

Gender Dimensions of Viet Nam's Comprehensive Macroeconomic and Structural Reform Policies

by Le Anh Tu Packard





Occasional Paper 14

Gender Dimensions of Viet Nam's Comprehensive Macroeconomic and Structural Reform Policies

by Le Anh Tu Packard
February 2006

This United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Occasional Paper was written for the preparation of the report *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*. The work for this report is being carried out with the support of the European Union, the Department for Research Co-operation of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida/SAREC), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Ottawa, Canada) and the government of the Netherlands.

Copyright © UNRISD. Short extracts from this publication may be reproduced unaltered without authorization on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to UNRISD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. UNRISD welcomes such applications.

The designations employed in UNRISD publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNRISD concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The responsibility for opinions expressed rests solely with the author(s), and publication does not constitute endorsement by UNRISD or by the funders of this project.

ISBN 92-9085-067-1

Download this publication free of charge from www.unrisd.org/publications/opgp14

contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Acronyms	iii
Summary/Résumé/Resumen	iv
Summary	iv
Résumé	vi
Resumen	viii
I. Introduction	1
I.A Macroeconomics and gender in Viet Nam: Background and overview	2
I.B Macroeconomics and gender in Viet Nam: Summary of findings	3
II. The Socioeconomic and Legal Status of Women in Viet Nam	5
II.A Data on the status and condition of women in Viet Nam	5
II.B Government policy and the legal status of women in Viet Nam	11
III. Doi Moi and Macroeconomic Policy: Socioeconomic Goals and Gender Impact	13
III.A Postwar period: Closed-economy “Subsidy” regime (1975–1988)	15
III.B Liberalization phase I: Vigorous reforms (1989–1993)	18
III.C Liberalization phase II: Reform ambivalence (1994–2000)	25
III.D Liberalization phase III: New reform momentum (2001–2005)	33
Conclusion	40
Bibliography	42
Tables	
1. Summary gender profile: country and regional comparisons, 2000	6
2. Main economic indicators for Viet Nam, 1975–2000	15
3. Private sector employment and compensation: Gender breakdown	36
Figures	
1. Employment structure by expenditure quintile, location and gender	7
2. Breakdown of employment share by industry	8
3. Average real hourly wages by occupation in rural and urban areas	9
4. Average hours spent in income-generating activities and household work: Gender comparison, 1997–1998 ...	10
5. Viet Nam’s ratio of imports to exports, inflation and economic growth	13
6. Viet Nam’s open economy as measured by the trade to output ratio	14
7. Level of real government expenditures, normalized, 1984–1995	21
8. Viet Nam’s trading partners: Switch to convertible areas	23
9. Evolution of real interest rate, trade and budget deficits, 1986–2000	24
10. Evolution of the main components of aggregate demand, 1986–2002	26
11. Gender distribution of enterprise workers and average compensation in 2002 (by type of ownership)	27
12. Gender distribution of enterprise employment and wages by economic sector	29
13. Gender distribution of enterprise employment and wages by industry sector	30
14. Evolution of employment structure by sector and gender, 1989–1998	31
15. Gender wage gap by education level and residence, 1997–1998	32
16. Occupational distribution of employed men and women with education to upper secondary or higher level, 1997–1998	33
17. Output by ownership sector (disaggregated) in Viet Nam and China, 1998 and 2002	35
18. VN dong/US dollar exchange rate, level and percentage change, 1990–2003	36
19. Interest rates and credit growth, 1996–2003	39

acknowledgements

I am much indebted to Ann Zammit for her helpful and detailed comments and suggestions, which significantly improved earlier versions of this paper. The paper has also benefited from the constructive comments of an anonymous referee. Of course, I have sole responsibility for all remaining errors and omissions.
(tu.packard@gmail.com; leanhtu@yahoo.com)



