

Contending views and conflicts over land In Vietnam's Red River Delta

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Abstract: This study offers an approach about the nature of peasants and the reasons for their political actions. It examines the views of different parties towards the question on how land should be owned, managed, used, by whom, for whose benefits, and uncover as well as explains the resulting conflicts over land rights in the Red River Delta since decollectivisation. It postulates that the contending views among parties over decision-making, distribution, and holding of land rights, create dynamics for conflicts, which take place under the form of public resistance, in a number of communities. © The National University of Singapore 2007.

Index Keywords: decision making; decollectivization; land rights; land use planning; political conflict; Asia; Eurasia; Red River Delta; Southeast Asia; Viet Nam

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- Given the Vietnamese context, I use the term 'controlling,' instead of 'management' to indicate what in Vietnamese means 'quản lý' In some cases, those who were not male adults, such as widows and orphans, also received land shares Huy Phúc, V., (1979) *Tim hieu chie do ruong dat o Viet Nam nua dau the ky XIX* [Investigating land tenure system in Vietnam in the first half of nineteenth century] (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản (Nxb). Khoa học Xã hội
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- Like in China and other socialist countries, agricultural cooperatives did not put all agricultural land of its members into the hands of the cooperative for control and use, but left a small portion for members to farm on their own. In Vietnam, from 1961-1988, agricultural land for family use theoretically amounted to five per cent of the total agricultural area in the village. Many villagers either called these plots 'land for vegetable farming' or 'the five per cent land, In one sense, therefore, the cooperative members still maintained their family economy while engaging in the economy of the cooperative. The five per cent plot and other non-collective economic activities formed the villagers' family economy which was significantly complementary to their collective economy. The 1988 Law authorised the doubling of this area, from five to ten per cent, and named it, agricultural] land for family economy Thi Que, T., Economic reforms and their impacts on agricultural development in Vietnam (1998) ASEAN Economic Bulletin, 15 (1), p. 33
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- The 1988 Land Law was passed as a direct result of agricultural decollectivisation. In one sense, this brief and uncomplicated Law broadly answered the question of how and in what way the land in Vietnam should be owned, managed and used, by whom and for whose benefit, from the state's point of view Scott, J.C., (1976) The moral economy of the peasant: Rebellion and

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 - (1) deciding the purposes of land use
 - (2) regulating the area limit and time span of land use rights
 - and (3) deciding prices of land use rights. The state allocates people land use rights, recognises such use rights as well as the rights and duties of use rights possessors. The state also has power to adjust resources from land through its financial policies, for example, collecting land-use or rent fees, land-use taxes, land-income taxes, and land-transfer taxesFirstly, in contrast to

residential land, the holdings of agricultural land use rights are limited to a fixed time. Under the 1988 Land Law, the duration of use rights holdings ranged from five to 15 years. The 1993 Land Law extended it to 20 years for agricultural land for annual crops and 50 years for perennial crops. Accordingly, when the holdings of land use rights expire, a redistribution must be made to balance the holdings of villagers in the rural areas. Secondly, the area of land use rights that one possessor can hold is limited, and depends on the types of land use rights possessor and the kind of land. In regards to agricultural land for annual crops, the dominant types of land in the Red River Delta, the 1993 Land Law regulated that one individual or households could hold a maximum of two ha of land. In 2003, the amended version of Land Law increased the maximum area of one possessor to three ha see Table 1, Finally, besides rights, possessors of land use rights have resp

However, William Bredo has argued that because of a long tradition of tenancy and landlessness, many southern Vietnamese peasants under the Republic of Vietnam had a strong desire to own the land they farm. This desire varied hardly at all with peasant status. See Land reform in Vietnam, Working paper, VI, Part 1 of 2 (California: Stanford Research Institute, 1968), pp. 83-89

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