

A Discussion on The Poverty of Ethnic Minority Community Under Critical Realism Perspective: A Case Study In Vo Nhai District, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam

Bich-Ngoc Thi Tran¹, Cheng-Liang Tsai²

¹² Social Welfare Department, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan

Corresponding Author: Bich-Ngoc Thi Tran¹

ABSTRACT: Poverty of ethnic minority groups in Thai Nguyen Province – Vietnam is very challenging in the rural economic development plan. From critical realism perspective, this study identifies the situation and causes of poverty, and hence the role of Vietnam government through their poverty reduction policies in Vo Nhai – one mountainous district of Thai Nguyen Province. This study provides a concrete example of applied qualitative and quantitative research using critical realism as a philosophical and methodological framework, a 33-item questionnaire was initially applied to conduct a survey with 204 subjects, followed by a twelve in-depth-question interview on eight respondents. The obtained data was later systematically analyzed.

Collected data and the results of analysis (average household income, employment, housing conditions, health care and capacity building to approach public services of local people) asserted that local poor households are facing a number of difficulties related to their real lives that the government, authorities and social organizers' supports are required. Lack of confidence, initiatives in working environment, capital and knowledge were reported the biggest hindrance to poverty mitigation. Based on current situation of poverty and these constraints identified, this paper figured out proposed interventions in poverty alleviation in Vo Nhai and in that province.

KEY WORDS: Critical Realism, Poverty, Poverty Reduction, Ethnic Households, Vo Nhai

Date of Submission: 29-09-2018

Date of acceptance:09-10-2018

I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a social and economic phenomenon historically, common to all local, national, ethnic. It does not just appear and long-term survival under primitive communal mode, mode slavery, feudalism level underdeveloped productive forces, but even in this day and age, with of stormy development of technical scientific revolution, with the development of productive forces unprecedented poverty still exists obvious though that country is developed, developing countries or poor countries. Therefore, human beings are always looking for ways to improve production and to resist natural disasters, sabotage and the risk of unhappiness to lead a prosperous and happy life (UN, 2010).

Vietnam is an agricultural country; backward, harsh natural conditions should be relatively high poverty rates. As in many other developing countries, hunger and poverty in Vietnam has existed for a significant amount of time. Until the 1980s, most of the Vietnamese population still lived under the poverty line. However, thanks the political and economic reform in 1986 and the government's commitment, the status of poverty and hunger in Vietnam has been significantly improved. From one of the poorest countries in the world with per capita income below US \$100 per year, Vietnam have become a lower middle income country with per capita income of US \$1,130 by the end of 2010 (The World Bank, 2012). Poverty in Viet Nam, however measured, has fallen rapidly since the early 1990s. The poverty rate based on a \$1.90 per day purchasing power parity declined from 50% in the early 1990s to an estimated 3% in 2015, meaning that close to 50 million people have risen out of poverty (World Bank, 2016). Achievement of poverty reduction in recent years has contributed to sustainable economic growth and social justice prevails. However, besides these achievements, poverty rates between regions and ethnic groups also huge differences. with the Kinh majority and Hoa (Chinese) tending to have high living standards. Other ethnic groups have disproportionately high levels of poverty. They comprise less than 15 percent of the population, but 70 percent of the extreme poor (World Bank, 2015). Evidence also shows that ethnic minority groups have lower social mobility. Between 2010 and 2014, 49 percent of Kinh and Hoa in the bottom quintile moved to a higher income bracket, while just 19 percent of other ethnic groups progressed in the same way (Oxfam Vietnam, 2016). They were also more likely to move down the income

ladder than Kinh and Hoa.

As the people at the grassroots generally experience poverty, it is reasonable to begin looking at what causes poverty at the micro level. This explains poverty from the bottom and it identifies individual characteristics as the causes of poverty such as behavior, values and others. Then, discussions on causes from the macro level are addressed. This explores the causes from the top and it identifies social forces as the cause of poverty such as social policy failure, market failure, stratification in a community, agency and institutions. Vo Nhai is one of mountainous district of Thai Nguyen province in North Mountainous region in Vietnam with 85% of the population working in agricultural activities (Nguyen, 2012), unequal population distribution, low educational attainment (high ratio of illiteracy and high number of children leaving schools), particular in remote communes of Vo Nhai (SYB, 2015). Three communes Lien Minh, Than Sa and Binh Long were selected to study in Vo Nhai district where 90% of population living in mountainous area with 204 poor households were interviewed (total households in survey in Lien Minh, Than Sa and Binh Long were 70, 64 and 70 respectively).

This paper used critical realism theory as methodology to analyze Vietnam, Thai Nguyen province of ethnic minority's poverty causes, in addition to emphasis on the individual level and also emphasize the structural level of interpretation, as critical realism emphasizes the real refers to trigger a variety of events underlying structure or mechanism. The paper conducts an analysis of livelihoods of Vo Nhai's community that is to investigate strategies for poverty reduction. To do that, the first steps are (1) assess the characteristics of surveyed households; (2) assess the current situation of poverty and find out the causes leading to poverty in that study area and (3) propose interventions/solutions for poverty mitigation in Vo Nhai, Thai Nguyen.

II. BACKGROUND

Poverty in rural and mountainous areas has long been the concentration of the Vietnamese government, at all levels, industry and society (UN, 2012). The study of the phenomenon of poverty in rural areas, mountainous only be deployed relatively system in more than a dozen years. This is consistent with the need to recognize the dynamics of the social class differentiation under the impact of economic transition, as the basis for the establishment of social policies and deployment activities social work in accordance with the socio-economic conditions in order to achieve strategic objectives "prosperous people, a strong country, a civilized democratic society."

Since the reform of socio-economic background of Vietnam, the lives of the vast majority of the people has improved, each household economic conditions develop according to their abilities, however the life of the mountain are still many difficulties and facing new challenges. The challenges they face today is the lack of appropriate production resources such as land, labors; and capital development to production, livestock farming, and the development of industries. Credit policy of the state is limited leading to many; the poor do not get loans. On the other hand, people be living in mountainous has less chance to get scientific and technical progress and income is limited (Australian Government, 2012). Results poverty reduction in Vietnam is not sustainable because the income of the population most of which centers around the poor, so very easy to fall into poverty. To achieve the objective by 2020, Vietnam becomes an industrialized, agricultural and rural development is a very important task, which necessarily carry out poverty reduction, most that for rural and mountainous areas.

Empirical evidence from past research provides the foundation necessary to construct this study for reducing poverty in Vietnam. The empirical review of poverty literature examines factors that influence the livelihood that the people will be poor, highlighting major finding and implications. International literature and poverty literature in Vietnam, both sets of literature provide insight into the complex and dynamic of sometimes conflicting factors that influence poverty situation and poverty causes, provide the structure for the conceptual framework presented in next section.

Since the panel data are available mostly for the US and EU countries, the literature is mostly comprised of studies on these countries. "How long does poverty last?"; "What are the beginning and ending events of poverty?"; "Which groups make up the short and longer-term poor?"; "What are the exit and entry rates of poverty?"; "What is/are the reason/s of poverty persistence?". Most of studies find high turnover amongst the poor; individuals below the poverty line are not the same individuals across years. Due to high exit and entry rates, poverty is more widespread than what static rates suggest. For example, Andriopoulou and Tsakoglou (2011) analyze the poverty dynamics in 14 European countries in a seven-year period and find that the prevalence poverty rate, which measures the proportion of individuals that experience poverty at least once in the whole period of the survey to the total population, is almost double than the poverty rate. This is an indication that mobility exists and that for a substantial proportion of the population poverty is a transient situation.

In the last decade, poverty dynamics research has focused on the issue of state dependence in poverty. In other words, researchers consistently try to distinguish between true state dependence and individual

heterogeneity. Most studies find significant poverty state dependence (for example, Cappellari and Jenkins, 2004a) for Britain, Ayllon (2008) for Spain, Buddelmeyer and Verick (2007) for Australia, Andriopoulou and Tsakloglou (2011) for 14 European countries, Biewen (2009) for Germany, separately from the persistence caused by heterogeneity. In fact, the probability of being poor is higher for individuals who were poor in the last period as compared to those who were non-poor. More than half of this probability is due to being in the state of poverty in the last period and is not to do with individual characteristics. Therefore, human capital theory is not enough to explain the poverty transitions alone. Since the most important trigger event for poverty transitions is found to be earnings change, many of the sources of state dependence in poverty lie in the labor market. Tomlinson and Walker (2010) analyze the state dependence in Britain in both qualitative and quantitative methods and conclude that there is state dependence in low-pay which leads in turn to higher poverty. In the case of poverty state dependence, prevention of initial poverty becomes an important policy tool and social assistance programs are widely used for this purpose. However, due to possible work disincentive it may create, instead of decreasing state dependence social assistance programs may even increase it. There are many studies on the adverse effects of social transfer programs which could be used for the prevention of state dependence. In the empirical literature, there is a consensus regarding the existence of work disincentive effects of welfare payments (see for example Danziger et al., 1981; Levy, 1979; Moffitt, 1983; Meyer and Rosenbaum, 2001; Blau and Robins, 1983; Chen and Klaauw, 2008; Schneider and Uhlenhorff, 2004). Both static and dynamic analyses are used for this purpose.

