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**An approach to the informal sector in Vietnamese metropolises:
From the knowable towards the unknown**

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The subjects of informal sector and informal employment remain totally up-to-date in all countries and especially in developing and emerging countries. However, few studies were able to select the workers in the informal sector according to the detailed definition adopted by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in January 1993 (International Labour Organization, 1993).

Vietnam is not an exception. Among the recent works, it is necessary to quote the Labour Force Survey of 2007 (LFS) implemented by the General Statistics Office, which enabled to select the “non registered enterprises”; this survey provided the base of a specific investigation, the Informal Sector Survey (ISS) (Cling & al., 2009).

In front of the difficulty to directly capture informal employment, we can try to “approach” the informal sector by means of various indicators characterizing the workers of this sector. Cling & al. (2009) emphasize that “The level of wage earners is a good means to differentiate the informal sector from the formal sector”; in Vietnam, where residential registration still exists, the holding of a short-term temporary residential permit (KT4) is another one.

Two recent operations enable to approach the informal sector in both Vietnamese metropolises, Hanoi (the political capital, in the North, 2.6 millions of urbanites within the administrative unit at 2009 census) and Ho Chi Minh City (the “economic capital”, in the South, 5.9 millions of urbanites):

- the 2004 census of Ho Chi Minh City, which is the only operation having directly noted down the residential status (KT1 to KT4, from a permanent residential permit to a temporary short-term residential permit) from the whole population of the city and of which we have got a 10% sample which will be used here;
- the survey “Migration, poverty and urban environment: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City” (MPEU), implemented in 2007 within the framework of a FSP social sciences project of the French embassy in Vietnam, on a sample of 1,000 households (3,983 residents) in Hanoi and 1,500 households (6,592 residents) in Ho Chi Minh City; this survey provides information about economic sector (of which “Family or individual business”) as well as on employment status (of which “Independent worker” and “Mother’s help”).

These both operations enable to classify the population according to certain socioeconomic characteristics, notably the *population without permanent residential permit* for the first one and the *independent workers* for the second one. They also allow to make geographic distinctions between districts. The second operation also provides numerous information about housing and urban environment.

1 See for example: Bangasser, 2000; Hussmanns, 2001 and 2004; Jütting & al., 2007.

Regional Workshop on the Measurement of Informal Sector and Informal Employment, Bangkok, 30 November-2 December 2009 [www.unescap.org/stat/isie/ws-isie5/index.asp]

International Labour Organization (ILO): Office of library and information services, Guide of resources on informal economy [www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/informal.htm; 17/03/2010]

The population without permanent residential permit

The 2004 Census of Ho Chi Minh City is the only operation in Vietnam having directly noted down the residential status from the whole population, in this case the whole population of the city

By schematizing, in a given *phuong* or *xa* of the city², there are four categories of residential permits:

- KT1: Permanent resident living and registered in this *phuong/xa*;
- KT2: Permanent resident living in this *phuong/xa*, but first registered in another *phuong/xa* of the city or Permanent resident living in another *phuong/xa* of the city but first registered in this *phuong/xa*;
- KT3: Long-term temporary resident, having vocation to remain;
- KT4: Short-term temporary resident, having vocation to leave.

Thus, in Vietnam, every citizen is registered in a given administrative unit (*phuong* or *xa*): it is the residential registration on a residential book (*ho khau*). A change of residential place implies the modification of residential registration, with the agreement of the authorities at the departure place as well at the destination place. The application of this rule has been very strict for a long time; it gradually became more flexible under the influence of the economic liberalization which implies labour force mobility. The rule was made itself less restrictive by a law of 2006 (applied from July 2007), facilitating the obtaining of a permanent residential permit³. However it still exists, but it doesn't anymore prevent anybody from migrating as far as its main purpose at the origin was to enable to manage food rationing which does no more exist for a long time. The daily life remains only much "easier" in numerous domains if one has a permanent residential permit and the absence of such a permit remains a source of disparity between citizens and of poverty (Hardy, 2001; Gubry & al., 2002; VeT & al., 2005). Thus each one is led to arbitrate between the solution to devote the necessary time and money to regularize his(her) situation and the solution to pay fines for "illegal position" in case of any residential control.

In this context, the individuals without permanent registration in the city and especially those who have a short-term temporary permit (KT4) were often classified among the *migrants* (what is exact), even likened to them (what is erroneous, because many migrants have got a permanent residential permit). However this category of persons having in-migrated in the city remains often vague as far as one does not always clarify the duration of presence in the city and one does not take into account, due to the lack of statistical means, those who made no step to regularize their situation in the city; furthermore, it is clear that the category of migrants counts so more and more persons with a permanent residential registration (public employees, employees of the formal sector, spouses of residents in the city...). On the other side, we can imagine, with less bias, to assimilate the individuals without permanent residential registration to the *workers of the informal sector* as far as all types of formal jobs

² *Phuong* and *xa* are administrative units just lower than districts, respectively in "urban districts" (*quan*) or in "rural districts" (*huyen*). The peculiarity of administrative division in Vietnam makes that the administrative units of large cities (provinces) include as well urban districts in the centre as rural districts in the suburbs.

³ Luật cư trú của quốc hội khóa xi, kỳ họp thứ 10 số 81/2006/QH11 ngày 29 tháng 11 năm 2006 [*Residence Law, XIth legislature of the National Assembly, 10th session, no 81/2006/QH11 of November 29th, 2006*].

either require beforehand a permanent residential registration, or quickly lead to it a posteriori.

The instructions given at 2004 census of Ho Chi Minh City planned to note down the type of really possessed residential permit. However, after one or two days of survey, it quickly turned out that these instructions were not applicable: the individuals endowed with a permanent permit (KT1 and KT2) were the only ones to have their papers in due form, as for the others (endowed with a KT3 permit and especially KT4) they were in very strong minority in the group of population without permanent permit. It means that a high proportion of population had no document at all concerning its stay in the city and was still officially resident in countryside or in another city. In front of this situation, it was decided that the interviewer would rather register on the questionnaire the type of residential permit to which the persons could aspire if they made the steps, considering their objective situation and considering the current legislation⁴. To schematize, among the persons without permanent permit, the individuals living in the city “for a long time”, having a stable employment, a flat and living with their family within the city were classified ‘KT3’; the others were classified ‘KT4’.

