

**REPORT OF HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT**  
(1 October 2015-31 September 2016)

“Land contracts and land conflicts.  
Land politics in Central Highlands of Vietnam.  
History of the Bahnar in Kontum, Central Highlands of Vietnam,  
1850-1945”

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Thanks to the scholarship of Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and the scholarship of Pres-HéSam (Pôle de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur et Hautes études, Sorbonne, Arts et Métiers (Hésam) as well as a grant from The History Project and the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET), I was able to undertake a research project in Central Highlands of Vietnam over one year, from 1 October 2015 to 31 September 2016.

My research plan included three main activities: consulting documents in different archives in Vietnam; conducting fieldwork in the Central Highlands; and writing my thesis and articles based on the research completed during these trips.

Over nearly five months, I worked in three National Centres of Archives (N° 1, N° 3, N° 5). In National Centre of Archives No 4 in Dalat, I consulted more than 600 documents related to land issues in the Highlands from 1890 to 1954 in four archives. In National Centre of Archives No 1 in Hanoi, I found the only register of land in Kontum and consulted documents related to Viet immigrants in Bahnar's land in Binh Dinh in the 18th century. In National Centre of Archives No 3 in Hanoi, I collected documents related to land use in the Highlands during the 1950s. I collected about 5000 pages of documents. I also conducted nearly 100 hours of interviews, both formal and informal, in Vietnamese and in the Bahnar language.

In addition, I did my field research in four provinces of Central Highlands: Kontum, Gialai, Darlac and Lam Dong. In Kontum province, I interviewed many villagers in five Bahnar villages in Sa Thay districts and in Dak Rowa commune, to collect information related to land issues of the Bahnar. The collected information was used for writing up chapter II and chapter III in my thesis. In Gialai province, I conducted interviews with the Bahnar in An Khe, Dak Doa and the Jrai in Pleiku about land issues as well as relations between the Bahnar and the Jrai related to land and the Church's land in Gialai. The collected information was used in chapter I and chapter II. In Darlac province, I conducted interviews with some Ede about the land of the Church of Kontum in Darlac. The information was used in chapter IV and chapter VII in my thesis.

The collected data was used to write up five (I, II, III, IV, VII) of the eight chapters of the thesis. Furthermore, based on the collected data, I wrote an article which was presented in the

conference “Thirty years of Đổi Mới-Policy in Vietnam. Expectations, Challenges and Achievements”, organised at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn, from 18th to 20th March 2016. The presentation was titled “*When ‘The apparition of Mother Maria is just a reason to ask for more land compensation...’. Land issue and Ha Mon religion in Bahnar community in Ha Mon commune, Dak Ha district, Kontum province, Central Highlands of Vietnam*”. In addition, my one year in the Highlands gave me rich data which permit me to extend my research towards land property of Highlanders in the period from 1975 to the present. First results of the research plan contributed to my receiving a Fellowship at the Maison Francaise in Oxford University, from April to June 2016. The year of doing fieldwork also gave me the chance to create contacts with Highlander intellectuals, researchers, and artists interested in Highlanders’ culture and history. In term of learning languages, I have started learning the Jrai language.

However, I have not yet completed a part of my research plan, in three respects. Firstly, in terms of documents in archives, I could not go to the National Centre of Archives N° 2 in Ho Chi Minh City as I planned to consult documents related to my research subject because of the lack of time and money. Secondly, in term of doing fieldwork, in Gia Lai, I could not realize as many interviews with the Bahnar in the region of An Khe and Dak Doa as I planned. In fact, because of my research activities in Pleiku from January to March, I got in some trouble with the police, and I then had to come back Hanoi at the end of March to meet my supervisor. Following his advice, I moved from Pleiku to Dalat to continue my work in the archive and writing my thesis. I then stayed in Dalat from April to August 2015. Nonetheless, during this five month, I conducted interviews related to land property of the K’ho and Churu in Lam Dong to make a comparison with the situation of the Bahnar and the Jrai in Kontum and Gia Lai. Thirdly, in term of learning languages, and living next to the Jrai in Gia Lai province three months, from January to March, because I could not stay in a Jrai village I could only begin learning the Jrai language, with limited results.

I hope to come back to Central Highlands for three months more, from December 2016 to February 2017 to complete my research plan.