

THESIS ABSTRACT

Title: The Socioeconomic Impacts of Shrimp Farming Development on Households
in Chu Chot Hamlet, A Vietnamese Rural Area

Researcher:	<u>Tran Minh Tri</u>	No. of Pages:	<u>180</u>
Adviser:	<u>Ricardo G. Abad, Ph.D.</u>	Year:	<u>2007</u>
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Statement of the Problem

Chu Chot Hamlet is a rural village in Vietnam where shrimp farming has expanded to the point that it has replaced rice production as the main source of livelihood among households. This research therefore asks: what are the socioeconomic impacts of shrimp farming development in Chu Chot? To what extent have households changed their living condition (improved, unchanged, or worsened)? Which kinds of capital do households use in shrimp farming? What differentiates households who have improved in their material conditions and those who have not? And how do households mobilize their capital in shrimp farming?

Procedure

To answer the research questions, the study used a combination of survey method and qualitative analysis. For the survey method, the study conducted a survey on 110 households who were respondents in the 2001 survey, also used in this study for comparative purpose. For the qualitative analysis, the research carried out in-depth interviews on two community leaders and twenty-four household heads.

Treatment of Data

For the survey data, the study used both descriptive and inferential statistics on the uni-variate or bi-variate levels. For qualitative data, the analysis method of case study was used.

Findings

The findings of the study include types of capital, socioeconomic impacts of shrimp farming expansion, and capital mobilization.

Shrimp farming in Chu Chot has generally increased income, land size, material possessions, and education of households in the community. However, it has disrupted family relations and has led to social exclusion on the part of the poor, some of whom are considered losers as they failed in shrimp farming due to reasons that often involve lack of land. Structural advantages owing to the possession of capital such as material wealth, high education, sufficient labor force, strong social ties, large land size, and access to technological training are significant to the improvement of households. In addition, personal qualities and a good strategy to mobilize capital also contribute to the improvement of households' living condition while organizational membership and access to credit are considered insignificant.

Conclusion

Although shrimp farming has considerably improved households' living condition in general, the benefit gained from shrimp farming in Chu Chot has remained to be unequally distributed. Apparently, those who already have the structural advantages usually become the major beneficiaries of shrimp farming. However, households without structural advantages may be able to improve their lives upon maximizing the potential of strong social ties, positive personal qualities, and appropriate strategies to mobilize different types of capital.

Recommendations

Drawing from findings, the study gives several recommendations to local governments, farmers, and researchers.

Local governments should maintain shrimp farming as a local economic strategy. However, they need to make some institutional improvements in order to likewise improve shrimp farming and to reduce its negative effects on the poor.

Farmers should maintain shrimp farms using the improved extensive farming which has been already applied in the hamlet. In addition, farmers should be active in learning new technology, diversifying income sources (for some poor households), and using appropriate strategy to mobilize capital and long-term plans for their future.

For researchers, it is necessary to include the concept of capital mobilization or interrelations among different types of capital in doing researches related to household capital. Moreover, it is also necessary to connect social sciences with economics, politics, psychology, and other sciences to explain social phenomenon. In addition, it is suggested that both quantitative and qualitative methods be applied in research in order to provide better understanding of research issues.

For further researches that should be done in Chu Chot Hamlet, several topics are hereby proposed: poverty status and solutions to deal with poverty in Chu Chot Hamlet; issues of banking in Chu Chot Hamlet toward a strong community; the gap between supply and demand of aquacultural extension at Chu Chot Hamlet; and technological and economic solutions aiming to increase returns of shrimp farmers.

Thesis abstract prepared by:



Tran Minh Tri