Who are the persons classified KT4?

At 2004 census, the population of Ho Chi Minh City is 6,026,493 inhabitants, among whom 5,064,273 live in the urban part (84.0%) and 962,220 in the rural part (16.0%) (table 1). A proportion of 70.7% only have a permanent residential permit (KT1 and KT2), that is 68.7% in the urban part and 80.8% in the rural part. The rural districts (*huyen*) have a higher proportion of stable population –regularly registered– and fewer migrants.

Table 1: Distribution of the population of Ho Chi Minh City by type of district and type of residential permit on 1th October 2004

Type of district	Residential permit				Total ⁵
	KT1	KT2	KT3	KT4	
Total	3,538,609	720,594	912,488	854,802	6,026,493
%	58.7	12.0	15.1	14.2	100
Urban (<i>quan</i>)	2,862,494	619,276	800,866	781,637	5,064,273
%	56.5	12.2	15.8	15.4	100
Rural (<i>huyen</i>)	676,115	101,318	111,622	73,165	962,220
%	70.3	10.5	11.6	7.6	100

*Source: Census of Ho Chi Minh City, 1st October 2004
[Cục Thống Kê Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, 2005]*

The individuals classified ‘KT4’ (short-term temporary residential permit) are 854,802 (14.2% altogether, 15.4% in the urban part, 7.6% in the rural part).

The KT4 are divided into 44.8% males and 55.2% females against respective proportions of 47.4% and 52.6% in the whole population. As it often occurs, precariousness is higher among

⁴ Oral communication at Statistical Service of Ho Chi Minh City.

⁵ The totals were recalculated, as those of the published tables are not the totals of the components, because containing probably also foreigners who are not concerned by residential permit (they were counted for the first time in a representative statistical operation, but are manifestly underestimated with a proportion of 0.16% of the resident population of Ho Chi Minh City).

women. One may also commit that the obtaining of a permanent registration by many of them is subordinated to the obtaining of his own permit by a male spouse.

The KT4 have an age structure very different from the whole population (table 2). They have fewer young people and fewer old persons, with a strong predominance of individuals of active age. This corresponds to the fact that the KT4 are generally migrants, from whom a high proportion came to the city in search of work, to follow higher education or on the occasion of a marriage. Women are even a little more numerous than men at active ages, less numerous among young people (probable result of selective abortions which recently increased) and more numerous among elderly (conjunction of higher life expectation of women and deficit of men due to the war).

Table 2: Distribution of the population of Ho Chi Minh City classified KT4 by year of birth and sex (%)

Year of birth	KT4			Whole population
	M	F	Together	
Before 1945	1.7	2.7	2.2	8.3
1945-1989	87.1	88.2	87.7	70.7
1990-2004	11.2	9.1	10.0	21.0
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Census of Ho Chi Minh City, 1st October 2004

The KT4 are a little less qualified than the whole population, but the difference is small, as a result of an almost generalized schooling (table 3). It is even necessary to note among them a high proportion of graduates from higher education (8.1%); there are probably students who came to the city for their studies and who stayed there without necessarily regularizing their residential situation. Women are appreciably less qualified than men: 90.0% of them are without qualification and without any diploma, against 85.2% of the men.

Table 3: Distribution of the population of Ho Chi Minh City aged 15 years old or more classified KT4 by qualification level and sex (%)

Qualification level	KT4			Whole population
	M	F	Together	
Without qualification et without diploma	85.2	90.0	87.9	86.4
Without diploma	3.5	2.6	3.0	3.5
Secondary school diploma	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1
Higher education	10.1	6.5	8.1	8.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Census of Ho Chi Minh City, 1st October 2004

The exam of the situation of activity of the KT4 aged 15 years old or more highlights two remarkable characteristics: the high proportion of occupied individuals and the high proportion of individuals being trained (table 4). It is obviously the consequence of the main reasons for migrating towards the city which are the search for work and the continuation of studies. Conversely, the proportion of persons who declare themselves to be unemployed is very low: the KT4 know underemployment and precariousness, but in case of unemployment a large part of them leave back towards countryside.

Table 4: Distribution of the population of Ho Chi Minh City aged 15 years old or more classified KT4 by situation of activity and sex (%)

Situation of activity	KT4			Whole population
	M	F	Together	
Working, occupied	74.9	69.0	71.6	65.5
Unemployed, looking for a job	1.2	1.3	1.3	2.3
At home, mother's help	0.4	9.0	5.2	13.1
Being trained	21.5	18.1	19.6	9.8
Unable to work	1.3	1.7	1.5	7.2
Doesn't want to work	0.7	1.0	0.8	2.0
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Census of Ho Chi Minh City, 1st October 2004

Women are less numerous than men at work or at training; they are more numerous to declare themselves "Mother's help" according to widely spread patterns.

