

# The challenges encountered by street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam

An analysis of the challenges street-level bureaucrats encounter while attempting to combat pesticide related problems.



Course: International Public Management and Public Policy  
First reader: Dr. F. van Nispen acting on behalf of Dr. P. Marks  
Second reader: Dr. P. Hupe  
Student: Thomas T. Zijderveld  
Student number: 202057  
Date: 10/11/2010

## Table of Contents

List of figures .....	4
List of tables .....	4
List of abbreviations .....	4
Acknowledgements .....	5
Summary .....	6
1. Introduction .....	7
1.1. A short history of Vietnam .....	7
1.2. Socio-economic factors, dealing with a nation in transition .....	9
1.2.1. Economic growth .....	10
1.2.2. External influences .....	10
1.2.3. Emerging democratic influences .....	11
1.3. Changing political and administrative structure .....	11
1.3.1. Demise of the Soviet Union .....	11
1.3.2. Globalization .....	11
1.3.3. General evolution of a political and administrative system .....	11
1.4. Chapter summary .....	13
2. Research objective .....	14
3. Theoretical framework .....	15
3.1. Policy Implementation (A) .....	15
3.1.1. Top-down .....	15
3.1.2. Bottom-up .....	16
3.2. Street-level bureaucracy (B) .....	17
3.2.1. Conditions of influence .....	18
3.4. Administrative discretion (C) .....	20
3.5. Public accountability (D) .....	21
3.6. Policy tools (E) .....	23
3.7. Chapter summary .....	24
4. Research methodology .....	25
4.1. Motivation .....	25
4.2. Research criteria .....	26
4.3. Research method .....	27
4.3.1. Documents .....	27
4.3.2. Interviews .....	27
4.3.3. Observations .....	28
4.4. Chapter summary .....	28
5. Case study .....	29
5.1. What are pesticides? .....	29

5.2.	Pesticide related issues .....	30
5.2.1.	Cause of the issues.....	30
5.2.2.	Effect of the issues.....	31
5.3.	Pesticide related policies.....	32
5.4.	Policy implementation issues .....	35
5.4.1.	Lack of priority .....	35
5.4.2.	Lack of funds .....	36
5.4.3.	Lack of accountability.....	36
5.5.	Chapter summary.....	37
6.	Research analysis.....	38
6.1.	Policy implementation .....	38
6.1.1.	Top-down .....	38
6.1.2.	Bottom-up.....	38
6.2.	Challenges encountered by street-level bureaucrats .....	39
6.2.1.	Strenuous client relationship.....	40
6.2.2.	Unrealistic goal expectations .....	42
6.2.3.	Discrepancy between demand and supply .....	44
6.2.4.	Performance orientation.....	45
6.3.	Chapter summary.....	48
3	Conclusion.....	49
6.4.	Answering the sub-questions .....	49
6.5.	Answering the central research question.....	52
7.	Recommendations .....	54
8.	Reflection .....	55
	Sources .....	56
	Appendix I – Classification of pesticides.....	58
	Appendix II – Overview of pesticide related policies.....	59
	Appendix III – List of interviews .....	61

## List of figures

Figure 1 – Research design .....	7
Figure 2 – Historic development of the Vietnamese GDP in current million US\$.....	9
Figure 3 – Local government structure Vietnam .....	12
Figure 4 – Theoretical framework .....	15
Figure 5 – A model of the policy-implementation process.....	16
Figure 6 – Conditions of influence experienced by street-level bureaucrat, derived from Lipsky .....	18
Figure 7 – WHO classification of pesticides.....	58
Figure 8 – Vietnamese Government classification of pesticides .....	58

## List of tables

Table 1 – Forums of public accountability.....	22
Table 2 – A typology of the accountability regimes at the street-level.....	22
Table 3 – Linking the policy tools with the modes of implementation .....	24
Table 4 – Research criteria.....	26
Table 5 – Level of public accountability with regard to the client relationship .....	40
Table 6 – Level of influence with regard to the client relationship .....	42
Table 7 – Level of influence with regard to the goal expectation.....	44
Table 8 – Level of influence with regard to the resources .....	45
Table 9 – Level of influence with regard to the lacking performance .....	48
Table 10 – Level of influence of the socio-economic factors .....	51
Table 11 – Level of influence of the policy related factors.....	52
Table 12 – Overview of pesticide related policies.....	60

## List of abbreviations

AI	Active Ingredient
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HAU	Hanoi Agriculture University
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
NA	National Assembly
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NILP	National Institute of Labour Protection
PCC	Pesticide Control Centers
PPD	Plant Protection Department
VIDS	Vietnam Institute of Development Studies
VNGO	Vietnamese Non-Governmental Organizations
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

## Acknowledgements

I started working on this thesis in the early summer of 2006 when I was introduced to Pham Van Hoi. From the very beginning the topic surrounding the pesticide related issues in Vietnam fascinated me, mainly due to the passionate accounts given by Hoi. This fascination has stayed with me throughout the years that I have worked in this thesis. And it has been many years that I have worked on it. Numerous people, including Dr. Marks, openly wondered if I would ever finish this research which now lays in front of you. In all honesty I can repeat what I replied in all those cases: *of course I am going to finish it, I am not going to quit with the finish in sight!* In hindsight I can safely state that the finish only recently came in sight.

Nonetheless, this chapter is not about the struggles I had while writing this thesis, it is traditionally written to give credit to those who supported the author. This is what I will do by first of all giving credit to my past (EUR, PuurPXL) and present employers (Capgemini) which supported me during my studies. Their relentless interest, patience, and support was at some times crucial for me to conclude my studies; Sonja, Darja, Pleun and Bart: thank you! Also a number of friends and loved ones helped and supported me while writing this thesis. In particular I would like to thank Jan-Jaap for the endless moments of reflection during which I gained interesting new insights. Maris: your patience and support was very important to me during the past few months. I promise to make up the missed vacations and trips we had planned. But also my brother and sisters who supported me throughout my studies, in one way or another.

The help of the following people was essential during the research of this thesis. My gratitude goes out to all those who gave their time and shared their knowledge: Mr. Neil Jamieson, Ms. Misha Coleman, Mr. Bill Todd, Mr. Chiranjibi Tiwari and of course all the interviewees. During the summer of 2006 I visited Hanoi for over 5 weeks in order to gather my research data. Upon arrival I was welcomed by Bengt and Kitty who throughout my stay in Hanoi introduced me to many friendly and interesting people. Thank you so much for making my stay in Hanoi so much more pleasant!

However, I can safely state that without the following people this thesis could not have been written at all. First of all I would like to thank my father and mother who supported my academic career in all possible ways. Secondly, but certainly not less important, Pham Van Hoi. His help and knowledge was crucial throughout this research. Hoi has shown me the troubles but also the beauty of Vietnam, thank you so much! Finally I would like to thank Dr. Frans van Nispen for being able to act on behalf of Dr. Peter Marks on such a short notice. Dr. Peter Hupe for the feedback as a second reader. And of course Dr. Peter Marks for his endless help and enlightenment as the first reader of this thesis.

Thomas Zijderveld  
Rotterdam, 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2010

## Summary

Vietnam's modern history can be characterized as one filled with conflict and hardship. The *Đổi Mới* reforms -introduced in the mid 1980s- resulted in an impressive economic growth which is still visible today. However, the years of war, subsequent poverty and recent economic growth has had an impact on the current socio-economic situation in Vietnam. Increase in personal wealth is high on the agenda for many Vietnamese. This desire has been further stimulated by the internet and satellite TV which introduced influences from abroad. The Vietnamese government itself is also affected by external influences although in a different form. The recent accession to the WTO is a prime example of this. Many policies had to be altered or designed to adhere to the conditions of the accession.

The introduction on Vietnam and the current socio-economic and policy related changes it is currently undergoing are the backdrop of this research. The actual research focuses on the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats whom are combating the pesticide related issues. Therefore the central research question of this thesis is as following: *Which challenges, stemming from pesticide related issues, do street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam encounter in their day-to-day work? How do street-level bureaucrats deal with these challenges and what factors are of influence to their methods of dealing?*

The theoretical framework is with regard to this research crucial in order to understand the challenges which the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats encounter. Figure 4 visualizes this framework by connecting multiple related theories. The theory on policy implementation can be considered as the focal point of the framework. Michael Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy is by far the most important theory of this research and directly related to the three other theories: administrative discretion, public accountability and the available policy tools. Within the theory of street-level bureaucracy four different conditions of influence have been described which will play an important role in the analysis chapter of this research.

However, before the analysis is done the case study of this research focuses on three important aspects. First of all the pesticide related issues currently visible in Vietnam. Categorized by cause and effect these issues make clear that the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats are combating a serious problem. Secondly, an overview is given of a number of pesticide related policies currently implemented in Vietnam. Finally, the case study focuses on three major implementation issues encountered by the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats.

The research analysis chapter brings together the theoretical framework and the case study using the earlier designed research criteria. It first analyzes the policy implementation process where it will become clear that the top-down process of implementation is the dominant one in Vietnam. However, the bottom-up process is currently emerging. The street-level bureaucrat is responsible for this bottom-up process, however he runs into a number of challenges. The strenuous client relationship, unrealistic goal expectations, lack of resources and the performance orientation all have their influence on the implementation process. This chapter will further make clear to which degree these challenges are affected by the socio-economic and policy related factors.

With regard to the central research question it is apparent that the socio-economic factors have a major impact on the challenges of the client relationship and the unrealistic goal expectations. External influences via the internet and satellite TV empower the Vietnamese citizens, they become more critical on their government and as such the street-level bureaucrats. The policy related factors have -in return- a major impact on the challenges of the discrepancy between demand vs. supply and the performance orientation. The pesticide related policies do not receive the priority they deserve. Policies designed to enable further economic growth receive more attention. As a result of this the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats are caught in a situation where they have to work with a structural lack of resources and respect of their clients.

## 1. Introduction

For many years I have had a fascination with Asia's modern history, its resilience and its impressive social and economic development. Countries such as China, South-Korea, and Vietnam encountered many hardships such as wars and economic crises. Yet in recent decades these countries have undergone an impressive social, economic and political transition. However, in early 2006 I was -by chance- introduced to PhD candidate Pham Van Hoi. While conducting his research at Wageningen University I had the opportunity to meet him over a cup of coffee. During this short meeting he told me about the many pesticide related issues manifesting in his home country Vietnam. Having triggered my interest and a possible research topic for my master thesis, Hoi was quick to offer his helping hand. As such, I visited Hanoi for some five weeks during the summer of 2006. While being in Hanoi I managed to interview (frequently with Hoi's all too important help) several actors related to this research topic. The results of -among other- these interviews have been gathered and analyzed in this thesis. This research however consist of several chapters that help to further understand the research analysis. The *theoretical framework* in chapter 3, the *research methodology* in chapter 4 and the *case study* in chapter 5 all come combined form the *research analysis* (chapter 6). Figure 1 visualizes the relationship between the chapters and more important: the role the research analysis chapter has.

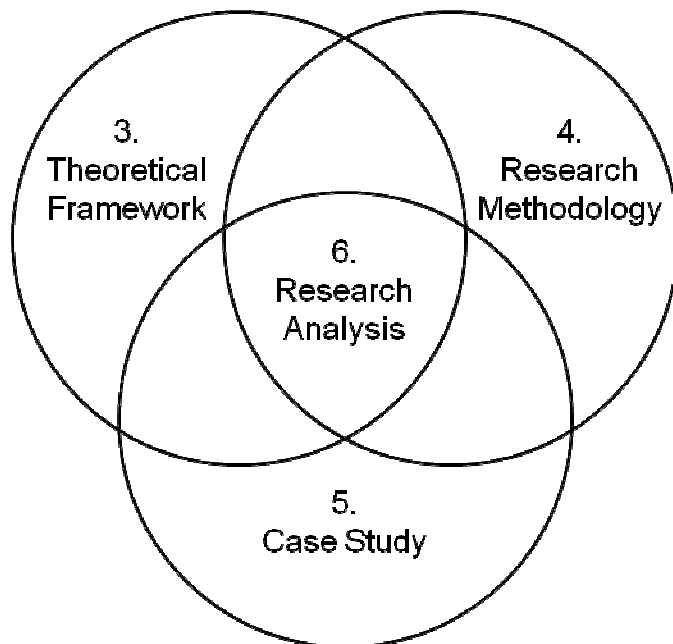


Figure 1 – Research design

However, before commencing with the actual research as visualized in Figure 1 this opening chapter will further shed light on several important variables introduced later in this research. The following paragraph continues with a short history of Vietnam which will help to understand the current state of mind in Vietnam. Next, further insight will be given on the current economic and social transition that is taking place. Followed by a short explanation of the political and administrative structure currently in Vietnam.

### 1.1. A short history of Vietnam

Vietnam's encounter with modern societies came to a climax in 1858 when a combined French and Spanish fleet landed at Đà Nẵng. Their intended march towards (at that time) the capitol of Hue ran into fierce opposition by the Vietnamese powers that be, the Nguyen court. Failing to capture the capitol the forces turned south towards the Mekong delta and the major city Saigon, which fell in the hands of the French in 1859. In 1862 -after several successful French military campaigns- the

Nguyen court conceded their defeat by signing a peace treaty. The treaty practically gave all the power to the French and allowed their catholic priests to continue their evangelizing of the Vietnamese. Which was by all means the reason why the French and Spanish started their military campaign some four years earlier (Jamieson, 1995, pp. 43-44).

The French occupation of Vietnam was unacceptable for many of the predominantly Buddhist and Taoist population. Soon several local partisan groups attempted to fight the French occupation. Their lack of skills and funds rendered their numerous actions futile and often provoked harsh French reprisals. It took many years for the Vietnamese to organize their resistance. In 1941 during the Japanese occupation –which lasted from 1940 until 1945– a former pastry-chef called Nguyen Ai Quoc joined a resistance group called the Viet Minh (Luong, 2001). Although the Viet Minh upheld a Leninist ideology, American intelligence officers assisted his organization during the fight against the Japanese and even saved the life of Quoc while he was seriously ill from malaria and dysentery. The Americans might have regretted that helping hand as Quoc was also known as *He who enlightens*, Vietnamese for Ho Chi Minh (Beyer, 2003, p. 190).

When the Japanese surrendered and the French resumed control over Vietnam, the Viet Minh continued their struggle for independence. Due to the fact that the Americans were allies of the French, the Viet Minh could not receive any of their support for Vietnamese independence. Even though Ho Chi Minh personally asked President Truman in February 1946 for his help (Beyer, 2003, p. 191). Truman's denial of help led to a large Soviet / Chinese backed war against the French. This lasted until 1954 when the French were defeated at the legendary battle at Dien Bien Phu. Disagreement among the Vietnamese resulted in Vietnam being split in a communist northern part (called the *Democratic Republic of Vietnam*) and below the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel the *Republic of South Vietnam*, which was backed by many western nations (Luong, 2001).

By the end of the 1950s the French had already left north- and south-Vietnam. By 1959 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam initiated a military campaign against the south. With the Cold War being at a boiling point, the American President Kennedy decided to put a halt to the communist campaign against the Republic of South Vietnam. In 1961 he sent military advisors to support the South Vietnamese army (Luong, 2001). Unable to successfully counter the North Vietnamese threat President Johnson eventually sent 3.500 marines to South Vietnam in 1965. Joining the some 20.000 American 'advisors' already present in south Vietnam. It was now official: American troops were actively participating in combat against north Vietnamese soldiers or communist guerilla troops (Valken, 1989, p. 787).

The 'reunification-war' with the south (and the United States) lasted until the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1975 when the South Vietnamese capitol of Saigon fell in North Vietnamese hands. While the last Americans – still present in Saigon– were being evacuated many of their former South Vietnamese allies tried to escape the country. Unfortunately numerous people did not succeed and the 'lucky ones' were subsequently detained by the communist rulers in the years that followed.

Sadly enough Vietnamese war history did not end with the 'reunification' of the north and the south. By the beginning of the 1980s Vietnam had fought with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and (unknown to many) the Chinese in a bloody border conflict. These wars led –combined with other factors– to a situation where the Vietnam's economy was in a dismal state in the early 1980s. To prevent large scale famine Vietnam had to import food and ration it among the population. By the mid 1980s the Vietnamese Government introduced the *Đổi Mới* reforms: a set of (mainly) economic renewal policies (Fromonteil, 2009). By the beginning of the 1990s these reforms led to an impressive economic growth measure by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As can be seen in Figure 2 the GDP more than double between 1992 (current US\$9.867.000.000) and 1995 (current US\$20.736.000.000) (www.worldbank.org, 2010). However, in the past decade the economic growth has been far more



spectacular. For example, the growth between 2007 and 2008 (current US\$22.020.000.000) was higher the total GDP of 1995. The GDP increase since 2007 can for a large part be explained by Vietnam's accession to the WTO (World Trade Organization) (www.vietnamnet.vn, 2008) in January 2007 (www.wto.org, 2010).

