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Cultural diversity and ethnicity in North-Central Vietnam: ethnographic discovery and oblivion in the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area



Peter Bille Larsen, University of Lucerne

Research Scholarship for the Documentation of the
musée du quai Branly collections, 2015-2016

September, 2016

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Introduction

This project started with the discovery of a selection of objects and photos coming from Quảng Bình province housed by the musée du quai Branly (MQB), Paris. It coincided with a growing personal interest in better understanding the historical context of the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area and its ethnic diversity. I have worked on and off in the area for the last 19 years, and the research scholarship with the museum was an opportunity to go in further depth. This reports complements an earlier intermediate report on methodology with a summary of key findings.

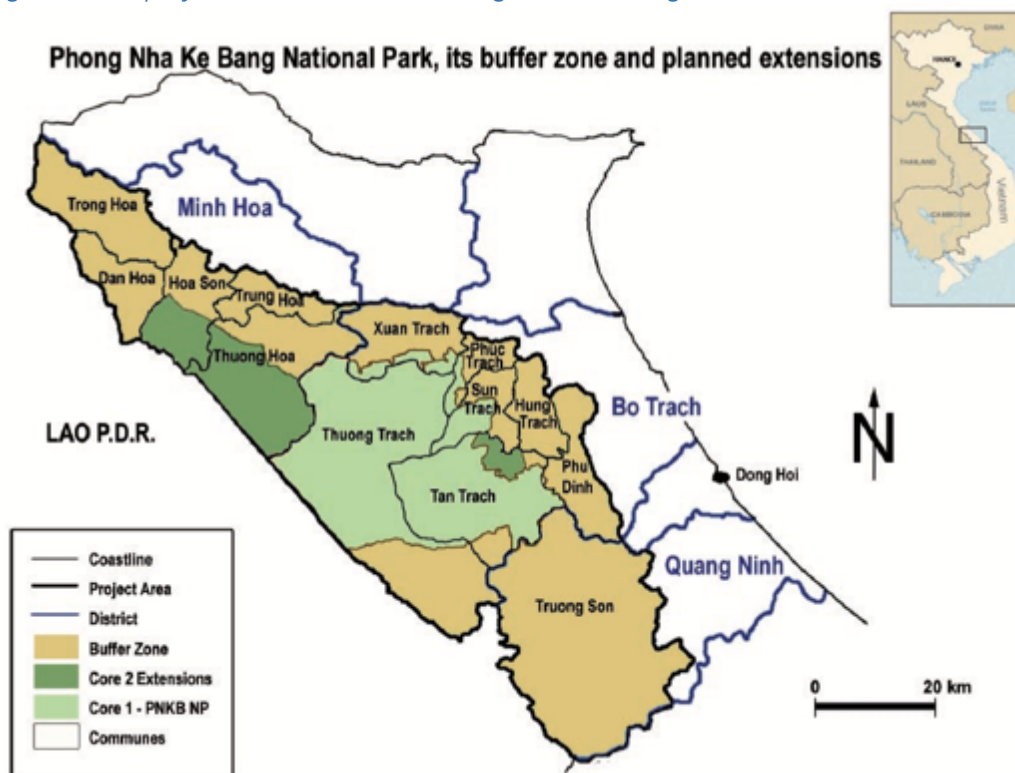
Among thousands of pictures left to the museum by Georges Condominas, what was the role of a series of black and white photos from Quảng Bình taken by a Vietnamese photographer, supposedly named Vinh Hoang Tuyen? I learned about the collection by coincidence, and awaited an opportunity to explore the small number of photos and other material. More importantly, I increasingly wanted to explore the historical, partly colonial, context of approaching the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area. The idea gradually evolved as the lack of substantial attention to the cultural values and ethnic diversity in wider world heritage discussions became increasingly evident in parallel research undertaken at the University of Lucerne. Could I use old photos to discuss a cultural reality that is often forgotten? Can museums with global ambitions play a role back home in the sites, where objects have been collected, photos taken, narratives written up? Many claim so, yet what it amounts to in practice obviously varies considerably.

I was encouraged by the passion by museum staff members, who generously shared their time and introduced me to the bigger treasure grove of their archives. This led to the discovery of the Cuisinier-Delmas archives. While Cuisinier's main book had been on my shelves for years, I knew little of the wider context of knowledge production. Yet, why bother with a small selection of black-white portraits from the 1930s and 1970, and scattered collection of everyday objects – often without the diversity, colour and spectacular nature, which tend to attract audiences to ethnographic museums – and implicitly justify public investments in the endeavour? Was it really significant historically or important in terms of

dealing with contemporary challenges of conserving biological and cultural diversity 8 decades down the line? After all, the focus on most of the mission by Jeanne Cuisinier and Lucienne Delmas was mainly about the Mường further North. The visit to the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area was a parenthesis. Still, I was intrigued by the photos and scattered notes revealing ethnographic interest both during late colonial times and early independence times into the ethnic diversity of the area.

It was also encouraging to get a strong positive response from Mr. Tinh, the Director of the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park, who sees the importance and challenges of the topic. There has over the years been a growing interest among Vietnamese authorities about not only addressing the biodiversity of the area, but equally paying attention to the cultural diversity. We even tried, a decade ago, to get one European embassy in Hanoi to support work in the area through their cultural support programme. This programme, an embassy staff explained to justify why the proposal was rejected, turned out to be more about financing concerts and other « cultural » events, rather than dealing with everyday cultural diversity and living heritage.

Figure 1: map of communes in the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area



(Larsen 2008)

and tales of discovery. Yet, beneath the big headlines are even more significant real people, individual destinies and the everyday lives of ethnic minorities, some of whom have inhabited and shaped the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area over centuries. These appear once one looks into the identities of the 65000 people listed by the national park as the bufferzone population. The area in effect has a profound cultural history shaped by the area’s ethnic diversity made up of minorities speaking Vietic (Việt – Mường- Nguôn), Bru - Vân Kiều (Vân Kiều, Trì, Ma Coong and Khùa communities) and Chứt (Sách, Mày, Rục và Arem)ⁱ languages.

Figure 3: Ethnic diversity in the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area

Language group	Vietic	Bru - Vân Kiều	Chứt
Ethnonyms (current)	Kinh, Nguồn	Vân Kiều, Trì, Ma Coong and Khùa	Sách, Mày, Rục và Arem

Looking at how this diversity has been perceived since colonial times involved walking in the steps of giants, of early ethnographers, experiencing the reality and hardships of seminal thinkers and researchers venturing into the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area. It gradually evolved through discussions with experts at the museum into a more discussion about how to create more space and dialogue around the topic of cultural and ethnic diversity in the area. There are limits to how much can be said in a brief report like this. This report hardly does justice to the complexity of the archival material visited, nor the insights gained during interviews. More modestly, it seeks to bring in some basic reflections emerging from the first journey into the archival material.



*Figure 4: Research team paying their respects at Hang Tam Co, Bồ Trạch district.
(photography by author)*

Approaching diversity

« The life of the world's most mysterious tribe in Vietnam »¹, the title of a newspaper article, is a fairly illustrative example of how the ethnic diversity of the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area is often portrayed with rather exoticized language. The article speaks of their discovery 50 years ago as « one of the 10 most mysterious peoples in the world » revealing how these hunter-gatherers along with other ethnic minorities in the area have long caught the public imagination as objects of enigma and mystery. While the area is today most known for its natural heritage, the spectacular geological and biodiversity values of the karst limestone forest complex, the high levels of ethnic and cultural diversity have a long, if less, recognized history.

« L'Annam »² the document prepared for the colonial exhibition in 1931 spoke of « a country with an amazing diversity» and a « mix of races and languages, we are yet to fully understand ». Indeed, the ethnographic section, authored by Léopold Cadière, spoke not only of the Annamites, but equally of the Indonesians and Malaysians inhabiting the Western parts. Cadière equally authored the ethnographic section, noting how up to the 15th century, many villages from Hue to Quảng Bình still spoke Cham. He spoke of the « Chams annamitisés ». Yet, more profoundly and testimony to the profound he also noted how:

« Chose curieuse, la population annamite a été très peu étudiée, au point de vue du détail des mœurs et coutumes. Les ouvrages qui traitent des Annamites se copient mutuellement et répètent parfois depuis des siècles, des généralités. Très peu se basent sur l'observation directe de détail, qui, cependant, serait si riche en remarques neuves, si féconde en conclusions certaines » (p. 68, 1931).

Such statements are of course significant from the perspective of his own seminal work over decades to document and describe Annam in historical, archaeological, cultural and linguistic terms. Indeed, in many ways, Cadière and other missionaries were among the first

¹ <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/special-reports/114088/the-life-of-the-world-s-most-mysterious-tribe-in-vietnam.html>

² <http://sach.nlv.gov.vn/sach/cgi-bin/sach?a=d&d=kEmwX1931.2.2.4.4&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN----->

ethnographers, who during stays in the area, with the help of others, started documenting the rich and complex cultural diversity of the area. Albert Sallet would describe Phong Nha as « le point qui porte la curiosité la plus haute du pays », speaking of the « long couloir souterrain de Phong-Nha ». He recognized the old Cham vestiges, but also contemporary practices (ibid: pp. 52-53). Yet, colonial descriptions, as this research reveals, began much earlier.

Colonial incidental ethnography and ethnographic discovery

In the manual of ethnography, Marcel Mauss would describe the *Moï* in Annam as « archaic and protohistorical », not unlike common Kinh perceptions at the time (Cadière 1901). The founding of L'École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in 1900 would gradually lead to more systematic calls for the description and classification of ethnicity gradually showing a shift compared to say, the exotics of colonial exhibitions at the time.