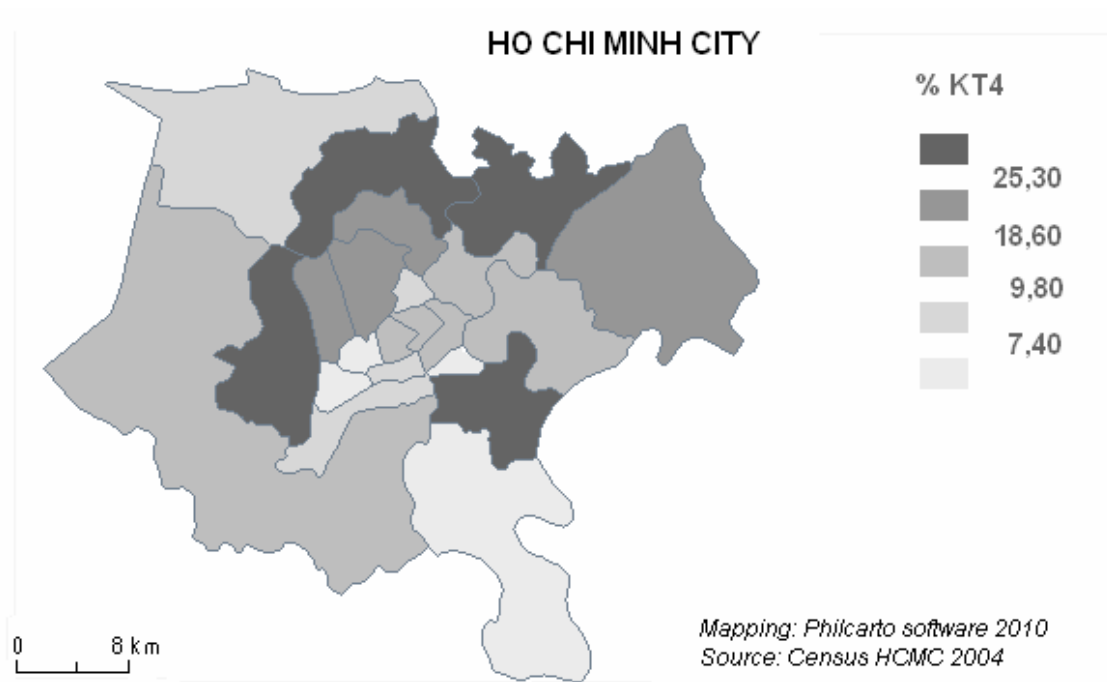


Figure 1: Proportion of persons classified KT4 by district in Ho Chi Minh City
(apart peripheral districts of Cu Chi and Can Gio)

The KT4 are mainly living in the suburban districts close to the centre of Ho Chi Minh City: 7th district, Binh Thanh, 12th district, Thu Duc (figure 1).

On the other hand, the KT4 are less numerous in the central districts of the city and in the peripheral rural districts (Nha Be, Binh Chanh and Hoc Mon districts).

This distribution can be compared with that of the migrants which came from outside the city (external migrants), thus by excluding intra-urban migrants (figure 2)⁶.

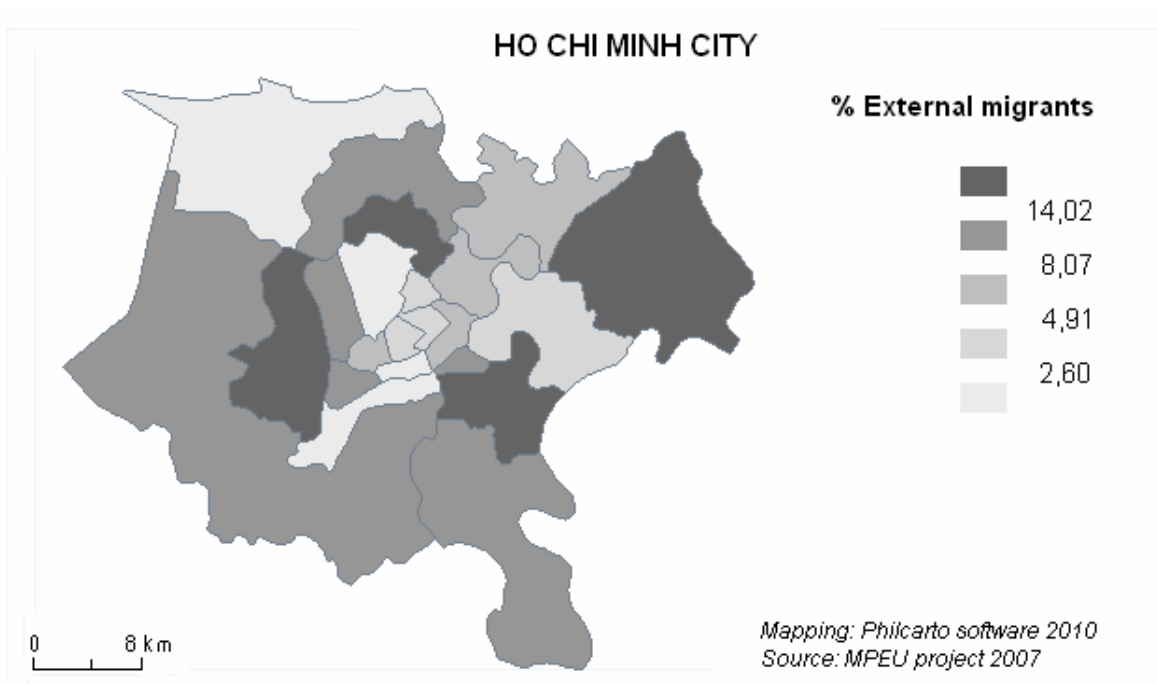


Figure 2: Proportion of migrants originated from outside Ho Chi Minh City by district

These migrants are also concentrated in the near suburban districts, but also in some more remote districts, like the 9th district, in which many industrial zones have been developed. They are few in the city center in which land reached prohibitive prices.

What is to be concluded from this analysis of the KT4 in Ho Chi Minh City with regard to informal workers?

The data of the 2004 census of Ho Chi Minh City enable to estimate the number of KT4 aged 15 years old or more who are occupied (working) at 549,638, that is 17.7% of the total occupied population aged 15 years old or more. These figures are much below the 32.9% of the number of jobs in informal household businesses given by the 2007 Labour Force Survey in Ho Chi Minh City (Cling & al., 2009), about which we shall see that they are probably themselves underestimated, because concerning only “residents” in the city. One can suggest that many people endowed with another residential status (KT3, even KT1 and KT2) also have an informal employment, but also that the number of KT4 was perhaps underestimated at 2004 census of Ho Chi Minh City. We can also suggest that informal employment also concerns some young people aged less than 15 years old, who were not taken into account here. Thus the residential status, in this specific case the temporary short-term residence (KT4), cannot enable to indirectly estimate the level of informal employment.