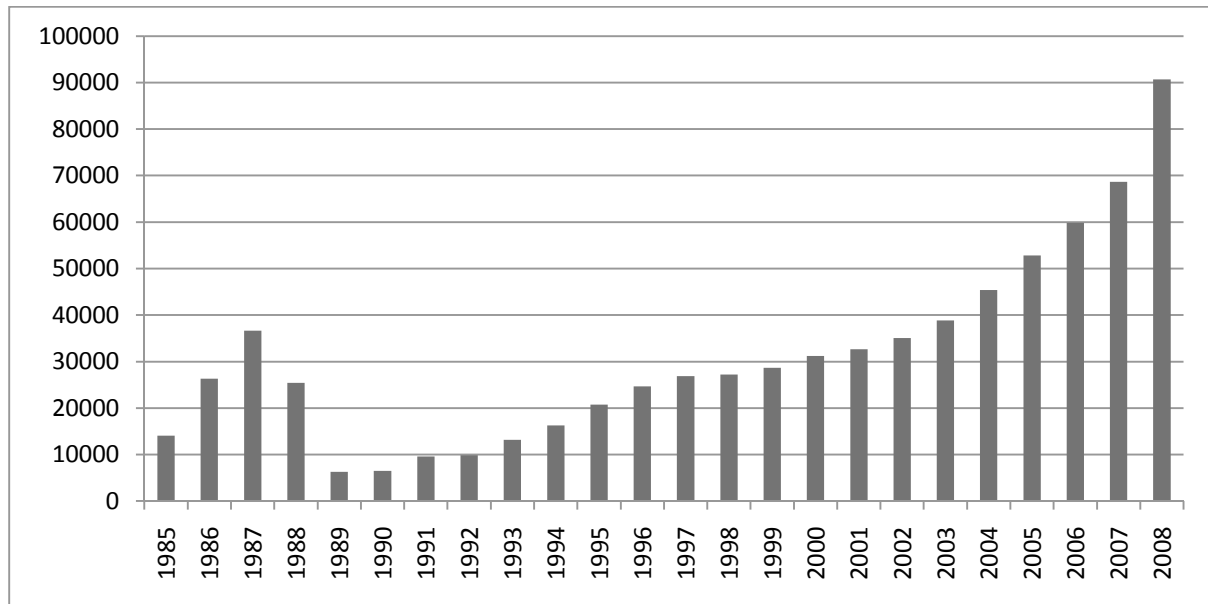


Figure 2 – Historic development of the Vietnamese GDP in current million US\$ (www.worldbank.org, 2010)

9

The *Đổi Mới* reforms not only initiated a remarkable economic growth with regard to Vietnam's GDP. In the 1998 'household welfare transition'-report the World Bank wrote the following: "Vietnam's development since 1985 provides important lessons for economic and social policy. Among the world's 40 poorest countries in 1985, Vietnam has since had –by far– the fastest growth rate. This rapid growth has transformed the country, reducing poverty from about 75 percent of the population to about 50 percent. At the same time, the transition from a planned to a market economy has created new challenges for public policy in a wide range of areas" (Dollar, Glewwe, & Litvack, 1998, p. XV). The growth of its GDP has not only had an enormous impact on Vietnam's economy but also on its society. Almost overnight people had more money to spend, frequently on luxury items. This for example led to a situation where the import of beverages and tobacco increased with 7650% between 1987 and 2003 (www.adb.org, 2005). Even more worrying is the enormous growth in the consumption of petroleum (www.adb.org, 2005) which has its obvious negative effects on the Vietnamese environment and health of the population.

Vietnam is no longer the poor and struggling nation; the "socialist oriented market economy" (Fromonteil, 2009) enabled the transition from a state ruled economy to a government directed market economy. The following paragraph will further explain this transition and the effects of it on the economy and society.

## 1.2. Socio-economic factors, dealing with a nation in transition

Numerous economists have written about nations that are changing from a planned economy to an open market. In general these nations are referred to as *transition economies*. In the case of Vietnam the *Đổi Mới* reforms can be considered as the official start to the transition it is still undergoing. *Đổi Mới* saw light for the first time in 1986 when it was introduced during the Sixth Party Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam as a new economic reform programme. In the years that followed the reforms influenced many aspects of life. Alpert et al. stated that by 1988 "the farming household, which replaces the cooperative, is established as the basic economic unit in agricultural production. The law on Foreign Investments is approved, clearing the way for inflows of foreign investments."

(2005, p. 40). In the following year the *Đổi Mới* reforms continue to be implemented by the abolition of many subsidies, price controls and restrictions in trade. Subsequently the restructuring of the banking system took place (Alpert, et al., 2005, p. 40). By 1990 “excise, turnover and business profits taxes are introduced” (Alpert, et al., 2005, p. 40). In 1991 the introduction of personal income tax took place and foreign banks were allowed to open branches (Alpert, et al., 2005, p. 40). These are some of the most influential economic reforms that took place.

However, the transition that was and still is taking place also had its influence on the Vietnamese society. The following three factors will further focus on the cause of the Vietnamese social transition that is taking place.

### **1.2.1. Economic growth**

During the economic crises in the 1980s Vietnam experienced hyperinflation and economic stagnation. Many Vietnamese fled the country due to the lack of economic progress and democracy, and even due to large scale famine. By the early to mid 1990s the economic crises turned around and Vietnam experienced economic growth at about 9-10 percent per year, exports had increased tenfold, and overseas Vietnamese were returning with their wealth to take advantage of increasing investment opportunities (Dollar, et al., 1998, p. 1).

Increase in individual wealth also lead to a situation where one could afford luxury items like motorbikes, mobile phones, (satellite) television and internet connections. The emerging tourist industry and the above mentioned returning wealthy Vietnamese refugees gave a new insight for many people unfamiliar with the West. For some this culture shock was –and still is– an undesirable influence on Vietnamese society. But for many, mainly the younger generation, the western influence is a welcome one.

Typical western consumer patterns are becoming more and more visible in Vietnam. Status symbols like expensive mobile phones, branded clothing and personal motorcycles (and even cars) are very important to modern day youth in Vietnam. These influences are having its affect on traditional cultural values which are slowly disappearing to the background.

### **1.2.2. External influences**

Not only the visiting tourist and returning refugees have an effect on Vietnamese society, (global) technological developments like the internet, satellite television and (mobile) telephones have also broadened the frame of mind of many Vietnamese. During the harsh top-down rule in the 1970s and 1980s many Vietnamese had no way of referencing their life with other (western) societies. As is currently the case in, for example North Korea, the Vietnamese at that time knew only about other (western) societies through what its government told them.

During the 1990s many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) began their work in Vietnam. Educating the farmers to work more efficient, carefully advising the government in methods of good governance, providing healthcare at a higher standard, etc. etc. The westerners working in Vietnam (mainly in the large cities) came into contact with the local inhabitants. As a western aid worker in the early years one was only allowed to live and recreate within a set compound. One could only leave the compound under supervision of a Vietnamese government official and only with a purpose. By the mid 1990s this changed and westerners were allowed to live wherever in Vietnam, although they are currently not allowed to own real-estate.

The Vietnamese government accepted the fact that it is part of a global economy and as such it cannot keep out western influences. By 2006 Vietnam joined the WTO, which will have a serious impact on the country, not only with regard to the economy but also its culture.

### 1.2.3. Emerging democratic influences

The lure of the WTO and need to cooperate with other (western) nations force the Vietnamese to adopt more democratic practices. Remarkable developments are the Vietnamese NGOs, very common in democratic nations but somewhat out of place in a country where every part of life is controlled by the government. Although these Vietnamese Non-Governmental Organizations (VNGOs), as they are called, seem to work independent, they are still very much controlled by the government.

The change in society and the further emergence of a civil society became apparent in the 2006 'Civicus report' on civil society in Vietnam. In the introduction of this report the president of the VietNam Institute of Development Studies (VIDS), professor Dang Huu, made the following observation. "In Vietnam, as the *Đổi Mới* process moves forward, a wide range of civil society organizations have been established and tremendously developed. The people's participation in the development process has been increasingly enhanced" (Norlund, 2006, p. 1).

These three factors have and are currently still influencing the social transition taking place in Vietnam. It is clear that the social transition is mainly due to the economic transition that is taking place since the *Đổi Mới* reforms. One can state that the *Đổi Mới* reforms had an enormous influence on the whole way of life in Vietnam.

## 1.3. Changing political and administrative structure

Partly because Vietnam is focusing towards the west, its current basic political and administrative structure and/or system differs in part from what it was before. As is the case in most other nations, the Vietnamese system was not dormant for the past 25 years, it underwent several changes due to – among others– the following factors:

### 1.3.1. Demise of the Soviet Union

In the early 1980s the Soviet Union was running out of funds and could hardly support its communist allies such as Cuba, East-Germany and Vietnam. Not long after coming to office Soviet president Gorbachev introduced the *perestroika* ("restructuring") and *glasnost* ("openness") reforms (www.britannica.com, 2006). At that time the Vietnamese government introduced the aforementioned *Đổi Mới* reforms, in practice their first steps of independence from the Soviet Union. The 1989 collapse of the Berlin wall further set in motion the end of many communist nations with the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 being most devastating blow to the communist ideology along with its political and administrative structure. By that time the Vietnamese economy was growing rapidly and probably for the first time since 1946 (when Ho Chi Minh asked American President Truman for aid) Communist Vietnam officially opened its gates to the West (Beyer, 2003, p. 191).

### 1.3.2. Globalization

Technological developments made it possible for mankind to (inexpensively) travel to the other side of the planet in almost one day instead of months. The arrival of the internet for mainstream use allowed people to freely communicate without the constraints of time, place and high costs. In short, the world became smaller and more accessible for the average (western) citizen. Many corporations also benefited from these developments making it possible to do business almost all over the world. Combining this factor with the demise of the Soviet Union, Vietnam could no longer keep out western tourists, aid workers or investors. Until the mid 1990s the stream of tourists and the amount of western aid workers were strictly regulated, currently –and in particular– the tourist can travel freely throughout Vietnam. International trade and tourism are at present some of the most important sources of income for the Vietnamese.

### 1.3.3. General evolution of a political and administrative system

At the moment the Vietnamese political structure is still very much modeled after the early communist systems from all over the world. Although Vietnam is one of only five official communist nations in the

world, the above mentioned factors had little influence on this structure. The complex governmental system can be described as following.

Vietnam is under leadership of the Communist Party which holds a congress every five years to sketch out the general course of the nation. The Party Central Committee is responsible for policy guidelines in-between the two congresses. This committee is made up out of 150 party members (Vietnam Trade Office in the United States of America, 2002).

Although the Communist Party is the only political party in Vietnam it is not the highest official state authority. That is in fact the National Assembly (NA). The NA is open to Party and non-Party members and includes a maximum of 500 deputies and is elected for a period of five years. It has the following tasks and or powers:

- It is the only body with constitutional and legislative power.
- It elects both the President of the State and the Prime Minister.
- It approves the:
  - Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,
  - Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuracy (who in return is nominated by the President of the State) and
  - Members of the government cabinet (who have been selected by the Prime Minister).
- Several other powers such as decision-making surrounding "basic domestic and foreign policies, socio-economic tasks and targets, national defense and security issues, major principles governing the operation of the government, budget allocations to different ministries and supplement budgets for provinces, the social relations and activities of citizens" (Vietnam Trade Office in the United States of America, 2002).

Besides the NA the President of the State is the actual Head of State, as such he represents Vietnam on a national and international level. He also serves as "both the commander-in-chief of the People's Armed Forces and the chairman of the National Defense and Security Council" (www.vietnam-ustrade.org, 2002). The responsibility of the day-to-day handling goes to the Prime Minister (www.vietnam-ustrade.org, 2002). Furthermore Vietnam has some 26 ministries, committees etc. which are in some cases divided in specialized sub-departments (Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United States of America, 2006). Besides the central (national) government structure Vietnam has an extensive provincial, district and communal government structure. The following model shows Vietnamese government structure from the highest (Central Authority being the national government) to the lowest level (the communal level):

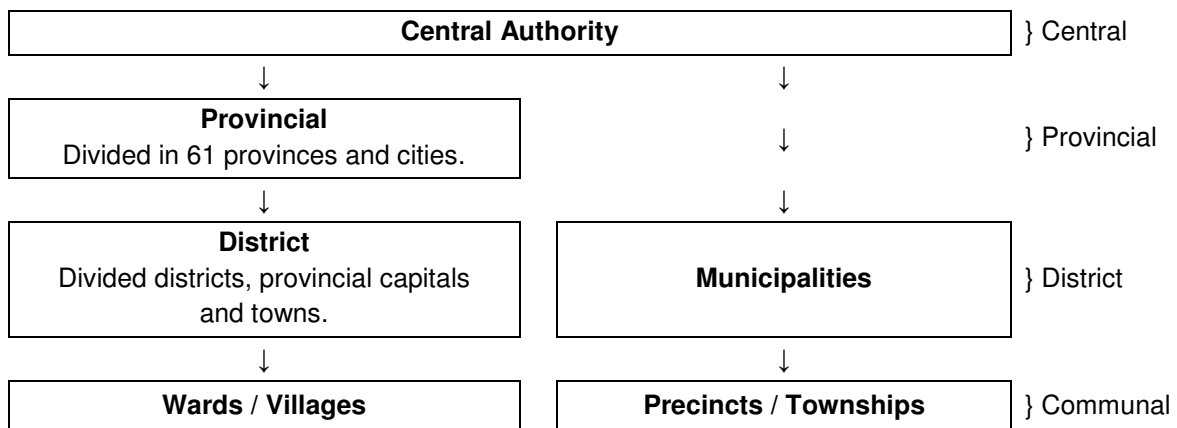


Figure 3 – Local government structure Vietnam (www.vietnam-ustrade.org, 2002)

The four government levels of Vietnam start from the top with the Central Authority, which is the national government with the aforementioned political institutions (i.e. the National Assembly, the President of the State, the People's Supreme Court and the Supreme People's Procuracy). At the

following three local levels (provincial, district and communal) every five years elections are held to choose the People's Councils. The People's Councils in turn elect the People's Committees which are the agencies for state administration on a local level. As such the People's Committees and the Central Government form the State administrative system in Vietnam ([www.caicachhanhchinh.gov.vn](http://www.caicachhanhchinh.gov.vn), 2004).

Having focused on the political structure of Vietnam it is also of importance to understand the legislative system. Although this system is very complex and would go beyond the scope of this research a short introduction is needed. In almost all of the cases the pesticide related policies are formalized in a legal structure, i.e. laws. In Vietnam the following types of laws are used:

- *Edict*  
This is an announcement of a law and consists of the following types of law: constitutional called *Hiến pháp*, an *Agreement*, a *Law* and an *Ordinance* called *Sắc lệnh*.
- *Decree*  
This is a rule of law issued by the head of state.
- *Decision*  
The decision consists of the type *Resolution* and *Inter-ministry decision*.
- *Circular*  
This is a written statement of government policy.
- *Official letter*
- *Directive*  
This is serving or intending to guide, govern or influence.

In the case study of this research a number of these types of laws will be further explained. Although not based upon their typology but only on the contents of these laws.

## 1.4. Chapter summary

The first chapter of this thesis started with a short introduction. It explained the reason how I got to this research topic and the way the thesis is structured. The following paragraph continued with a short history of modern Vietnam. It is important to get an overview of its history due to the fact that it has had an enormous impact of the current Vietnamese society. The second paragraph of this chapter further focused on the social and economic change Vietnam is currently undergoing. One can imagine that years of war, subsequent poverty and recent economic growth have had an impact on the current socio-economic situation. The final paragraph gave a brief explanation of the Vietnamese political and administrative system and the influences on it. This system is rather complex due to the many power levels within this political and administrative system.

## 2. Research objective

The previous paragraphs gave a short insight on the recent history of Vietnam, the current transition it is undergoing, and the administrative and political structure. These insights function as a reference for the case study of this research. As will be further explained in this research, Vietnam is a nation which is very much dependent on its large agricultural sector. Many types of pesticides are used on the numerous sorts of crops grown throughout the country. These pesticides have hazardous effects on the farmers, the environment and the consumers. There are several policies in place that should prevent the spread of these hazardous effects. However, the lower-echelon enforcers (street-level bureaucrats) of these policies still encounter issues that prevent them from effectively implementing these policies. With regard to these issues, the aim of this research is to gain insight into the challenges which street-level bureaucrats encounter while attempting to combat the pesticide related issues. This within the context of the current social and economic transition taking place in Vietnam. With regard to the aim of the research the following central research question has been formulated:

*Which challenges, stemming from pesticide related issues, do street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam encounter in their day-to-day work? How do street-level bureaucrats deal with these challenges and what factors are of influence to their methods of dealing?*

The challenges and issues mentioned in this rather lengthy central research question will be further focused on throughout this research. As this central question touches upon all the main issues of this thesis it has been divided in three sub-questions. The following sub-questions will be answered in the conclusion of this research and combined they will answer the central research question.

*1. With which challenges are street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam confronted that stem from pesticide related issues?*

The first sub-question touches upon two major topics further explored in the case study of this research. It is apparent that the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats are confronted with a number of challenges while attempting to perform their work on a day-to-day basis. However, a number of these challenges are stemming from the pesticide issues currently visible in Vietnam. Both the challenges encountered by the street-level bureaucrats and the pesticide related issues are further explained in the case study of this research. In the analysis chapter the challenges stemming from the pesticide related issues are further analyzed using the theoretical framework.