Studies of Vietnam's poverty focus consideration of poverty in rural areas, mainly directed to the object of the research is poor women, poor children, ethnic minorities. In addition, some studies focus to consider programs to reduce poverty and the impact of programs and policies to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of the poor people in Vietnam. The researchers referenced some theories and literatures of Vietnam and international, which is the basis theoretical related to the content of the thesis and it is the original validation of study to compare the results finding in this study with previous studies.

According to Bob Baulch et al (2010) although economic reform has brought remarkable progress in poverty reduction in Vietnam, the scale and depth of ethnic minority poverty in Vietnam presents one of the major challenges to achieving the targets for poverty reduction set out in the Socio-Economic Development Plan, as well as the Millennium Development Goals. Some of the short- and longer-term policy measures which they believe could help to counter ethnic disadvantages in the nutrition, education and employment sectors are discussed. They also emphasize the importance of promoting growth that is geographically broad and socially inclusive without which, the current disparities between the Kinh-Hoa and the ethnic minorities will continue to grow.

Pham et al (2011) used baseline dataset of Program 135 Phase II (P135-II) to provide situational analysis of poverty and multiple socio-economic aspects of the ethnic minorities. P135-II provides the most comprehensive data set about demographic, socioeconomic information of the ethnic minorities in Vietnam. The data set is representative of ethnic minorities in the country; therefore, the analysis using P135-II baseline data would provide a highly accurate and representative analysis and description for the ethnic minorities. The study identifies significant gaps between ethnic minority groups. Some ethnic minority groups with larger populations such as the Tay, Thai, Muong, Nung and Khmer have poverty rates lower than the average for ethnic minorities as a whole. The study also analyzes multiple reasons undermining the socio-economic progress of the ethnic minorities: inability to speak Vietnamese, cultural practices such as community leveling mechanism, low quality of assets and services.

Poverty is a reality facing many families in Vietnam. 70% of the population live in rural daily income of US \$2 to US \$3 a day. Badiani et al (2013) examine the lives of poor men, women, and children in Vietnam and explores the constraints and opportunities they face today in rising out of poverty. It builds on a rich body of poverty analysis and an excellent base of knowledge from previous reports and aims to do three things. First, it proposes revisions to Vietnam's poverty monitoring system-via better data, updated welfare aggregates, and new poverty lines-to bring these more in line with economic and social conditions in present-day Vietnam. Second, it revisits the stylized facts about deprivation and poverty in Vietnam, and develops an updated profile of poverty using data from the 2010 Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) and new qualitative field studies. Third, it analyzes some of the key challenges for poverty reduction in the next decade, including changing regional patterns of poverty and wealth, high and persistent poverty among ethnic minorities, and rising inequality in outcomes and opportunities.

Before diving into the empirical and analytical discussions about the poverty it is important to situate the argument within a theoretical context. First because we will be examining how much government intervention is appropriate to ensure proper development, researcher will examine the different poverty theories that deal with interventionism and this will also offer a short history of the global drive from classical poverty to the welfare state. We will then begin to look at the theories that deal with the concepts of human development

which is central to the discussion on the poverty.

As an embracing approach, critical realism does not simply criticize existing philosophy of science, but tries to integrate empirical research into a broader understanding of scientific research and intellectual intervention, giving primacy to putting research in a role to support emancipation. In this sense, a realist approach makes a difference between the term poverty and the reality of poverty, assuming that poverty as a reality existed before the term was coined. While specific forms of poverty and social innovation must be understood as societal constructed or determined, theoretical conceptualizations of poverty and social innovation are more or less adequate. In line with the philosophical dictum “the term dog does not bark” all realist approaches assume “the existence of a relatively mind-independent reality” (Westerhuis, 2007;419-420). Roy Bhaskar, the mastermind behind the critical realist approach to social science, argues that the causal structures and generative mechanisms of nature must exist and act independently of the conditions that allow men access to them. [...] Structures and mechanisms then are real and distinct from the patterns of events that they generate; just as events are real and distinct from the experiences in which they are apprehended. Mechanisms, events and experiences thus constitute three overlapping domains of reality, viz. the domain of the real, the actual and the empirical (Bhaskar, R, 1975/2008). This crucial distinction between “the real”, “the actual” and “the empirical” (see Table 1) is called the “layered ontology” of critical realism.

	Domain of the real	Domain of the actual	Domain of the empirical
Mechanisms	•		
Events		•	
Experiences	•	•	•

Table 1: Layered Ontology in Critical Realism
Source: Bhaskar 1975/2008, 56

With critical realism, poverty to be problematized in the following way (Olson,W, 2007; 370-371) for different accounts of poverty:

First, as overcoming poverty in general cannot be achieved at the individual level, one needs to be critical of individualistic analyses of poverty. Poverty is not simply a problem of individual deprivation or lack of motivation, but a complex social problem, a “wicked problem”.

Second, poverty is not given and unchangeable, but results from a historically produced unequal social structure, like lack of access to land, unemployment, homelessness etc. Therefore needs to contribute to emancipation from oppression.

Third, poverty needs to be perceived as a social relation and not as a static and actualist description of a current situation. This allows linking abstract structural mechanisms like class domination, patrimonial state structures or patriarchal family relations with concrete agency by disempowered, oppressed or vulnerable actors.

Fourth, critical realists aim at the transformation of the social world “with the label ‘poor’ placed as potentially an epiphenomenon (i.e. false appearance)”. In depth empirical research might identify other relevant needs of the poor and other causal factors impeding empowerment than theories of poverty have hitherto identified.

In the context of improve, we consider poverty and especially the search for socially innovative strategies to combat poverty to be one of such wicked problems, which do not permit easy solutions. Socially innovative actions or policies in the field of poverty reduction and social exclusion are bottom-up initiatives that respond to the commoditization of life chances and/or the relations of domination embodied in existing institutions to satisfy social needs of socially excluded groups (content dimension). They bypass or transform existing welfare or other institutions and structural social relations by involving civil society, third sector or social entrepreneurs so as to increase the control of socially excluded groups over the means to satisfy their social needs (process dimension). They thereby contribute to the empowerment and socio-political mobilization of socially excluded groups. Critical realism is especially suited to deal with social innovation, as it goes beyond the actual and existing, and aims at identifying potentialities and emerging properties of actors, situations and contexts. And it links ethical and analytical issues, as not every new activity can be considered as a social innovation.

Poverty consists of multiple, interlocking dimensions. Theoretically, the study used critical realism theory as methodology to provide a contribution to an understanding of poverty from an academic standpoint, especially the multidimensionality of poverty and how to address it. Practically, on the other hand, the study is expected to assist local officials to improve the way poverty is understood and to help them design effective strategies and responsive policies to reduce poverty. As this study is primarily based at the grassroots level, the study recommends a bottom-up and self-defined approach to poverty alleviation in the research locations. The principal objective of this study is to explore the issue and cause of poverty in selected research site in Vo Nhai District, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam. This objective is broken down to three questions: how is poverty

understood, what are its causes and how is it alleviated?

Vo Nhai is a mountainous district in Thai Nguyen province, central district of Thai Nguyen city 37 miles east-north of Vietnam. Topography of Vo Nhai is quite complex, most of the area of the district is mountainous slopes and limestone (over 92%), areas with flat topography means for agricultural production accounts for a billionaire extremely small and concentrated in the communes of La Hien, Long Thuong, Phu Thuong, Dinh Ca and Trang Xa ward. With complex terrain features that will allow law a background in agriculture, forestry diversity and abundance, but it is the unfavorable conditions for the development of infrastructure such as: transportation, irrigation and the exchange of goods in and out of the district (SYB, 2015).

The climate of the tropical monsoon nature, divided into four seasons: Spring, summer, autumn and winter. The average annual temperature is 22.4 ° C, the temperature in the district is very complex, in June, July, August is the hot, in November, December, and in January of the following year the cold weather damage longed influence the growth and development of plants and animals. Land favorable for agricultural development little practice, most of the land can only serve the purpose of forestry (SYB, 2015). The use and reclamation must be posed and solved in the sustainable development strategy. Vo Nhai has large reserves of mineral resources exploitation but Vo Nhai not significant mineral resources remain in the form of the potential key.