⁶ Data of the survey “Migration, poverty and urban environment: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City”, implemented within the framework of the FSP social sciences programme (FSP2S) in 2007; this survey excluded the peripheral districts, practically entirely rural, of Soc Son in Hanoi, and Cu Chi and Can Gio in Ho Chi Minh City.

If one added the 16.8% KT3 aged 15 years old or more who are occupied, one would reach a proportion of 34.5% workers without permanent residential status, but it would certainly be excessive to assimilate all of them to the workers of the informal sector, as the KT3 were precisely classified in this category partially because of their stable employment.

On the other hand, as we saw, the data on residential status enable to analyze some important characteristics of precariousness.

The non-agricultural independent workers

The survey on the subject “Migration, poverty and urban environment: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City” in 2007 noted down among other characteristics the employment status. We focus here on the “Independent workers”, those who are working for their own, without salary and without employing anybody. This question was asked to the population aged 13 years old or more, currently “occupied” (working). We shall be interested in the non agricultural independent workers, of whom one may think that a large part belongs to the informal sector⁷.

In both cities, the non agricultural independent workers represent 18.5% of the non agricultural occupied labour force aged 13 years old or more (table 5). The proportion is higher by females than by males and the gender difference is higher in Hanoi than in Ho Chi Minh City.

Here also, the number of independent workers hardly enables to estimate the level of informal employment: on one hand, all of them do not belong to the informal sector; on the other hand, it would be necessary to add the informal workers employed in the formal sector.

Table 5: Distribution of the non agricultural occupied labour force aged 13 years old or more by sex, employment status and city (%)

Hanoi						
Sex	Employment status					Total
	Employer	Wage earner for an unlimited period	Wage earner for a limited period	Independent worker	Mother's help	
M	8.9	53.8	18.8	15.6	3.0	100
F	7.9	52.2	12.8	22.0	5.0	100
Together	8.5	53.0	16.0	18.5	3.9	100
Ho Chi Minh City						
M	11.6	49.7	19.3	16.9	2.4	100
F	14.3	47.5	14.8	20.4	2.9	100
Together	12.9	48.7	17.3	18.5	2.6	100

Source: MPEU project, 2007

The non agricultural independent workers have a low qualification level (table 6). In Hanoi, 74.3% of them have no qualification, against only 36.0% for all non agricultural workers. In

⁷ The consideration of all independent workers would be too much influenced by farmers, especially in the peripheral zone, to be able to establish a link with informal sector.

Ho Chi Minh City, 92.4% of them have no qualification, against 67.3% among all workers. At the other extremity of the scale, the non agricultural high qualified independent workers are little numerous with regard to all non agricultural workers. The qualification level is on average appreciably higher in Hanoi than in Ho Chi Minh City, as a result of the education which was for a long time more developed in the North of the country.

Table 6: Distribution of independent occupied non agricultural workers aged 13 years old or more by qualification level and city (%)

Qualification level	Hanoi		Ho Chi Minh City	
	Independent workers	All workers	Independent workers	All workers
Not qualified	74.3	36.0	92.4	67.3
Secondary professional school level	14.9	15.7	2.2	5.6
Level 12 + 2	5.3	11.8	2.8	5.0
Level 12 + 3	1.7	3.9	0.4	4.1
Level 13 + 4 or more	4.0	32.5	2.2	17.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: MPEU project, 2007

In both cities, the non agricultural independent workers are by far mainly occupied in trade (table 7). They are notably small street vendors (cf. for example: Drummond, 2000; Jensen and Peppard, 2003). We are not surprised to find also many of them in services, then in light craft industry.

Table 7: Distribution of non agricultural occupied independent workers aged 13 years old or more by main occupation and city (%)

Main occupation	Hanoi		Ho Chi Minh City	
	Independent workers	All workers	Independent workers	All workers
Industry, handicraft	13.6	21.1	12.0	29.0
Construction, housing	3.0	4.9	3.5	8.3
Transportation	6.0	5.2	10.4	6.5
Trade	46.5	22.4	48.1	24.2
Services (apart domestic services and public services)	29.6	22.2	19.4	14.6
Domestic services	1.3	0.9	5.7	4.4
Public services	0.0	23.4	0.9	13.0
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: MPEU project, 2007

The non agricultural independent workers are not so clearly located as the KT4 in the crown of the close suburbs, but they remain numerous in the peripheral districts in the broad sense (figure 3). In Hanoi, they are concentrated in the urban districts of the close suburbs of Hai Ba Trung and Tay Ho, in the peripheral urban district of Hoang Mai, but also in the rural district of Gia Lam. In Ho Chi Minh City, the non agricultural independent workers are numerous in the urban districts of the close suburbs of Go Vap, Tan Binh, Tan Phu, Binh Tan and in

District 2, but they are also numerous in the rural peripheral crown in the South and in the West of the city, with the districts of Nha Be and Binh Chanh.

Several among these districts are well-known for the workshops which developed there. Research tracks remain opened to explain the location of independent workers. Those among these workers exercising their activities in trade are certainly less precisely located in the urban space as far as they were counted here in their residential place whereas their activities can be implemented in remote places in particular in the central districts of both cities.