*2. How do street-level bureaucrats deal with these challenges?*

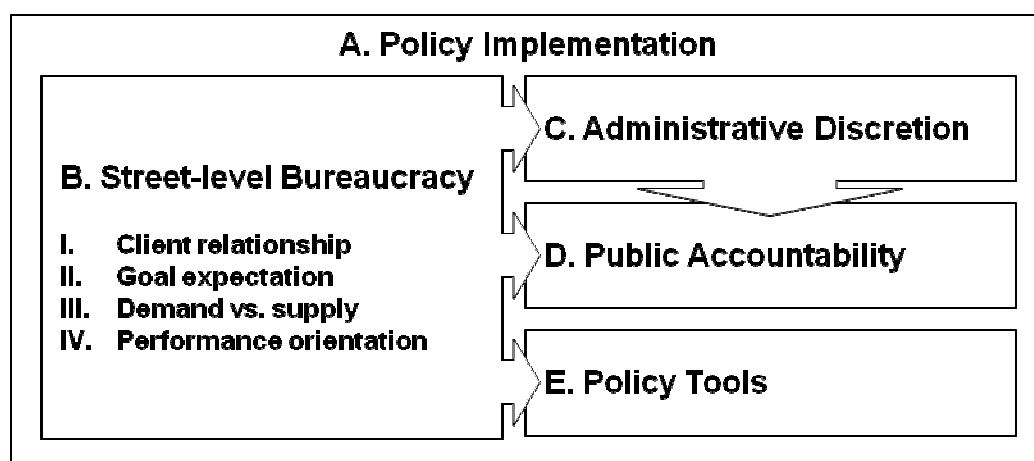
The second sub-question focuses on the way in which the street-level bureaucrats deal with the challenges they encounter. The theory of street-level bureaucracy mentions several of these methods which are reflected to the situation currently in Vietnam. The methods will be further analyzed in the analysis chapter by combining the gathered empirical data and the theory of street-level bureaucracy.

*3. What factors are of influence to their methods of dealing?*

Where the previous sub-question focuses on the methods of dealing, the third sub-question focuses on the factors that influence the methods of dealing. Throughout the research it will become apparent that a number of socio-economic and policy related factors are very much of influence to the street-level bureaucrats methods of dealing. The factors are explained throughout this research and further analyzed in the analysis chapter. In the analysis chapter the empirical data will be brought together with the theoretical framework and further analyzed. Following that chapter the three sub-questions - and as such the central research question- will be answered in the conclusion of this thesis.

### 3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework can be seen as the core of this research. The theories introduced in this chapter will contribute to further understanding the issues described in the case study. By combining these chapters I will be able to analyze the issues and answer the central research question. Figure 4 gives a schematic overview of these theories and the way they are related to each other. In this overview the relationship is clarified by the arrows pointing downwards. Section A of the framework covers the overarching theory of *policy implementation*. Street-level bureaucracy (B) is the main theory of this research, this can be seen as the core of the theoretical framework. The street-level bureaucrats need to perform their work with certain levels of administrative discretion (C) and public accountability (D). Finally the street-level bureaucrats need policy tools to implement the policies they are assigned to enforce (E).



15

#### 3.1. Policy Implementation (A)

The implementation of policies is by all means not the first step of the process. It is a phase in a much larger and complex cycle called the policy cycle. This cycle describes the process where an issue gains public and political attention and results in one or more policies which counters the undesirable effects of the original issue. Preceding the implementation phase the issue gains attention in the agenda setting phase. The policy is further prepared in the subsequent policy formulation phase. After the implementation phase a policy frequently assessed in the policy evaluation phase. This phase can result in the policy termination phase, although this rarely occurs. More frequently the results of the evaluation phase are that the policy gains public and/or elite attention and as such starts over the policy cycle in the agenda setting phase. Although the policy cycle itself is an interesting theory it is not within the scope of this research. As such this chapter continues with a focus on the policy implementation phase.

##### 3.1.1. Top-down

Before the 1970s there was a conception that there is no discrepancy between policy formulation (alpha) and policy implementation (omega). It was only until Hargrove had made a study on this that people realized that there was a 'missing link' between the alpha and omega (M. Hill, 2005, pp. 174-175). The bottleneck is in the discrepancy between policy formulation and policy implementation. A policy that looks great on paper might fail miserably once being implemented. In some cases the street-level bureaucrats blame the desk-bureaucrats for formulating these difficult policies or vice versa. Michael Hill has formulated it as following: "There has been a tendency to treat policies as clear-cut, uncontroversial entities whose implementation can be studied quite separately." (M. Hill, 2005, p. 175). Initially this resulted in the concept of a top-down way of implementing policies. Pressman and Wildavsky have researched this with first formulating policies and later implementing them. They continue by stating that by first setting an objective only then a policy can successfully be

implemented. Or as they write it in their own words: “Implementation cannot succeed or fail without a goal against to which to judge it.” (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973 1984 edition p.xxii in M. Hill, 2005, p. 176). Continuing with Pressman and Wildavsky’s publications on implementation studies, American scholars Van Meter and Van Horn offered a theoretical model. They argued that Pressman and Wildavsky’s 1974 publication was lacking in a theoretical perspective. Guided by organizational theories, studies on the impact of public policy and judicial decisions and studies of inter-governmental relations they created the so called ‘model of the policy-implementation process’ (Hill & Hupe, 2002, pp. 44-48). They hypothesized that “implementation will be most successful where only marginal change is required and goal consensus is high” (Van Meter & Van Horn 1975, p.461, from Hill & Hupe, 2002, pp. 45-46). Hill and Hupe continue to explain their hypothesis by giving the example of a war-time cabinet, the goal consensus is high and as such the cabinet can make decisions at a higher pace (Hill & Hupe, 2002, p. 46). The above mentioned ‘model of the policy-implementation process’ has a clear top-down approach to this process. According to Van Meter and Van Horn some six (clustered) variables interact with each other in order for the policy to perform.

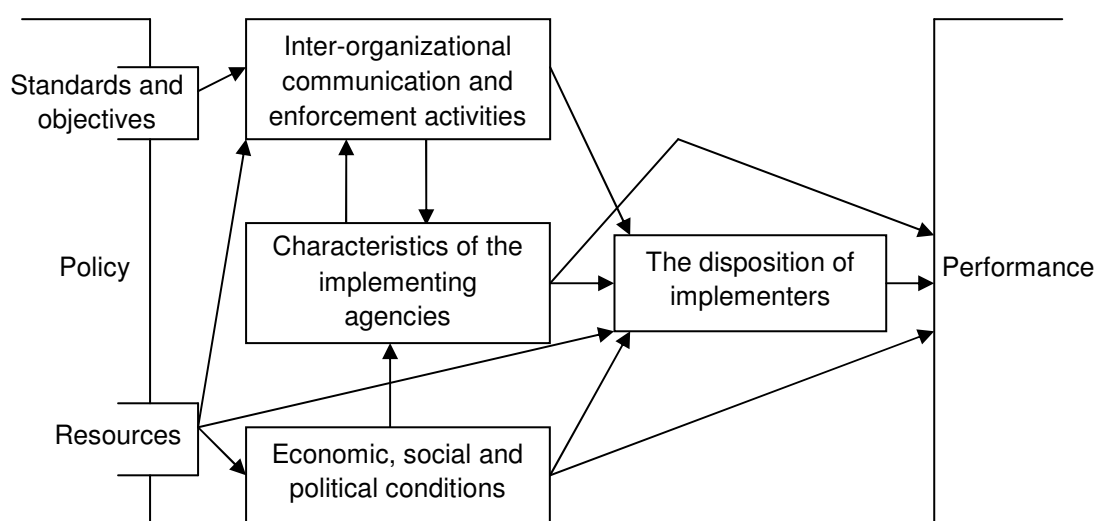


Figure 5 – A model of the policy-implementation process (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975, p.463).

The first two variables are the *standards and objectives* of the to be implemented policy. These predefined variables can be considered as the aim of the policy. In addition to this the resources needed to successfully implement the policy also need to be defined. What *resources* are available during the policy implementation process and what incentives are made available? The following three variables (*inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities*, *characteristics of the implementing agencies* and *economic, social and political conditions*) are critical variables that contribute to the success or failure of a policy. The first two variables can be influenced, however the third variable hardly be manipulated by any of the other variables even though it has its influence on most of the other variables. The final variable is the disposition of the implementers which is critical in this process. According to Van Meter and Van Horn (p.471 in Hill & Hupe, 2002, p. 46) the disposition of the implementers exists of three elements: *cognition* (their understanding and comprehension), *the direction of their response* (acceptance, neutrality or rejection) and *the intensity of that response*.

Figure 5 visualizes the policy implementation process as it occurs in the top-down manner. By all means this model shows that the variables are highly interrelated and the relations as such complex. Nonetheless it does show the internal and external influences on the implementation process.

### 3.1.2. Bottom-up

In the years that followed it became apparent that a top-down approach to policy making and implementation would not be successful in all cases. A new ‘school’ of believers arrived that



propagated the bottom-up approach to a successful policy(-implementation). This 'backward reasoning' enabled a broader view of all the loopholes and threats present while taking the necessary steps. In his 1980 publication *Street-level Bureaucracy* Lipsky brought to light the bottom-up approach. According to him the street-level bureaucrats (which will be explored in depth further in this chapter) are in fact the front-line "[...] workers with high service ideals exercising discretion under intolerable pressures" (Hill & Hupe, 2002, p. 53). According to Hill and Hupe (2002, pp. 1-2) this bottom-up process has received further attention due to the fact that many governments have introduced the concept of 'governance'. As more actors are "[...] participating and that simplistic hierarchical models are being abandoned [...]" (Hill & Hupe, 2002, p. 1) the top-down approach seems to be less fitting.

Lipsky (1980, p. xii) further states the following: "...people often enter public employment [...] with at least some commitment to service. [...] yet the very nature of this work prevents them from coming close to the ideal conception of their jobs. Large classes or huge caseloads and inadequate resources combine with the uncertainties of method and the unpredictability of clients to defeat their aspirations as service workers." This somewhat cynical quote is for many street-level bureaucrats a reality, as will be clear further on in this research. Being at the bottom of the policy process the street-level bureaucrats find creative ways to successfully conduct their work. These coping strategies in itself actually formulate the policies in the bottom-up process. Or as Lipsky himself stated: "[t]he decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures effectively become the public policies they carry out" (1980, p. xii).

Birkland (2001, p. 182) continues to explain the bottom-up process by noting (first) that the goals are ambiguous rather than explicit and can also conflict with other goals (in the same policy area) but also the norms and motivation of the street-level bureaucrats. Secondly he notes that "...the bottom-up approach does not require that there be a single defined policy in the form of a statute or other form. Rather, policy can be thought of as a set of laws, rules, practices and norms..." (Birkland, 2001, p. 182).

This thesis will focus mainly on the bottom-up approach and the subsequently related theories which will be covered in upcoming paragraphs. The reason for this is the important role of the street-level bureaucrat and their bottom-up dispositions. The analysis chapter will focus further on this disposition.

### 3.2. Street-level bureaucracy (B)

Although previously introduced, the concept of street-level bureaucracy will be further explored in this paragraph. Michael Lipsky introduced the concept of the street-level bureaucrat in the early 1970s, but only in 1980 did he further expand this concept in his influential book *Street-level Bureaucracy* (Hill & Hupe, 2002, pp. 51-52). He described the street-level bureaucrat as the "[p]ublic service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work [...]" (Lipsky, 1980, p. 3). According to Lipsky these street-level bureaucrats are far more influential actors in the policy process than previously conceived. They are the government representatives who are in direct contact with the public (clients) and as such frequently run into the constraints set upon their performance. "Typical street-level bureaucrats are teachers, police officers and other law enforcement personnel, social workers, judges, public lawyers and other court officers, health workers, and many other public employees who grant access to government programs and provide services with them." (Lipsky, 1980, p. 3). The primary role of the street-level bureaucrat is to deliver *benefits* and *sanctions* towards their clients. They must determine the eligibility of citizens for available benefits, but they also sanction undesirable behavior. As such they are the "extension of state influence and control" (Lipsky, 1980, p. 4). The street-level bureaucrats must fulfill their role without any bias due to the "considerable impact on peoples' lives" (Lipsky, 1980, p. 4). Unfortunately the street-level bureaucrats' role is far greater with regard to the

lives of the underprivileged people in a society. They are considered to be more dependent on government support and therefore are more frequently confronted with the street-level bureaucrats.

The research on street-level bureaucrats encompasses many aspects. With regard to this research I will focus on the challenges the street-level bureaucrats encounter while performing their work. But also the strategies they have to cope with these challenges. The next paragraph will focus on four factors that influence the conditions of their work. Following that paragraph I will shed further light on the coping strategies and the result of that.

### 3.2.1. Conditions of influence

Lipsky (1980, pp. 27-28) introduced some four conditions street-level bureaucrats experience in their work (see Figure 6). To a certain degree these conditions can be derived from the definition of street-level bureaucracy. Each of these conditions in some way trigger a behavior from the street-level bureaucrat and as such they are related to the coping strategies used (Lipsky, 1980, p. 28).



Figure 6 – Conditions of influence experienced by street-level bureaucrat, derived from Lipsky (1980)

Using Figure 6 this paragraph will further explore the conditions that influence the work of the street-level bureaucrat.

#### I. Client relationship

Lipsky (1980, pp. 54-56) gives a cynical explanation of the relationship between the street-level bureaucrat and its clients. He states that the non-voluntary characteristic of the relationship comes to light when observing several examples of the relations with the clients. The police officers relationship with its clients is mainly of a coercive nature, they attempt to correct the clients behavior by writing fines or even detaining him or her. Street-level bureaucrats are not restricted to the use of coercive methods the mere fact that they have a monopoly on most of the services underwrites the non-voluntary characteristic. The administering of welfare also brings this non-coercive and non-voluntary characteristic to light: “[p]otential welfare recipients in a sense “volunteer” to apply for welfare, for example, but their participation in the welfare system is hardly voluntary if they have no income alternatives.” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 54). Therefore we can state that the client relationship as almost in all cases non-voluntary. As this not complicates the relationship between the client and the street-level bureaucrat enough, Lipsky (1980, pp. 59-60) also claims that the social construction of the client has a major influence. The clients are “...unique individuals with different life experiences, personalities, and current circumstances” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 59). With that perspective they also claim their “...individual problems and their demands as individual expressions of expectations and grievances.” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 60). On the other hand the street-level bureaucrat perceives the clients demands as components of an aggregation and as such tend to categorize the call for action (Lipsky, 1980, p. 60). Lipsky sums this process up as following: “[c]lients seek services and benefits; street-level bureaucrats seek control over the process of providing them” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 60). This struggle between the client and the street-level bureaucrat justifies the need of certain coping strategies. In order to successfully help the client the street-level bureaucrat needs to act with certain levels of discretion. Doing so he is actually implementing policies from the bottom-up.

#### II. Goal expectation

The street-level bureaucrats have certain goals which need to be reached in order for their work to be considered effective. However, these goals appear to be conflicting and ambiguous, or as Lipsky (1980, p. 40) describes it: “[p]ublic service goals also tend to have an idealized dimension that make

them difficult to achieve and confusing and complicated to approach". The problems with the ambiguous goals seem to originate during the formulation phase where certain conflicts were buried. During the implementation of the policies by the street-level bureaucrats these conflicts emerge and hinder the implementation process (Lipsky, 1980, p. 41). According to Lipsky (1980, p. 41) the sources of these conflicts can be placed in three categories:

**1. Client-centered goals versus social engineering goals.**

Governments attempt to socially engineer a society for it to function in a desired manner. The client centered goals of the street-level bureaucrats are primarily there to socially engineer functions of the government. In order to achieve this compliance street-level bureaucrats are able to control the resources of its clients (utilitarian compliance) or through the threat or use of force (coercive compliance) (Lipsky, 1980, p. 42). The conflict here lays in the fact that street-level bureaucrats frequently are confronted with non-voluntary clients during the act of social engineering. The street-level bureaucrat attempts to be client-centered however he has a non-voluntary client where methods of utilitarian and coercive compliance are 'forced' upon (also see condition A, the client relationship).

**2. Client-centered goals versus organization-centered goals.**

As stated in the previous category the street-level bureaucrat attempts to be as much client-centered as possible. However, a constraint originating from its organization creates a conflicting situation. An example of such a constraint is the need for mass processing of clients set upon the street-level bureaucrat by its organization. This directly conflicts with the individual client orientation of the street-level bureaucrat (Lipsky, 1980, p. 44). The lack of resources –as mentioned earlier– seems to be a major contributor to this conflict (Lipsky, 1980, p. 45).

**3. Goal conflicts and role expectations**

Contradictory expectations surrounding the role of the street-level bureaucrat can lead to goal conflicts and ambiguity. According to Lipsky (1980, pp. 45-46) there are at least three ways in which the role expectations of the street-level bureaucrat contribute to goal ambiguity and conflict. First there are the public expectations of what the street-level bureaucrat should primarily do. The way in which the objectives are pursued is up to the discretion of the street-level bureaucrat. However, there is often a discrepancy between the street-level bureaucrats methods and the community opinion which creates the role conflict (Lipsky, 1980, p. 46).