Vo Nhai has 15 wards with 172 villages of 16,154 households. Although the government is very interested in investment, Vo Nhai is still the poorest district of Thai Nguyen. Vo Nhai is a highland district should average per capita income is low, only about 3,5 million VND / person / year (2005), in 2010 average per capita income was 6 million VND / person / year. In 2010 the district has 7,237 poor households accounted for 46,53%, in 2015 has 6,979 poor households accounted for 20,87%. Number of workers in the agricultural sector 33,334 workers, accounting for 86,3% of employees in the district. Number of employees in the industry accounted for 4,1% and the service sector accounts for 9.6% of the total number of employees in the district (SYB, 2015). It shows us the number of employees working in rural areas mainly in purely agricultural sector. Therefore, it is so difficult to develop economy and reduce poverty rate. Structural infrastructure of Vo Nhai is still low, this is no small influence on the socio-economic development of the district.

Vo Nhai district is divided into three distinct areas: the northern part is mountainous communes rugged rocks, mainly forestry production and mining; southern regions are mountainous communes of agricultural production, the center consists of communes and towns located along Highway 1B, there are services and economic development in the district. Given the constraints of time and resources, three communities were selected as representative of the most prevalent groups of poor in the Vo Nhai district. Almost 90 per cent of the people live in the mountainous areas. The mountainous areas on the other hand were somewhat more difficult to reach due to poor transport facilities.

Some houses are permanent in nature with brick and cement walls and others are semi- permanent (half brick and half-wood). Despite this, many are non-permanent, which were constructed from wood with an earth floor. A few houses had electricity but others had no electricity. There was an Auxiliary Health Centre in the village, but it had only a doctor and a nurse and very limited facilities. Low education and skills prevented them running micro-enterprises, although the local government attempted to help them. They were also often trapped by a pattern of subsistence that tended to be more consumption than productive. They were also constrained by a condition where there was a lack of capital to run micro-enterprise, although many attempts were made to get micro-credits from several banks and to get financial support from the local government. Ironically, while concern is given to poverty reduction, particularly among the donor community, the term poverty still means different things for different people. This means that people, according to their political, social and economic circumstances, will understand poverty differently. Laderchi et al (2003:3) argued: “clarification of how poverty is defined is extremely important as different definitions of poverty imply use of different criteria for measurement, potentially the identification of different individuals and groups as poor, and the use of different policy solutions for poverty reduction”. So the purpose of this study is to identify the poverty situation and the causes of poverty in the Vo Nhai District, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam. Moreover, it will try to understand a number of recommendations aim to promote the capacity of the poor in poverty reduction works, gradually bringing people in Vo Nhai to transfer from poverty and gradually affirmed its position, its role in society.

I. Research Design and Methodology

This section firstly describes the research framework of research constructs, including the basic research data, poverty situation, poverty causes ad policies for poverty reduction. After that, the sampling plan is described including locations selected and respondents selected. Finally, interview method, questionnaire design and data analysis techniques are also described.

1. Research Framework

The purposes of this study are firstly to integrate relevant literature and develop a comprehensive research framework, and secondly to test it through survey and in-depth interview. The research framework of the study was shown as follow figure 1. The research framework of research constructs including the critical realism theory, literature review, poverty situation, poverty causes ad policies for poverty reduction.

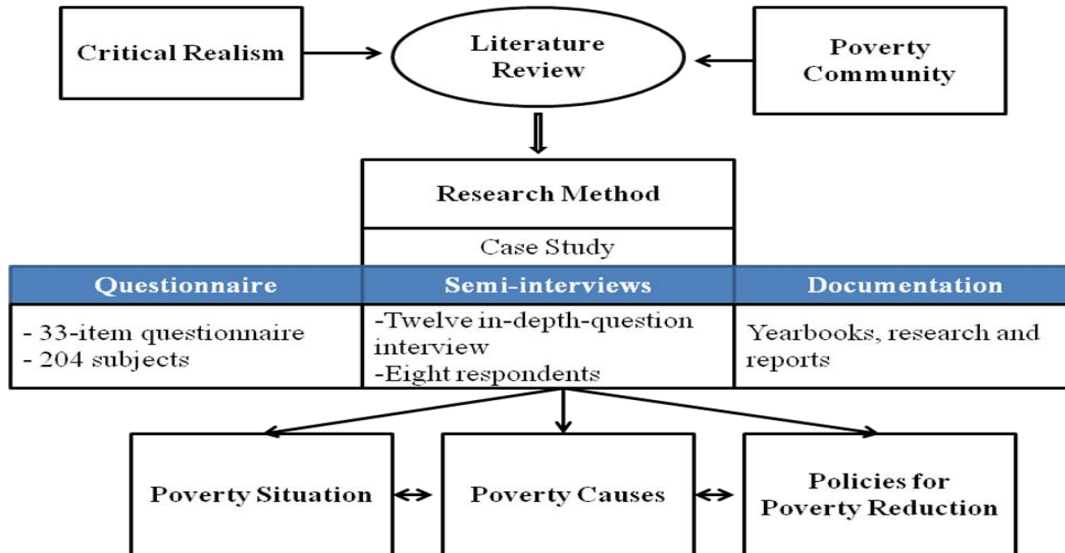


Figure 1: The research framework

2. Research Method

Like many other researchers, critical realists typically begin with a particular problem or question, which has been guided by theory. Indeed, Bhaskar (1979) acknowledged the distinct but complementary importance of philosophy and empirical social science, with the former setting the parameters of possibility for latter, which examines the substantive operation of structures. Bhaskar (1978) has suggested that critical realism has a stratified rather than flat ontology and this has major epistemological implications. The strata are the empirical, the actual and the real. In this study, researchers focuses on individual agents (poor households) in context using interviews and quantitative analysis, employs causal groups, produces causal explanations which are, however, limited to the situation studied so that testing is by corroboration (Sayer, 2000).

In this paper we argue that critical realism offers a way forward. Critical realism is, by philosophical standards, a relatively new approach to ontological, epistemological and axiological issues. Critical realism is particularly well suited as a companion to case research. It justifies the study of any situation, regardless of the numbers of research units involved, but only if the process involves thoughtful in depth research with the objective of understanding why things are as they are. This study provides a concrete example of applied qualitative and quantitative research using critical realism as a philosophical and methodological framework. The use of a case study approach in this research is consistent with qualitative and quantitative methods because it allows researchers to explore as well as test theoretical concepts against local experiences and place-specific conceptual insights for wider applicability (Beeton, 2005)

Poverty is a social problem, it is not only a personal factors, also is social factors, more effective solutions or treatments need to start from the nature of the structure which are critical realism emphasis. This paper used critical realism perspective to analyze Vietnam, Thai Nguyen province, Vo Nhai district of ethnic minority's poverty causes, in addition to emphasis on the individual level and also emphasize the structural level of interpretation, as critical realism emphasizes the real refers to trigger a variety of events underlying structure or mechanism.

The households selected to be representative for the study area. The number of households is determined by the following formula (Yamane, 1973):

$$N = n / (1 + Ne^2)$$

N = sample size

n = Population size

e = error of the sampling (*e* = 6.9%)

Therefore, the sample size for this study can be calculated as follows:

$$N = 6979 / (1 + 6979 * 0,0692) \quad \mathbf{N=204}$$

After determining the number of samples under investigation, I determine the locations surveyed in 3 communes: Lien Minh, Than Sa, Binh Long, the choices for them to fully investigate the random method. Research method is based on the snowball technique because of three reasons. First, sample size is small (204 households). Second, households selected have similar background of poverty. Finally, living area where information on target respondents with particular characteristics is insufficient (SYB, 2015). Option to be investigated through the following table 2:

Questionnaire	
Locations selected	Respondents
Village1(LM)	70
Village 2(TS)	64
Village 3(BL)	70
Total	204

Table 2: Research questionnaire sample size (1)

(LM=Lien Minh; TS=Than Sa; BL=Binh Long)

Objects selected for interview are the poor households in the research area. Researchers prepared 12 questions in-depth interview in accordance with the content. The purpose of the interviews is to exploit further information, contributing to accurately reflect the nature of the research problem. 12 questions in-depth interview was answered with 8 subjects in order to identify the poverty situation, poverty causes characteristics and expression the role of government through poverty reduction policies. Interviews were also conducted with the poor, village heads and selected government officials (see table 3).

In-depth Interviews				
Locations selected	Respondents (Poor households)	Government officials and village leader	Respondents	Total
Village1(LM)	1	Vice chairman of district	1	8
Village 2(TS)	1	Chairperson of farmers' associations	1	
Village 3(BL)	2	Chairperson of women' associations	1	
		BL village leader	1	
Total	4		4	

Table 3: Interview respondent summary (2)

(LM=Lien Minh; TS=Than Sa; BL=Binh Long)

These (semi-structured) interviews were carried out without a questionnaire, but based on interview guides prepared previously. Like the questionnaire, the interviews were characterized by open-ended questions and sometimes unstructured interviews. In the evening, after the interviews, some notes were made to remember the information obtained during the day. Storey (1997:6) called this a blue book or methodology diary that helped him “to think through ideas, list avenues that had opened and closed, as well as things he needed to do”. Thus, the blue book helped him to write up the research findings and facilitate the analysis of the findings.