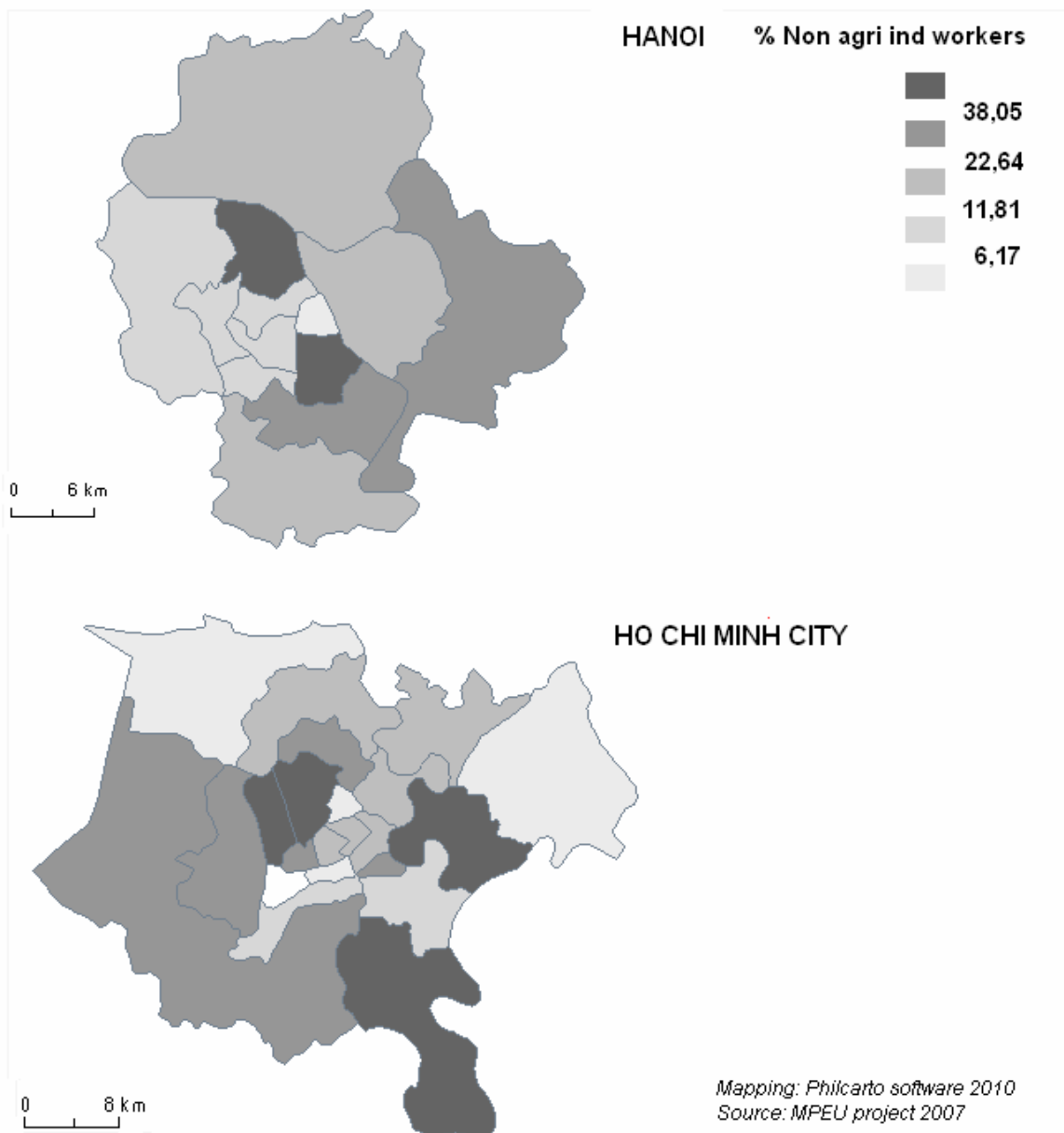


Figure 3: Proportion of non agricultural occupied independent workers by district in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
(apart the peripheral districts of Soc Son in Hanoi, Cu Chi and Can Gio in Ho Chi Minh City)

Conclusion: The shortcomings of the available data on informal employment and the necessity of taking into account the “floating population”

Two indirect approaches of the informal sector in the Vietnamese metropolises, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, were attempted from the available data, from the individuals classified as ‘short-term temporary residents’ on one hand, from the ‘non agricultural independent workers’ on the other hand; these two approaches proved to be clearly insufficient to measure the level of the informal sector but they enable “to approach precariousness”.

It *shows a contrario* the interest of specific studies on the informal sector, either from employment surveys (Cling & al., 2009; Hussmanns, 2009), or by means of a specifically adapted survey like the 1-2-3 surveys on living standards for example (Razafindrakoto & al., 2009).

However, in Vietnam, until now all representative surveys exclusively concerned the “resident population” in the city (thus living there for six months or more or planning to remain there), whether it is migrant or not; these surveys totally eclipsed the *temporary movers* or “visitors”, present for less than six consecutive months in the city and who are thus considered as residents at their place of origin. In this context, migrants generally turn out to be rather richer than non migrants; this situation which seems paradoxical can be explained by the fact that it is a “selected” population, because it is constituted by the workers of the formal sector of which administration, the students who remained in the city at the completion of their studies, the spouses of a resident registered in the city...

Contrary to what takes place in other countries, a high number of “visitors” come here to the city for working, while continuing to declare themselves or to be declared “residents” in countryside; the residential registration is probably not unrelated to this situation. These people constitute a large stock of “floating population”, which came for work to the city, but practically living between city and countryside, in constant renewal. This term is more rarely used than in China (Goodkind and West, 2002), while it applies even better to the Vietnamese situation in which these people probably represent a higher proportion than in China with regard to the real migrants because of the simple fact of the short mean distance between the place of origin and the large metropolises. Thus following the adopted definitions, these visitors in the city are never counted, except in small qualitative surveys in which they are captured on their working place (for example on the street), while their great majority precisely works in the informal sector and constitutes the main part of the “poor” in the city and the least poor of the countryside... We are in fact in the unknown, what highlights the pressing necessity of a representative survey on the subject of temporary moves and poverty in the Vietnamese metropolises.

The methodology exists. According to the statistical data of the Labour Union of Ho Chi Minh City and the Management Committee of Free and Industrial Zones of the city, a large majority of migrants (as often, it is here a generic word representing the natives of other provinces, without distinguishing the duration of their stay) are welcomed by relatives in “ordinary households” (*Le Courrier du Vietnam*, 17th May 2009); the others rent a room or a studio (then they constitute an “ordinary household”) or spend their nights on construction sites, in shops and in dormitories of companies. The methodology worked out for the survey on intra-urban mobilities in 2003 (Gubry & al., 2008) and applied again to the survey on “Migration, poverty and urban environment” in 2007 is perfectly adapted to this data collection with a two degrees draw taking advantage of the existing distribution in blocks (*to*

dan pho) at first degree, then drawing households on lists established at the time of the survey in the selected blocks, independent from those of the administration, at second degree. Thus the blocks drawn at first degree actually constitute areolar units in which it is possible to spot also the non conventional floating population's places of stay like construction sites.