The role of the peer groups (e.g. colleagues) is the second dimension of role conflict or ambiguity. Only they fully understand and "[...] appreciate the pressures of work and the extent to which street-level bureaucrats experience the need to have goal orientations that are consistent with resolving work pressures." (Lipsky, 1980, p. 47). Lipsky uses the example of police officers who are confronted with role conflicts and ambiguity on a daily basis. They are expected to be "[...] objective, impartial, and upstanding, protective of all segments of society even while society does not protect all segments of itself." (Lipsky, 1980, p. 47).

The third and final dimension is in relation to fact that the role of the street-level bureaucrat is not based upon the role expectations of its clients. "Clients are *not* a primary reference group of street-level bureaucrats." (Lipsky, 1980, p. 47). For example, a teacher does not determine his or hers role based upon the expectations of the pupils. "Work-related peer groups, work-related or professionally related standards, and public expectations generally are much more significant in determining role behavior." (Lipsky, 1980, p. 47).

**III. Demand vs. supply**

According to Lipsky (1980, p. 29) the street-level bureaucrats are constrained in their work due to the fact that the subject matter is especially complex. In addition to that there is a high frequency within the decision-making process. Street-level bureaucrats need information to execute effectively their given task. However this information is costly and difficult to obtain. Besides the high frequency of the decision-making process they also encounter a heavy case load, it is therefore difficult for a street-level bureaucrat to even decide whether "[...] an investment in searching for more information would

be profitable.” (Lipsky, 1980, p. 29). These issues combined can find its origin in a general lack of resources which the street-level bureaucrats seem to continuously endure. Apart from the high case load and frequency of their work the lack of resources is also related to the situation surrounding the demand and supply of their services. According to Lipsky (1980, p. 33) “the demand for services tends to increase to meet the supply”. Lipsky explains this concept with the universal problem of traffic congestion. In the Dutch situation there is a long lasting debate whether the government should invest in an improved public transportation system or in the expansion of the highway system. If the government would choose to meet the demand for an expansion of the highway system the supply will be met instantly as people would stop the use of public transportation and commute by car on those new highway lanes. The (seemingly wicked) problem with regard to traffic congestion would, as such, not be resolved. The tension between supply and demand is therefore a perpetual issue encountered by the street-level bureaucrat.

#### **IV. Performance orientation**

Measuring the performance of bureaucracies is a difficult task as the output cannot be evaluated through market transactions (Lipsky, 1980, p. 48). Private corporations can measure their performance by the numbers on a balance sheet at the end of a fiscal year. However, a bureaucratic organization cannot per se be classified as being successful when it is making a profit (if that is at all possible). The evaluation of the performance of a street-level bureaucrat is in particular difficult as its output consists of services provided, frequently delivered while making discretionary decisions (Lipsky, 1980, p. 49). The earlier described goal ambiguity and the fact that too many variables are present makes it far more difficult to measure the performance of the street-level bureaucrat.

Although measuring the street-level bureaucrat’s performance is difficult, it is not impossible. Providing that certain output targets have been defined in an earlier stage (the policy formulation phase), one can measure the performance based upon certain standards. Examples of this are the minimum amount of fines a police officer must write every month. The street-level bureaucrat will need to abide to a certain level of compliance for such standards and/or output target to be met (Hill & Hupe, 2002, p. 189). However, in practice the street-level bureaucrat does not always meet the expected level of compliance, by interpreting the set standards and/or targets differently he or she can ‘manipulate’ the measured performance. For example, a police officer can write tickets for frequently not fined offences such as jay-walking which enables the police officer to reach his or hers set targets easily. In short, the street-level bureaucrat seems to find ways to improve their measuring indicators (Lipsky, 1980, p. 51). This in itself is not unique for the street-level bureaucrat, however in this case it can create a situation where compliancy is met but the quality of the work is lacking.

#### **3.4. Administrative discretion (C)**

As described in the previous paragraph street-level bureaucrats possess a basic amount of discretion in order to successfully and efficiently achieve their goals. This administrative discretion has been defined by Kruschke and Jackson (1987, pp. 16-17) as following: “[t]he capacity to decide or to act outside the control of others and on the basis of one’s own judgment”. As such one can state that at least some form of administrative discretion is always indissolubly connected to the street-level bureaucrat. Moreover, the street-level bureaucrat cannot perform effectively or efficiently if he or she can’t make decisions of one’s own judgment. This brings to light the question: “[...] how much discretion should administrators have, who should make this decision, and upon what basis should such a decision be made.” (Douglas H. Shumavon (ed.) & H. Kenneth Hibbeln (ed.), 1986, p. 11). From a legal perspective these three questions can and should be answered through administrative law, defined differently in each nation. Nevertheless, not all issues the street-level bureaucrats encounter are or can be covered by administrative law. This is where the bureaucrat’s judgment comes to light but also his or hers normative insight and perception of accountability. The street-level bureaucrat acting under administrative law is more clearly constrained, compliant and accountable towards higher political authority (Gary Bryner in Douglas H. Shumavon (ed.) & H. Kenneth Hibbeln

(ed.), 1986, p. 50). The street-level bureaucrat, whom is applying administrative discretion in his or hers day-to-day activities, can be acting on thin ice when it comes to issues such as accountability and compliancy. A recent example of a street-level bureaucrat exerting administrative discretion is the civil servant of the Dutch child protection services whom decided to be lenient on the mother of a dysfunctional family. Against the wishes of the mother the street-level bureaucrat did not place one the children in foster-care but left her with the mother. Not long after this decision the mother killed her daughter. Eventually the Dutch government filed charges against the civil servant claiming that she was neglectful in her work which resulted in the death of the child (www.volkskrant.nl, 2007a). The civil servant claimed that the heavy workload and lacking support from her superiors led her to find less desirable manners to fulfill her job. When observing this example one can state that the civil servant acted with a certain level of administrative discretion in order to efficiently fulfill her day-to-day activities. Unfortunately this led to a tragic event which was unforeseen by her. Eventually the court ruled that the civil servant was not alone responsible for this tragedy and acquitted her of all charges (www.volkskrant.nl, 2007b).

The above example would clearly be an argument in favor of further defining the legal boundaries of the day-to-day activities of the street-level bureaucrat. The civil servant would in this case have a clear set of guidelines that would help her make such difficult decisions. On the other hand one can also state that this could lead to further constraints in the effectiveness of the street-level bureaucrats' work. If for every decision the street-level bureaucrat would need to check what the law prescribes he or she would hardly be effective and efficient in his or hers day-to-day activities. As such a certain level of administrative discretion is always necessary. The question that consequently arises is how far this level of administrative discretion should go so that the street-level bureaucrat still remains accountable for his or hers actions? Michael A. Quinn (in Shumavon & Hibbeln, 1986, pp. 128-144) further explored this with an analysis of the *urban triage and municipal housing code enforcement* in St. Louise. He stated that "[...] professional discretion must be exercised in a way that is open to public scrutiny[...]" (Quinn in Shumavon & Hibbeln, 1986, p. 141). The decisions must be transparent if possible and the street-level bureaucrat should be accountable for his or hers actions. Furthermore, when making choices the street-level bureaucrat should focus on the need, cost and effectiveness of the decisions. The focus-points seem to be rather economically oriented but in the end the street-level bureaucrat is always constraint by such costs, therefore these focus-points remain important.

### 3.5. Public accountability (D)

In the context of this research the concept of accountability is best defined as following: "a social relationship in which an actor feels an obligation to explain and justify his conduct to some significant other" (Bovens, 1998, p.172 in Hupe & Hill, 2007, p. 286). This broad definition applies to the relatively autonomous work of the street-level bureaucrat. However, when one focuses more on the concept of street-level bureaucracy and the implementation of policies the definition merits further attention. Hupe and Hill (2007, pp. 288-291) analyzed it further with a focus on public accountability. This analysis resulted in the suggestion that the founding principles and the nature of the relationship between the accountors and accountees can be seen as a dimension to a typology (Hupe & Hill, 2007, p. 288). The typology resulted in three types of public accountability which they labeled as *public-administrative accountability*, *professional accountability* and *participatory accountability*.

These three types of public accountability take place at different levels. The first type (public-administrative accountability) takes place at the top level, the second type (professional accountability) takes place at the working level and the final level (participatory accountability) takes place at the level of citizenship. Table 1 is a visualization of these typologies with an added 'action scale'. This scale introduces the level where the actors are to be found: *system*, *organization* or *individual*. Combining the levels and the types gives an excellent insight on what occurs with regard to public accountability.

Types of public accountability			
Action scale	Public-administrative accountability	Professional accountability	Participatory accountability
System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative organs</li> <li>• Courts</li> <li>• Ministers/Cabinet</li> <li>• Inspectorates</li> <li>• Auditors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National associations of patients / parents / clients</li> <li>• Communication media</li> <li>• National interest groups</li> </ul>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative organs</li> <li>• Institutions for appeal</li> <li>• Local officials</li> <li>• Executives</li> <li>• Controllers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local associations</li> <li>• Local news media</li> <li>• Client councils</li> <li>• Citizen's initiatives</li> </ul>
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chiefs</li> <li>• Collaborators</li> <li>• Subjects of law</li> <li>• Patients / pupils / clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens</li> <li>• Association members</li> <li>• Voters</li> <li>• Parents / residents / etc.</li> </ul>

Table 1 – Forums of public accountability (Hupe & Hill, 2007, p. 289)

So far it seems that public accountability is a one-way-street, this is not the case. Public accountability works in both ways, not only the street-level bureaucrat is accountable, but for example also the chiefs (public-administrative accountability), the colleagues (professional accountability) and the clients in the form of citizens (participatory accountability). The last example is perhaps the most illuminating example as the client relationship is one with reciprocal expectations. For example, the street-level bureaucrat can be held accountable for the quality of his or hers work. However, the client in return can be held accountable for the quality of the given information. Both are crucial with regard to the success or failure of a policy.

Modes of implementation			
Parameters	Enforcement	Performance	Co-production
Characteristic of accountability at scale of individuals	Compliance to rules	Compliance to targets	Compliance to internalized professional standards
Characteristic of accountability at scale of organizations	Conformity to standard operating procedures	Conformity to contract	Conformity to shared goal and standard setting
Issue	Were inputs respected?	Did promised outputs occur?	Have shared outcomes been realized?
Characteristic of relationships accountors - accountees	Rule bound	Contractual	Trust
Citizen role in accountability	Presupposed compliance Access to complaint- and appeal procedures	Exit Otherwise provision of evidence on contract compliance	Voice (potential for cooperation)
Guiding type of public accountability	Public-administrative accountability	Public-administrative accountability (managerial variant)	Professional or participatory accountability
Fitting labels for accountability regime	Task oriented	Indicator oriented	Impact oriented

Table 2 – A typology of the accountability regimes at the street-level (Hupe & Hill, 2007, p. 294)

With regard to public accountability at the street-level Hupe and Hill created the typology of accountability at the street-level. These typologies are brought together in Table 2 and are based upon a number of parameters and three modes of implementation. Hupe and Hill (2002 in 2007, p. 287) "...distinguish between three prescriptive perspectives on managing implementation, respectively labeled as 'Enforcement', 'Performance' and 'Co-production'. These may be described as modes of implementation." The typologies in Table 2 illustrate what the relationship is between the parameters and the modes of implementation. As such it gives a good insight on the characteristics of accountability encountered by street-level bureaucrats while implementing one or more of the modes of implementation.

### 3.6. Policy tools (E)

In order for the street-level bureaucrat to successfully implement a policy he or she will need certain policy tools. Schneider and Ingram (1997, pp. 93-97) defined it as "elements in policy design that cause agents or targets to do something they would not do otherwise or with the intention of modifying behavior to solve public problems or attain policy goals." Birkland (2001, pp. 168-173) collected and categorized a number of policy tools from a number of scholars. A summarized but relevant version of these nine policy tools are found below.

**1. Services and goods**

Government provides a diversity of services and goods for the benefit of the population. One can think of the postal services, traffic information or weather forecasting.

**2. Contracting out**

Not all government activities are fulfilled by the government itself. Frequently activities are contracted out to private firms. Examples are specialist work such as infrastructural projects and IT implementations.

**3. Taxes**

The main source of income for a government is taxation. Besides this taxation (or more specific excise) is also a method of altering less desirable behavior. An example of that is the added tax on tobacco or petrol.

**4. Loans and loan guarantees**

Government loans for –among others– private organizations can be a method to stimulate a policy. One can think of loans that can induce economic activity or other desirable activities.

**5. Subsidies**

Outright payment towards organizations or individuals in order to stimulate a policy or an activity for the greater good. For example, the Dutch government subsidies solar panels for citizens in order to stimulate environmentally friendly energy.

**6. Suasion**

A public campaign by governments to persuade people to change their undesirable behavior is also known as suasion. Examples are numerous, such as campaigns to counter drinking and driving and unhealthy habits such as smoking and drug use.

**7. Sanctions**

Schneider and Ingram (1997, pp. 93-97) describe this as a tool that induces "quasi-voluntary or quasi-coerced" actions based on tangible payoffs". Examples of sanctions are fines for violating government regulations but also bonus payments for finishing a government contract within the set deadline (Birkland, 2001, p. 171).

**8. Capacity-building tools**

By facilitating capacity-building tools such as training, education, technical assistance and information (Peters) governments contribute to general knowledge of its citizens. Examples are job-interview training for the unemployed and payment for the hiring of educational staff.

**9. Informal procedures**

In some cases governments can use informal procedures to resolve certain issues. Due to the fact that such policy tools are not specified in laws or regulations it is closely related to the concept of administrative discretion.

The policy tools listed in this paragraph are -of course- used during the implementation phase. This enables them to be categorized in the previously introduced modes of implementation. The categorizing of the policy tools in the three modes of implementation will help determine the nature of a given policy. This will become important in the analysis chapter of this research.

Policy tools	Modes of implementation		
	<i>Enforcement</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Co-production</i>
<i>Services and goods</i>		X	
<i>Contracting out</i>		X	
<i>Taxes</i>	X		
<i>Loans and loan guarantees</i>			X
<i>Subsidies</i>			X
<i>Suasion</i>	X		
<i>Sanctions</i>	X		
<i>Capacity-building tools</i>		X	
<i>Informal procedures</i>			X

Table 3 – Linking the policy tools with the modes of implementation

### 3.7. Chapter summary

The third chapter of this research focused on the theoretical framework; this is -by all means- the foundation of the research. The first section (A) centers on the concept of the policy implementation phase which can be described as the focal point of the framework. Some three other theoretical concepts were introduced that are closely related to this step. Most important of these theories is Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy (section B). An in-depth look was taken at this theory before the concept of administrative discretion (section C) was introduced. Administrative discretion is a concept which is directly related to the role of a street-level bureaucrat, which became apparent in this paragraph. In addition to this Public Accountability (section D) can also be considered an important related concept. Finally some nine different policy tools (section E) commonly available for the street-level bureaucrat were presented in the final paragraph of this chapter.



## 4. Research methodology

Attempting to research the entire policy cycle in a country such as Vietnam would be beyond the scope of this research. The extensiveness and complexity of this cycle would cover too many aspects and as such overload the reader with information. However, the policy implementation phase is very much of interest to this research. The earlier presented research questions, which are related to the implementation phase, will -combined with the theoretical framework and case study- be answered in the analysis chapter. Before these questions can be answered it is necessary to describe the research design and methodology which is the backbone of this research. This chapter will continue with the motivation which is a clarification on the reason why this research has been done. It continues with a description of the theoretical concepts and the abstracted measuring criteria. Finally this chapter will conclude with the method by which this research has been done.

### 4.1. Motivation

Research with regard to the implementation of policies has frequently been done and is as such not a unique topic. So how does this research attempt to stand out with regard to research in the field of policy implementation? What variables are present in this thesis that justifies it from being different to the countless other researches? This paragraph will explain these variables so one can understand the reason why this research attempts to stand out compared to other implementation studies.

The first variable is the fact that many policy implementation studies seem to focus on Anglo-Sachsen nations. Asian nations with their often unique administrative and political systems seem to be kept out of the Anglo-Sachsen 'research loop'. Perhaps this research is done on a small scale and as such less visible and appealing for Anglo-Sachsen scholars. However, I am of opinion that it is interesting and challenging to further study the policy implementation in such nations. The following variable will further explain why.

The second variable is the fact that Asian nations differ from Anglo-Sachsen nations with regard to a basic cultural factor. Where in Anglo-Sachsen nations it is more important to have the right education and/or experience to further one's career, in Asian nations there appears to be a situation where it is more important to know the right persons at the right place. According to American Anthropologist and Sociologist Neil Jamieson this leads to situations of nepotism and corruption in nations such as Vietnam. These situations seem to be institutionalized throughout the administrative and political system of many Asian nations.