Questionnaire consists of 33 questions designed to obtain information about the poor households (4 questions), poverty situation (9 questions), the causes of poverty (20 questions). A preliminary version of this questionnaire was designed and discussed with the advisor. Since the study focuses on the local district in Vietnam, the questionnaire will be translated into Vietnamese. The questionnaire will be distributed directly to respondents, using paper-based questionnaire. Please refer to appendixes for the questionnaires. The question is

closely with the content of research topics. This is a mountainous area, awareness is low, so the question is simple design, easy to understand and use the majority of closed questions.

Data stemming from qualitative and quantitative methods are different. Qualitative research data is often regarded with suspicion by those who are interested in quantitative research. They argue that qualitative research deals with words or text as the unit of analysis while quantitative research tends to be associated with numbers as the unit of analysis (Sarantakos, 1998:53-56; Denscombe, 2003:232). The qualitative researchers can according to quantitative researchers, collect and analyze the data based on their bias. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that bias is also an issue for those who prefer to use numerical data. In both research paradigms, therefore, it is extremely important to adopt methods that minimize the bias.

This study adopted the above steps in conducting the inductive data analysis process, with a little modification. The process initially prepared all data or information obtained, questionnaires and interviews with the selected institutions. This included checking the correctness of the data. This step was done during the fieldwork. The next process was to group the data. The data was grouped into some categories. These categories were made to describe the key issues researched and based on the research aims. Three main categories had been determined, namely: poverty and well-being, problem priorities and institutions. All data or information obtained from the field was grouped into these categories.

With the step was to code the grouped data. In this step all the grouped data was given some labels or numbers in order to facilitate the tabulating process. After that the next step was continued by the tabulating process. The tabulating process was the last step of the data processing in which all processed data was interpreted and analyzed to determine the patterns and meanings. The patterns and meanings of the processed data were associated with the established research aims and research questions. All these processes were conducted with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program.

On the basis of the obtained raw data of the questionnaire method, using SPSS software to process and analyze the data. The results of the processing of data have important implications for research results. In order to achieve the purposes of this research, SPSS 19.0 is supplied to help us analyze the collected data. We have conducted the following data analysis procedure.

All interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and reviewed prior to each subsequent interview. A journal was used to record researcher ideas and thoughts regarding the possible relationships within data. At the completion of interviews, transcripts were recorded line by line to reassemble data within a developmental map. A total of 8 persons were recruited for in-depth interviews until data was saturated. A thematic analysis of narrated stories was conducted and entailed (a) reviewing audio taped interviews and field notes, (b) transcribing tapes verbatim, (c) reading transcripts, and (d) coding for categories and themes.

II. RESEARCH RESULTS

1. Quantitative Research Results

1.1. Socio-characteristics of Households

In terms of age structure, people from 21 to 40 years old (working-age group) are reported the largest group (table 4). However, the poverty rate is 62.8% meaning that their efficient working capacity and innovation is limited.

	Categories	N=204	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	66	32.4
	Female	138	67.6
Age(years old)	Under 20	17	8.3
	21 to 30	63	30.9
	31 to 40	65	31.9
	Above 41	59	28.9
Education level	Illiteracy	31	14.9
	Primary school	56	26.9
	Secondary school	76	36.5
	High school	41	19.7
Occupation	Famer	152	74.5
	Worker	30	14.7
	Seller	1	0.5
	Housewife	20	9.8
	Retied	1	0.5

Table 4: Summary socio-characteristics of households in three communes

Source: Field data 2016

Low educational levels demonstrate causes and results of poverty. There is very high rate of the illiterate (14.9%), while secondary level reported as the most highest educational attainment, accounting for only 19.7%. Low educational attainment would be owing to traditional conceptions that women just belongs kitchen and were not allowed to attend schools like men.

Turn to relationship between occupation and poverty, since all households interviewed are poor, 74.5% of all households are farm households, while there is only 0.5% of households are sellers and retirees. This infers that income from pension and business is much higher than that of on-farm employment.

1.2. Current Situation of Poverty

Current poverty situation in Vo Nhai determined by nine factors, including average monthly household income, income resource, daily average working time (hours), health-care facilities, possession of health-insurance cards, housing conditions, used water source, toilet system and farmers' feelings about their lives. The results are reported in table 5

Factors		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Monthly average Income (USD ¹)	Under \$10	52	25.5
	From \$10-\$15	99	48.5
	Above \$15	20	9.8
	Above \$20	33	16.2
Income resource	Agriculture	171	83.8
	Industry	25	12.3
	Service	6	2.9
	Other	2	1
Average daily working hours	Under 4 hours	13	6.4
	From 4hours to 6 hours	76	37.3
	From 6 hours to 8 hours	89	43.3
	More than 8 hours	25	12.3
Health care provider	Herbalist	76	37.3
	Medical station	72	35.3
	Private hospital	12	5.9
	Public hospital	44	21.6
Possession of health insurance ID	Yes	193	94.6
	No	11	5.4
Housing conditions	Temporary houses	152	74.5
	Semi-permanent house	40	19.6
	Permanent house	12	5.9
	Others	0	0
Water sources	Rain-water	90	44.1
	Tap-water	3	1.5
	Pond/ lake	111	54.4
	Others	0	0
Toilet conditions	Septic toilets	30	14.7
	Two-compartment latrines	51	25
	No toilet	123	60.3
	Others	0	0
Feeling about current living	Very satisfied	4	2
	More than satisfied	161	78.9
	Satisfied	22	10.8
	Partly satisfied	12	5.9
	Not at all satisfied	5	2.5

Table 5: Current poor situation of surveyed households

Source: Field data 2016

Average households income is very low. Based on rural poverty line of Vietnam -\$20/person/month in 2015

¹ \$1 is equivalent about 22,000 vnd

(World Bank, 2016), Vo Nhai is a very poor district with 83.8% of households living under poverty line (table 5). The proportion of people earning 200,000 vnd/ month (equivalent \$10) and 200,000 to 300,000 vnd/ month (equivalent \$10-\$15) contributes to 25.5% and 48.5% respectively. The highest income group (above 400.000vnd/ month, equivalent \$20/month) makes up the smallest income group (table 5).

Poverty distribution is different among various occupations. The highest proportion of poorest belongs to agriculture (83.8%), followed by industry (12.3%) and services (2.9%) respectively (table 5). It is explained that agricultural business is self-sufficiency (home consumption is priority and little agricultural production is sold at markets for income generation); traditional farming practices and relies on rain-fed system in conjunction with inadequate awareness due to very low educational attainment that would induce very low yield productivity and little economic benefits as a consequence.

Lack of employment is another issue. A number of working people working from 6 to 8 hours contribute to 43.6%, from 4-6 hours is 37.3% and the least group contributing to 6.4% working under four hours per day (table 5), limiting their working capacities as well as income source (table 5).

Another issue is health-care service/provider. Health-care service is poor, in conjunction with poor infrastructure and inadequate awareness of health-care importance, 72% people just see herbalists and medical stations for health medical-exams, instead of private (5.9%) /public hospitals (21.6%), although 95% of total population have their own insurance cards (table 5). Housing conditions are also examined a signal of poverty assessment. Up to 95% of households live in temporary/semi-permanent shelters.

Very poor sanitary and hygienic conditions are other concerns. Only 1.5% of the community residents have an access to tap-water, while all most all people use unclean from rain (44.1%) and/or pond/lake (54.4%). People also do not have toilets or have toilet but not familiar with using them, accounting for 60.3% (table 5), and others have toilet but septic toilets and latrines. Behaviors of not using toilets (just go around for toilets) would affect sanitary and hygiene conditions of surrounding water sources like pond/lakes that they use as their main water source. As a consequence, infected and insanitary water supply could trace epidemic of diseases in conjunction with unsettled housing conditions would bring negative effects on most people regarding their health and lives. In terms of feeling about current living: Most of respondents feel happy with their current living accounted 78.9%, 5.9% of respondents feel unhappy and 2.5% respondents feel very unhappy with their current life.

This result is consistent with the previous finding by Nguyen, Viet Cuong, Peter Lanjouw and Marleen Marra (2012) most ethnic people are self-employed in agriculture (i.e. 78 percent). The majority ethnic group is less dependent on agriculture wage employment (60%) which is taken to mean mainly working for the authorities, limited at around 28%. Housing conditions in the mountain areas of Vietnam generally are far better than those in the extremely difficult communes. For instance, in 2008, only 19% of the rural population lived in a temporary house, as compared to 39% in the extremely difficult communes in 2009.

The proportion of the rural population living in a permanent house is two times higher than in the poorest areas (17% vs. 7%). And this result also is consistent with the previous finding by World Bank (2012), 87% of ethnic households don't having access to clean water for cooking and 91% don't having access to the sanitary toilets. The coverage of free health insurance for ethnic minorities increased from 8% in 2000 to 78% in 2011. There are around 84% of people with health insurance in the extremely difficult communes and income level on the right of the vertical line, the majority earn considerably more than ethnic minorities. This kernel distribution of per capita income looks essentially the same as the kernel density of per capita expenditure between the two groups (ethnic minorities and the majority) as reported of World Bank (2012).