The Statistical Service has just implemented, at the end of 2009, an "Urban Poverty Survey" (UPS) in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City aiming at filling a part of these gaps. We are expecting much from the results of this survey that we hope soon. However, the exam of the methodology shows that this survey does not exhaust the subject and highlights certain limitations:

- the sampling design with the distinction *a priori* of two categories within the sample (880 households and 880 individuals outside of these households in Ho Chi Minh City) is extremely complex;
- the survey only takes into account people who came to the city for work (thus this question has to be asked from the establishment of the sampling base, while a battery of questions should be implemented to answer it correctly);
- the survey takes into account as well the urban zone as of the rural zone included in the administrative limits of both cities (so it doesn't anymore exactly concern "urban poverty");
- on the other hand, the survey does not take into account peripheral urban zones located in the neighboring provinces, but with a continuance of the built area with the city centre (urban parts of Binh Duong and Dong Nai provinces which are now contiguous with the urban zones of Ho Chi Minh City) and so it will not give results about the urban agglomerations;
- in Hanoi, the administrative limits prior to 2008 were kept, excluding even some contiguous peripheral urban zones currently located in the province of Hanoi (formerly Ha Tay province);
- the survey did not take into account for its schedule the agricultural calendars in the rural departure zones, which would have enabled to identify the periods of low agricultural activity during which one may find the maximum temporary movers in the city, particularly those who are moving from Red River Delta towards Hanoi; it may lead to an underestimation of the temporary movers.

Thus there are still relevant reasons to adjust and deepen the analysis of this subject.

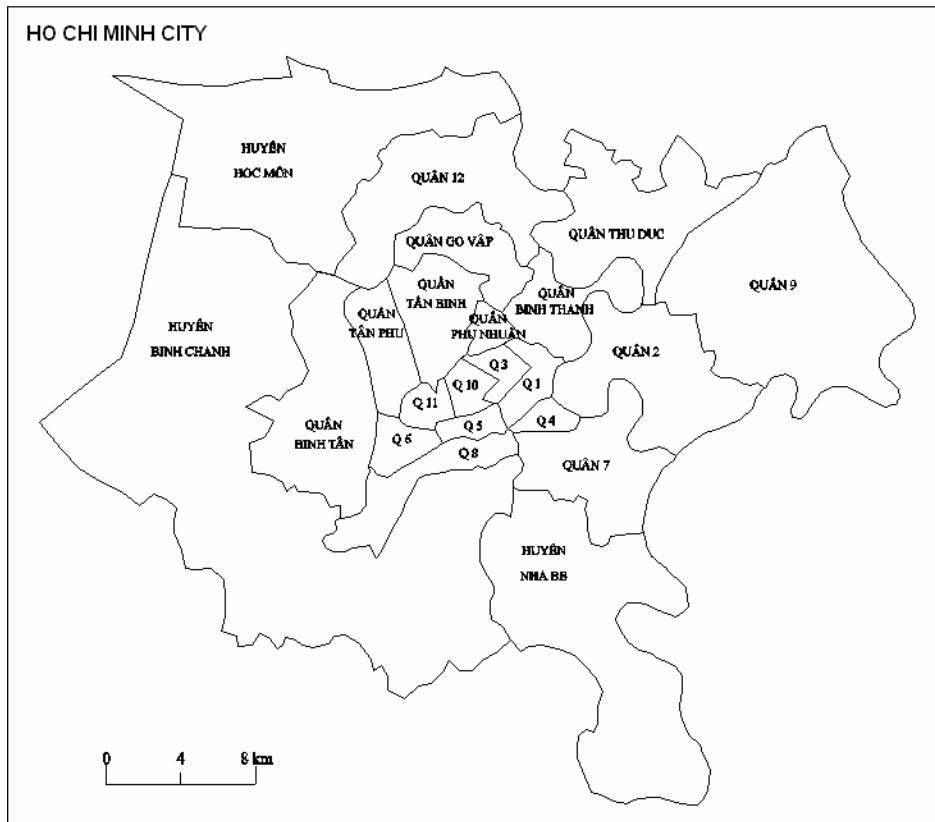
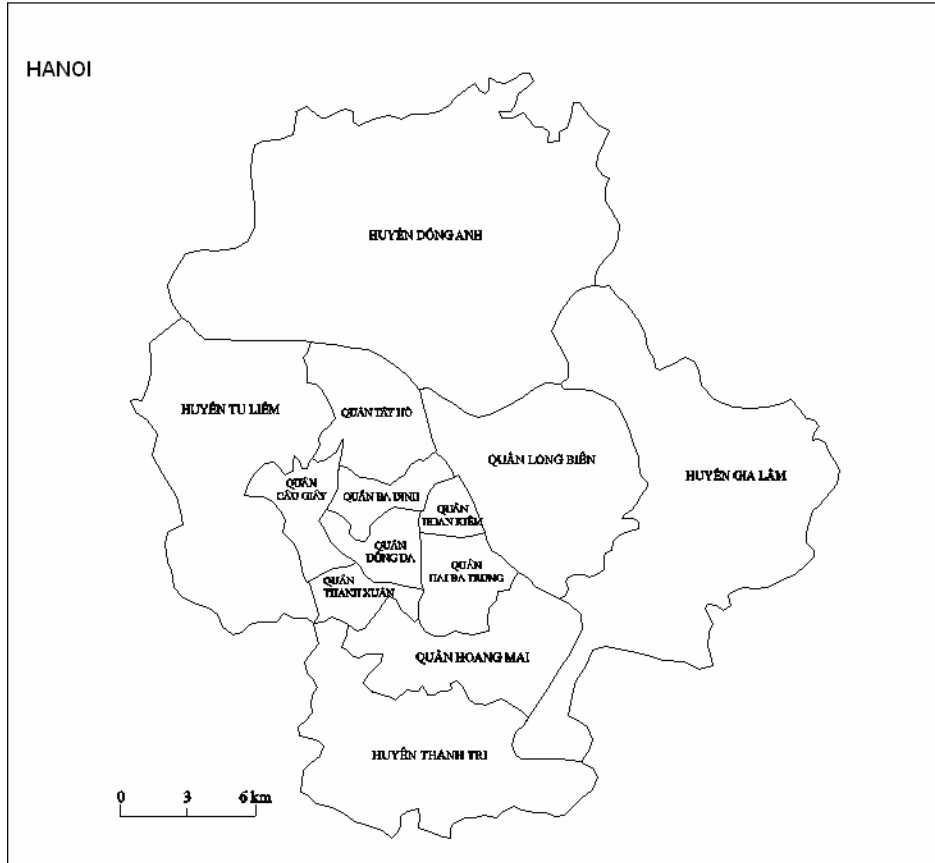
The urban informal sector contains a visible face which can however be only captured by specific surveys and a hidden face, totally unknown, which can only be comprehended by taking into account at last the "floating population"; this one is a part of the urban labour force and represents an important part of the workers of informal sector and the poor people "floating" between city and countryside. Within this population, the unemployed people for example are thus never counted in the city: either they left the city at the end of their employment (even if it means returning to the city at the first opportunity), or they are considered as residents at their place of origin, even if they live in the city.