Figure 5: colonial exhibitions and representing alterity

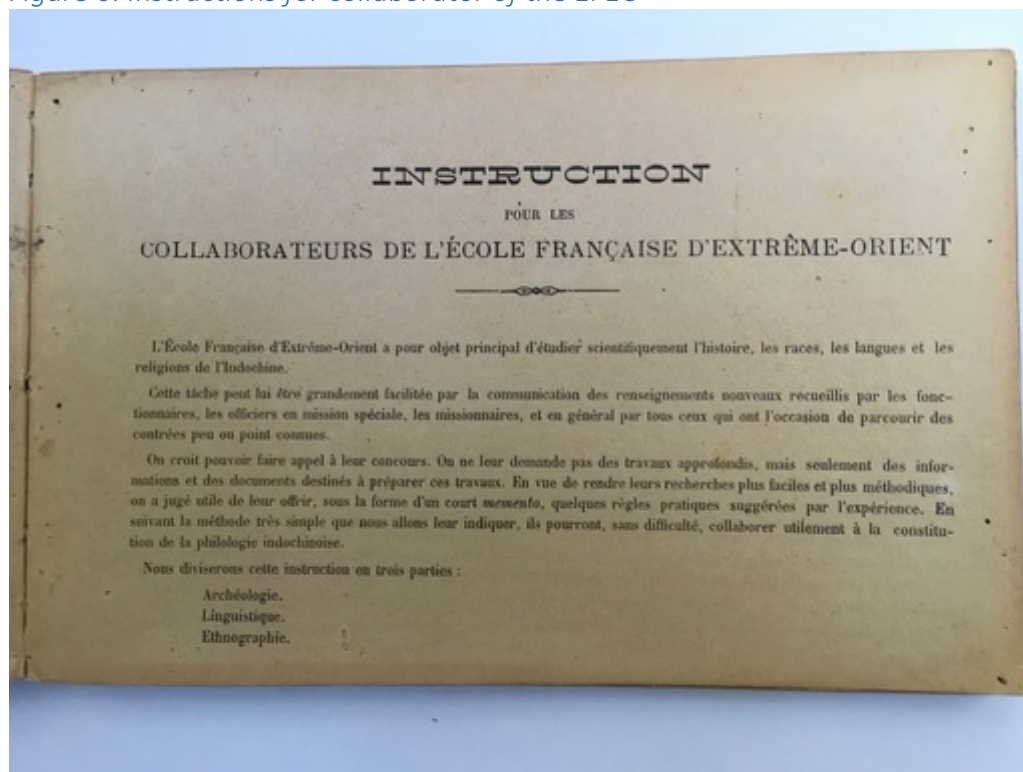


³ <http://meknes-roidelabiere.forumgratuit.org/t275-expositions-foires-coloniales-et-ou-universelles>, accessed 23.9.16

In contrast with popular imagery and exhibitions, a different gaze emerged with the writing up of statistical reports in different provinces, some of which are located at the EFEO. While surveys of Quang Tri and Thua-Thien Hue were found (1903/1905), that of Quảng Bình is unfortunately missing (Vargyas 2000: 51).

In the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng area the task of ethnographic description during the colonial period was taken up by missionaries, notably Léopold Cadière, and later anthropologists like Jeanne Cuisinier. In both cases, the ethnography of the minorities was an annex to bigger projects. Missionaries were busy with managing their parishes, yet also found time to engage in the ethnographic enterprise. The research stay in Paris thus allowed to consult the notes of the French missionary Marius Maunier from 1902, who was based in Cu Lạc, not far from the area. Using the recently published « instructions for collaborators of the EFEO » (EFEO 1900), Maunier offers a hand-written notes regarding what he called the « Moï vocabulary » of Quảng Bình⁴.

Figure 6: Instructions for collaborator of the EFEO



(original in EFEO archives, MS Eur 458)

⁴ MS Eur 458, Archives of the EFEO, Paris. Many thanks to librarians for facilitating access.

Léopold Cadière, was the mentor of Maunier in Cu Lạc⁵, the small village located North-West of Dong Hoi, which appears as a form of birth place for local ethnographies in the region.



Figure 7: location of Cu Lạc, google earth.

Whereas Cadière epitomized this ethnographer role in many ways, Maunier's notes are interesting as an illustration of missionary engagement in the ethnographic enterprise, likely in a more typical, fractioned, occasional nature compared to the systematic work of Cadière. Jean Michaud has in the context of the Tonkin-Yunnan area called these missionaries « incidental ethnographers ». Maunier explains in an introductory note how his notes on *Moi* vocabulary were taken on January 26, 1902 in Cu Lạc with 11 so-called « *indigènes* » present. We may in retrospect wonder why they were there, considering that the « *sauvages* », as Maunier also calls them, supposedly lived three days walk North-East of Cu Lạc⁶. What is important how a missionary took part in the ethnographic enterprise catalyzed through the newly established EFEO in some ways indicative of what would later come. What is also significant from the brief and very rudimentary description are two other points. On the one hand, it shows the apparent question mark regarding ethnicity at the time. What was in use

⁵ <http://archives.mepasie.org/notices/notices-biographiques/maunier>

⁶ This geographical indication may be mistaken and more likely to be South West of Cu Lạc referring to Ma Coong settlements. Van Kieu settlements in the area, are presumably, of a more recent nature. - Gábor Vargyas would later suggest these to belong to the Bru Van-Kieu (2000).

by local Annamites (kinh) were ethnic categories, and the apparent lack of clearly identified ethnicity. As Maunier asks:

« A quelle tribu appartiennent- ils? je ne saurais le dire car ils ne donnent pas de noms à eux-mêmes. Les Annamites les désignent sous le nom générique de Mọi (sauvages). J'ai interrogé les deux principaux chefs dont je donnerai plus loin les noms. Je les ai interrogé directement en annamite qu'ils possèdent assez bien. D'ailleurs plusieurs Annamites présent avaient soin de leur répéter les interrogations lorsqu'ils les avaient pas bien comprises (1902, P. 11, MS Eur 458, EFEO)

While ethnic categories in the area, on the one hand, appeared uncertain, and likely unknown to colonial authorities, the case reveals ability of the people to communicate in Vietnamese, a testimony of presence and integration in a local regional economy. Yet, we do not learn about the reasons behind ethnic minority presence. Was it a question of religious conversion, political delegation or economic reasons? Why were they meeting up with missionaries? The French Vicariat owned rice-fields in the area that Maunier administered, were they expanding into other areas? Most likely, it was more a question of encountering people in the market context, and perhaps simply an attempt to respond to the colonial ethnic mapping endeavour. What is interesting is Maunier's emphasis on only knowing the ethnic categories, and wondering about their own. This is likely a period of expansion – cum- discovery of the area and its people. What is also interesting in this respect are the variations of ethnonyms not yet fixed as governmental categories.

Cadière later in published work refers to meeting the *Ka-lơ* « likely another tribe of the Kha », he says, at « almost all » the markets in Troóc and Bung in proximity of the current Phong Nha area (Cadière 1905). This regularity suggests how the market attendance, perhaps of the ancestors of the MaCoong in today's Thượng Trach commune, even if three days march away was a regular practice. Describing the areas further North, in what is currently Minh Hóa district, Cadière speaks of the Nguôn, the That Sac and the Mọi or the Rợ, “*des sauvages*”. Once again, Cadière's meticulous notes are precious. He also speaks of the *Nguoi Kôy*, which he translates as people of the border, *sauvages*. These may likely refer to the *Mày*, currently

living in K-Ai (Dân Hóa commune). Cadière also mentions the presence of *Nguoi-rú*, as people of the forest, *sauvages*. He also notes being told about:

« another race living in the mountains, and described under the name of Ta-Kuy, or Ca-Kuy or Kôy. These people live in families, in the mountain caves, without clothes, without tools or utensils, eating forest fruits and feculents from the *kai-núk* (sago ?) and being extremely shy. Would these be the Négritos of Indochine mentioned by certain authors? », he asks. (Cadière 1905: 350).

Likely, reference here are to the Northern-most subgroups of the Mày, whose current settlement K-Ai, is likely the Kôy, just as the Ta-Kuy are the Tac-Cui subgroups later referred to by others in the area further North bordering with Ha Tinh. Much of Cadière's analysis then was based on second-hand insights from a colonial officer in the area. He suggested that the Sac, previously dominant in the area, no longer reflected past times of grandeur, largely submerged by the "Annamites" and marrying the Nguồn. As Cadière would conclude in 1905 concerning the Nguồn:

« Le fait de cet îlot de population, tout au moins de langue Mườ̀ng, perdu dans le Quầng-binh, à une si grande distance du noyau principal, était intéressant à noter, au point de vue ethnographique comme au point de vue linguistique. Mon étude donnera peut-être à quelqu'un l'idée d'étudier les chaînons qui relient sans doute, dans la grande chaîne annamitique, à hauteur du Nghê-an ou du Hà-tĩnh, les Mườ̀ng de la Rivière-Noire aux Mườ̀ng du Quầng-binh » (Cadière 1905).

Documenting diversity

A few decades later, an aura of imagination continued to reign regarding the PNKB area. Madeleine Colani offers a good sense of the general public perception. She describes the karst complex as "forested and almost uninhabited" noting how the area had caught the imagination of the wider public thought to hide treasures of ethnological and zoological significance. Quoting military personnel, geological and archaeological finds, she mentions

the presence of so-called *négroïdes* living “in the periphery of the massif” in scattered houses rather than established settlements. As part of her archaeological research, she mentions the how some caves were inhabited, while others affected by penetration and break-down explaining the lack of traces of historical or prehistorical settlements. She for example, argues that stone age people did not enter the caves of Phong Nha. Interestingly, in oral interviews with Arem elders, they informed that the Son river and cave entrance was a customary fishing and gathering spot, also indicated that they did not traditionally reside within that particular cave. Such work needs to be discussed further. However, what is interesting here was how ethnic identity issues of the PNKB area in the early 1930s remained relatively poorly described. The 14. October, 1930 Colani sends off 11 boxes of skulls collected in the *kjökkenmöddinger*, ethnographica and other items to the Musée de l’Homme. A draft of the accompanying letter was found in the EFEO archives. Colani notes how :

« les indigènes du Quảng Bình (centre Annam) chez lesquels nous avons fait ces récoltes n’ont pas été étudiés de point de vue racial. Ils paraissent issus de métissage entre Asiatiques » (EFEO archives, Colani)

In this list of objects, she notes how the *indigènes* in the *Pays de Qui-Dat* do not speak Annamite (Vietnamese) « having houses different from the Annamites and other traditions ; the women do not dress as the Annamites. *Il nous a été impossible d’avoir des renseignements ethnographiques* ». Most of these objects⁷, however, could be reclassified as Nguõn, although some may also be from Sách. The ethnographic challenge would be pursued three decades later by Jeanne Cuisinier and Lucienne Delmas during their ethnographic mission of the Musée de l’Homme.

⁷ Such as objects: 71.1931.6.1, 71.1931.6.2.1-2, 71.1931.6.3.1-2, 71.1931.6.4.1-2, 71.1931.6.5, 71.1931.6.7., Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

Figure 8: In comes Jeanne Cuisinier...



⁸(photo likely by Lucienne Delmas)

Ethnic diversity as scientific object of study: Cuisinier-Delmas

Colani's descriptions reveal how Western Quảng Bình was then off the beaten track in ethnographic terms despite the monumental contribution of Cadière to the establishment of ethnography in Indochina, not least shaped by his early engagement in Cu Lạc. This gap also justified the extension of the Cuisinier-Delmas mission into the area. Indeed, their mission conducted in 1937 and 1938 was well-financed at the time totalling 97.000 Francs split between mission financing from the Musée de l'Homme, l'Institut d'Ethnologie and the French society for advancing science⁹. This was mainly a comparative study of the Mường. The mission was about the Mường population and « quelques villages à la frontière du Laos », as Cuisinier would inform the ministry of Education upon her return¹⁰. The majority of villages visited targeted the Mường of Hòa Bình and Thanh Hoa, but also Phu Tho, Son La, Yen Bai provinces. In Quảng Bình, Cuisinier and Delmas visited Tuyên Hóa (at the time also including Minh Hóa) namely Minh Cam, Dong Le, Tan Ap, Xom Cuc, Latrong, Baidinh (Ka Ay), Qui Dat, Da Nang, Ba Nuong and Tan Ly. In Bố Trạch, they visited Phong Nha, Troóc and Khe Gat, as well as Lê Ky and Cô Trang in Quảng Ninh district¹¹. While there were plans to visit Bố Trạch

⁸ PP0036545, Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

⁹ Emploi des subventions(DA000274/26560, p. 13), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹⁰ Rapport de mission. (DA000274/26560, p. 24), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹¹ Liste des villages visités (DA000274/26560, page 18), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

and the Phong Nha area, and this would potentially have offered important insights about the Arem and Ma Coong, a typhoon prevented this from happening¹².