The third variable is the number of nations in the world currently *in transition*, according to the definition mentioned earlier in this thesis. When focusing on Asia the number of nations that fit this definition is remarkably lower compared to -for example- the Baltic States. At the moment only three nations are undergoing this transition in Asia, namely: Laos, Vietnam and China. They all are facing familiar problems and opportunities during their transition. The in previous chapters refer to changes which Vietnam is undergoing and are -to certain extent- also visible in Laos and China. In Laos these changes are on a lower scale due to the fact that its population is fourteen times smaller than Vietnam (www.cia.gov, 2006b). In return these changes are in China in a far greater scale because its population is fifteen times larger than Vietnam (www.cia.gov, 2006a). With its eighty-four million inhabitants Vietnam stands out between Laos and China, not too small to be an effective player on the World market (as is the case with Laos) and not too large to potentially spin out of control (as some claim to be happening to China's economy). Another aspect about Vietnam which makes it stand out between Laos and China is its historical connection with western nations. Combined with its long coastline and its many important neighbors, Vietnam has a favorable geographic position for this research.

The fourth and final variable is the political and administrative system in Vietnam. Although the Vietnamese government is opening the borders for international trade it still considers itself to be a communist nation ruled by a single political party. The combination of a strict ruling singly political party and an emerging open market further makes Vietnam and interesting nation to research.

These four variables make Vietnam stand out and (for me) an interesting nation to further research with regard to the policy implementation phase. By focusing this research on the use of pesticides one can further understand possible issues that come to light during the policy implementation phase. As a result it *should* make an interesting connection between theory and practice within the above described influences of a nation in transition.

## 4.2. Research criteria

Having introduced a number of theories in the previous chapter the following research criteria have been collected. Table 4 gives an overview of all the research indicators with the values which can be given to them. The indicators originate from the theory of street-level bureaucracy and will be further analyzed in the analysis chapter of this research. In the conclusion of this research the indicators with the given values will be used to answer a number of sub-questions.

Theories	Indicator	Value
Street-level bureaucracy (section B)	<b>Client relationship</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats client relationship.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Client relationship</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats client relationship.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Goal expectation</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats goal expectation.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Goal expectation</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats goal expectation.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Demand vs. supply</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats resources.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Demand vs. supply</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats resources.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Performance orientation</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats performance orientation.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much
	<b>Performance orientation</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats performance orientation.</i>	-- none what so ever - hardly +/- more or less + somewhat ++ very much

Table 4 – Research criteria

The theories of administrative discretion, public accountability and the policy tools were also further explained in the theoretical framework. However, these theories will be covered in the analysis chapter while supporting the implementation and street-level bureaucracy theories.

### 4.3. Research method

The collection of the research data was done through a method of triangulation where the data is gathered through three different sources (documents, interviews and observations). Robson (2002, p. 174) explains what the opportunities and threats are of with this method of data-collection. This “valuable and widely used strategy [...] can help to counter all of the threats to validity. Note, however, that it opens up possibilities of discrepancies and disagreements among the different sources. [...] [Triangulation] raises both logical and practical difficulties, e.g. when findings collected by different methods differ to a degree which makes their direct comparison problematic” (Robson, 2002, p. 175). His criticism with regard to triangulation is one to keep in mind while collecting and analyzing the data. Nevertheless it is still an effective method of collecting and verifying data. If one source seems to be questionable another source can verify or disqualify the original source. The following paragraphs will describe each type of source and further observe the opportunities and threats.

#### 4.3.1. Documents

The document source represents such sources as books, newspapers, magazines and websites. A characteristic of this type of source is its unobtrusive character. Or as Robson (2002, p. 349) describes it: “[A document] is non-reactive, in that the document is not affected by the fact that you are using it”. However, the source of the document should also be valid. A recent discussion among academics is the validity of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. Some argue that this is not a valid source due to the fact that everyone can add or edit an article on the website. The hazards are obvious when people with lacking knowledge about a topic are allowed to publish about it, as such the validity of the source is at stake. As mentioned before one can also collect contradictory data which can lead to “discrepancies among the sources” (Robson, 2002, p. 175).

Having brought up the possible threats of collecting data from documents one should also focus on the benefits. When keeping in mind that a document should be interpreted in a unobtrusive and non-biased way it can be of key importance when collecting data. Due to the enormous availability of data, on paper and especially digital, this way of data collection takes up the most important part of this research. At least with regard to the quantity of data collected and not with regard to quality of the data collected.

#### 4.3.2. Interviews

The data gathered for this research was done by method of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. This method has several advantages compared to remote questionnaire type of interviews. Robson (2002, pp. 272-273) describes these advantages by stating that it offers “...the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot.”

However, there was a factor at play that greatly hindered several of the semi-structured interviews. Some of the respondents were non-English speaking Vietnamese and as such a translator was necessary. Attempting to loosely follow the list of predetermined questions was therefore difficult and even more time-consuming compared to a one-on-one interview.

Although in general interviews are time-consuming (preparation and the actual interview) they are a very important part of the triangular way of collecting data. The ability to steer the conversation into a desired direction enables the interviewer to collect data that, for example through a questionnaire, would not have brought to light.

### **4.3.3. Observations**

The third and last method of data collection within the triangular way of collecting data is observing actions and/or behavior of people. It is of not to be underestimated importance due to the fact that people often have the habit of saying one thing but doing another thing (Montaigne in Robson, 2002, p. 310). In some situations people “wish to present oneself in a favorable light (the ‘social desirability response bias’)” (Robson, 2002, p. 310). In other situations people deliberately act different compared to what they say. As was the case during an interview in Vietnam where a respondent stated during an interview that the corporation he worked for did not use toxic pesticides. However, after observing the crops there were empty toxic pesticide packages to be found in the litter bin next to the field.

Using the above described method of triangulation one can collect more valid data, this is done by comparing the sources with each other. Although it has its ‘loop-holes’ it is still the only valid and appropriate method of collecting the data for this research.

## **4.4. Chapter summary**

This chapter focused on the methodological aspect of this research. In other words why, with what criteria and how have I conducted this research? The first paragraph shed light on the why question, it is the motivation for this research. It answered the question why this specific research contributes to the body of knowledge surrounding the introduced topics. The second paragraph further focused on the criteria by which the research was conducted. Or in other words, how is one able to measure the outcome of the case study while using the theoretical framework as guideline? Finally the actual research methods were described based upon the concept of triangulation. Data was gathered through collecting and studying documents, conducting interviews and making observations.

## 5. Case study

This chapter will focus on four topics which are crucial to a further understanding of the research. It will start with a short explanation of what pesticide exactly are. There are many kinds of pesticides and as such many definitions describing them. Following the definition of pesticides an overview will be given of all the pesticide related issues currently visible in Vietnam. This overview is pretty much the core of the case study as it is related to all issues described in this research. The third topic gives an overview of some of the foremost pesticide related policies currently implemented in Vietnam. Finally, the fourth topic sheds light on the issues street-level bureaucrats encounter in Vietnam while attempting to implement the pesticide related policies.

### 5.1. What are pesticides?

In order to further comprehend the issues described in this research one will need to understand what pesticides are, as such a clear and precise definition is needed. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) maintain an extensive definition<sup>1</sup>. However, this definition is too broad for this research and as such will only cause ambiguity. Therefore, I have shortened this definition in order for it to fit the research: *pesticides are any substances or mixtures of substances intended for preventing, destroying or controlling any pest, unwanted species of plants or animals causing harm during or otherwise interfering with the production of agricultural commodities*. This modified definition covers important aspects which deserve further attention. It mentions substances or mixtures of substances. In most cases pesticides are a mixture of Active Ingredients (AI) and inerts (e.g. water) also known as *non-pesticidal ingredients* (WHO, 2006, p. 4). The AI's form the basis of the pesticide whereas the inerts serve a variety of functions except the actual prevention of pests itself. Therefore many sources used for this research refer to the hazards of *active ingredients*, rather than *pesticides*.

29

One also needs to understand that there are two different types of AI's, those with chemical and those with biological AI's. The chemical AI's form the most powerful and thus most hazardous pesticides. As such these chemical pesticides are used in almost all cases. Biological AI's that form the biological pesticides are made from less hazardous (non-chemical) materials, needless to say that such pesticides are less powerful and thus less effective.

Acknowledging the fact that many pesticides contain hazardous AI's the World Health Organization (WHO) has since 1978 started to classify all AI's in four different classes (see Figure 7 in Appendix I – Classification of pesticides). In addition to these classes there are also two categories which the WHO keeps track of: *AI's unlikely to present acute hazard in normal use* and *AI's believed to be obsolete or discontinued for use as pesticides*. Where the WHO focuses their classification on the level of hazard of the AI's, the Vietnamese government maintains a classification bases upon the set permission of use (see Figure 8 in Appendix I – Classification of pesticides). There are three categories by which the AI's are allowed to be used: *banned from use*, *restricted from use* and *permitted for use*. The first and second categories differ in that the second category type of AI “can only be used in specific locations, for specific crops, and with strict application methods.” (Hoi, 2006, p. 1). Once every year the Plant Protection Department (PPD), which is part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), publishes a new list of all available AI's. All the AI's on this list are subsequently categorized according to those three categories.

<sup>1</sup> “Pesticide means any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying or controlling any pest, including vectors of human or animal disease, unwanted species of plants or animals causing harm during or otherwise interfering with the production, processing, storage, transport or marketing of food, agricultural commodities, wood and wood products or animal feedstuffs, or substances which may be administered to animals for the control of insects, arachnids or other pests in or on their bodies.” (FAO, 2002, p. 6).

## 5.2. Pesticide related issues

During my visit to Vietnam the effects of the use of pesticides became very clear. The information gathered through observations and interviews showed that it is a serious problem. This paragraph will further focus on the cause and the effects of the pesticide related issues.

### 5.2.1. Cause of the issues

The cause of the problems can be found in four general categories, the following paragraphs will further explore these categories.

#### *Incorrect use*

Using pesticides on crops is a complicated procedure for which the applier will need to receive training. Unfortunately this is hardly the case in Vietnam. Although many large pesticide producing corporations occasionally organize training many farmers still incorrectly use and apply the pesticides. An all too common problem is the overdosing of crops. Many pesticides are highly concentrated and as such do not require frequent application. Lack of knowledge by the farmer often results in overdosing of the crops. As a result the crops contain high amounts of toxics and therefore cause a health hazard for the consumer. In addition to that hazard overdosing of crops also leads to a hazard for the environment as the pesticide residue reaches the groundwater. Paragraph 5.2.2 will further focus on the effects of overdosing.

#### *Illegal import of pesticides*

Currently there are two types of pesticides that are considered to be illegal. The first being the pesticides in the prohibited or restricted categories classified by the Vietnamese government. Through illegal import (mainly from China) these AI's or pesticides reach the Vietnamese market. Their effectiveness (due to the highly toxic AI's), often low prices and general lack of government enforcement make them popular products in Vietnam. The second types of illegal pesticides are the imitations of legitimate products. Mr. Le Thanh Hai of the respected An Giang pesticide corporation showed presentations of illegal imitations of their products. In such cases the appliers of these illegal imitations are frequently not aware that they bought an inferior imitation. However, Vietnamese law clearly states that this is illegal and as such An Giang has frequently sued –with success– the imitators of their products. The use of these highly toxic and/or inferior products are further described in paragraph 5.2.2.

#### *Lack of alternatives*

Unfortunately farmers will need the use of pesticides in order to successfully harvest their crops. Besides the pesticides with chemical AI's there are also pesticides with biological AI's. These so called biological pesticides are in many cases less hazardous for the applier, the environment and the consumer. However, they are also less effective and therefore cannot prevent all the pest related issues.

With the agricultural sector being such a dominant one with scattered land ownership<sup>2</sup> brings other problems to light. On these small pieces of land many farmers grow, consume and sell their products. The high density creates a situation where farmers are close neighbors. If one of the farmers decides to ban chemical pesticides and continue to use biological pesticides his neighbors would need to do the same. Due to the fact that biological pesticides are far less strong and thus less effective if only one farmer chooses to use these biological agents. This farmer would be a 'magnet' for all the repelled pests of his neighboring farmers that continue to use the chemical pesticides.

---

<sup>2</sup> By replacing the cooperatives with farming households the farmland became more scattered and more often the small pieces of farmland in the countryside seem to resemble a patchwork.

One would assume that cooperation between neighboring farmers, for example in the form of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan, could solve this problem. During my interview with Neil Jamieson his experiences illustrated the Vietnamese culture as being individualistic and even borderline anti-social. Pham Van Hoi underwrote this criticism to a certain extent, he acknowledged the fact that there is little cooperation between neighboring farmers, even though this has many advantages. When farmers cooperate they can introduce an IPM strategy. Using IPM as a combined strategy can also be an effective way of introducing biological pesticides and as such prevent the problems described earlier. An IPM-strategy with biological pesticides is often based on a long term planning and can therefore also protect the environment in the future. (www.ufl.edu, 2006).

#### *Nepotism*

As stated in the previous paragraph, the Vietnamese culture is –to say the least– very individualistic. The lack of cooperation among farmers is a poignant example of this. Another characteristic of the Vietnamese culture is nepotism, especially in the higher echelon of society. If one wants to achieve something it is important to know the right people. Neil Jamieson also told the story that he needed to speak to a Vietnamese high official. He tried through the official channels and had no luck at all. It seemed it was impossible to even ask for a meeting. During a cocktail party he mentioned this to a Vietnamese woman he was talking to. After listening to his story she told him that her husband studied with the brother of this minister. Two phone calls later the Vietnamese woman had arranged a meeting between Jamieson and the minister. Jamieson continued by stating that nepotism is culturally entangled in Vietnamese society. Apparently it is far more important *who* you know instead of *what* you know. This is but one of the many examples which was told or observed during my stay in Vietnam.

#### **5.2.2. Effect of the issues**

Due to the inherent nature of pesticides (to prevent, destroy or control any pest) it is clear that pesticides have hazardous characteristics. One needs to keep in mind that pesticides can form a hazard during production, handling and application of these materials. The following paragraphs will focus on effects of pesticides.

#### *Hazards for the handlers during mixing and applying*

Research by the Vietnamese National Institute of Labour Protection (NILP) showed that in general the handlers of pesticides, such as farmers, wear little to no protection at all when handling pesticides. Depending on the type of pesticide being used the person in question should, according to the NILP (Dr. Dang Quoc Nam et al., pp. 16-17), be using protective gear such as respirators, gloves, aprons, boots and safety glasses. In some cases the pesticides are so hazardous that mere touching it with bare hands can lead to blistering and even infections.

Due to the fact that pesticides are frequently sold as a concentrated substance (e.g. powder) the applicator will need to further mix it or liquefy it with an inert such as water. During this process the applicator is at risk of being in direct contact with the hazardous ingredients. Not only the mixing is hazardous, the actual applying of the pesticides can create a dangerous situation. There are numerous methods by which a pesticide can be applied, in general they can be classified by a sub-surface application (i.e. injecting pesticides in the ground), surface application (i.e. applying it directly to the surface or crops) and aerial application (i.e. by sprays or aircraft) (www.lgean.org, 2008). During my research in Vietnam I noticed that the aerial application (hand spraying of crops) is by far the most common method of applying the pesticide. Sadly enough the applicators of the pesticides frequently do not follow the instructions of the NILP. As such inhaling of pesticides in a sprayed form is all too common.

#### *Storage*

Pesticides not only form a danger during mixing or application. Also the manner in which it is stored can create hazardous situations. According to the instruction manual of many pesticides they need to

be stored in a safe surrounding like a storage shed near the field. However, situations are known where farmers keep the pesticides in their living quarters, this to prevent possible theft while stored in the shed (Dr. Dang Quoc Nam et al., pp. 9-11). Accidental exposure to highly toxic pesticides stored in a living quarter is many times more likely compared to a situation where these pesticides are stored in a safe surrounding.

#### *Hazards for the consumer*

Consuming products that have grown with the help of pesticides can be hazardous for one's health. Overdosing of the crops is a common problem in Vietnam; as a result one will consume too many toxic materials that still remain on the crops. During an interview with Ms. Coleman at the Australian Embassy in Hanoi she mentioned a remarkable incident with regard to raticides (pesticides specifically produced to kill rodents). During the end of the 1990s Vietnamese farmers found out that using a specific aggressive raticide was an effective way to prevent these rodents from damaging their crops. Using this raticide appeared to be very effective by killing the rodents before they could damage the crops. At the same time rats are also a delicacy in the Vietnamese cuisine and as such many people collected rats in order to personally consume them or sell them on the markets. Unfortunately some people also collected the rodents that had been poisoned by the raticide. Consequently a number of people died due to the raticide that was still present in the rodent they consumed. A large government campaign prevented further casualties, but since this horrible event food-safety issues were placed on the political and (mainly) public agenda. Although raticide had a far more devastating and rapid effect on the health of the consumer, pesticides are –when consumed on a long-term period– very much hazardous and can certainly be fatal. Contrary to raticide (for it being a poison), pesticides are slow killers.

#### *Hazards for the environment*

Due to the toxic nature of many pesticides they in general damage the environment, however by correctly applying and dosing the pesticides the damage can be controlled. Incorrect application of the pesticide can cause long-lasting effects on the flora and fauna.

When applying pesticides it is in almost all cases inevitable that chemical residues reach the ground water level. This water in return reaches surrounding (and future) crops. A vicious circle can emerge that damages the land and all the plant life living on it. An added hazard when the chemical residues reach the ground water is the fact that the water filtration system in Vietnam is not always up to standard. The chemical residues can therefore reach sources of drinking water.

Pesticides per definition affect animals, either by repelling or exterminating them (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2002, p. 6). Incorrect application or overdosing of pesticides can thus have a serious effect on the fauna living in and around the area where pesticides are being applied.