1.3. Causes of Poverty

This paper used the regression model to identify causal relationships between average monthly household income and causes of poverty. Average monthly household income is divided into four groups and there are 19 independent variables of poverty causes (R1 ÷ R19).

Table 6 provides data analysis by questionnaire items for cause of Poverty in Vo Nhai. These include 19 items of cause poverty (1) Lacking of land for cultivating=R1 (2) Lacking of means of production=R2 (3) Lacking of capital=R3 (4) Lacking of working force=R4 (5) Lacking of work=R5 (6) Many people in my family could not earn money=R6 (7) Do not know what to do for a living=R7 (8) Bad health=R8 (9) Work-shyness=R9 (10) One member in the family contracts social evil=R10 (11) One member in the family gets serious disease=R11 (12) Family discord =R12 (13) Not well-educated=R13 (14) So many children attending school=R14 (15) Not supported by the government= R15 (16) Not supported to relieve the poverty=R16 (17) High price of electricity=R17 (18) High price of water=R18 (19) Low income=R19 .

Variables in the Model	B	SE	t
Land shortage (R1)	-8.659E-02	.839	-1.550
Lack of production facilities (R2)	-8.507E-02	.056	-1.407
Insufficient capital (R3)	6.636E-02	.060	1.161
Lacking of labour-force(R4)	4.728E-03	.057	.096
Lacking of work (R5)	-2.242E-02	.049	-.391
Many people in my family could not earn money (R6)	-.103134	.052	-2.177*
Do not know what to do for a living (R7)	3.064E-02	.073	.452
Poor health (R8)	-9.827E-02	.068	-1.954
Lack of confidence (R9)	-.242	.050	-3.836***
People get involved in crime evils (R10)	-4.925E-02	.063	-.952
Burden of disease (R11)	-.134	.057	-1.826
Family discord (R12)	.130	.047	1.873
Low educational attainment (R13)	9.784E-02	.069	1.606
Too many children attending school (R14)	-2.591E-02	.061	-.242
No government's supports (R15)	3.952E-02	.107	.626
No poverty reduction support (R16)	9.770E-03	.063	.144
High price of electricity (R17)	-9.397E-02	.068	-1.422
High price of water (R18)	-1.386E-02	.066	-.158
Low income (R19)	-5.703E-02	.088	-.778
	Valid n= 204		
	Adj. R2= .125		

Table 6: Results of regression of the household income model

Source: Field data 2016

Legend: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

The variables have different effects on monthly household income (table 6). Lacking of confidence and the unemployed (number of families' members could not earn money) have significantly negative effects on household income at p<0.05 and p< 0.001 respectively. It is elucidated that the more number of unemployed, the more financial burdens households would suffer. Furthermore, members have their jobs but they hesitate and lack confidence and motivation, they would confront limits to just assert themselves and improve their working capacities or seek out new jobs for better income.

Other variables land shortage, lack of production facilities, lacking of work, poor health, burden of crime evils and diseases, too many children attending schools (leading financial burden and lack of immediately labour source for intensive farming activities), influences of expensive electricity and water and low income could bring adverse effects on their households' income, but not significantly (table 6).

Surprisingly, low educational attainment and no supports from governments and assistances for poverty mitigation are responded to not negatively affect household income. That would be because the community life in highland mountainous regions where their on-farm employment based on mostly their experience. On the other hands, the surveyed community has inadequate awareness due to low educational levels that make them become inappropriately conscious of importance of government's supports as well as other poverty mitigation assistance. This result is consistent with the previous finding by Narayan, et al (2000:252) that poorness causes education, particularly of children of secondary age, to be cut short. Leaving school early at maybe 14 or 15 years old means you can't manage a job and contributes to some early parenthood. It was considered that early parenthood led to more babies because of the resultant lack of a job. So the cycle continues with children having children and remaining poor so that they in turn cannot afford to send their kids to school. Quibria (1993); Ellis (2000); Narayan, et al (2000); Narayan & Petesch (2002) of research paper also finding that sets have been argued by most empirical studies as determinants of a household's wealth. If a household lacks assets, then they face poverty. The assets have been classified by the studies to include natural, physical, human, social and financial assets. As assets are determinants of wealth, the poor tend to view the problems they experience as a result of asset deprivation. Some of author also argued about basic social services. This includes roads, electricity, water supply, transportation, communication, schooling, health and others. Previous empirical studies found that a lack of basic social services can contribute to poverty.

III. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

1.4. Poverty situation

In 2015, the total number of households in Vo Thai district are 16,383 (69.381 people) and the poverty rate of household is 34.86% (SYB, 2015). Ethnic people in Vo Nhai district have to working hard to get money for their basic needs. It is extremely difficult for them to improve their lives because of their very low education level.

"Before 2000 it was very difficult for the local Vo Nhai government wanted to find commune officials because

no person could be qualified for the position requirements. Children can't go to school because their families are very poor. Although government has opened the boarding school system, the number of children went to school is still very low. Since 2000 the government has invested heavily for education, so the number of ethnic children qualified high school has increased a lot. Moreover, the government is encouraging people who have high education level in working for district office with incentive salaries. Besides, ethnic children are encouraged to study hard in school for their better future. (Source: In-depth interview result, No.01- Male 47-year-old – BL village leader).

The 21st century is the age of information, science and technology but in Vo Nhai where the reality shows that the education level of minority is still very low. Living on subsistence farming and supplemented by foraging in forests, most of communes in Vo Nhai are the poor communes, also considered to be among the poorest 10% in all Vietnam-earning about one USD per day (SYB, 2015). Local people in Vo Nhai have to work hard to make ends meet. It is extremely difficult for them to improve their lives because of their low educational attainment, inadequate skills and lack of job opportunities.

“My family has only one income resource from agriculture. Every month expenditure is higher than income so my family’s life is always difficult. We spend all of money to buy food, there isn’t any money to buy other things such as new clothes and household utensils (Source: In-depth interview result, No.03-Female 38-year-old - Resident)

“My family's income is mainly from tea planting. The government has supported farmers by giving low loan interest, land, and seedlings. Recently we have enough food for three meals a day. I hope I can save money to buy some furniture such as television sets, motorcycles, refrigerators ...” (Source: In-depth interview result, No.02-Male 40-year-old - Resident).

Having many children in ethnic households is also one of problems that cause their poverty. These families have to face food shortage, clothes, and work. Children lack food and live in dilapidated housing, which causes many diseases. The non-guaranteed living standard leads to the inevitable consequences such as malnutrition in children and life expectancy in adults. Regarding the general income, the cost of education, health care and other service will be cut for spending on food demand.

It is true that poverty situation is happening. However, in each region or residential area, the economic and social condition are very different, so the manifestations of poverty are also different. Thus, even the standards of the poverty line in each region have separate regulations. While the poverty in big cities or delta areas is manifested primarily of housing difficulties or lack of money for children’s education, the expression of these poor households in Vo Nhai is solely estimated at the status of food shortages.

Expression status	Households	%
Lack of food	2,679	31.92
Dilapidated housing	3,251	38.74
Lack of money for therapeutic	2,830	33.72
Lack of money for children studying	1,432	17.06
Lack of arable land	3,925	46.77
Lack of knowledge and experience	2,473	29.47
Other	316	3.76

Table 7: The expression status of the poor households

Source: Statistics of Vo Nhai district, 2015

Data on the table 7 shows that 31.92% of households are under the condition of food shortage. This percentage is still very high since they are now living in mountain areas, development of which is still low.

When people do not worry about minimum dietary needs of human life, they have opportunity to care about the demand for cultural enjoyment and spiritual. Enjoyment new culture and beauty in society become something far slag for the poor. The fact that demands of food is not guaranteed entails a series of other demands which, hence, are not met.

"My family has 5 people: I, my wife and three little children. The arable land is very limited. My wife stays at home and takes care of our kids. I have to go out to find work. In some lucky days, I earn 70,000(VND) per day and spend it on buying food for my family. If I cannot find a job, my family has nothing to eat” (Source: In-depth interview result, No.05-Male 35-year-old - Resident)

In the data of table 4-11 shows the number of poor household lack of money for children studying accounted 17.06%. Therefore, when the food is shortages, parents cannot afford to buy clothes; pen and book for children go to school. Parents from poor households expect to receive resources from the government to support their children can go to school.

“My family is very poor, so we don’t have money for children going to school. We certified as poor household so we receive supports from government. Although we do not have to pay tuition fees, our children

cannot go to school because we have no money to buy books, pens, and new clothes for them. Therefore we look forward to receiving more government supports such as books, notebooks, pens, and clothes for our children's study" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.03 - Female 38-year-old - Resident)

The house of ethnic poor people is very simple, makeshift, and ramshackle. Beams are made from small bending trees; the walls are made from corn stalks; the roof is thatched with cement tiles by government support. In the house, they have a corn grinder stone, a cast iron pan to put under a wooden, some pigs look like pumpkins. Beds with wooden planks, it was sketchy, no cabinets or furniture. Visitors come to visit them seating around the fire with wood cubes lying.