Paul Rivet had, upon the acceptance of the mission, also designated Delmas, who would be charge of the photography and filming as well as « assurant par sa connaissance pratique de l'annamite vulgaire le contact direct avec les populations étudiées, presque tous les Mường parlant cette langue »¹³. Cuisinier later estimated that Delmas had contributed with « 10 % » of the data collected. They left Paris in April 1937 and returned late 1938 with the majority of their observations undertaken in Mãn Đức (Hòa Bình), yet also undertaking « une étude ethnographique extensive ». This related to the ultimate goal of being able to compare the Mường with neighbouring Thai and Annamite populations¹⁴. Among the Mường, they collected data about 18 dialects, ritual texts and much more. With some 1800-1850 photos, 210 minutes of films, 315 collected objects as well as 728 anthropometric descriptions and somewhere between 720 and 750 ethnographic notes. Like many other missions, Cuisinier equally collected plant specimens as well, handing over 20 specimens of which the Botanical department of the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle was able to identify 8¹⁵.

While the ethnographic notes are not available in the archives of the musée du quai Branly, some can be found in the archives of the Musée de l'Homme. Jeanne Cuisinier is known for the monumental work, but also a researcher spread out over many different cultural areas, countries and fields. She did not speak Vietnamese, but relied on Delmas or assistants for translation and interpretation. Indeed, she was not a Vietnam specialist *per se*. Consider her astonishment to the following:

“J'en exprimais mon étonnement au Résident Supérieur en Annam, il m'a raconté qu'il avait vu, lui, les voyageurs massés sur le quai d'une gare, se tordre de rire littéralement, au spectacle d'un homme broyé par un train! Il ajoutait “ça c'est profond, car c'est tout à fait incompréhensible, étant donné que ces gens ne sont pas méchants” Et c'est vrai qu'ils ne sont pas volontairement méchants..”¹⁶

¹² Rapport de mission. (DA000274/26560, p. 21), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹³ Rapport de mission. DA000274/26560, p. 24), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹⁴ (Rapport de mission DA000274/26560, p. 22), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹⁵ Letter from Musée d'Histoire Naturelle (DA0004021/52179), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹⁶ lettre de Jeanne Cuisinier, Cua-Tung, 16-25 juillet, (DA000274/26560), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

This astonishment reveals a certain lack of local-specific sense and understanding, notably how that a smile in Vietnam may signify discomfort, sadness and even anger is not captured. Cuisinier was aware of this, and humbly suggested that “vu mon ignorance de l’annamite je ne suis engage à faire l’étude des seuls aspects exterieurs de la civilisation Mùròng”. A certain lack of ethnographic insights characterizes her comparative anthropological enterprise. While Delmas technically was defined as “chargée de mission scientifique”, Delmas was more than a young assistant or the “agent de liason” (Cuisinier 1948:xx). For one, she had the language skills Cuisinier lacked. Secondly, the two were close. Cuisinier described her as her *compagne*, during a stay in Hue before the Delmas left for Saigon.

“Nous n’étions pas tout à fait à l’unisson, Del et moi, et j’avais l’impression que ma compagne m’avait déjà un peu quittée – mais j’aurais pu lui faire un guet, d’abord parce qu’il serait absurde de vouloir imposer aux autres ses façons de sentir, et puis aussi parce qu’il y avait quelque chose de touchant à penser que cette jeune femme a accepté pendant plus d’un an, dans la brousse, une vie qui a dû lui coûter plus q’à moi, pour avoir l’occasion de vivre aussi quelques jours à Saigon ou s’est écoulé sa jeunesse, ou s’était édifié son bonheur”¹⁷

Yet, there was more in the relationship between the two.

“le 8 juillet, à 6 heures du matin, j’accompagnais Del à la gare, désolée de ne pouvoir l’accompagner jusqu’au bateau, mais m’y résignant tant par économie de temps que par économie d’argent. C’est qu’aussi je me sentais gagné par la nostalgie du retour..... et je me disais qu’en ne perdant pas de temps, je rentrerais plus tôt.”

Cuisinier followingly meets Cadière, by then installed in Hue, just after leaving Delmas at the station. She ends up staying with him for three weeks.

“Il s’est montré accueillant et bon et gentil – si encourageant aussi et décourageant pourtant, quand il me répétait ‘avec tout ce que vous avez trouvé déjà vous voilà parfaitement préparée; maintenant il vous faudrait rester encore un an ou deux’ ...vous pouvez aller plus loin encore – et si vous ne le faites pas, qui reprendra la question après vous?”¹⁸

¹⁷ lettre de Jeanne Cuisinier, Cua-Tung, 16-25 juillet, DA000274/26560, p. 56), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

¹⁸ lettre de Jeanne Cuisinier, Cua-Tung, 16-25 juillet, (DA000274/26560, p. 54), Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

The exchange summarizes the *de facto* recognition of Cadière as an ethnographic authority and gatekeeper in Annam in the pre-war period. Whereas Cuisinier even entertained relationships with the Résident Supérieur of Annam, it thus appears indirectly as if the “Far West” of Quảng Bình remained somewhat of an ethnographic enigma. Even ethnographic notes from the Mường were patiently complemented by Cadière adding Chinese signs to some, correcting translations made by her assistants and adding precisions. Cadière was a prime source, an ethnographic tutor, translator and advisor. After having studied a year’s cycle, Cuisinier was not exactly impressed with the tedious ethnographic work about the Mường, and clearly wrote to Rivet with a certain fieldwork fatigue.

“individuellement ils sont confiants, hospitaliers, gentils...mais si j’évoque les collectivités Mường, j’ai l’impression d’avoir perdu mon temps auprès des pauvres êtres désormais incapables de rien livrer d’eux mêmes qui ait une valeur réelle.”¹⁹

She would pursue the mapping of what she called their “aire d’occupation/ aire de dispersion” of the Mường, yet was irritated by their geographic spread over several provinces. As she wrote:

“Hélas, si ces diables de Mường ne s’étendaient pas plus loins!... mais ils descendent au jusqu’au Sud... et s’en vont à l’Est jusqu’au Laos! C’est une vraie catastrophe – car jamais il ne sera possible d’explorer une région aussi étendue en deux mois.”

An eloquent and entertaining writer in contact with Rivet, Mauss and others, her letters revealed the excitement about heading to Quảng Bình: “Ce que je vais entreprendre maintenant sera singulièrement plus palpitant... c’est la grande aventure”, she wrote. “il ne s’agit plus d’aller étudier à un endroit connu une population...il s’agit d’aller repérer parmi plusieurs populations... de délimiter l’aire occupée par chacune, de savoir s’il y a des contacts

¹⁹ lettre de Jeanne Cuisinier, Cua-Tung, 16-25 juillet, (DA000274/26560, p. 68) Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

et des échanges entre elles, de quelle nature ils sont.... N'est-ce pas que c'est tout-à-fait palpitant? ²⁰.

But not even that perspective, could keep her from feeling terribly sad. "Car j'ai été triste pendant tout le temps que j'ai passé à Cua-Tung – affreusement triste, d'une tristesse de goût cafard, d'une tristesse paralysante..". Was it the absence of Delmas? Apparently, they would later back in Paris live together. Yet, for the moment, she sought to fight the sadness by preparing her field trip. As she describes her trip before heading to Quảng Bình:

« je pars pour le diable vau-vert. Je vais voir des Sach, des Nguôn, déjà rattachés au bloc Mường par le Père Cadière, des Mai (?), des Khùa qui sait ? peut-être des Sep, que l'ancien Résident appelait des pygmées, que mon secrétaire (sans le faire exprès), dénomme des « piqués » et que je ne sais plus qui considérait comme des crétins.... Et cette fois, j'espère bien ne plus vous écrire, mais vous raconter enfin dans quelques mois, si j'ai trouvé « tous ces mondes là » et ce qu j'en aurai tiré »²¹

Cuisinier's questions about ethnicity were not just a question of personal knowledge, but equally telling of the levels of administrative ignorance and stereotypes. Ethnicity was not a given, but a question. As the letters reveal, she was in very close contact with colonial authorities, the *resident superieur* even lending her a car for three weeks. Still, knowledge of ethnic diversity in the area appeared surprisingly vague and characterized by hear-say more than anything else. This perhaps also explains the limited success of my attempts to find additional archival material in the colonial archives on the topic. Much information remained in localities. Nonetheless, these were also times when the ethnographic museum in Hanoi was in the making, even with plans to exhibit some of the objects collected by Cuisinier-Delmas (ibid: 57).

Reaching Minh Hóa

²⁰ lettre de Jeanne Cuisinier, Cua-Tung, 16-25 juillet, (DA000274/26560, p. 54). Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

²¹ (lettre de Jeanne Cuisinier, Cua-Tung, 16-25 juillet, 1938 DA000274/26560). Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

How did Cuisinier reach the area of Minh Hóa to start exploring this diversity? What were key findings? The planned route first involved visiting Khammoun province in neighbouring Laos to “look for relations between the inhabitants of Kammuôn and the Nguôn”. They planned to enter Laos through Nghệ An and followingly reach Quảng Bình through Khammoun (Laos). The planned route description also contains a description of their planned working method, which is revelatory of the limited contacts in the field. As they indicated how they would approach people upon reaching Latrong village (today a mainly Khùa settlement²²).



Figure 9: exploring with Khùa household in La Trộng, Dân Hóa commune, 2016.
(photography by author)

Yet, there were no site stays planned as such rather visits and occasional stops on the road. As Cuisinier described the planned method:

²² That they came through Laos may indeed explain why the Khùa were identified as Sô (Kha Sô, Laos?).