Only a more complete knowledge of informality will enable to initiate policies intended to improve the consideration and the functioning of the informal sector, essential in the Vietnamese context, and to improve the living standards of the workers and the concerned families.

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Location maps of the Districts of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in 2007
(apart Soc Son District in Hanoi, Cu Chi and Can Gio Districts in Ho Chi Minh City)

Summary

Few studies were able to select the workers in the informal sector according to the detailed definition adopted by the 15th International conference of labour statisticians (January, 1993). Vietnam is not an exception. In these conditions, one may think of “approaching” the informal sector by means of various indicators characterizing the workers of this sector. The level of non wage-earning employment is a way to differentiate the informal sector from the formal one; in Vietnam, where residential registration still exists, the holding of a short-term temporary residential permit (KT4) is another one.

Apart from the 2007 Labour survey implemented by the General Statistics Office, which enabled to select “non registered enterprises”, two recent operations allow to approach the informal sector in both Vietnamese metropolises, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City:

- the 2004 Census of Ho Chi Minh City, which is the only operation having directly noted down the residential status from the whole population of the city;
- the survey “Migration, poverty and urban environment: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City”, implemented in partnership between the Institute for Population and Social Studies (IPSS, Hanoi), the Ho Chi Minh City Institute for Development Studies (HIDS) and the Institute of Research for Development (IRD, France); this survey notably provides information about employment status (among which ‘Independent worker’).

Thus these two operations enable to indirectly characterize the workers of the informal sector according to their socioeconomic characteristics. They also allow to make geographic distinctions between districts. Finally, neither the ‘residential status’, nor the number of ‘independent workers’ seem able to estimate the level of informal employment, but they enable the analysis of some important characteristics of precariousness.

However these operations, like all similar operations, exclusively apply to the “resident population” in the city (thus for a duration of six months or more), whether it is migrant or not; they totally omit the temporary movers or “visitors”, present for less than six consecutive months in the city and who are thus considered as residents in their place of origin. These persons form an important stock of “floating population”, the main characteristic of which in Vietnam is that it often came to the city to work, while living between city and countryside. These visitors in the city are never counted in the representative surveys while the large majority of them precisely work in the informal sector and constitute the main part of the urban “poor” and the least poor of the countryside...

We are here in the unknown, which highlights the pressing necessity of a representative survey on the subject of temporary moves and poverty in Vietnamese metropolises. The Statistical Office has just implemented an Urban Poverty Survey (UPS) intended to bridge part of this gap; it can still be improved. A sample survey based on a sample of blocks is proposed here. Only a more complete knowledge of informality will enable to initiate policies intended to improve the consideration and the functioning of the informal sector, essential in the Vietnamese context, and to improve the living standards of the workers and the concerned families.

Tóm tắt

Không nhiều nghiên cứu đưa ra cách thức xác định lao động khu vực phi chính thức theo định nghĩa chi tiết được thông qua tại Hội thảo quốc tế lần thứ 15 của các chuyên gia thống kê lao động (tháng 1 năm 1993). Việt nam cũng không là trường hợp ngoại lệ. Trong bối cảnh đó chúng tôi có thể tiếp cận khu vực phi chính thức theo các tiêu thức khác nhau mang nét đặc trưng của lao động khu vực này. Tỷ lệ lao động làm công không hưởng lương là một trong những tiêu chí để phân biệt khu vực phi chính thức với khu vực chính thức ; ở Việt nam, nơi đăng ký hộ khẩu thường trú vẫn còn tồn tại, thì giấy đăng ký tạm trú ngắn hạn (KT4) cũng là một tiêu chí có thể sử dụng để phân biệt khu vực phi chính thức và chính thức.

Ngoài cuộc điều tra về việc làm của Tổng cục Thống kê năm 2007 cho phép lựa chọn các “doanh nghiệp không đăng ký”, hai cuộc điều tra mới đây cũng cho phép tiếp cận khu vực phi chính thức tại hai khu vực đô thị lớn nhất Việt nam là Hà Nội và TP.Hồ Chí Minh. Cụ thể là :

- Cuộc điều tra dân số giữa kỳ tại TP.HCM năm 2004 : là cuộc điều tra duy nhất trực tiếp đề cập đến tình trạng sinh sống của toàn bộ dân cư thành phố.
- Cuộc điều tra “Di dân, nghèo đói và môi trường đô thị tại Hà nội và TP.Hồ Chí Minh” do Viện dân số và các vấn đề xã hội (IPSS, Hà Nội), Viện nghiên cứu phát triển TP.Hồ Chí Minh (HIDS) và Viện nghiên cứu vì sự phát triển (IRD, Cộng hòa Pháp) phối hợp thực hiện. Cuộc điều tra này chủ yếu đề cập đến các thông tin liên quan đến tình trạng việc làm (trong đó có lao động tự do).