1.5. Causes of Poverty

There are many causes of poverty in Vo Nhai district. They classified according to two main groups of reasons: objective reasons and subjective reasons. Objective reasons are due from natural conditions: steep terrain, dissected complex; commuter traffic difficult; weather and climate extreme impact on the production process (floods, droughts ...). Subjective reasons are from poor people who lack knowledge and experience to do their farming. With low education levels, it is difficult for them to acquire technical expertise manufacturing process, livestock and crop.

Many poor ethnic people cannot speak Vietnamese fluently, along with low level of education, thus acquiring new knowledge is extremely difficult. Traditional cultivation could not bring high economic efficiency, but they still apply. It is difficult for them to change their thinking and production methods.

"The poor households also have land to cultivate, but they do not know how to work. With the same rice and corn varieties, people with knowledge can get higher efficiency than the poor" (Source: In-depth interview result, No. 06-Male 44-year-old - Chairperson of Farmer Association).

Although some poor people know the importance of knowledge, poverty prevents them from going to school. The most important thing is how to get enough food for every day:

"I agree with this statement: 'Knowledge will help people relieve the poverty' my family has been kept a poor household, because we have low education level. Educational attainment of my wife and I were elementary school. So we expect our children to go to school and we hope their lives would be better than ours". (Source: In-depth interview result, No.02-Male 40-year-old - Resident).

"My family has been kept poor, because we don't have enough knowledge. However if my children go to school, we will not have anyone to work and nothing to eat. My husband and I have bad health. Family's income only relies on the labor of two sons" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.04-Female 48-year-old - Resident).

Local government and the unions have scientific and technical guidelines class to improve knowledge for poor ethnic people.

"The poor with acquired knowledge are very limited. There are trainings and guidance but the results of application are not good. Every household is an economic unit, when they can't calculate and apply knowledge in the new project, so they still are very poor" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.08-Female 44-year-old - Chairperson of Woman Association).

Lacking of capital is very popular in majority of poor households. It is the basic conditions to carry out an operation, bring revenue, and raise the standard of living. Local governments and unions have given a number of capital programs to support poverty reduction such as capital to create jobs, capital to buy cattle and buffaloes plowing drag. These programs satisfy demand of loans of 70% poor household. However, this is not decided factor for households to escape poverty; it requires the synchronous combination of other conditions.

"My family is poor because we don't have the capital to invest in production development. We want to raise livestock, buy good quality seeds and fertilizer for agricultural investment but we do not have enough money. If my family only relies on rice cultivation, its sole dependence would unable them only enough rice to eat alone, unable to escape poverty" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.04 - Female 48-year-old - Resident).

"Government gives poor households loans, but the poor don't know how to use capital to escape the poverty. Therefore, government must guide them on how to use capital efficiently. After lending, monitoring the use of loans is an essential activity of government. Moreover instead of lending to the poor, government should invest capital for better-off households to invest in production in order to attract workers from the poor to participate in labors" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.06-Male 44-year-old - Chairperson of Farmer Associations).

This sharing is a personal opinion, it is not representative, but it is a suggestion to think about methods of lending institutions and capital management. People used to say "the money give the poor as wind passing through empty house". Poor households always face with food shortage.

"Some poor households have borrowed funds, when they have money in hands, they don't know what to do, what to buy because they have never been have too much money in the hands" (Source: In-depth

interview result, No.01 - Male 60-year-old - BL village leader).

The people are poor because of lack capital. When they have capital, they will know what to do with the money in their hands. However, with ethnic poor people, when government give them low loan interest they do not know what to do with the money. They are suffering because of poverty and after they borrow loan, they still suffering with completely returned capital. This is relates to the knowledge and experience of manufacturing production as mentioned above. With the fact that women's union, Youth's Union, farmer's Association give poor households training of scientific and technical transfers.

"Every year at least two times, the unions are organizing for training, planting instructions, efficient production. In 2011 farmers' association was have five times to open training agricultural techniques classes for the poor households, they had to translate the documentation from Vietnamese into local languages "(Source: In-depth interview result, No.06-Male 45-year-old - Chairperson of Farmer Associations).

In order to find out the answer of question: why are the ethnic people of the poverty rate is higher than others are?

"The general nature of ethnic people isn't frugal spending as people of other race. The festival of the ethnic people extended several months and they spend allot of rice; wine; money for festival activities. Ethnic people don't focus on the accumulation" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.08 - Male 44-year-old - Chairperson of Women Associations).

Lack of knowledge and spending plan, poor households expect the support of the government, so they are very difficult to overcome the hunger and poverty. How do to help the poor households to change the ways of thinking, it is one of the keys to help them fight poverty in a sustainable way.

"The majority of poor people are newly split households. Previously they were with their parents, they weren't worries everything for the family. They just do the work assigned by their parents, so they don't imagine all the work and the problems can encounter in private. So many households don't know how to remove poverty and vulnerable" (Source: In-depth interview result, No.07 - Male 50-year-old - Vice chairman of Vo Nhai district).

The poor will become even poorer, because the poor of birth rate is higher than the relatively wealthy households. In contrast to the poor, the rich and their family often join to social activities; they have education level and social awareness higher than the poor do so they have fewer children.

The poor households lack knowledge, capital, land ... so they have to rely on forest resources for living. They cut timber and firewood and sell them to get money. Forest resources are rapidly depleted by intense devastation and natural ecological environment is seriously affected. Lead to annual floods scanner and they are subjected to the most damage. The poor are in the working age, they are the most prolific period of life if they have the determination, to be equipped with knowledge and have the right help from the government and the community they could do to change their current life.

1.6. The social policies on poverty reduction in the study area

Viet Nam has had a plethora of policies and programs aimed at poverty reduction and improving living standards, including for the poor in general and specifically for poor ethnic minorities. Comprehensive poverty reduction programs and projects are programs with a general approach aimed at improving all aspects of the life of poor households.

Until now, there have been few studies about the consequences of 'overlapping' in management and implementation of poverty reduction programs and policies. There are many agencies and organizations involved in the management and implementation of poverty reduction interventions and Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), as 'the standing committee' of the P135, is arguably the most important agency for poverty reduction programs for ethnic minorities. Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs -MOLISA (with the National Target Program (NTP) on Poverty Reduction, job creation programs), Ministry of Education and Training - MOET (with NTP on Education and Training; education support policies), Ministry of Health – MOH (with NTP on Population and Family Planning; Healthcare support programs), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), and Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) are implementing and/or 'owner' agencies of important poverty reduction programs and projects. In addition, Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and Ministry of Finance (MoF) also play a role in state management of poverty reduction projects supported by international donors. International organizations, governmental organization, and NGOs who have supported various programs and policies are also key players in the implementation of poverty reduction programs. In this given context, it is very difficult to ensure an effective coordination mechanism among the relevant agencies. It is likely that this lack of an effective coordination mechanism hampers the effectiveness of poverty reduction interventions for ethnic minorities.

As a result, many good policies have been implemented with specific and effective steps. One of them is poverty reduction strategy by setting up capital loan for poor people to help them improve their living condition.

Year	Total poor household	Number of household get loan	Total amount of loan (VND)	Rate %
2010	6408	2844	2.888.000.000	22.4
2012	5670	3492	7.692.000.000	61.5
2014	5364	4086	9.129 000.000	76.1

Table 8: Number of eligible households through the years

Source: Statistical data of Vo Nhai district, 2015

Data on the table 4-12 shows that the percentage of households borrowed government loan increases significantly. Only 22.4% of poor households was borrowed government loans in 2010, but this number was risen up to 76.1% in 2014. This proves that the borrowers had known how to use capital funds step by step. It also reflects the role of government and the unions in the propaganda to mobilize members of the households in difficult condition participating in poverty alleviation programs.

Government’s loans have become a driving force to bring practical effects to the economy. It was focused on local jobs for workers and based on the exploitation of available potentials. Government comprehensively invested in development of agriculture, forestry, cottage industries, and commercial services. Moreover, policies of government encourage and create favorable conditions for the development of all economic sectors.

However, the results of the operations for withdrawing credit remain limited. Overdue rate of the debtor are still high, even many households do not have the ability to repay the loan since the money had been used in inefficient, improper or at-risk purpose. In this case, the poor households run the risk of falling into deeper poverty. In spite of that reality, more and more households borrow capital to ranch cattle.

“ In 2014, government supported my family a water tank, a cow and shingle roof so our life has temporarily stabilized. My family has seven members, including elderly mother, my wife and four kids; but the income relies only on my labor. I have two children who attend school, and we give the school 24 kg of corn per month. The government must give my family more support. In our ethnic culture, we have a habit of drinking a lot of wine when we meet friends or some guests come to visit us. If the men in my ethnic cannot drink, it will be very difficult for them to make friend. We usually use corn to distiller wine, so people will bring corn to the distilleries after harvesting and complete drying; then store in jar” (Source: In-depth interview result, No.05-Male 35-year-old - Resident).