### **5.3. Pesticide related policies**

The Vietnamese government has introduced several policies in an attempt to prevent the previously described issues. This paragraph will introduce some of these policies but also focus on the issues surrounding these policies.

Each of the following decrees, decisions or ordinances are dated and given a number, as such they are easily recognized and/or retrievable. Unfortunately many of them are not translated in English or any other (western) language and therefore only available in Vietnamese. The following descriptions of these major policies are from Pham Van Hoi who is a lecturer at the Hanoi Agriculture University (HAU), one of Vietnam's foremost universities. The policies are not so much in a chronological order but more per topic.



Decision No. 32/CT dated on January 21, 1984 was probably the first major policy in Vietnam on pesticide management: “The Decision simply mentioned about responsibility of relevant state departments in pesticide management of which Ministry of Agriculture and Food Technology (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development at the present) takes the leading role.” (Hoi, 2006, p. 1). Some seven years later (in 1991) the Decision No. 208/BVTV-KHKT/QD listed some 77 AI’s which could be categorized as class Ib and class II from the WHO toxicity class. This Decision was preceded by Circular No. 04-TT/LB which required the “...Ministry of Agriculture and Food Technology to issue list of pesticides for use in Vietnam annually (the list also means permission for registration/import/production/ package/ distribution).” (Hoi, 2006, p. 1). From 1992 this list issued by MARD was categorized in three categories: (I) permitted for use, (II) restricted from use and (III) banned from use. It is noteworthy to mention that the problems with regard to pesticides truly reached the political agenda after the *Đổi Mới* reforms were introduced. With the reforms also came the economic growth in the early 1990s, Vietnam opened its market to the outside world and was as such ‘obliged’ to counter the hazards of pesticides.

Decree No. 92-CP, dated November 27, 1993, was “the first comprehensively lawful document of Vietnam on pesticide management.” (Hoi, 2006, p. 1). This Decree stated the following (Hoi, 2006, p. 1):

- The objectives of plant protection.
- The requirements for pesticide production.
- The requirements for packaging.
- The requirements for distribution.
- The requirements for uses.
- “Responsibilities and rights of relevant state offices in monitoring and inspecting all activities related to pesticides.”
- “The establishment of a plant protection system from central to district level of which the Plant Protection Department (PPD) is in charge of helping MARD to fulfill state administration affairs in every aspects related to pesticides.”

This landmark Decree emphasizes on the fact that “plant protection activities need to follow the principle *“prevention is first and application of controlling methods is in time.”*” (Hoi, 2006, p. 1). In addition to the fact that this decree is aimed at a successful pest and disease control, it also focuses on the safety of the people, flora and fauna. This decree also stated that only pesticides from the first and second category were allowed to be imported, produced, packaged and distributed by pesticide companies. Furthermore the decree also stated that it was not allowed to advertise pesticides from the second category (Hoi, 2006, p. 2).

Regulations surrounding the second category type of pesticides were tightened with Decision No. 100 NN-BVTV/QD dated on February 23, 1995. This decision specified that new registration of second category pesticides were no longer applied, with an exception for pesticides use in the wood industry, disinfection and health care system. Circular No. 05/1999/TT-BYT dated March 27, 1999 and issued by the Ministry of Healthy regulated that “all organizations and individuals need to declare, register and being certified for use of second category pesticides issued by MARD among other toxic chemicals” (Hoi, 2006, p. 2).

By 2001 pesticides were considered to be special goods and as such had strict limitations in the conditions of the trade. Ordinance No. 36/2001/PL-UBTVQH10 dated on July 25, 2001 stipulated this and in practice this meant that the registration, import, export, production, storage, transport and trade from now on was managed by the state and in accordance to its regulations. This ordinance also gave a high priority for the research, investment, production, trade and use of biological pesticides. Later on the guideline of the ordinance of Decision No. 145/2002/QD-BNN dated on December 18, 2002 stated that biological pesticides were to be prioritized. In practice this meant that “they do not have to follow regulations applied for chemical pesticides in terms of field test and experiment. Companies which register for biological pesticides do only have to submit to PPD of MARD a

research result report available (if pesticides are domestically produced) or pest and disease controlling effect of pesticides as tested in Vietnamese conditions (if pesticide is imported).” (Hoi, 2006, p. 2)

Decision No. 193/1998 /QD/BNN-BVTV dated on December 2, 1998 has further specified the field testing of pesticides. There are two Pesticide Control Centers (PCC) in Vietnam, one in the North and one in the South; this is due to the environmental differences between these regions. “The aim of pesticide field test is to determine pest and disease controlling effect of pesticides, and other effects on plants, people, animal and environment” (Hoi, 2006, p. 2). This decision states three reasons for a pesticide to be field tested in a PCC (Hoi, 2006, p. 2):

1. Pesticides are new to the list of pesticides issued by MARD.
2. Pesticides which have been officially registered in Vietnam, but subjected to some change in target pest and disease, dosage, percentage of active ingredients or additives, or combined with (an) other active ingredients.
3. Pesticides which have been officially registered in Vietnam but negatively affect on plant and environment

The 2003 decision (No. 50/2003/QD-BNN) further specified the characteristics of the field tests.

With regard to the packaging and distribution of pesticides several decrees and decisions were implemented in the past years. Decree 92-CP originating from 1993 states that only individuals with a *technical background* are allowed to be involved in the process of packaging and distribution. Decree No. 58/2002/NĐ-CP dated on June 3, 2002 specified the *technical background* further, it must be at a university/college level. Individuals active in the service sector of pesticides need to be certified by a health center at least at a district level. Decision No. 91/2002/QD-BNN dated on October 11, 2002 further regulates the owners of individuals that possess pesticide business certifications. They regularly need to participate technical training sessions organized and given by the PPD at provincial level. These trainings provide the individuals of updated information on pesticides as well as state regulations (Hoi, 2006, p. 2).

Decree 92-CP regulates that pesticide users are obliged to follow the guidelines as stated on the packaging of the pesticide and/or the technical staff. These guidelines regulate and explain the proper dosage in time and by crop-type. Decision 145/2002/QD-BNN adds a legal aspect to the usage of pesticides, that is: “users are responsible lawfully for their activities especially those related to improper uses of pesticides, uses of banned or unknown origin pesticides that may harm people and animal health as well as environment.” (Hoi, 2006, p. 2).

Pesticides used on vegetables were further regulated through Regulation No. 367-BVTV/QD dated on June 19, 1996. Many pesticides and active ingredients were –from then on– not allowed to be used on vegetables, also the field testing of pesticides used on vegetables was further adjusted. Decision No. 50/2003/QD-BNN, in 2005, Decision No. 19/2005/QD-BNN and Decision No. 21/2005/QD-BNN issued a list of pesticides and active ingredients that are allowed to be used on vegetables, all other kinds of pesticides and active ingredients “will not be allowed to register, produce, distribute, advertise and use on vegetables” (Hoi, 2006, p. 3).

The above referred to policies are all defined as official Decisions and Decrees, there are on the other hand some other examples of policies which are less obvious. Being mainly an agricultural nation Vietnamese authorities have initiated a mass media campaign to propagate the safe use of chemical pesticides. Besides the all too common billboards on the streets the Vietnamese state television is broadcasting game shows where farmers compete to win prizes. Questions in these game shows are related to problems such as the unsafe use of (illegal) pesticides.

## 5.4. Policy implementation issues

Having described the pesticide related issues and the pesticide related policies it is important to get a basic understanding of the issues which street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam encounter. This paragraph will focus on three main issues the street-level bureaucrats encounter while attempting to perform their work.

### 5.4.1. Lack of priority

As explained in the first chapter of this research the economy in Vietnam is growing with impressive numbers (see Figure 2). The recent accession to the WTO has further stimulated this growth. However, the process of becoming a fully fledged WTO member took several years and several policy alterations and implementations. These alterations and implementations had a –not to be underestimated– impact on Vietnamese socio-economic structure. A number of concessions and commitments had to be made in number of economic sectors, among which the agricultural sector. Business-in-Asia ([www.business-in-asia.com](http://www.business-in-asia.com), 2006) named the following:

- state subsidies on products for domestic only allowed up to 10%;
- state subsidies on products for export are not allowed at all;
- no more state awards on the export of coffee which was the case before the WTO membership.

In one of the official WTO accession documents (2006, p. 92) the following relevant concessions and commitments were defined:

- after 2009 state-owned corporations will lose their monopoly on rice export;
- no more rice export quotas and no further export restrictions with regard to rice (Decision No. 46/2001/QD-TTg, dating 4 April 2001).

The WTO membership application process did not only have an impact on economy related aspects. Also the policymaking and -implementation processes have underwent some basic changes. In particular "...a number of administrative and legal structures have been introduced or strengthened that WTO provisions are applied, including the possibility of investigation and judicial review to deal with complaints about this." ([www.business-in-asia.com](http://www.business-in-asia.com), 2006). This example shows that the formulation and implementation processes of these policies require a considerable amount of resources within the Vietnamese government and civil service. As these policies are all focused on the WTO membership one can state that the investments that have been made in these policies are directly aimed at stimulating Vietnam's economic growth. The 2007 added boost to the GDP (see Figure 2) can for a large part be accredited to the WTO-accession in early 2007. In addition to this the Vietnamese representative to the WTO stated in the report of the Working Party on the accession of Vietnam that "agricultural and rural development was a priority in the economic and social strategy of his Government" (World Trade Organization, 2006, p. 93). With the aimed increase in agricultural and rural development the use of pesticides will of course also increase. This fits in the historic data that is available so far: between 1991 and 2007 the use of pesticides increased from 15,000 to 76,000 tons (Anh, 2002; Vinachem, 2008 in Hoi, Mol, & Oosterveer, 2009).

Due to the fact that Vietnamese agricultural policies are mainly focused on economic development, other related policy fields are of lesser importance. During interviews with street-level bureaucrats and scholars in Vietnam it became apparent that food safety issues related to the widespread use of (mainly chemical) pesticides are of far lesser importance to the government. In reality this leads to a structural lack of priority by the central government.

An example of this became apparent during an interviews with a Vietnamese street-level bureaucrat. The department within the MARD that he manages is responsible for providing permits that allow producers of pesticides to market their products in Vietnam. They evaluate permit requests for pesticides with both chemical and/or biological AI's. In that capacity this department has direct contact with the clients (pesticide producers and resellers). These clients –in return– consider the civil servants in this department as their main government representatives they have to deal with. During

the interview it became clear that this department is seriously constrained due to lack of funds. With over 500 permit applications per year (in 2006), which are complex procedures, his department has an extremely high case load. Besides the high case load the lack of funds also directly influence the quality of their work. In addition to this a lack of effective testing equipment prevents the street-level bureaucrats from performing their work according to acceptable standards. Although these standards were not available for me during my research, the Vietnamese government does have a number of policies which state how pesticide applications should be treated. Besides the duration of these tests the samples also need to be tested in two different geographic locations. This is due to the fact that Vietnam is -geographically seen- a long stretched country. In a straight line there is about 1650 km between the most northern and the most southern point. Combined with the difference in terrain (mountainous in the north and a relative flat delta in the south) there is a diversity with regard to the climate. As such there is a need for two test-facilities which both test the samples in different climates. With some 500 permit applications per year also some 500 pesticide samples have to be tested in the two testing locations. This has an significant impact on the permit application department.

The problem described in this paragraph gives a clear example of the lack of priority the Vietnamese government has with regard to preventing pesticide related issues. One of the first lines of defense from hazardous pesticides is clearly not capable of successfully performing their duty.

#### **5.4.2. Lack of funds**

Although Vietnam has a booming economy the street-level bureaucrats assigned to combat the pesticide related issues encounter another major problem. The previously stated lack of priority also results in a structural lack of funds. The high case-load of the permit application department mainly due to a lack of funds. During the interview it became apparent that this departments budget does not allow the hiring of more staff. The resulting high case-load directly effects the quality of the work because the same amount of permit-applications have to be evaluated.

36

The lack of funds also creates a situation where the street-level bureaucrats are underpaid. Personal wealth is increasing in Vietnam but the street-level bureaucrats are lacking. For example, a police officer earns about US\$60 per month, which is almost the same as one month rent in a city such as Hanoi. Such low wages 'forces' a civil servant to look for supplementary income and in the case of a police officer this is frequently done by accepting bribes. Combating corruption in Vietnam is a complex and time consuming activity.

It is apparent that the lack of funding is caused by a different strategy maintained by the Vietnamese government. This strategy aims towards further economic growth at cost of the street-level bureaucrats attempting to combat the pesticide related issues.

#### **5.4.3. Lack of accountability**

As became clear in the theoretical framework a street-level bureaucrat has to act with a certain level of accountability. This is necessary due to the fact that they regularly act with administrative discretion. The earlier mentioned MARD-department responsible for the pesticide permit applications has to act with a certain degree of administrative discretion. The high case-load does not allow them to spend too much time on one of the 500 clients they annually have. However, when they act with administrative discretion they have to remain accountable for their actions. This is not always the case and according to sources this department very much acts with a lack of accountability. A representative of a respectable international pesticide producing corporation spoke remarkably open about the permit application procedure, however only under condition of anonymity. He stated that the permit application processes require the pesticides to be tested for a set period of time. For chemical pesticides this is 24 to 36 months. However, this anonymous source obtained documents which stated that certain chemical pesticide applications were successfully concluded in a far shorter period of time. In this case one can argue that the street-level bureaucrat acted with administrative discretion and that there is logical reason for this. Whatever the actual reason is, the street-level bureaucrat

responsible for this was never held accountable. There seems to be a lack of supervision over this process and as such a lack of accountability towards the supervisors.

## **5.5. Chapter summary**

The case study of this research can be divided in four sections. First of all it focuses on what pesticides exactly are. This is needed due to the fact that there are many different definitions of pesticides. The inherent nature of pesticides (to prevent, destroy or control any pest) make it clear that pesticides have hazardous characteristics. During production, handling and application of these materials a number of issues are visible in Vietnam. The second paragraph of this research focuses on these issues. There are however a number of pesticide related issues available for the street-level bureaucrats, these policies have been described in the third paragraph. The final paragraph of the case study sheds light on three main policy implementation issues encountered by the street-level bureaucrats.

## 6. Research analysis

### 6.1. Policy implementation

During interviews with Vietnamese civil servants and other (in-)directly related actors it became apparent that Vietnamese policy implementation is very much based on a top-down model. The standards, objectives and resources of the government are planned and projected through the administrative system from the top to the bottom where the street-level bureaucrats are active. This is fitting in the Vietnamese situation where the government acts in five-year plans (www.worldbank.org, 2007). However, the *Đổi Mới* reforms not only changed the economic system it also –although covertly– introduced more freedom and less government intrusions. This did not lead to a change in policymaking, the policies described in the case study all seem to have been formulated at the top and expected to be implemented with success at the street-level. This does not mean that the policy process in Vietnam is strictly top-down. There is a clear bottom-up process emerging among the street-level bureaucrats. This paragraph will focus both on the top-down and the bottom-up processes visible in Vietnam.

#### 6.1.1. Top-down

The pesticide related policies which are currently implemented in Vietnam all have been designed by policymakers in Hanoi. An issue received the elite attention in the agenda setting phase and then entered the policy formulation phase. This process is not uncommon with regard to the life-cycle of a policy. However, the Vietnamese one-party system adds another dimension to this process. The Vietnamese Communist Party decides the course of action and as such what enters the policy agenda. External influences from actors such as news media, interest groups or citizens initiatives are as such limited. And once a policy has been formulated it is sent towards the street-level for it to be implemented. The top-down policy implementation model shown in Figure 5 is fitting for the situation in Vietnam. The variables at play actually take place when implementing the pesticide related policies. The Vietnamese policies have predefined *standards and objectives* and in order for it to be implemented *resources* need to be available. At the next stage some three internal and external variables influence the process. The *inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities* and the *characteristics of the implementing agencies* and *economic* can be considered as internal variables. This due to the case that these variables can be controlled by the actors involved. If the inter-organizational communication is lacking, this can be solved. However, the *social and political conditions* are far more difficult to solve if they play a large part. These issues arising from these variables can be managed but not that easily solved. The next stage covers -with regard to this research- by far the most important variable: *the disposition of the implementers*. The implementers in this case are the street-level bureaucrats. The following paragraphs will further analyze the disposition of the street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam.

One thing is clear so far: there seems to be a mismatch between policy and reality. The policies designed at the top are not working at street-level. During my interview with Mr. Dinh Van Thao (district level PPD) this mismatch became further apparent. The government at national level acted little upon his criticism. This emphasizes the literal interpretation of the top-down approach in which Vietnamese policies are implemented and where all communication and enforcement flows go downwards in the stream. Any upward flows seem to be ignored or ‘lost in translation’. Besides the one-way vertical flow there is also hardly any horizontal flow. According to the civil servant at the national level of the PPD the communication between the Vietnamese ministries is limited to non-existing.