“Circuler très lentement en s’arrêtant chaque fois qu’on rencontre ... un simple abri, caravane ou piétons isolés; ne pas hésiter à abandonner la voiture pour suivre dans la forêt des Ruk ou des Coi²³; essayer de découvrir s’il s’agit de races distinctes ou si les 5 noms, May, Ruk...Coi toujours la même race à 3 stades d’évolution? Sur le versant laotien, rechercher les villages Nguôn... Au sud du col de Mụ Giạ, rechercher les villages Sách. Préciser les relations des Sách et des autres groupes ethniques de la région”²⁴

The quote is remarkably informative on a number of levels. First of all, one can presume it points to the relative “administrative ignorance” of the area and its inhabitants even some three decades after Cadière visited it. Secondly, one senses Cadière’s presence behind the questions, reiterating the questions he himself raised earlier (1905) ²⁵. Thirdly, the small methodological note encapsulates the evolutionary thinking and racial theories informing thinking around ethnic identity at the time. This is important because it explains how for Cuisinier the Nguôn and Sách belonged to the same group in terms of their evolutionary level, whereas they were and are considered linguistically separate. Indeed, Cuisinier would later insist on this point noting how the May on the contrary “belonged to a different race” given that “pygmoid characteristics are found in a proportion beyond 25 % justification their separation from the Sách, Nguôn and Mường” (1948 : 562). Fourthly, one senses the *ad hoc* nature of the visit there, something equally evident in the photos taken. In contrast to fieldwork undertaken in Thanh Hoa and Hòa Bình, the visit in Quảng Bình – in the periphery of the Mường cultural space – was more of a reconnaissance nature. Although fieldnotes were taken, they were far less extensive and detailed than, for example, the linguistic questionnaires applied among the Mường²⁶.

In the end, Cuisinier’s descriptions reveal a number of assumptions. She points to the physical and linguistic similarities between Mường and Nguôn, noting how they originally come from Nghệ An. Her hypothesis was that the Nguôn had gradually settled in more and more

²³ The use of the ethnonym “Coi” here likely refers Cadière’s earlier identification (1905) of the Mày in Ka-Ai as Côi.

²⁴ (DA000274/26560, page 14), Archives of the Musée du quai Branly.

²⁵ This was later confirmed in the mission notes. Cuisinier met up with Cadière in Huê to discuss the planned visit.

²⁶ Questionnaire linguistique “Muong”, de la mission Cuisinier-Delmas, D001882/38849. Archives of the Musée du quai Branly.

Western-lying areas displacing the SÁCH, as well as fusing with them. She also notes the similarities between SÁCH and Mày language, yet nonetheless spends considerable time on racially-informed ideas making her after the research conclude that the latter are not “a pure ethnic group” *par la diversité de types, ils révèlent au contraire des métissages anciens et multiples*”. Ethnicity here – in the pre-war area, had clear racial undertones. As she would continue in the final report:

“Dans ces brassages de races, un type primitif ressurgit de temps en temps et c’est chez les Mày que réapparaissent quelques pygmées..”

In effect, Cuisinier undertook measurements while among the Mày in Dân Hóa leading her to note:

“Les Mày sont en général de petite taille et de peau sombre bien que les types masculins sortent très panachés encore une fois, le type féminin présente plus de constance” (Ethnographic field-notes, Musée de l’Homme)²⁷

²⁷ Work in the field of physical anthropology also included collecting data on the *pigmentaire* congénitale – as part of a research project coordinated by Professor Rivet and later documented by Pierre Champion in an article entitled « La Tache pigmentaire congénitale ». In this text, for example, it is noted how « De leur côté les Mày, généralement nomades, parmi lesquels on rencontre quelques types pygmoïdes de Négritos, exhibent une tache bleuâtre, exceptionnellement brunâtre ou verdâtre (p.29), copy tableau IV. P. 30). As the racial logic concludes on p. 36 : « c’est ainsi que le type indonésien se retrouve presque pur de nos jours chez les Moi d’Annam, les Kha du Laos et les Pnong du Cambodge, et qu’on rencontre encore, à l’Etat sporadique, parmi les Moi de la chain annamitique, qui d’après Dr. Rivet, seraient les descendants les moins altérés de ces Océaniens ». des types australoïdes



Figure 10: “the profile of the smallest subject” among the Mày²⁸

(photo: Lucienne Delmas)

She refuted theories of these coming from another ethnic group suggesting instead that they are just smaller Mày with “*caractères négritiques (ou plus exactement papou)*”. She also mentions having spoken with “Buru”, which is not surprising given her stop in Latrong (La Trộng), although bad weather prevented further work in that respect.

One senses, in the different reports and notes, the mix between physical and cultural anthropology. Cuisinier both measures height as well as collecting knowledge about birth practices, diets as well as collecting a range of everyday objects and taking photos. While the ethnographic work as a whole is fragmentary and largely theoretically-informed, rather than empirically grounded, given the short time-frame, the collected material and data nonetheless include a number of ethnographic gems. We may illustrate this by some of the objects collected – now in the musée du quai Branly.

Numerous forest-related objects collected among Sách and Mày, are thus reportedly prepared by the “Ruk”. The Cuisinier-Delmas contains a number of objects such as baskets,

²⁸ PP0209926 “Profil du plus petit sujet du groupe Ag. 2”. Archives of the musée du quai Branly

crossbows, resins, lamps, cooking gear and arrows, largely crafted by the Ruc recognized for their excellence, yet widely sought for by neighbouring ethnic groups²⁹.



Figure 11: panier de caisson Muong fabriqué par des Ruc (Cuisinier collection)³⁰

Contrary to ideas of isolation, the material collected by Cuisinier-Delmas and the notes regarding their production suggest and confirm what could be expected in terms of engagement, trade and barter. This was likely not limited to the « Mụ Giạ » Rục, but equally to families that reportedly were « discovered » in the late 1950s. Thus, interviews conducted by Boudarel and others in the early 1960s, spoke of Rục accessing machetes through barter, for example. As a villager told him in a rare French, and later controversial insight, into post-independent Vietnam.

« ‘we used to exchange them’...sometimes people used to trade them with the valley folk but rarely met them. They simply put on rock the things they had for trade –

²⁹ See e.g. 71.1938.112.303.1-2, 71.1938.112.309.1.1-3. Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

³⁰ 71.1938.112.306.1-2. Archives of the the musée du quai Branly

villagers from the valley had brought them in exchange : pots, knives, pieces of cloth »(Boudarel 1965: 169) .

Thus contrary to decades of reproducing ideas of isolation, which would reappear with force in the 1960s, the Cuisinier-Delmas material, and partly indicated earlier by Cadière, demonstrate longstanding histories of engagement and exchange. The material also demonstrated intimate and longstanding indigenous knowledge systems and practices, skills and practices appreciated well-beyond the confines of the immediate community boundaries. Objects are equally intimately tied to the particular environments. This is also evident in parts of the ethnographica sent by Madeleine and Eleonore Colani³¹. Thus one object collected in Quang Ninh province consists of a lamp made from a turtle shell.



Figure 12:lamp from Quang Ninh (Colani collection)³²

³¹ I had hoped to identify more material notably by Madeleine Colani, who undertook considerable archaeological research in Quang Binh and neighbouring provinces in both Vietnam and Laos. Some interesting material was identified in the Musée de l'Homme archives, which could enrich this work. However, material identified the Musée du quai Branly was mainly from other provinces.

³² 71.1931.6.11, Collection of the musée du quai Branly.

Indeed, despite ideas of isolation, equally nurtured by Cuisinier herself, the material collected indirectly described interaction with the State and neighbouring groups. A radio broadcast transcription about the Mày, for example, revealed the reluctance of villagers to provide detailed information about settlements to avoid taxation. Pictures also revealed the wider infrastructure context.



*Figure 13: “Le long de la route du téléphérique, vers km. 44. Habitation Ruk.”*³³

(Photo : Lucienne Delmas)

While not possible to explore in more detail, we may speculate that these were family members of the Rục currently residing between Baidinh, Cha Lo and the Mụ Giạ areas, who over the years have lived in various areas. The “Ruk” and the Mày depicted were concentrated in the area around Baidinh, which was one stop on the aerial tramway functioning then. Initially planned to form part of an interior railway network linking up Vietnam to Laos (Thakek) by crossing the Mụ Giạ pass, the aerial tramway was set up from 1933 transporting goods between Vietnam and Laos.

The Mày photos from Cuisinier-Delmas are all from this area, mainly K-Ai, which today continues to be a Mày settlement area. Interviews with villagers also revealed interesting biographical notes on some of the villagers present on the pictures. These biographical notes

³³ PF0154102, Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

could potentially form part of a more detailed publication, yet overall reveal the continuity of Mày in the area as well as the turbulent decades, which were to follow.



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Figure 14: "Homme mày entre deux femmes mày de Cu Ay."
(Photo: Lucienne Delmas)



Figure 15: Interviewing Mày descendant about her father in K-Ai, 2016
(photography by author)

³⁴ PP0209919 , "Homme mày entre deux femmes mày de Cu Ay.", Archives of musée du quai Branly

There is an important story to tell in terms of bringing together the Cuisinier-Delmas pictures and contemporary dynamics not only among the Mày, but equally regarding the Nguồn in particular. The material offers a glimpse of the colonial situation before the outbreak of World War II and the following changes. Upon her return to France, Cuisinier was busy setting up an exhibition and preparing the book, but also clearly part of the active ethnology in times of European conflict. A brief note to Dr. Rivet, then director of the museum, for example, speaks of their partially successful efforts to secure Spanish refugees permission to stay in Paris. As she ends a letter on the topic, dated March 17, 1939:

“Mais les autres?...Ah! tout est trop triste, trop décourageant. J’essaye quand-même de travailler”³⁵

Their exhibition, entitled “Deux ans chez les Mường d’Indochine” was inaugurated on May 26, 1939 just a few months before the World War II officially broke out. Cuisinier’s monography on the Mường would eventually only be published in 1948.

The birth of Vietnamese ethnography and the so-called discovery of the Rục

There is largely a gap of a couple of decades between the Cuisinier-Delmas mission, the photos briefly mentioned above and the photos of the Rục from the Condominas collection found in the musée du quai Branly. Whereas the Mày photos were from the Dân Hóa area, the Rục photos mainly concerned the Thượng Hóa area further South. Many media stories cultivated the idea that the Rục were discovered in 1960.

How did photos from Quảng Bình of Rục people end up with Condominas, who never undertook fieldwork in that part of Vietnam? The Condominas collection was probably not a coincidence, but perhaps linked to his engagement with the emerging Vietnamese ethnology in the early 1960s. I had some initial trouble with the name Vinh Hoang Tuyen identified as the photographer. I then guessed/ realized that the real photographer’s name was Vuong Hoang Tuyen, and the story changed. Vuong was one of the founders of post-independent Vietnamese ethnology. Educated in Russia, Vuong among other things criticized colonial

³⁵ (DA000274/26560, page 2) Archives of the Musée du quai Branly.

anthropology for not having educated Vietnamese ethnographers. “During almost one century, the colonists did not educate one single Vietnamese ethnographer”, he thundered (Vuong 1963: 4). While French ethnography filled his pages, there were no references to the work of Cuisinier-Delmas. His work, thanking Russian scholars Stratanovich and Tokarev for their support to the young branch of ethnology at the national university, sought to change this. It was a call for more ethnography in Northern Vietnam and one of the first ethnographic ventures of the young discipline concerned the Khùa, Van Kieu, Tri and Mang Koong in Quảng Bình province (ibid: 5). Here we see the ethnonyms used today emerging. The relative youth of Vietnamese ethnography and the rupture with French ethnology, at least in name, was arguably not without consequence. It is thus somewhat striking how Vo Xuan Trang initiate his important work with the statement that the Rục were discovered in 1960 (Vo 1998: 17). As he notes, later in the book, Cuisinier had already made reference to them in 1948 (ibid: 40). We may also add other researchers before her such as Cadière, and likely local administration after that.