In fact, since the government has poverty reduction policy, poor ethnic’s lives are improved remarkably.

“I would like to thanks the government for freely providing us health insurance, so when my family members get sick we can have medical treatment without losing a big amount of money. Thanks to the support of government loans, my family has some capital to grow tea. Now, we are having a jobs and opportunities to escape from the poverty” (Source: In-depth interview result, No. 02 – Male 40-year-old - Resident).

“I would like to thank the government for providing tuition fees for my children's study. My family has been received support from relieving poverty program, and we hope that our children’s life will be improved” (Source: In-depth interview result, No.04-Female 48-year-old Resident).

In addition, it has been observed that households, which have participated in poverty reduction programs, have had many changes by comparison with the previous time. They have already owned color TVs and cassette, etc.

“My family has borrowed government loan to buy a cow. I have raised it for five years, and it has spawned two little calves. Then, I have fed them and sold one to return the money to the government. Now I have two cows; the mother one is pregnant and will give birth again at the end of this year. This color television was bought last month when I get the money from government for protecting and taking of forest” (Source: In-depth interview result, No.05 Male 35-year-old - Resident).

The income of the poor in Vietnam is mostly from cultivation section, but it changes when the implementation of programs and projects have deployed. Currently, the income of poor folk is 22.4% from livestock (Source: Statistical data of Vo Nhai district, 2010). This indicates that some poor households have shifted from plants to animals. Animal husbandry development is a new direction for the poor. The proportion of income from raising livestock is still low now. However, with the support of the government and the efforts of the poor, the percentage of income from livestock will be increased in the future. Along with income from this potential source, the poor will also have earnings from services and forestry.

Comprehensive poverty reduction programs and projects are programs with a general approach aimed at improving all aspects of the life of poor households: in access to services (education, healthcare), infrastructure, production support (seeds, fertilizer, training and capacity building, agricultural extension), promoting commodity production and market linkages, vocational training, participation in the labor market.

Most significantly there is Program 135-II; National Target Program on Poverty Reduction 2006-2010. With comprehensive poverty reduction programs and projects were helping many the poor ethnic households in Vo Nhai district go out of poverty.

“After receiving the funds from relieving poverty program, my family has been investing in buying seeds, fertilizers to increase crop yields. Thanks to the capital, I have bought a cow to rise. The support from the government in providing tuition fee helped my children to be able to go to school” (Source: In-depth interview result, No. 03-Female 38-year-old - Resident).

Government policies to support poverty alleviation have obtained significant results, gradually improved living condition of the poor and ethnic minorities, as well as helped them to find new directions in the development of household economics.

“I would like to thank the government for providing us health insurance, so when my family members get sick we can have medical treatment without losing a big amount of money. Thanks to the support of the government loans in helping my family to grow tea, now we have jobs and opportunities to escape from poverty” (Source: In-depth interview result, No. 02-Male 40-year-old - Resident).

Having several policies and programs to support the poor in general and poor ethnic minorities in particular that jointly contribute to poverty reduction is a distinctive feature of Viet Nam under Doi Moi reforms. However, this also presents a problem. Jones et al. (2010) in a UNDP summary report on these policies and programs concluded that 'overlapping' in program design is very high. In terms of scope and beneficiaries, there are two major overlaps. The first is the 'overlapping' across poverty reduction programs and policies in general. The second is the 'overlapping' amongst poverty reduction programs and projects targeted at ethnic minority groups. In terms of organization and management, there is considerable 'overlapping' between implementing and/or 'owning' agencies (most significantly, among Committee for Ethnic Affairs-CEMA, Ministry of Labour, War invalids and Social Affairs-MOLISA, and other line ministries) in implementing poverty reduction programs and policies for ethnic minorities.

In principle, the 'overlapping' in poverty reduction programs for ethnic minorities is not necessarily a limitation if programs and policies are implemented in a way to ensure that there is no overlap in beneficiaries. As observed by Jones et al. (2010), localities do often try to ensure that the overlap in the design will not lead to overlap in beneficiaries. In addition, they usually integrate (at various levels) resources and plans of poverty reduction programs and projects into their Social Economic Development Plans (SEDPs) and annual plans. In this way, 'overlapping' in implementation can be mitigated. However, it is not easy to ensure that overlap in design does not become overlap in beneficiaries. Even if the locality can guarantee that the resources of all programs and projects are integrated in their annual socio-economic development plan, it remains a big challenge for full implementation of activities in accordance with the provisions of each program or project. Jones et al. (2010) estimated that many localities must comply with 100 regulations and guidelines used for the existing programs and projects. It is obviously very difficult to fully implement the series of such provisions, especially in the condition of limited human resources at the local level.

IV. DISCUSSION – PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS FOR POVERTY MITIGATION

Critical Realism can be seen as the human capital theory individual interpretation of a rebuttal. The theory mainly focuses on structural factors beyond the personal effects of poverty, the labor market will tend to think that the amount of remuneration for work mainly by socio-economic structures, such as occupational characteristics, industry characteristics, organizational characteristics, and class characteristics (呂朝賢, 王德睦, 2000). So structure theory attributed to poor employment opportunities of ethnic or social factors can be supplied (Kelso, 1994). It can be seen, critical realism control manager to explore the deep structural poverty and causal mechanisms, tend to think that poverty factors in addition to the poor themselves, more importantly, the structure of the social environment will impact the poverty, so it is also a social the product under structural changes. Generate employment structure such as family members, as well as the poor family structure change and poverty have great relevance.

In this study, households with large household size and high proportions of children are more likely to have low income and high poverty rate. This finding is similar to the finding in "Poverty Assessment of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam" Chau Le et al (2014). Land is important for household income. Perennial crop land has positive but not statistically significant effect on household income. Annual crop lands and forestry lands have significant effects on household income and poverty reduction. This finding is similar to the finding of the positive effect of land on consumption at the nation level in Nguyen and Tran (2013). Land and education remain important for household income. Programs targeted at the household level including credit and transfers are more effective in income increase and poverty reduction than programs targeted at the village and commune level. Among the village and commune projects, village road project and irrigation projects tend to help local people increase their income and reduce poverty than other projects such as commune road, market and clean

waters.

Critical Realism allows us to understand poverty alleviation, caused by improvements in policies and regulations for community development. However, different areas have their particular situations of poverty that require strategies suitable with current local living conditions and its livelihoods. The positive role of credit and transfers in poverty reduction in Vietnam is found in a large number of studies (e.g., Quach and Mullineux, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Van den Berg and Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen, 2013). However, there are no studies on the effect of these variables on ethnic minorities, especially those in poorest areas. This study found that credit and transfers also help ethnic minority poor households in Vo Nhai increase income and reduce poverty. Micro-credit from the Vietnam Bank for Social Policies and informal credit are positively associated with per capita income.

In fact, in the world and Vietnam there have been many studies on the poverty of ethnic minorities, but from a theoretical to practical perspective, in this study, again researchers want to confirm the importance of government and non-governmental poverty reduction policies and programs for ethnic minorities. From the analyses above, there are some interventions/solutions proposed for poverty reduction, embracing (i) improving education through activities of trainings, vocational educations and education universalization in primary and/or secondary schools. (ii) enhancing rural infrastructure and (iii) providing assistance for farmers to get loans and other financial/technical investment for technology application in on-farm activities.

First, improving the confidence for people would be the most important thing. To do that, enhancing educational levels is the first step through free compulsory education (universalisation of primary and secondary education). Since the community mostly rely on agriculture, rural extension centres and other social organizations should organize social/outside activities and professional short-training courses for people to encourage them engage in to improve both their professional farming skills and other soft skills. Therefore, their hesitations and shyness are gradually removed in working and they would gain their confidence and communication that consider keys to help them seek out new jobs for income generation.

Transportation is another factor driving socio-economics development. Means of transportation would turn self-sufficiency into more commercial production and bring more economic benefits and also increase labour productivity (because of timely material provisions), limit risks in deliveries and transportation in seasons. Besides, transportation development could drive educational levels and improve their lives (more diverse food source, information and entertainments...) (World Bank, 2015).

In Vo Nhai, lack of capital for agr-forest activities (expanding farming scales and afforestation) and other economic activities is another big challenging for years ago. Among requirements for financial investments, investment for improving infrastructure, agricultural commodities, means of transports, high-tech application, rent labour, etc.. are the most concerned. Therefore, helping farmers to get loans with appropriate interest rate could bring holistic influence in commercial productions.

Next, interventions and supports need to focus on health-care and housing conditions. Local authorities need to call for financial supports from governments and other non-government organizers to impede rural community development projects. Objectives of these projects are to develop rural community by building permanent shelters with sanitary toilet systems, establishing plans to bring tap-water/clean water and power to the community.