#### 6.1.2. Bottom-up

The previous paragraph stated that the implemented pesticide related policies all have been designed in a top-down manner. This however does not imply that these policies are also implemented in a top-down manner. The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats actually run into the familiar challenges

described in the theoretical framework. These challenges emerge from the ambiguous and sometimes conflicting goals set by the policy makers. This discrepancy between the policies on paper and the real life situation force the street-level bureaucrats to act with discretion. Based upon the norms and motivation of the street-level bureaucrat coping strategies are used to successfully achieve the set goal(s). These coping strategies make use of the available tools made available by one or more policies. As such the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats create bottom-up policies through a collection of coping strategies.

So far this covers the theoretical aspect of bottom-up implementation in Vietnam. During my visit to Vietnam I observed and was told of a number of bottom-up implementation examples. Mr. Dinh Van Thao of the PPD is a street-level bureaucrat per definition. During my interview with him he was very open about the ambiguity of the policy goals. By using coping strategies he is able to achieve the set goals. These coping strategies consist (in some cases) of a mix of policy tools which used in combination can help him reach the set goal. He gave an example of the inspections he does at the pesticide resellers. He has to check if these resellers are abiding the set laws. If this is not the case then he is obliged to fine them. However, another policy states that he is not allowed to fine the reseller without the presence of third official from that commune. So before these inspections of the resellers can take place an official request for assistance has to be sent to the commune in question. This gives away the element of surprise and before the inspection can take place the resellers are warned of the impending inspection. This is a clear example of a design flaw in the relevant policy. On paper it may sound good to involve the commune level but in reality it does not work. In order to make effective surprise inspections Mr. Dinh Van Thao uses a policy tool from another policy. He sometimes makes unannounced surprise inspections at district level, enabling him to circumvent the commune level. Or as Mr. Dinh Van Thao stated in the interview:

39

*I find these surprise visits in general not very effective, therefore we also do large surprise visit at district level. Together with the district government we plan a large surprise visit during which we get police assistance. The only reason the police is present is the intimidation factor, I can tell you this really works.* Dong Anh, 14th of July, 2006

The Vietnamese central government is however carefully exploring this bottom-up process. At the end of the 1990s several policies were introduced and implemented that showed a process of governance and as such a bottom-up process. These so called Grassroots Democracy Decree's 29/1998/ND-CP, 71/1998/ND-CP and 07/1999/ND-CP (Lindskog & Long, 2001, p. 55) “[...] became the idiom of choice for donors, the government and the state media for the importance of “downward accountability”, a focal point for discussions on governance in the late 1990s.” (Fritzen, 2003, p. 237). Remarkably *decree 71/1998/ND-CP* states that the actors in the lower level should have more influence on the policy implementation phase, in practice this is not the case as became apparent during the interview with Mr. Dinh Van Thao. His criticism or call for improvements is still being ignored in Hanoi. The information that street-level bureaucrats can supply to their superiors is of major importance and typical in a bottom-up process. The local dynamics that occur at for example commune level should also be known to the policymakers in Hanoi. It seems that civil servants at national level are not aware of these local dynamics. As such, one can wonder if these bottom-up policies could be considered more symbolic than effective.

## 6.2. Challenges encountered by street-level bureaucrats

The street-level bureaucrat in Vietnam can be considered as 'the core object of interest' in this research. The theory of street-level bureaucracy has extensively been described and visualized (see Figure 4) in the theoretical framework of this thesis. Using the theory four different factors of influence have been explored. These factors, in combined with my research findings, will be further analyzed in the upcoming paragraphs.

### 6.2.1. Strenuous client relationship

The clients of the street-level bureaucrats in this case are either farmers, pesticide -producers, -importers or -resellers. Their contact with the street-level bureaucrats is frequent and mainly on a non-voluntary basis. An example of this was given by Mr. Dinh Van Thao of the Dong Anh PPD. He regularly checks within his district whether the pesticide resellers are abiding the law. In the past it has occurred that resellers offered illegal products, which would result in Mr. Dinh Van Thao fining the reseller. As can be expected, this contact is very much on a non-voluntary basis for the reseller.

The fact that a street-level bureaucrat has a monopoly on implementing policies is to be expected. However, the political structure within Vietnam adds another interesting dimension. The one-party political structure does not allow a lot of interaction as would be expected in for example a western democracy such as The Netherlands. If a farmer in the Netherlands opposes a certain policy he or she can vote for a different political party in the next elections. This is not the case in Vietnam. The lack of democratic influences prevents the Vietnamese population from having a say in the country's political course. This situation leads to frustrations for the clients but also the street-level bureaucrats. Having frustrated clients and not being able to do anything against it adds to the strenuous client relationship.

In addition to the above frustrations there is another factor of influence to the strenuous relationship. The street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam have to conduct their work with very limited resources. This further hinders the way in which they perform their work, adding to the frustration of the client. Having individual expectancies but also grievances, the clients are each different persons. Their personalities and current circumstances influence the manner of interaction between them and the street-level bureaucrat. This social construction of the client is heavily influenced by the current socio-economic situation in Vietnam. The overall urge for more personal wealth has its effects. Some clients willfully break the law in order to increase their personal wealth.

A client has limited means of appealing a decision made by a street-level bureaucrat. As stated earlier a farmer in Vietnam is not able to simply vote away an unwanted policy. However, this does not imply that a Vietnamese street-level bureaucrat cannot be held accountable for his or her actions. But what forms of public accountability are visible with regard to the client relationship of a street-level bureaucrat? Using Table 1 from the theoretical framework the level of public accountability with regard to the client relationship has been visualized in Table 5.

Action scale	Types of public accountability		
	<i>Public-administrative accountability</i>	<i>Professional accountability</i>	<i>Participatory accountability</i>
<i>System</i>	+	--	-
<i>Organization</i>	+/-	+/-	+
<i>Individual</i>	+	+	++

Table 5 – Level of public accountability with regard to the client relationship

The level of public accountability differs per scale (system, organization or individual) but also per type of accountability (public-administrative, professional or participatory). In Table 5 these levels of public accountability have been quantified, with -- having the lowest level and ++ the highest. At the system-scale the street-level bureaucrat has over all the lowest level of public accountability. The explanation for this is obvious, as the street-level bureaucrat is too far away from this scale. For example, the street-level bureaucrat can hardly be accountable towards the ministers or the cabinet. But on the other they can be held accountable towards the courts, inspectorates and auditors. The organization-scale is one step closer towards the street-level bureaucrat. The level of public accountability towards these actors is slightly higher. With regard to the participatory accountability



the local media and client councils are of influence. At the individual scale the street-level bureaucrat has a high level of accountability. This is logical because this scale is the closest to the street-level. He or she is accountable towards the clients in the participatory type but also the manager in the public-administrative scale. When observing Table 5 it becomes clear that the street-level bureaucrat has the highest level of accountability towards the participatory type. Surely, this is where the clients are present.

This seems to contradict the earlier statement that the clients have limited influence on the implementation process by the street-level bureaucrats. Officially this is the case, clients can protest the actions of street-level bureaucrats at government officials such as the head of the commune. However, in reality this is not the case because there still is a general lack of accountability with regard to the street-level bureaucrats. Corruption is very much a visible problem. Although I personally witnessed no obvious acts of such, the stories are plentiful. For example, the police officers in Vietnam receive little respect from the general public. This is due to the fact that these street-level bureaucrats are by far the most corrupt, mainly due to their low wages and the type of work they do which further facilitates corruption. The nature of their relationship with the client is mainly based upon sanctioning. Bribing a policy officer in order to prevent a more expensive fine is to a certain extent accepted in Vietnam. This does not imply that corruption is accepted within the Vietnamese society. During my stay in Hanoi I frequently read newspaper articles about corrupt higher officials being prosecuted. As of yet the corrupt street-level bureaucrats -albeit not being too overt- seem to get away with it. The level of public-accountability for certain street-level bureaucrats seems to be too low. Acting with little or no accountability further facilitates corruption.

With regard to the above it appears that the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats have a terrible relationship with their clients. This is certainly not the case. During interviews with street-level bureaucrats and their clients it became clear that in some cases the relationship is very good. The afore mentioned Mr. Dinh Van Thao for examples regularly organizes information events for his clients. As such he is not only sanctioning them but also giving services and benefits. It is obvious that the clients prefer the services and benefits given to them. In return Mr. Dinh Van Thao wants control over the process in his district. As long as this is in balance the relationship between the street-level bureaucrats and the clients remain good. During interviews it became apparent that this balance cannot be maintained by the set policies alone. Lack of resources and a mismatch between policy and reality is (again) a fact of life. Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats have therefore adopted a number of coping strategies. For example, the information events organized by Mr. Dinh Van Thao are not part of any policies he has to implement. He uses these events as a coping strategy, by giving something back to the clients in his district he receives valuable information. In return this information can help him successfully implement the set policies and as such reach his goals.

#### *Quantification of the challenge*

This paragraph made clear that the relationship between the street-level bureaucrat and his or her client is -to say the least- strenuous. Two major factors are of influence to this, the *policy related* and *socio-economic related* factors. Table 6 brings together the challenge described in this paragraph and quantifies the influence per factor. In this case the policy related factors are more or less (+/-) of influence to the lack of respect encountered by the street-level bureaucrats. Other policies must have an effect on the disposition of the clients and as such the way they interact with the street-level bureaucrat. Unfortunately no clear evidence of this was found, only observations made during my visit to Hanoi. However, the socio-economic factors are very much (++) a factor of influence. The changing Vietnamese society makes the client more critical and aware of these socio-economic factors. Corruption and lacking resources makes the street-level bureaucrats (in the eye of the client) a difficult interaction partner.

	Policy related factors	Socio-economic related factors
<i>The extent to which policy and socio-economic related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats client relationship.</i>	+/-	++

Table 6 – Level of influence with regard to the client relationship

### 6.2.2. Unrealistic goal expectations

The previous paragraph focused on the relationship between the street-level bureaucrat and his or her clients. It is obvious that this relationship has a large influence on the success of a policy. In order to successfully implement the pesticide related policies street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam have to reach certain goals. As described in the theoretical framework these goals can be conflicting and ambiguous. The origin of this conflict and ambiguity can frequently be found in the policy formulation phase. With regard to this the theoretical framework introduced three sources of these conflicts:

1. Client-centered goals versus social engineering
2. Client-centered goals versus organization-centered goals
3. Goal conflicts and role expectations

This paragraph will focus on these three sources of conflict and reflect them to the current situation in Vietnam. By analyzing this it will become clear that many of the challenges the street-level bureaucrats encounter originate from poorly formulated policies.

#### *Client-centered goals versus social engineering*

The Vietnamese government has formulated a number of pesticide related policies. These policies have the aim to further prevent the issues related to the use of pesticide. The method of implementation by the street-level bureaucrat differs per policy. This can be done in a coercive or a non-coercive manner. However, in both cases the goal is to socially engineer the clients behavior to further prevent the pesticide related issues. This all sounds very well in theory, but in practice the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats run into the non-voluntary clients. As described in the previous paragraph (6.2.1) the relationship is strenuous and as such in cases troublesome. The social engineering of the clients is frequently of a non-voluntary nature.

#### *Client-centered goals versus organization-centered goals*

The previous paragraph (6.2.1) made clear that in Vietnam there is a strenuous relationship between the street-level bureaucrats and his or her clients. Unfortunately the street-level bureaucrats also have -by nature- a conflicting relationship with their supervisors, or as referred to in the theory their organization. A prime example of this became clear during an interview with the head of the department within the MARD that is responsible for providing permits that allow pesticide products to the Vietnamese market. His department consists of a number of street-level bureaucrats who's clients are pesticide producers or imports. These street-level bureaucrats evaluate permit requests for pesticides with both chemical and/or biological AI's. With over 500 permit applications per year (in 2006) his department has an extremely high case load, mainly due to the highly complex procedures involved. The head of this department explained that his department is seriously understaffed and that lack of resources prevent him from hiring more staff. However, from organizational level (high managerial echelons) his department is required to evaluate, test and make decisions on all submitted requests. There is a pressure on his department to maintain a set target of permit applications and in the same time adhere to a certain quality standard. The pressure of performing mass processing of permits in combination of a lack of resources creates a conflict between the organization and the street-level bureaucrats. In this case there is a clear tension visible between the client-centered goals of the street-level bureaucrats (quality decisions) and the organization-centered goals (mass processing of the permits).

### *Goal conflicts and role expectations*

While attempting to reach the set goals the street-level bureaucrat in Vietnam runs into certain expectations surrounding his or her role. These expectations differ depending on who you would ask. In the theoretical framework three actors were described who each have an expectation of the street-level bureaucrats role. First of all there is the public's expectation of the role. As described earlier in this research Vietnam is undergoing a transition, mostly related to the economic boom. Personal wealth is on the increase and democratic influences come from abroad through satellite TV and the internet. These socio-economic influences are changing Vietnamese society, the urge for a higher living standard is very much present. With the increase in wealth and democratic influences there seems to be a sense of public empowerment. With that the role of the street-level bureaucrat changes. Where the public used to be a 'good socialist' and listen to the government, they are now becoming more critical and expect more of the street-level bureaucrats. The expectations of the street-level bureaucrats role are becoming higher. Unfortunately the resources and as such the effectiveness of the street-level bureaucrats are decreasing. In short the conflict is about the Vietnamese public expecting more of the street-level bureaucrat who in return can give less due to resource deficiencies.

The street-level bureaucrats peer is the second actor which has an expectation of the role. Being in the same position the peer understands as no other the struggles and conflicts. Although I was not able to collect direct empirical material on the peer-relationship of street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam there are some connections to be made with other research findings. As stated earlier in the case study anthropologist and sociologist Mr. Jamieson referred to the Vietnamese society as being individualistic and even borderline anti-social. This characteristic is also applies to the relationship among the peers of street-level bureaucrats. Cooperation among peers therefore seems to be troublesome. But, if one would interpret the term *peer* as a street-level bureaucrat in a different role then an example can be given. Mr. Dinh Van Thao explained during the interview that he often has to work together with the street-level bureaucrats at commune level. This cooperation is not always to his liking as the communes frequently have a policy aimed at economic development of the commune. The role of Mr. Dinh Van Thao assigned to prevent the pesticide related issues is as such conflicting with the street-level bureaucrat at commune level.

Finally, the third actor having an expectation of the street-level bureaucrats role is its clients. Where the public should be recognized as all Vietnamese citizens, the clients are the ones directly involved and in contact with the street-level bureaucrat. Paragraph 6.2.1 the relationship between the street-level bureaucrat and his or her client is -to say the least- strenuous. The reason for this was also explained in that paragraph. However, the role expectation of the clients is also a probable cause explaining this troublesome relationship. The client expects the street-level bureaucrat to help him or her solve any problems at hand. Unfortunately, the street-level bureaucrat cannot solve these problems in all cases. The familiar limitations such as lack of resources or conflicting interests can prevent this. Vietnamese farmers would kindly receive as much support (financial or information) as the can, however street-level bureaucrats such as Mr. Dinh Van Thao is limited to the resources he has.

### *Quantification of the challenge*

This paragraph made clear that the street-level bureaucrats goals is full of conflict. Two major factors are of influence to this, the *policy related* and *socio-economic related* factors. Table 7 brings together the challenge described in this paragraph and quantifies the influence per factor. There are somewhat (+) policy related influences on the unrealistic goal expectations which the street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam encounter. Policies are in some cases ambiguously designed which result in the unrealistic goal expectations. If the street-level bureaucrat has difficulties implementing a policy due to ambiguity then it is unrealistic to expect that the goals are successfully reached. In this case the socio-economic factors are also of major (++) influence. As is the case in the previous paragraph, the clients of the

street-level bureaucrats have high expectations on the attainability of the street-level bureaucrats goals. Vietnam's changing society leads to a higher degree of public empowerment and as such the expectations of the clients.

	Policy related factors	Socio-economic related factors
<i>The extent to which policy and socio-economic related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats goal expectation.</i>	+	++

Table 7 – Level of influence with regard to the goal expectation

### 6.2.3. Discrepancy between demand and supply

The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats endure the same demand and supply issues as described in the theoretical framework. Their subject matter is complex, there is a high frequency within the decision-making process, the need for information is high and so is the case load. All these demand and supply issues can be related to one cause: the lack of resources allocated to the street-level bureaucrat to successfully perform his or her set task. The earlier mentioned head of the pesticide permit department at MARD further explained his frustration. The street-level bureaucrats in his department evaluate permit requests for pesticides with both chemical and/or biological AI's. In that capacity the department has direct contact with the clients (pesticide producers and resellers). These clients –in return– consider the civil servants in this department as their main government representatives they have to deal with, (as such them fitting the definition of a street-level bureaucrat). With over 500 permit applications per year (in 2006), which are complex procedures, his department has an extremely high case load. The application procedure consists of a desk research of the actual application but also extensive field-testing in two different geographic locations. This is due to the fact that Vietnam is -geographically seen- a long stretched out country. In a straight line there is about 1650 km between the most northern and the most southern point. Combined with the difference in terrain (mountainous in the north and a relative flat delta in the south) there is a diversity with regard to the climate. As such there is a need for two test-facilities which both test the samples in different climates. The procedure also differs between pesticides with exclusively biological AI's and pesticides with at least one chemical AI. The testing procedure for chemical pesticides takes 24 to 36 months and the application fee is VND 200.000.000 (€ 9.522 in 2006). The testing procedure of biological pesticides takes three months and the application fee is VND 30.000.000 (€ 1.428 in 2006).