Figure 16: book cover, Vương Hoàng Tuyên, 1963

The “discovery” and ensuing resettlement of hunter-gatherers attracted repeated visits of ethnographers. Were these the proto-Vietnamese? Stone-age people having survived in the hinterlands and exotic karst limestone area of Quảng Bình? It became a sensation indeed the story nurtured by the young generation of ethnologists accompanied by Russian researchers. Vuong Hoang Tuyen, our photographer, wrote a piece on discovering cave people and a whole generation of linguists, anthropologists and historians flocked to Cu Nhai to study the Rục. The pictures in the museum collection date from this specific moment. The specific pictures be dated from between 1960 and 1963, as this was the time when the Rục were settled in the Cu Nhai area (indicated in one of the photos)³⁶.

It is not unlikely that these photos were obtained during the first western mission in 1973 to Northern Vietnam regarding the *sciences humaines*, which Condominas undertook with A.G. Haudricourt invited by the National Committee for the Social Sciences. Organized by anthropologists as Đặng Nghiêm Vạn, Bế Viết Đăng et Vương Hoàng Tuyên, the meetings would later form the basis for cooperation with EHESS³⁷.

Only later, by 1964 would the Rục be moved the current settlement area of On. During field visits it was very difficult to obtain specific information regarding the photos of the Rục. While people were certain that the photos concerned the Rục of On, and some in Mo O O O, details varied. We are therefore indeed fortunate to find book references to explain this reality, as they include references also present in some of the pictures.

The story as told by researcher Vo Xuan Trang, who dedicated much of his time and academic work to the situation of the Rục, begins in 1960 when a district official resides among the Sách people in Cu Nhai for a census. Speaking to villagers, he is told of mysterious foot prints a day walk away in the jungle. Worried that it might be parachuted soldiers from the Diem regime (Vietnam divided at the time), he explores the matter further, reports it to provincial authorities and enters the area with a group of people. Upon finding signs of inhabited caves, the group ends up exchanging in Sách language as people emerge. Trong, the person whom they first meet, calls all other to gather. In total, the newly “discovered” Rục comprise 11 males, 23 females and 4 children.

³⁶ The following pictures will need to have the Vietnamese text listing corrected during my next visit at the museum (PP0193915-PP0193929).

³⁷ www.aafv.org/IMG/doc/Hommage_Condominas_Revue_Perspectives.doc?2820/...



Figure 17: “The Ruc family of Cu Vit (currently listed as “[Gra duing Ruc cu vit : portrait d'un groupe d'adultes et d'enfants]”³⁸

(photo by Vuong Hoang Tuyen, Condominas collection)

One of the pictures, exactly features this Ruc elder, Cu Vit, among his family surrounded by family members in the new resettlement area. Each picture, indeed, tells fragments of this story of discovery and resettlement. The background of several photos show the karst landscape of the Ke Bang areas. Some pictures feature Ruc in the caves – and some in the open landscape.

³⁸ 70.2005.20.15949 , Archives of the musée du quai Branly.



Figure 18: “Ruc in a cave”³⁹
(photo by Vuong Hoang Tuyen, Condominas collection)



Figure 19: “Ruc in a cave”⁴⁰
(photo by Vuong Hoang Tuyen, Condominas collection)

Cave residence, for some, were signs of people caught in the past, fleeing modernity and contact – which was sought explained.

³⁹ PP0193920. Archives of the musée du quai Branly

⁴⁰ PP0193922. Archives of the musée du quai Branly.



*Figure 20: A Ruc child*⁴¹
(photo by Vuong Hoang Tuyen, Condominas collection)

Thus another picture features a boy in traditional attire at a critical moment in their recent, where clothes distribution was one of the things provided through government support in the resettlement area to offer “development”. It was, during my interviews, very difficult to identify the specific members almost five decades later, not least due the low average living age, the absence of many Rục during fieldwork and also the heavy toll of diseases through the years. These documents have historical value and significance.

⁴¹ PP0193923. Archives of the musée Quai Branly.



*Figure 21: traditional palm among the Ruc.*⁴²
(photo by Vuong Hoang Tuyen, Condominas collection)

Even a picture described as “luxuriant vegetation” in the museum archives gains further meaning through proper understanding of the specific cultural context. More than simply vegetation, it is the picture of a palm, which culturally plays a critical role in the ways of life and food security of the Rục people. The “Kapac” palm is abundant in the area and continues

⁴² PP0193921. Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

to play an important role in terms of food security as well as to prepare an alcoholic beverage, mainly consumed by the Rục. Thus whereas the forest area is generally perceived as inhospitable, the Rục have traditionally lived in and from its resources for centuries. Today, many gathering areas of this plant and the wider customary lands of the Rục are located within the national park without taking into account the living cultural heritage. Indeed, pictures as the following were closely linked to the identification of

Disrupted during the war, Vietnamese researchers later joined by French linguists and others pursued work after 1975. Yet, as Vo Xuan Trang notes the majority did not stay very long, himself starting to work in the area in the 1980s (ibid: 20). The point is that the pictures illustrate the dual birth of a Vietnamese ethnography and the administrative discovery and tragic results of resettlement. The case of the Rục is also remarkable in terms of repeated high level interest in their case. Vo Xuan Trang, for example, reports showing a film about their conditions to high-level influential persons like Vo Nguyen Giap, Pham Van Dong and Nong Duc Manh (1998).

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Figure 22: interviewing Rục about living in caves, 2016, Thượng Hóa commune (photo by author)

In the following decades, numerous settlement, housing and livelihood schemes have sought to sedentarize the Rục of Thượng Hóa. Disease, failing projects and natural calamities have continuously, however, led many Rục to maintain a hunter-gatherer lifestyle at least on a seasonal basis despite official policy seeking to stop it. Whereas rice subsidy schemes have replaced large areas of people's own rice production⁴³, many people continuously depend on forest products for their everyday survival.



Figure 23: Rice from the sacks, Ban Mo O ò o, 2016
(photo by author)

⁴³ I have witnessed many Rục abandoning the dry rice production over the last 15 years.



*Figure 24: Growing tobacco next to the cave, Thượng Hóa, 2016.
(photo by author)*



Figure 25: Rục children fishing *Figure 26: Rục youth preparing for the forest trip, Ban On, (photo by author)*

Whereas some land allocation has taken place, in a number of cases Rục have sold off their land and now live as day-wage labourers (as the woman depicted above). Whereas official media tell the story of rice subsidies and new wet rice fields established by the government, investment into and maintenance of rice fields among the Rục largely depended on the work of border guards. Villagers mainly weeded and harvested. A sign of the benevolent paternalism, but also the fragility of transforming livelihoods. As Vo (1998) and others have noted it is not the lack of support, but it rarely works as planned.

Rethinking cultural diversity in a context of World Heritage in Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng

There has for several decades been a concern among Vietnamese observers about the threats to the cultural diversity of Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng (Vuong 1963, Vo 1998, Vo and Dinh 2010). The area may for some appear as a cultural cross-roads. Historically, as the northern tip of the Champa kingdom, Southern-most Viet-Mường-Nguồn population, Northern most presence of Bru-Van Kieu speaking, it is also a much older cultural landscape of the Arem, Rục, Sách and Ma Lieng.

History and ethnography offer important lessons in terms of the recognition and understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity in the broader context. For one, and perhaps, most importantly the sources offer a picture dating back to very first years of the 20th century of ethnic minorities having lived, practiced and exchanged among each other. We learn about indigenous knowledge, techniques and multiple identities, but also the limited in-depth understanding, in particular of the hunter-gatherer communities.

Secondly, throughout the years there have been considerable debates about appropriate ethnonyms. As the research illustrates these historically range from debates informed by race theory, lifestyle towards debates about linguistic similarities and differences⁴⁴. A striking example, is the case of the Nguôn of Minh Hóa district estimated to make up some 80 % of its total population, yet currently not recognized as an ethnic minority. Sources as Cadière and Cuisinier offer important sources in this respect.

⁴⁴ These debates are not raised here, but can be found notably in analysis by Michel Ferlus and others.



Figure 26: *Nguôn, Annam. Dong Hoi. Tuyen Hoà. Qui Dat. Le désherbage des rizières.*⁴⁵

(photography: Lucienne Delmas)

The official listing of 54 ethnic minorities – *dân tộc* of Vietnam - has on repeated occasions been discussed at both national and provincial levels.

CÔNG THÔNG TIN ĐIỆN TỬ
ỦY BAN DÂN TỘC
 Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs

TRANG CHỦ | GIỚI THIỆU | TIN TỨC | TIN ĐÀ PHƯƠNG TIẾN | DỊCH VỤ CÔNG | THƯ ĐIỆN TỬ | ĐIỀU HÀNH TÁC NGHIỆP

Thứ Năm, ngày 22/9/2016 9:37 SA

CỘNG ĐỒNG 54 DÂN TỘC VIỆT NAM

NGƯỜI BANA	NGƯỜI BÔ Y	NGƯỜI BRÁU	NGƯỜI BRU-VĂN KIỀU
NGƯỜI CHĂM	NGƯỜI CHƠ RO	NGƯỜI CHU-RU	NGƯỜI CHỨT
NGƯỜI CO	NGƯỜI CƠ HO	NGƯỜI CỎ LAO	NGƯỜI CỎ TU
NGƯỜI CÔNG	NGƯỜI ĐA O	NGƯỜI Ê-ĐÊ	NGƯỜI GIA RAI
NGƯỜI GIĂY	NGƯỜI GIÊ-TRIỆNG	NGƯỜI HÀ NHÍ	NGƯỜI HOA
NGƯỜI HRÊ	NGƯỜI KHÁNG	NGƯỜI KHMER	NGƯỜI KHƠ MŨ
NGƯỜI LA CHÍ	NGƯỜI LA HA	NGƯỜI LA HŨ	NGƯỜI LĂO
NGƯỜI LỒ LỒ	NGƯỜI LỰ	NGƯỜI MA	NGƯỜI MĂNG
NGƯỜI MŨƠNG	NGƯỜI MÔNG	NGƯỜI MƯỜNG	NGƯỜI NGÁI
NGƯỜI NÙNG	NGƯỜI Ơ ĐU	NGƯỜI PÁ THÈN	NGƯỜI PHŨ LÁ
NGƯỜI PU PÊO	NGƯỜI RA GLAI	NGƯỜI RƠ MĂM	NGƯỜI SÁN CHAY
NGƯỜI SÁN DƯU	NGƯỜI SĪ LA	NGƯỜI TĂ ƠI	NGƯỜI TÂY

⁴⁵ PP0209918. Archives of the musée du quai Branly.