Hai cuộc điều tra này cho phép nhận biết một cách gián tiếp lao động khu vực phi chính thức theo các đặc điểm kinh tế-xã hội. Ngoài ra, thông qua hai cuộc điều tra này, chúng tôi cũng có thể thấy được sự khác biệt về mặt địa lý theo quận huyện. Tóm lại, có vẻ như “tình trạng cư trú” cũng như “lao động tự do” cũng không cho phép chúng tôi đánh giá đầy đủ về mức độ/tỷ lệ việc làm phi chính thức, nhưng thông qua hai cuộc điều tra này cũng có thể phân tích một số đặc điểm quan trọng của lực lượng lao động này.

Cũng như tất cả các cuộc điều tra tương tự, hai cuộc điều tra nêu trên mới tập trung chủ yếu vào “dân cư sinh sống thường xuyên” ở thành thị (bao gồm những người sống ở thành phố từ 6 tháng trở lên), không phân biệt họ là người di cư hay không mà bỏ qua toàn bộ những người di chuyển tạm thời, sống ở thành phố dưới 6 tháng. Những người này được coi là dân cư tại nơi mà họ ra đi. Họ tạo thành bộ phận “*dân cư lưu động*” khá lớn ở thành thị, ra thành phố làm việc và sinh sống lúc ở thành phố, lúc ở quê, hình thành nên một nét đặc trưng của Việt nam. Những người sinh sống tạm thời này không bao giờ được tính đến trong các cuộc điều tra chọn mẫu, tuy nhiên đại bộ phận họ làm việc trong khu vực phi chính thức và phần lớn là “những người nghèo” ở thành thị và ít nghèo hơn so với những người sống ở nông thôn.

Với đối tượng này, chúng tôi hoàn toàn không thể nhận biết. Điều đó chứng tỏ tính cấp thiết phải thực hiện một cuộc điều tra chọn mẫu về di chuyển tạm thời và nghèo đói tại khu vực đô thị Việt nam. Cuộc điều tra về nghèo đói tại khu vực đô thị do Tổng cục Thống kê (UPS) được thực hiện mới đây đã khắc phục phần nào sự thiếu hụt về thông tin. Cuộc điều tra này có thể hoàn thiện hơn nữa. Chúng tôi đề xuất một cuộc khảo sát trên cơ sở mẫu điều tra là các tổ dân phố. Chỉ có sự hiểu biết đầy đủ về khu vực phi chính thức mới có thể đưa ra các chính sách nhằm hoàn thiện việc tính toán và vận hành khu vực phi chính thức, đặc biệt là trong bối cảnh của Việt nam, và nâng cao điều kiện sống của người lao động và gia đình họ.

Résumé

Peu d'études ont été en mesure de sélectionner les travailleurs du secteur informel selon la définition détaillée adoptée par la 15^e conférence internationale des statisticiens du travail (janvier 1993). Le Viêt-nam ne fait pas exception. Dans ces conditions, on peut songer « approcher » le secteur informel par le biais de différents indicateurs caractérisant les travailleurs de ce secteur. Le niveau de l'emploi non salarié est un moyen pour différencier le secteur informel du secteur formel ; au Viêt-nam, où perdure l'enregistrement résidentiel, la détention d'un permis de résidence temporaire à courte durée (KT4) en est un autre.

En dehors de l'enquête emploi de 2007 menée par l'Office Général de la Statistique, qui a permis de sélectionner les « entreprises non enregistrées », deux opérations récentes permettent d'approcher le secteur informel dans les deux métropoles vietnamiennes, Hanoi et Hô Chi Minh Ville :

- le recensement de Hô Chi Minh Ville de 2004, qui est la seule opération ayant relevé directement le statut résidentiel sur l'ensemble de la population de la ville ;
- l'enquête « Migration, pauvreté et environnement urbain : Hanoi et Hô Chi Minh Ville », menée en coopération entre l'Institute for Population and Social Studies (IPSS, Hanoi), le Ho Chi Minh City Institute for Development Studies (HIDS) et l'Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD, France) ; cette enquête donne notamment l'information sur le statut dans l'emploi (dont « travailleur indépendant »).

Ces deux opérations permettent donc de caractériser indirectement les travailleurs du secteur informel selon leurs caractéristiques socio-économiques. Elles permettent aussi de faire des distinctions géographiques entre arrondissements. Finalement, ni le 'statut résidentiel', ni le nombre de 'travailleurs indépendants' ne semblent être en mesure d'évaluer le niveau de l'emploi informel, mais ils permettent d'analyser certaines caractéristiques importantes de la précarité.

Cependant ces opérations, comme toutes les opérations similaires, portent exclusivement sur la « population résidente » en ville (donc pour une durée de six mois ou plus), qu'elle soit migrante ou non ; elles occultent totalement les personnes en déplacement temporaire ou « visiteurs », présents pour moins de six mois consécutifs en ville et qui sont donc considérées comme résidentes dans leur lieu d'origine. Ces personnes forment un important stock de « population flottante », dont la caractéristique principale au Viêt-nam est qu'elle est souvent venue en ville pour y travailler, tout en vivant entre ville et campagne. Ces visiteurs en ville ne sont jamais comptés dans les enquêtes représentatives alors que leur grande majorité travaille précisément dans le secteur informel et forme l'essentiel des « pauvres » en ville et des moins pauvres de la campagne...

Nous sommes ici dans l'inconnu, ce qui met en lumière la nécessité impérieuse d'une enquête représentative sur le thème des déplacements temporaires et de la pauvreté dans les métropoles vietnamiennes. L'Office de la Statistique vient de réaliser une enquête sur la pauvreté urbaine (UPS) destinée à combler une partie de cette lacune ; elle peut encore être améliorée. Une enquête par sondage basée sur un échantillon d'îlots est ici proposée. Seule une connaissance plus complète de l'informalité permettra de concevoir des politiques destinées à améliorer la prise en compte et le fonctionnement du secteur informel, essentiel dans le contexte vietnamien, et à améliorer les conditions de vie des travailleurs et des familles concernées.