Overall, removing shyness and improving self-confidence for farmers are top priorities. Local authorities and governments would organize social/ outdoor activities to attract farmers to participate and be more active in their lives (competition in drawing, knowledge in socio policies, welfare and health care, etc...).

V. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated applied case research using critical realism as a philosophical and methodological framework. The purpose of this study has been to provide an example of applied critical realism analysis following the typical trajectory of the qualitative and quantitative research. This is not to suggest that there is a single method best suited to critical realism research; rather, our aim is to suggest one of many possible approaches to conducting case research in a critical realism framework (for a typology of possible approaches, see Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). Poverty is a social problem, it is not only a personal factors, also is social factors, more effective solutions or treatments need to start from the nature of the structure which are critical realism emphasis. According to the new structure, referring to the structure of employment in society when the use of structural factors to explain the poor, mainly from the economic structure, the labor market and employment differences explanation for poverty (呂朝賢, 1993). Therefore, in order to explain the structure of the point view of poverty, it is considered in the allocation of social class structure has some innate class than other classes of people in a more disadvantaged position, coupled with the impact of acquired factors, resulting in a risk of falling into poverty than the high population (Beeghley, 1988). In this paper, a critical realist views Vietnam, Thai Nguyen Province minority poverty status and the reasons of the poor results were as follows:

1. Farm households in Vo Nhai, Thai Nguyen is still very poor, demonstrated by low average monthly

household income, lack of employment, housing conditions, health-care services and capacity building to approach public services.

2. There are many causes to poverty in that area. Among of those, unemployment and lack of confidence are responded the variables that bring significantly negative effects on household income.
3. To address poverty in Vo Nhai, improving educational attainment, removing hesitation and shyness in working are considered very vital for improving the community's life. Besides that, governments and other rural development organizers need to improve health-care services and housing conditions for living conditions improvement. Creating part-time jobs and free classes are examined first steps for removing financial burden for those very poor households.
4. Overall, there are some interventions/solutions proposed for poverty reduction, that Vo Nhai, Thai Nguyen need to implement. These interventions could interact and bring potential results, including (i) improving education through activities of trainings, vocational educations and education universalization in primary and/or secondary schools. (ii) enhancing rural infrastructure and (iii) providing assistance for farmers to get loans and other financial/technical investment for technology application in on-farm activities.

REFERENCES

Chinese Part

- [1]. 呂朝賢、王德睦、王仕圖 (1999). 「年齡、時期、人口年輪與台灣的貧窮率」, 人口學刊
- [2]. 20:125-138。
- [3]. 呂朝賢、王德睦 (2000). 「1960s 以降的美國貧窮理論：回顧與整合」, 人文及社會科學集刊
- [4]. 12 (1) : 149-195。
- [5]. 呂朝賢、鄭清霞 (2004). 「單親家庭與貧窮」, 臺灣銀行季刊 55 (2) : 120-132。
- [6]. 呂朝賢(1993). 「台灣省各縣市貧窮率之影響因素」。嘉義：國立中正大學社會福利研究所碩士論文。
- [7]. 論文。

English Part

- [8]. Ackroyd, S., & Karlsson, J. C. (2014). Critical realism, research techniques, and research resins. In P. K. Edwards, J. O'Mahoney, & S. Vincent (Eds.), *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide* (pp. 21–45). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [9]. Badiani et al. (2013). Vietnam poverty assessment : well begun, not yet done - Vietnam's remarkable progress on poverty reduction and the emerging challenges (English). Washington DC ; World Bank.
- [10]. Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, the fourth edn, A divisions of Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
- [11]. Bernard, H. R. (1994). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, the fourth edn, A divisions of Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
- [12]. Beeghley, L. (1988). Individual and structural explanations of poverty. *Population research and policy review* 7(3):201-222.
- [13]. Beeton, Sue. (2005). The Case in Study in Tourism Research: A Multi-Method Case Study Approach. In *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating Theory with Practice*, eds. Brent W Ritchie, Peter Burns and Catherine Palmer. Oxfordshire: CABI Publishing.
- [14]. Bhaskar, Roy. (1975). *A Realist Theory of Science*. London/New York: Verso.
- [15]. Bhaskar, R. (1978). *A realist theory of science*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Press.
- [16]. Bhaskar, R. (1979). *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.
- [17]. Bob Baulch et al. (2010). *Ethnic minority poverty in Vietnam*. Chronic Poverty Research Centre ISBN: 978-1-906433-63-5
- [18]. Denscombe, M. (2003). *The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. (2nd edition) Buckingham: Open University Press.
- [19]. Chau Le et al. (2014). *Poverty Assessment of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam*. MPRA Paper No. 70090, posted 18 March 2016 05:18 UTC
- [20]. Pham, A. T. (2008). *Vietnam Country Study, Chronic Poverty Sesearch Center Working Paper*. *Economic Journal*, 23(1), 56-78.
- [21]. Pham, H., Le, T., Nguyen C. (2011), "Poverty of the Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam: Situation and Challenges from the CT 135-II Communes", Research report for State Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs of Vietnam and United Nations Development Program, Hanoi, Vietnam.
- [22]. RD. (2010). Needs assessment of sustainable livelihoods responding to climate changes in Vietnam: The case of Thai Nguyen.
- [23]. Roberts, JM. (2007). Postmodernism, in: Hartwig, M. (ed.): *Dictionary of Critical Realism*. London: Routledge, 368-369.
- [24]. Sarantakos, S. (1998). *Social research*. South Yaraa: Macmillan Education Australia.
- [25]. Sayer, A. (2000). *Realism and social science*. London: Sage.
- [26]. Safa, M. (2005). *Socio-Economic Factors Affecting the Income of Small-scale*. Retrieved from https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_185433/yemenspringer10.pdf
- [27]. SYB. (2015). *Socio-economic Indicators Report*. Vo Nhai District, Statistics Department.
- [28]. Hartwig, M. (2007). *Dictionary of Critical Realism*. London: Routledge
- [29]. Harvey, David. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, London: Basil Blackwell.
- [30]. International Conference. (2014). *Sustainable Development and Ethnic Minority Poverty Reduction*. Thai Nguyen University Publishing House, DH2014-TN03-30.
- [31]. Kelso, William A. (1994). *Poverty and the Underclass: Changing Perception of the Poor in America*. New York and London: New York and University Press.
- [32]. Nguyen, Viet Cuong, Peter Lanjouw and Marleen Marra. (2012). *Vietnam's Poverty Mapping using the 2009 Housing Population Census and 2010 Vietnam Living Standards Survey*. Background paper prepared for the 2012 poverty Assessments, World Bank, Hanoi.
- [33]. Nguyen, C. (2012). *Ethnic Minorities in Northern Mountains of Vietnam: Poverty, Income and Assets*. Munich Personal RePEc

- Archieve (MPRA), 40769.
- [34]. Morgan, D.L. (2007). Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Qualitative Methods, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), pp. 48-76
- [35]. Olson, W. (2007). Poverty, in: Hartwig, M. (ed.): *Dictionary of Critical Realism*. London: Routledge, 370-371.
- [36]. Oxfam Vietnam. (2017). *Social Mobility in Vietnam*. Retrieved January 5, 2017, from https://vietnam.oxfam.org/sites/vietnam.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/Vietnam%20Inequality%20Report_ENG.pdf
- [37]. Piachaud, D. (1998). *Changing Dimensions of Poverty*. In Nick Ellison and Chris Pierson, *Developments in British social policy*. Basingstoke :Macmillan, 1998.
- [38]. Punziano G. (2013). Europa e nuove direzioni di welfare tra autonomia e convergenza. Il modello mixed method nell'analisi delle politiche sociali, *Cambio*, III, 5, pp.153-181
- [39]. Roberts, J.M. (2007). Postmodernism, in: Hartwig, M. (ed.): *Dictionary of Critical Realism*. London: Routledge, 368-369.
- [40]. Westerhuis, D. (2007). Social Constructionism (or Constructivism), in: Hartwig, M. (ed.): *Dictionary of Critical Realism*. London: Routledge, 419-420
- [41]. World Bank. (2012). *Vietnam Poverty Assessment*. World Bank, Washington DC.
- [42]. World Bank (2015). *East Asia and Pacific Economic*. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/303611468188349154/pdf/100599-PUB-P155886-PUBLIC-Box393236B-EAP-Economic-Update-2015-10.pdf>

About the authors

Bich-Ngoc Thi Tran is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Social Welfare Department, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan. She is also the lecturer of the Department of Law and Social Management, Thai Nguyen University of Sciences, Vietnam.

Cheng-Liang Tsai is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Social Welfare Department, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan. He is also the director of the Department of Social Work, Puzi Hospital, Chiayi, Taiwan.

Bich-Ngoc Thi Tran “A Discussion on The Poverty of Ethnic Minority Community Under Critical Realism Perspective: A Case Study In Vo Nhai District, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam ”*International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention(IJHSSI)*, vol. 07, no. 9, 2018, pp. 70-88