Figure 27: “the community of 54 ethnicities in Vietnam”⁴⁶

This list groups the Arem, May, Rục, Sách and Ma Lieng as belonging to one people Chut, for example, yet does not recognize Nguồn as an ethnic minority. Questions in this sense, relate to whether authorities can determine specific distinct characteristics, which would justify recognition as a distinct ethnic minority. Despite longstanding attempts to secure the recognition of the Nguồn as an ethnic minority, a somewhat startling official conclusion has been to classify them as Kinh, and arguing that they are (or used to be) Mường.



Figure 28: Meeting Dinh Thanh Du, Minh Hóa, 2016.
(photo by author)

This has repeatedly left local observers, and this author, bewildered. Vietnamese researchers, with reason according to this author, have indeed argued for the official recognition of the Nguồn (Vo and Dinh 2010). Certainly, the current situation of non-recognition has led to a

⁴⁶, <http://cema.gov.vn/gioi-thieu/cong-dong-54-dan-toc.htm>

somewhat unhappy divide not allowing for a clear language and cultural identity policy in Minh Hóa. International criteria of self-identification, language and practices would arguably favour recognition. Furthermore, it is clear that Musée de Quai-Branly hosts an important collection of photos from the Cuisinier-Delmas mission yet to be categorized⁴⁷, which could help the district and local authorities in better documenting their heritage. Another case and dynamic, concerns the decreasing number of youths speaking indigenous languages such as the Arem. New forms of identity are emerging with Arem speaking of Arem 1 and Arem 2 with increasing intermarriage with the neighbouring MaCoong. As the following matrix illustrates, ethnic minorities have gone through various classifications by authors described in this report.

Language group	Vietic	Bru - Vân Kiều	Chứt
Ethnonyms (current)	Kinh, Nguồn, (Mường)	Vân Kiều, Trì, Ma Coong and Khùa	Sách, Mày, Rục và Arem
Early colonial period	Annamite, montagnards	Moi, sauvages, montagnards	Moi, sauvages, montagnard
Cadière	Nguồn, annamite, Tac-Cui	Kà-lơ, Khùa, Kha	Thất-Sác, Sác, Ta-Kũy, Ča-Kúy ou Kố, Mọi, Rợ, Rú
Cuisinier	Nguồn, Mường	Buru, Sô, Khùa	Rục, Rộc, Sách, Mày, Pygmées

Figure 29: Table of different ethnic classifications apparent in the report

Thirdly, a major issue has involved a tendency to dissociate people from their ancestral landscapes and customary practices. There are arguably several reasons for this. On the one hand, it is clear that a longstanding development gaze has portrayed customary livelihood practices as hunter-gathering and shifting cultivation as backwards. This, on the other hand, has relegated forest relations, from spiritual connections to livelihood practices, to a shadow

⁴⁷ These photos, kindly shown to me by Carine Peltier and her colleagues, contain further photos from the fieldwork in Quang Binh province, which offer an important potential.

existence. People, in this line of thought, are no longer supposed to live in caves, hunt animals, gather forest products. When it happens it is considered out of necessity rather than desirable. History tells us, however, how such connections to cave and forest landscapes are of ancestral importance, not just in the past, but for current and future generations.

Fourthly, there is a need to move out of the legacy where cultural difference and customary practices were defined as superstition, social evils and backwards practices. Interviews revealed a history and contemporary of dividing culture in good and bad practices. Indeed, a couple of decades ago, questions asked on the topic of cultural diversity were regarded with suspicion among some public officials. Official rewards such as “cultural households”, or villages of culture”, did not make reference to indigenous ethnic minority culture as such, but rather reflected external criteria of law, order and development. In fact, indigenous characteristics in terms of ceremonial practices, livelihoods tended to be downplayed. One commune official interviewed, regarding the case of Dân Hóa commune where he was in charge of culture, spoke of two cultural villages (ban van hoa): Bai Dinh and Cha Lo. As he mentioned, the criteria for this categorization concerned « how roads and paths in the villages were clean, the number of « clean » families and good livelihoods – that’s called culture », he mentioned. His own village did not qualify because « it doesn’t have trade enough », he said. In this sense, it was not uncommon to hear comments from ethnic minority villagers saying that « we do not have culture » or « our culture is backwards » referring to the dominant ideas of culture as linked to standard signs of modernity. For this, and other reasons, questions of cultural identity and practices have often been downplayed.

Several representatives interviewed stressed the importance of indigenous language, cultural practices for their sociality, resilience and everyday life and survival.



Figure 30: Drinking ruou cân with Arem and MaCoong at a combined wedding and 2month death anniversary

Photo by author

Reality is that indigenous knowledge practices, social identity are essential to resilient lives. Yet, reality remains that schools in Quảng Bình ethnic minority areas do not yet have an indigenous language, history and culture programme. Reality is also that official forest and land use policy tend towards rendering customary practices illegal rather than supporting their sustainability in the long-term. There is an urgent need to support provincial authorities, which are currently embracing ideas of ethnic diversity and cultural heritage in rethinking an approach to natural heritage that recognizes the cultural and ethnic diversity.

Fifthly, livelihood support is generally aimed at hindering and transforming customary livelihoods and practices. Agricultural extension services involve new high-yield varieties, not traditional varieties. While some communities as the Mày in Ba Loc keep certain traditional seed varieties, the loss of traditional varieties is common across the landscape. A local protection strategy is urgently needed. Many customary forest livelihoods linked to traditional forest areas are currently banned rather than promoted in sustainable terms. This needs further work on promoting sustainable solutions rather than imposed bans.

Whereas the question of cultural and ethnic diversity has implications province wide, it is of immediate and critical importance for the wider management of the World Heritage site. There are a number of critical points in this respect. On the one hand, the outstanding universal values recognized in the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng World Heritage site are mainly focused on natural values. While cultural values have been mentioned and listed in nomination dossiers and the information material, the values that are driving management decisions are mainly natural leading to the exclusion of customary culture and voice. Elsewhere I have discussed the implications for this in terms of disregarding the cultural values, rights of communities and history of the area (Larsen 2015). The linkages between culture and nature in terms of the customary knowledge, use areas and practices tying nature and culture within the very geologically significant, biodiverse and spectacular landscapes. Whereas there were debates about how to protect traditional culture, knowledge and practices, official policy has been more oriented towards its modernization and transformation rather than encouraging its support.

Indigenous voices

Many expressed concern about cultural practices being lost such as specific songs, how to make tools, find ones way in the forest and in life. There were concerns about the relationship between generations. As Dinh Rau, a village elder of the Arem noted: « We need to teach the Arem language to the children... many don't know it. Without the language we risk losing our history, our life ». Dinh Thanh Du called for the recognition of Nguôn identity, and a language policy encouraging its use in both writing and orally stimulated through teaching in primary school. Cao Quy Nheng, a Sách elder in Bai Dinh stressed how language was important to Sách, yet also how “elders should sit down and have a meeting” and see what could be done. In the evening, during our research stay, he organized an emotional singing encounter with villagers sharing songs and experiences from Bai Dinh. Importantly, many attached great importance to the role of local authorities. Dinh Rau, again, would like to work towards such things “if the commune calls for it.” Certainly, there is a great potential for public authorities to adopt a proactive cultural and ethnic diversity policy and sit down calmly and explore opportunities for action with village elders and youth.

Conclusions

What may seem a disparate set of photos, gains meaning and sense through contextualizing the ethnographic snapshots historically. The musée du quai Branly collections from the area in Quảng Bình bring small pieces together of this bigger picture in multiple and interesting ways. To avoid getting lost in details, however interesting and important that is, I have rather sought to raise a few key dynamics.

In a province historically devastated by war and for many years preoccupied with reconstruction and survival, it is not surprising that questions of culture, ethnic diversity and minority heritage are only now starting to reappear on the public policy agenda (see Salemink 2001, for national level discussions). This research, however basic and limited, in many ways benefited from interest and support from provincial authorities, park management, which together with the support from the museum allowed for some initial steps to explore this topic through archival material, photo discussions and interviews that together demonstrate a richness and complexity, unjustly summarized in this brief report.

This research nonetheless demonstrates the value of objects and photos as means to generate insights into the ethnographic recognition of cultural diversity. There is a value of ethnographic missions, not merely in terms of targeted presence and collection, but in terms of the complementary documents –and the story behind – the museological objects. The story of the Cuisinier-Delmas mission is one that deserves to be told, also for a wider Vietnamese audience.

There has been no lack of top-down and well-meant efforts to support ethnic minorities in the Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng region, yet results have been limited (Vo 1998, Larsen 2008). Yet, the cultural history and heritage remains a story largely untold, despite customs being the backbone of survival and resilience for the very communities that have lived in and off the forest complex for centuries. Furthermore, the living heritage is under increasing threat without a clear policy framework from provincial authorities to ensure and safeguard the

rights to customary lands and livelihoods, and a land and education policy, which nurtures rather than prevents cultural identity and expression. There is a clear call from elders interviewed to better document and create opportunities for elders to practice, transmit and teach language and culture. While many have experienced researchers driving in or even inviting elders to record songs in Hanoi, actual efforts to nurture cultural vitality by communities themselves in the area are yet to fully take off. Furthermore, there are clear risks that cultural heritage is “captured” by inappropriate infrastructure development plans and business interests e.g. in terms of tourism development rather than responding to community needs and opportunities for locally-driven, culturally sensitive and managed cultural resource management.

Provincial authorities have a key coordinating role in bridging education, culture, land management and forest authorities together to build an ethnic minority and cultural diversity policy which empowers ethnic minority communities to regain customary land tenure security within the park, support and finance indigenous language teaching, knowledge preservation and transmission. There is equally a need to strengthen and address indigenous livelihoods grounded in a cultural landscape approach both within the park itself and the wider buffer-zone.

The National UNESCO Commission will equally have a clear role to play to facilitate dialogue and policy support, which can help bridge the gap between natural heritage line agencies and cultural heritage agencies, which need to dialogue on appropriate steps forward. This coordinated effort could also explore in more detail the relevance of securing the recognition of the nature-culture linkages of the World Heritage profile whether in terms of recognizing the full range of values in the area and/or in terms of exploring renomination based on cultural criteria as well.

There is an urgent need to explore engagement with national cultural heritage authorities in charge of tangible and intangible heritage, ethnic minority and education authorities (notably in terms of catalysing bi-lingual and multicultural education) to cooperate with the province on consolidating an integrated cultural and ethnic diversity approach and action plan. Bringing together these actors to help consolidate a methodological framework for

establishing and inventory and baseline is now important. Anthropological expertise can help facilitate such a process.