acronyms

AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CMEA	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
FHH	female-headed households
GSO	General Statistical Office (Viet Nam)
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HDI	human development index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JV	joint venture
MHH	male-headed households
NCSSH	National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities
NGO	non-governmental organization
NME	non-market economy
ODA	official development assistance
PE	private enterprise
REER	real effective exchange rate
SBV	State Bank of Viet Nam
SOCB	state-owned commercial bank
SOE	state-owned enterprise
SRV	Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
SSG	Special Safeguard
T&G	textile and garment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USBTA	United States(/Viet Nam) Bilateral Trade Agreement
VCP	Viet Nam Communist Party
VLSS	Viet Nam Living Standards Survey
VND	Viet Nam dong
WTO	World Trade Organization

summary résumé resumen

SUMMARY

From a gender perspective, Viet Nam is an interesting case study because it is widely seen as a “globalization” success story where historically the social and political status of women have been high compared with women’s status in many other developing countries. At the same time, there is concern that women’s status may be eroding during the country’s rapid transition to a market economy. Thus, it is of interest to examine the relationship between gender equality and economic performance, and to assess how women have fared when macroeconomic and structural reforms are judged to have produced successful results for the society as a whole. Viet Nam’s recent reform experience is particularly instructive because it helps to identify the preconditions for women to benefit from these reforms.

Similar to other rapidly growing Asian countries, Viet Nam’s high growth has been accompanied by increased gender inequality as well as increased income inequality. Policy makers are paying more attention to this phenomenon of growing inequality because the country is entering a new development phase which involves an acceleration of the globalization process. At risk are poor households (many headed by single mothers) in rural and remote areas which are least able to cope with the transmission of external shocks.

This paper seeks to contribute to a better understanding of macroeconomic policies that benefit women by analysing the links between reform, gender equality, economic development and women’s welfare as they played out in Viet Nam during the 1990s, when the government carried out far-reaching and comprehensive reforms. It employs descriptive, narrative and quantitative approaches to explain how macroeconomic and market liberalization policies, although gender-neutral in intent, can give rise to gendered outcomes as a result of various underlying and interrelated factors. These include social attitudes and conventions influenced by patriarchal values, the pattern and structure of occupational segregation and related gender wage differentials, gender differences in education levels, and labour regulations that have the effect of increasing productivity differences between men and women.

The main finding of this paper is that the welfare of women in Viet Nam generally improved as a result of macroeconomic stabilization and controlled external liberalization policies adopted by a government that espoused a “developmentalist state” model. The *Doi Moi* reform policies were effective because they were broadly appropriate for Viet Nam’s particular circumstances. Women on the whole are better off as a result of the reforms, but the gains are not evenly distributed across income groups, regions and ethnic groups. Household and enterprise survey data present a mixed picture regarding gendered outcomes. Urban women belonging to the dominant ethnic group, by virtue of their higher status in society and better access to economic resources, have benefited more. Women who live in rural and remote areas and/or are members of ethnic minority communities tend to have low status and have benefited least.

The negative aspects of the reforms bear mention. Although they were gender-neutral in intent, culturally influenced patterns of horizontal segregation and occupational segregation in Viet Nam gave rise to gendered outcomes and increased social stratification. Moreover, women bore the brunt of deflationary measures such as fiscal austerity and public sector downsizing (experienced during the early reform period). As globalization accelerates in Viet Nam, the anticipated change in ownership structure will influence the evolution of the gender wage gap. The output shares of the foreign-invested (FDI) and private sector are expected to rise at the expense of the state enterprise sector. In light of the current pattern of gender wage discrimination in the FDI and private sector, the government will need to adopt and vigorously enforce measures to increase competition in the high-wage sectors of the economy and strengthen laws against gender discrimination, in order to counteract the likelihood of a widening gender wage gap associated with private sector growth.

Section 1 of this paper presents an overview of main issues and findings on the gender effects of Viet Nam's reform policies and transition to a market economy. To provide the context for understanding gender disparities in outcomes, Section 2 presents basic socioeconomic, health and educational data disaggregated by gender, and outlines the legal status and condition of women in Viet Nam. Section 3 describes the main policy episodes (marked by broadly homogenous policy packages and economic circumstances) of Viet Nam's recent history, and analyses the gender dimensions of key reform policies. Section 4 concludes with a review of policy lessons, directions for future policy research, and recommendations that would enable women to improve their economic and social welfare.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_21254