The Quai Branly museum can play a supportive role in engaging with the provincial and national authorities, the park management board and cultural specialists of the region to better link the cultural and natural values through work on exhibitions, publication material, historical documentation and appropriate strategies for a visitor centre. I will provide a list of rectifications to the current list of photos, ethnonyms and also stimulate further dialogue on this topic in both Paris and Dong Hoi. I have also committed to facilitate further dialogue, and there is a keen interest from the park to explore next steps in terms of research.

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Annex 1: Cultural diversity and ethnicity in North-Central Vietnam

Annex 1: Intermediary report

August, 2016

Peter Bille Larsen

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Introduction and background

This intermediary report briefly describes progress in relation to data-gathering for the forthcoming analysis of material gathered for the project on cultural diversity and ethnicity in North-Central Vietnam with a specific focus on the Phong Nha Ke Bang area. I am once again grateful to the kind support of the Musée Quai Branly and its wonderful staff.

This research explores the dual process of ethnographic discovery and description with a specific focus on visual representation, description and ethnic boundary making in North Central Vietnam. This work seeks to build on wider research exploring the significance of French and Vietnamese ethnologists in understanding and describing ethnicity in the wider context of ethnic boundary making. As part of a larger research initiative involving collaboration with a local university and local authorities into cultural diversity and landscapes in the Phong Nha Ke Bang area (today a World Heritage site), this research seeks to benefit from the archives of the Musée Quai-Branly to document and explore the significance of ethnographic description in ethnic boundary making. The results will form part of a larger book project on heritage in Vietnam, which equally builds on ethnography of contemporary dynamics. The Phong Nha Ke Bang area represents high levels of cultural diversity, yet is largely understudied in from multiple perspectives. This particularly concerns the high density of ethnic diversity ranging from numerically small groups such as the Ruc and the Arem to the numerically significant, yet officially unrecognized Nguon.

The research process could be described as somewhat of a puzzle to piece together ethnographica, photographic analysis and text material spread out in many archives, as well as an effort to gather oral history among the communities concerned. The financial support from MQB allowed for not only accessing the important archives of the MQB (see annex 1, for a description), but equally to explore relevant archives such as the EFEO, the Musée de L'Homme and the Arcives d'Outre Mer in Aix-en-Provence. Secondly, the support has allowed for a brief fieldwork stay to undertake oral history interviews to look for the stories behind the pictures collected. This turned out to be quite a logistical challenge in terms of getting the necessary permits, yet cooperation with MQB, and notably much appreciated support from Julien Rousseau, allowed for a last-minute cooperative agreement between the University of Lucerne (my home institution) and the Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park to be put in place on the theme of cultural diversity. Due to time constraints, hopes to explore provincial archives in Quang Binh province, Vietnam could not yet take place.

Archival work

Archival work was pursued at the Quai Branly museum, the archives of the Musée de l'Homme, the EFEO, Missions Etrangères de Paris archives and the oversea archives in Aix en Provence.

In the **Quai Branly museum** archives, relevant material found included notably the mission report of the Cuisinier Delmas and additional photos, still to be made public, kindly facilitated by staff members. The mission material offers a chronology of the visit to the Ke Bang area, as an addition to the main mission, which had its focus on the Muong. Some discussions of ethnicity are included, notably the multiple mission interests and preparations as well as criteria for analysis. Yet, review of the Quai Branly material also revealed a number of gaps compared the material initially reported. In particular, I was interested in identifying a certain number of ethnographic sheets (see discussions further below), which were absent from the MQB material.

Further material was found in the archives of the **Musée de l'Homme**. This was not easy to access, yet through some follow-up and kind support, it appeared that the museum had received the private archives of Jeanne Cuisinier, and furthermore had started to compile a list of the material in cooperation with a doctoral student undertaking research on the topic. In relation to my research interests the archives proved interesting in a number of ways. Firstly, it soon appeared that some of the missing mission material from MQB such as ethnographic «notes» regarding the Nguon, Sach and May are found there. However, very unfortunately, I was strictly prohibited to take photos of the material in order to conduct analysis followingly. Still, I took notes of what I could determine as immediately relevant. This material is now being analysed, and provides some interesting insights into the ethnographic mission and its particular gaze on ethnicity.

Archival work was also undertaken at the **L'École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)**. Surprisingly, I was not able to find much material directly linked to the Cuisinier-Delmas work in Vietnam. Instead, I concentrated on material related to work undertaken by Léopold Cadière, missionary and early ethnographer in the area. A number of writings by Cadière, published in the Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué relate to ethnicity in the area and will be mentioned.

To further pursue the angle of missionary work undertaken, notably the role of Cadière and his role considering his placement there in the late 19th century, a brief visit was also made to **the Missions Etrangères de Paris**. While it is too early to say whether material is relevant for this research, some documents were found in their archives.

In the **Archives nationales d'Outre-mer**, in Aix-en-Provence, expectations that overseas archives would contain systematic provincial level data on demographics proved appeared over-optimistic. While access was also obtained to private archives deposited in the archives, these also proved less useful than initially hoped for. As staff members explained, considerable colonial archives were left behind in Vietnam. Still, some overall reporting was identified and examined in relation to wider ethnic minority policy matters, and overall

provincial level reports. While only indirectly relevant for the research undertaken here, the archival work was nonetheless of interest.

Fieldwork/ Vietnam

Fieldwork was planned to take place in Quang Binh province in July, 2016 to document oral histories and engage in further dialogue with provincial stakeholders.

Initial fieldwork plans were rendered difficult by the fact that most villages targeted for data-gathering are located in border areas. This requires additional permits, and initial attempts to re-establish research agreements with national and provincial level institutions did not work out as planned. Given the challenge of paperwork, I had deliberately scheduled a very fieldwork period that could be handled within a short period. Danish citizens are within certain time constraints allowed into the country without visa. In the end, with the kind and timely support of Julien Rousseau providing a letter of support, I worked out a research partnership between the Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park and the University of Lucerne. As no visa was needed, the main issue was to have institutional letters of support, which are necessary to request border permits from provincial authorities.

UBND TỈNH QUẢNG BÌNH
VƯỜN QUỐC GIA PHONG NHA - KÊ BANG
Số: 35/VQG/GT

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
Độc Lập - Tự Do - Hạnh Phúc

GIẤY GIỚI THIỆU

Kính gửi: UBND xã Tân Trạch, xã Dân Hòa, Thượng Hòa, Hòa S

Chúng tôi xin trân trọng giới thiệu: Ông Bùi Ngọc Thanh
Ông, bà
Chức vụ Phó Trưởng phòng KH & HTQT
Được cử đến Giám sát đoàn nghiên cứu di sản văn hóa
tại VQG của ông Peter Larsen - Pháp
Đề nghị Các xã hết sức giúp đỡ.
Ông, bà Thanh hoàn thành nhiệm vụ
Có giá trị
hết ngày 02/7/2016

Ngày 23 tháng 6 năm 2016
Khu trưởng
PHÒNG QUẢN LÝ
VƯỜN QUỐC GIA
PHONG NHA
KÊ BANG
UBND TỈNH QUẢNG BÌNH

Đặng Đông Hà

Letter of introduction by park authorities for commune leader

Within the last few years the management board has expressed growing interest in cultural heritage and diversity matters. One of the hopes of this research is indeed to strengthen and deepen the understanding of ethnic diversity and cultural heritage matters in the area. This is a big task, well beyond the efforts of this initiative, yet the hope is to sow the seeds and establish further dialogue around the important linkages between the natural and cultural heritage of the Phong Nha Ke Bang area.

Fieldwork played an important role for the approach given the potential to complement archives and photographic documentation by Cuisinier-Delmas the Condominas collection with additional historical and ethnographic insights. In the long-terms, it is also hoped that further insights can from access to provincial archives. As mentioned, fieldwork was facilitated by the park management board given that the communities concerned live either within the core or bufferzone area of the park.

Methodological considerations during fieldwork

Making good use of the financial support from the MQB, I was able to pay for transportation, hire a colleague and finance the support and participation of a park official from the park's science office to take part in the work. We were, in short, a small team of three, who were complemented with local guides in some cases to identify specific individuals in the villages. Obviously, it was not ethnographic fieldwork *per se*. The stays were relatively short, yet involved targeted interviews and informal conversations with villagers where I have worked on and off for a couple of decades. This largely facilitated access, despite the time constraints. Oral history to start exploring and portraying in a more thick manner the cultural history and heritage of the area is only starting in the province and this work has a contribution to make. I particularly wanted to explore, indeed experiment with the idea of whether oral history telling through the photos gathered from MQB could help people enhance their story telling or shed light on otherwise forgotten questions and stories. In preparation for the fieldwork, I had brought a selection of the photos from the Cuisinier-Delmas collection and Condominas collection for further elaboration and exploration. In the case of the Cuisinier-Delmas photos these particularly concerned the Sach, May and Nguon people of Minh Hoa.

I was able to identify, pursue and establish cross-generational linkages with a few photos and – whose stories I ultimately intend to transcribe. In practice, oral history through photo story telling proved more difficult and challenging than initially expected. Yet, there were notable gems both directly or indirectly related to the pictures. Thus even in cases, where it was difficult to identify the specific persons on the photos, the sheer sharing of photos allowed for a new conversation with people about their particular cultural histories and practices. This was notably the cases among the Sach people interviewed. In the case of the Ruc and May, it proved more difficult. Challenges include language barriers, age and the simple fact – at least among the Ruc – that some families supposedly sedentarized by authorities in the 1960s continue to spend considerable time away from the settlements – practicing customary hunting and gathering. Still important historical contextual narratives emerged.

Preliminary assessment of findings and presentation of data

Condominas collection

The photos selected from the Condominas collection, literally a few out of several thousand, are nonetheless interesting from both a historical and an ethnographic perspective. As mentioned previously, I've suggested that the photographer is neither Condominas himself, (nor Vinh Hoang Tuyen as suggested in the MQB database). Rather it concerns Vuong Hoang Tuyen, a Vietnamese ethnologist who, among other things, in 1963 wrote an overview of ethnic minorities in North⁴⁸. The pictures concern of the Ruc, one of the countries smallest ethnic minority groups, which was said to have been discovered in that period. The pictures most likely be dated around the period right after this small hunter-gatherer population had been resettled in the Cu Nhai area in the late 1960s after having been taken out of their customary settlements. At that point of the time, the small group of people attracted

⁴⁸ <http://ussh.vnu.edu.vn/profile/vuong-hoang-tuyen>

considerable interest by the emerging, yet small, Vietnamese ethnological community. When Condominas at a later stage initiated collaboration with Vietnamese ethnologists, it is likely that some exchange of photos took place to portray the ethnic highland diversity of the region. This also helps to explain the couple of photos of the Arem people included. These stories will be elaborated upon in more detail.

Cuisinier Delmas – at the edge of the Muong

The mission by Cuisinier Delmas is particularly interesting given the particular historical period and colonial context, and what it reveals about understandings of ethnicity and boundary making. The very focus of the mission concerned the Muong, and the bulk of ethnographic work was undertaken in Hoa Binh province. Yet, the photos and the ethnonyms employed are historically significant in terms of documenting the broader cultural space of the Ruc – or the Ruk – as Cuisinier labelled them. As are the ethnological notes of the time, equally significant from the perspective of racial theories and other systems of ethnological classification at the time. In contrast, with wider narratives of discovery and isolation, the Cuisinier-Delmas show insights into the wider cultural landscape and customary areas of the hunter-gatherer groups as well as their histories of engagement with neighbouring populations. I'm here specifically thinking of the photos concerning the Ruc, Sach and the May people. These findings were further confirmed during interviews in Cha Lo and elsewhere with Ruc, which had been resettled. In contrast with narratives of discovery and. Reality is that Ruc are found and have a long history in a much larger landscape. While it was difficult to identify people on the photos from the late 1930s given the low average age of people, war impacts and hardships people have gone through in the region, a few oral history testimonials proved interesting.

The pictures of the Nguon, in contrast, raise a deep-running and significant ethnic boundary question as to whether or not they should be considered an ethnic minority. The topic has for decades raised debate among Vietnamese scholars and policy makers, a debate in which the perspectives and ideas provided by Cuisinier and Delmas are therefore historically significant and important. The final analysis will touch upon this in more detail. I was able to interview one of the more influential Vietnamese scholars on the topic as well.

Intermediary conclusions in relation to cultural diversity

There is a growing understanding of the significance and importance of cultural diversity in the Phong Nha Ke Bang area. Cultural diversity and its conservation are increasingly concepts employed and discussed frequently by local authorities, opening a new space for engagement and dialogue between researchers, authorities and the communities themselves.

Historically, French researchers have contributed to major discussions about the nature of cultural diversity, ethnicity and boundary. Both in colonial and post-colonial times, French ethnologists, missionaries and linguists are frequently cited, also by Vietnamese scholars and policy thinkers. This also concerns the nature of cultural and ethnic diversity such as the example of the Nguon, about which the Cuisinier-Delmas mission collected a number of ethnographic data and photos. This e.g. concerns the question of whether or not the Nguon are considered a separate ethnic minority group.

Vietnamese heritage authorities also see the relevance of engaging more systematically with the cultural diversity of the area. This became clear in the very process of preparing this brief research to which the Phong Nha Ke Bang authorities responded positively with enthusiasm. It is likely that the coming years will see a growing and more systematic effort to address the cultural diversity of the region. The question now is the nature of this systematic approach and how ethnographic and historical research can help to clarify the underlying issues and trends involved.

Remaining work

The bulk of the work in terms of analysing archival and oral history work and summarizing it in a synthetic manner is the main task now remaining. Results appear significant from a number of perspectives. For one, the whole research process, even if small in scope, has generated substantive interest from the Vietnamese colleagues and wider audiences. I was thus interviewed by local television and the management board is key to see what broader lessons can be extracted about the linkages between natural heritage and cultural diversity.



(interview by local television)

While in Vietnam, I also co-organized a provincial workshop together with research partners in another research project attached to the local university on cultural diversity in the area, which led to considerable provincial level discussions on the organization. This involved

presentations by local authorities, historians and other scholars as well as some local level participation. A Vietnamese report is in the making.

Annex 2: Defining the scope / Corps d'étude

Defining the scope / Corps d'étude

Peter Larsen, Musée de Quai Branly

February 12, 2016

Introduction

The first weeks of work concerned further defining the scope of the material to be studied as well as further gathering available information. I would like to thank Frédérique Servain-Riviale, Julien Rousseau, Sarah Frioux-Salgas, Jean-André Assié, Claire Schneider, Christine Hemmet and Carine Peltier for their time and support in identifying and establishing access to relevant archive material. L'accueil has been very positive. In addition, preliminary contacts were made with the EFEO and Musée de l'Homme (library and archives).

Thematic focus

The thematic focus remains the question of ethnographic/ visual description of ethnic diversity as well as other audio-visual documentation of ethnic minorities in the Quang Binh province, Vietnam.

In the current MQB list of ethnonyms we find Nguon, Chut (May), Chut (Ruc) and Chut (Sach) among the ethnonyms – but not Ma Lieng, Ma Coong, Khua and Arem, for example. This was explained by Carine Peltier as reflecting the « bottom-up » approach to which ethnonyms were include. The report of this bourse will likely result in some recommendations in this respect. The Quai Branly material is interesting from a number of angles. This includes four specific sources of material.

Material identified for further study

The first concerns the ethnographic documentation by the Cuisinier-Delmas mission in 1937/1938. While the main focus of their ethnographic work concerned the Muong in Hoa Binh province, they also undertook a complementary visit to Quang Binh province to study the Nguôn and other ethnic minorities there. The archive material identified for further research specifically concerns this and includes:

- Archive material from the Cuisinier Delmas mission describing the overall mission approach, methodology, mission reports (this has already been gathered)
- Identified objects from the province collected from the Western lying region (Tuyen Hoa, Minh Hoa and Bo Trach districts)
- Audio-visual material, including the 221 minutes of films by the Cuisinier-Delmas mission and recorded songs, will be explored in terms of relevant material from the Quang Binh province. Claire Schneider had not found this material in the MQB archives, yet has taken contact to the Centre of Ethnomusicology to explore whether they could be found. Ms. Schneider has also sent some discs for digitalization to explore in further detail.
- Photos from the Cuisinier Delmas from the area (selection has been identified with Frédérique). Need to further check with Carine Peltier if there are photos from the mission which remain unscanned.
- The Cuisinier / Delmas mission (71.1938.112) concerns 336 objets of which 25 have been identified of specific interest.
- In addition, I am still on the look out for the 720 to 750 « fiches ethnographiques ». These may be found at the Musée de l'Homme.
- Also a number of anthropometric documentation is of interest, yet has not been found (Hemmet suggests likely this material may be found in the musée de l'homme). I suspect finding more of this during archive work.

Overall, I have now a good overview of material available through the MQB archives.

A nice discovery of this first trip, thanks to Ms. Garcia of the MHN (patrimoinedbd@mnhn.fr), is that a pre-inventory is being prepared of the « Fonds Jeanne Cuisinier », wherein the following documents will be explored in March :

1. Boite 1, Indochine : Notes de missions sur les pygmées (cf. May (peuple))
2. Boite 1, Indochine, ethnographie – Tonkin, Laos :
 - a. Liste des films, prise de vues et enregistrements sonores de la mission Cuisinier-Delmas
3. Boite 1, Indochine, ethnographie
 - a. Notes sur les May, les Nuong, Sach
4. Boite 2 : Indochine-ethnographie, notes de mission 1937-38/ notes de mission sur les Annamites/ informations communiqués par Dinh à Delmas
5. Boite 3 : Indochine – ethnographies, notes de terrain (
6. Boite 17 : Indochine 3, Indochine 5, Indochine 16
7. Boite 18 : Indochine 18-28 : ethnonotes de terrain
8. Classeur 29 : Photos Jeanne Cuisinier
9. Fond du département d'ethnologie, partie Asie : boite mission Cuisinier

10. Madeleine Colani, « Comment étudier le problème indochinois ? » Shelf mark / reference : 2 AM 1 K27e
11. Fromaget, [Etudes géologiques sur le Nord de l'Indochine centrale](#)

Secondly, a set of additional photos have been identified among the 255 photos from the province of Quang Binh covering Dong Hoi and other places. The specific selection includes pictures from Condominas collection for further analysis and inputs in terms of classification etc. These are photos from the 1970s with additional writing in Vietnamese. Whereas the photographer is identified as Vinh Hoang Tuyen in the MQB database, this I believe after some further search and cross-check with publications more likely to be Vuong Hoang Tuyen, a Vietnamese ethnologist who, among other things, in 1963 wrote an overview of ethnic

minorities in North⁴⁹. I will proceed with verifying this as well as a number of further specifics regarding the photo collection. Photos were discussed in further detail with Carine Peltier, who kindly agreed to print a number of them for the trip to Vietnam. I will plastify them upon arrival in Hanoi. Apart from the photos of the Condominas and Cuisinier-Delmas collection, there may be a slight chance to do further progress on certain photos from the collection of the Indochina High Commission related to a hunting mission. This remains to be seen. I am among other things cross-checking with the literature by the colonial officer in charge of hunting at the time.

Thirdly, of the objects present in MQB from Quang Binh province (143), a significant number involve donations from Colani. While they are not of immediate interest to this research except , the reclassification of a number of these (currently listed as Kinh) could be considered. The objects of specific interest come from the Cuisinier-Delmas collection. The objects are reasonably well-described, yet pictures will be brought to the field to explore further cross-documentation. These include :

1. 71.1931.6.2.1-2 .
2. 71.1938.112.298
3. 71.1938.112.299
4. 71.1938.112.300
5. 71.1938.112.301
6. 71.1938.112.302
7. 71.1938.112.303.1-2
8. 71.1938.112.304.1-10
9. 71.1938.112.306.1-2
10. 71.1938.112.307.1-2
11. 71.1938.112.308
12. 71.1938.112.309.1.1-3
13. 71.1938.112.309.2

⁴⁹ <http://ussh.vnu.edu.vn/profile/vuong-hoang-tuyen>

Fourthly, the outre-mer archives (Aix en Provence) will be explored in terms of census data gathered on the ethnic minorities in the colonial period from the area.

The fifth element concerns the stories about who the people and their photos are – and their stories. This is significant in a social context where their stories are often forgotten. I will therefore attempt to gather brief biographies of the persons through oral history where it is possible to identify them. This will be undertaken in the second half of June.

Further plans, initially suggested in the to work possibly work with Vietnamese archives are likely not possible at this stage due to lack of progress to stimulate further documentation. It will nonetheless be explored in June.

Annex 3: fieldwork schedule

Arrival, Hanoi, June 21 Evening night train	Prepare plastic coating for photos
Dong Hoi June 22	Paper work and meeting with QBU for workshop preparation Afternoon, meeting with BQL PNKB workshop preparation, paper work
June 23 – 25	Ban Arem, Interviews about photos from Arem people
June 26 – 28	Yen Hop, Mo o O o, On (Interviews about photos from Sach and Ruc)
June 29	Workshop Dong Hoi (QBU, VASS, UNILU, BQLPNKB)
June 30 – July 1	Quy Dat and district authorities
July 1-2	Bai Dinh, K-ai (Interviews about photos from May and Sach)
July 3-4	Dong Hoi
July 4	Evening return to Hanoi
July 5	Return Switzerland

ⁱ I shall not here discuss the contested categories of ethnic classification in more detail.