With regard to the work of this department a representative of a respectable international pesticide producing corporation spoke remarkably open about this application procedure, however only under condition of anonymity. He stated that the large difference between the application processes triggers certain pesticide producers to submit fraudulent pesticide applications. Submitting pesticide samples with chemical AI's as being biological pesticides has many advantages, the short test period and lower application fee being the foremost. An added motivation for these fraudulent pesticide producers is the fact that the MARD is not capable of testing the contents of the pesticide samples. The MARD does not possess the technical capability to test the chemical levels of the samples themselves, let alone have the budget to contract these tests out. The anonymous representative further claims that about 70% of so called biological pesticides available in Vietnam actually contain chemical AI's.

With some 500 permit applications per year also some 500 pesticide samples have to be tested in the two testing locations. This has an significant impact on the permit application department. The combination of a high work load and a lack of technical information, skills and equipment leads to a situation where the street-level bureaucrats need to act with a certain level of administrative discretion. No clear signs of administrative discretion became present during the interview with the head of the permit department. However, the anonymous representative did mention that several application processes were done in a too short period of time. He had evidence that several tests of

chemical pesticides were conducted in less than 6 months. This clearly contradicts the 24 to 36 months of testing required by law. He also stated that his evidence were public records and that he was not sure what the reason was why the testing stations deviated from the set period of time. This could have been an example of administrative discretion in order to speed up the application process and as such prevent (further) backlog. The fact that the pesticide application department is openly deviating from set policies either shows that is allowed to act with a great deal of administrative discretion or there is an overall lack of supervision and accountability. The lack of effective policy enforcement and the lack of supervision from higher authorities can lead to a situation where certain acts of corruption become common practice.

However, in this case one should keep in mind that one man's corruption is another man's coping strategy. A clear example of the ambiguousness of corruption the common practice in Vietnam to hand over an envelope with money after an interview with a civil servant. In countries such as the Netherlands this would be unheard of and in general be frowned upon. Although this is the common way of conducting interviews it has to be stated that not all civil servants accepted my envelope with ease. One was clearly hesitant and would only accept it after repeated attempts, another civil servant accepted with no hesitation at all. One could argue if this is a case of corruption or just common practice, I guess it depends on who you are asking.

The problems described in this paragraph give a clear example of the lack of priority the Vietnamese government has with regard to preventing pesticide related issues. One of the first lines of defense from hazardous pesticides is clearly not capable of successfully performing their duty due to a lack of funds. The large scale falsification of permit applications, the lack of effective testing of the pesticide samples and the lack of supervision over this process make it possible that hazardous pesticides come on the market in Vietnam.

45

*Quantification of the challenge*

This paragraph made clear that there is a shortage between supply and demand resulting in a general lack of resources for the street-level bureaucrats. Two major factors are of influence to this, the *policy related* and *socio-economic related* factors. Table 8 brings together the challenge described in this paragraph and quantifies the influence per factor. The policy related factors designed in the formulation phase are very much (++) of influence to the lack of resources. Economic growth seems to be the main priority with regard to the government policies. The socio-economic factors are with regard to that somewhat (+) of influence to the lack of resources. The Vietnamese society wants this economic growth as well and therefore acts alike. Even though the lack of resources directly affect the quality of the street-level bureaucrats work.

	Policy related factors	Socio-economic related factors
<i>The extent to which policy and socio-economic related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats resources.</i>	++	+

Table 8 – Level of influence with regard to the resources

**6.2.4. Performance orientation**

The performance of the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats are difficult to measure. The permit application department of the MARD probably has to process a fixed number of applications each year. However, due to their high case load and lack of personnel they might have cut corners to perform according to standards. Quantified performance targets are easier to evaluate than quality performance targets because in the end quality targets are ambiguous. As stated in the previous paragraph an anonymous source explained that this MARD department is not performing as it should be. But perhaps the higher (evaluation) echelons in Hanoi consider this department as being successful. Compliancy towards the set targets is met but the quality of the delivered work is lacking.

The empirical data gathered for this research sheds some light on the origin of this lacking performance, especially when one takes the previous paragraphs in consideration. It seems that there is a clear discrepancy between the policies on paper and the reality the street-level bureaucrats encounter on a day-to-day basis. These policies clearly state what is and what is not allowed with regard to the use of pesticides. Furthermore the policies all seem to give a clear guideline on how to interpret and use them. Also, the policies all make sense, none of them seem to add unnecessary bureaucracy for the actors involved. However, according to researcher Pham Van Hoi many of these policies are copied from existing policies in Thailand. This perhaps brings to light a weakness of the implemented policies as one cannot simply copy existing policies from one nation to another and expect them to be effective accordingly. On paper the policies seem to be relevant and of a high quality. However, in reality the problems they were designed for to combat still remain.

As became clear in the case study the policies related to combating pesticide related issues are lacking effectiveness. The problems remain and appear not to become less problematic. The previous paragraphs analyzed the cause of the problems in part. A troublesome client relationship, different goal expectations and a lack of resources. Besides these problems there is also another main issue that is preventing the reduction in pesticide related issues: street-level bureaucrats are finding it difficult to effectively and efficiently perform due to the set policies.

In some cases street-level bureaucrats find that certain policies prevent them from working in an effective and efficient manner. During the interview with Mr. Dinh Van Thao he explained that certain policies seem to be ambiguous. His department occasionally does surprise inspections at pesticide retailers and farming cooperations in his district. During those inspections they check if they abide by the set rules of the certifications they were given. For example, the national government in Hanoi has given certain farming cooperations "safe greening" certificates which states that the cooperation is producing products which are considered to be safe. This can be done, for example by using biological pesticides. Obtaining such a certificate is not easy and rather costly, about VND7.000.000 (€335 in 2006). However, the government is promoting such certifications by refunding the farmer with some VND3.500.000 (€168 in 2006) for the first year. The surprise visits in this case will consist not only of an administrative check, but the PPD also test if the farmer is still "greening safe". Such tests are performed by testing the crops and the groundwater for contamination. When during a surprise visit at a pesticide retailer or a farming cooperation certain results come up negative Mr. Dinh Van Thao is allowed to write out fines. This is where the policies become ambiguous and very much bureaucratic. Mr. Dinh Van Thao's department (at district level) is limited in the fines they can write out, per violation he can fine up to VND200.000 (almost €10 in 2006). The PPD at national level can revoke retailer licenses and fine up to VND10.000.000 (€488 in 2006), which is by all standards a significant difference. The set policies become more ambiguous by the fact that the commune chair – who is lower in the pecking order and has no pesticide related knowledge – can fine up to VND500.000 (€25 in 2006). This is remarkable, someone with less authority and knowledge is able to write out higher fines than the district head of the PPD. Besides the inconsequent fining structure within the Vietnamese government Mr. Dinh Van Thau continued by stating the following in the interview:

*When we discover a violation of the rules I can write a fine for the retailer. There are some rules we have to adhere to when we do these surprise visits. For example, a third person has to be present during the visit, this third person has to be from that commune level. The reason for the presence of this third person is that it prevents corruption. If a pesticide retailer is fined he will need to co-sign the fine, if he refuses the third person can sign the fine for him, only then is the fine valid. Dong Anh, 14th of July, 2006*

In order to be able to fine a pesticide retailer or farmer there always has to be a third person present. This further adds to the bureaucracy, although one can state that it can prevent corruption. When

asked if the available policies enable him to accomplish his set tasks, Mr. Dinh Van Thao answered very honestly:

*The policies are clear and should be sufficient, in general they are. But for example the height of the fines per government level is strange and does not work very well. The commune chair often has insufficient knowledge of the problem and therefore lets us or the national government fine the pesticide retailer. With regard to other policies we have, they work as long as the commune level cooperates. But it also happens that the commune level find economic development more important than the protection of our environment. In that case it is very difficult for us to do our work.* Dong Anh, 14th of July, 2006

His answer reveals some personal frustration with regard to the policies available to him. However, his final statement with regard to the importance of economic development poignantly repeats what already became clear in paragraph 5.4.1: economic development has a higher priority than the protection of the environment.

Besides fining pesticide retailers and farmers the district level PPD also has an important role in supplying the farmers with information about pesticides. This is done through the Public Announcement (PA) systems<sup>3</sup> throughout the district but also training sessions in villages. During these training sessions farmers are told how to safely use pesticides. Sometimes these sessions are organized together with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). However, in some other cases these events are organized together with pesticide producing corporations. In the latter case one can argue if these events are a schoolbook example of a public-private partnership or just an opportunity to promote the pesticide producing company's product.

47

The above given examples explain in detail how certain policies are implemented by the district level of the PPD. Certain policy tools as described in the theoretical framework of this research become apparent.

- *Subsidies*  
When a farming cooperation chooses to green their products in a safe way they can apply for the "safe greening" certificate. The cooperation has to pay an annual fee for this certificate of which in the first year they are subsidized half of this fee.
- *Sanctions*  
Pesticide retailers and farmers can be sanctioned when they do not abide by the set rules.
- *Suasion*  
The PA systems throughout the relevant villages and wards give the farmers information about upcoming pesticide related training or just general advice on pesticide related safety issues.
- *Capacity building tools*  
The district level PPD also organizes training events where the overall pesticide related skill level of the farmers is being increased.
- *Informal procedures*  
During my interview with Mr. Dinh Van Thau I came under the impression that he is appreciated among the pesticide resellers and farmers in his district. As such it is not unlikely that through informal procedures and a certain level of administrative discretion he can manage to implement several policies.

---

<sup>3</sup> Throughout Vietnam one can encounter the Public Announcement systems. This system consists of loudspeakers in cities, villages and communes which at set times broadcasts government information. This can vary from information about personal hygiene to political propaganda.

This paragraph brought to light a number of issues with regard to the implementation of pesticide related policies. First, the levels of authority when it comes to fining is rather inconsequent (or "strange" as Mr. Dinh van Thau stated). Second, when the district level wants to conduct surprise inspections it becomes a rather bureaucratic process which slows up the process and defacto makes it useless. Third, the training and information sessions organized with pesticide producing corporations are of dubious origin. Are they really organized to prevent the pesticide related issues or just to promote the products of the pesticide producer? All in all, the performance and success of the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrat is negatively influenced by the discrepancy between policy and reality.

*Quantification of the challenge*

This paragraph made clear that the street-level bureaucrats performance is lacking with regard to the pesticide related issues. There is a high degree of pressure from above to perform, however in reality this is unfeasible. Two major factors are of influence to this, the *policy related* and *socio-economic related* factors. Table 9 brings together the challenge described in this paragraph and quantifies the influence per factor. The policy related factors are very much (++) of influence to the lacking performance of the street-level bureaucrats. The ambiguously designed and conflicting policies make it very difficult for the street-level bureaucrat to perform up to par. The socio-economic related factors are more or less (+/-) of influence to the performance. As was the case with the goal expectations (see paragraph 6.2.2), the clients expect the street-level bureaucrats to perform according to their desired standards. The lack of priority with regard to the pesticide related policies make this more difficult to achieve.

	Policy related factors	Socio-economic related factors
<i>The extent to which policy and socio-economic related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats performance orientation.</i>	++	+/-

Table 9 – Level of influence with regard to the lacking performance

### 6.3. Chapter summary

This chapter analyzed the research findings, or in other words it brought together the theoretical framework and the case study. It first analyzed the policy implementation process where it became clear that the top-down process of implementation is the dominant one in Vietnam. However, the bottom-up process is currently emerging. The street-level bureaucrat is responsible for this bottom-up process, however he runs into a number of challenges. The strenuous client relationship, unrealistic goal expectations, lack of resources and the performance orientation all have their influence on the implementation process. In this chapter these challenges have been analyzed according to a number of research indicators.



## Conclusion

Having analyzed the challenges encountered by the street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam this chapter contains the conclusion of the research. The sub-questions introduced in the second chapter of this research will be answered first. This due to the fact that these questions comprised will form the answer to the central research question. The following paragraph will answer these sub-questions, after which the final paragraph will answer the central research question of this thesis.

### 6.4. Answering the sub-questions

**Sub-question 1:** *With which challenges are street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam confronted that stem from pesticide related issues?*

In order for this sub-question to be answered first one has to understand what at the moment the pesticide related issues are in Vietnam. During this research some eight issues have been explored where the first four can be categorized as being the cause and the second four lead to the effect of the issues. Four major *causes* contribute to the issues still being present in Vietnam:

1. *Incorrect use of pesticides by farmers*  
Applying pesticides is a complex procedure and overdosing is not only costly for the farmer but more important is a hazard for the consumer and the environment.
2. *Illegal import of pesticides*  
Pesticides and/or AI's which have been imported illegally either harm the legitimate producers of pesticides (imitation products) or the handler, consumer and environment due to the fact that it is frequently highly toxic.
3. *Lack of alternatives*  
Scattered land ownership and lack of cooperation among farmers make it nearly impossible for farmers to green crops with biological pesticides. As such, biological pesticides are currently not a valid alternative for chemical pesticides.
4. *Nepotism*  
In Vietnam it is very important who you know and not so much what you know. Nepotism, especially in higher echelons, is very much present and frequently leads to some form of corruption.

These causes lead to four *effects* that are currently visible in Vietnam:

1. *Hazards for the pesticide handlers*  
Research has shown that handlers of pesticides (e.g. farmers) use little to no protection while applying or mixing the pesticides. In addition to that, pesticides are frequently not stored in a safe environment.
2. *Hazards during storage*  
Due to the toxicity of many pesticides they need to be stored in a safe area. However, there is plentiful evidence that show this is not the case in Vietnam. Accidental exposure to highly toxic pesticides stored in a living quarter is many times more likely compared to a situation where these pesticides are stored in a safe area.
3. *Hazards for the consumer*  
When applied incorrectly the products that have been 'greened' with chemical pesticides form a health hazard for the consumer. The toxic AI's still remain on the products and long term exposure can lead illness or even death.
4. *Hazards for the environment*  
When applying the pesticides residues can reach the groundwater level. Prolonged application of pesticides will cause damage to the environment, both flora and fauna.

In addition to these pesticide related issues, there are some three major issues during the implementation of pesticide related policies in Vietnam. There appears to be (1) a general lack of priority when it comes to implementing the policies that prevent the pesticide related issues. Economic growth has a higher priority. Although partially resulting from the previous implementation issue, there is (2) a general lack in resources when it comes to the implementation of the pesticide

related issues. A general lack of accountability (3) among street-level bureaucrats results in a lower standard of delivered work, or in worst case: corruption.

Stemming from these issues are the challenges which the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats encounter on a day-to-day basis. In the analysis chapter of this research these challenges were connected to Michael Lipsky's theory on street-level bureaucracy (see paragraph 6.2). Part of his theory are the four conditions of influence described in paragraph 3.2.1 and visualized in Figure 6. Having analyzed these four conditions the challenges resulting from the above mentioned pesticide related issues become apparent and as such answer this sub-question:

- The relationship between the street-level bureaucrats and their clients is, to say the least, strenuous. From the street-level bureaucrats perspective the clients seem to have a lack of respect towards them. This lack of respect appears to originate from the inherent nature of the street-level bureaucrat (monopoly on policy implementation) and the fact that there is a one-party political system thus lacking a political alternative. In return, the clients perceive a lack of attention from the street-level bureaucrat. This is mainly caused by a general lack of resources which hinders the personal treatment of clients by the street-level bureaucrats. However, with regard to the above mentioned issues nepotism and corruption among street-level bureaucrats should also be considered as major contributing factors in the lack of respect from the clients.
- The unrealistic goal expectations are also a major challenge for the street-level bureaucrats. They attempt to socially engineer the society by implementing coercive and non-coercive policies during which they are confronted by the strenuous client relationship. In addition to this there is a conflict between the goals set by the street-level bureaucrats organization and the goals set for the clients. The organization focuses on mass processing while the street-level bureaucrats want to focus on quality decisions. Depending on who is asked, the expectations of the street-level bureaucrats role is also perceived differently which causes troublesome goal expectations. The lack of priority and funds are further contributing to this challenge encountered by the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats.
- The discrepancy between demand and supply is resulting in a structural lack of resources for the street-level bureaucrat. Resources are allocated often towards policies aimed at improving the economy. This causes a number of issues mainly the overall quality of the delivered work. A high case load forces the street-level bureaucrat to act with administrative discretion. However, the lack of accountability causes a situation where the street-level bureaucrat is very much susceptible to corruption.
- The performance of the street-level bureaucrat in Vietnam is seriously hindered due to a mismatch between the policies on paper and reality. Policies set from above are difficult to implement at street-level due to ambiguousness and conflict among policies.

***Sub-question 2: How do street-level bureaucrats deal with these challenges?***

The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats have a number of methods how they deal with the challenges they encounter. The foremost being the use of administrative discretion. An example of this was given in paragraph 6.2.4 where a street-level bureaucrat implement policy tools from another policy to combat a pesticide related issue. This harmless and creative method of administrative discretion is however not the only method how the street-level bureaucrats deal with their challenges. In paragraph 6.2.3 another example was given on how the street-level bureaucrats (in this case) deal with their challenges. The problem of the high case load was solved by speeding up the tests of new pesticides to be released on the market. However, the test-period is stated by law and as such it seems that one is not allowed to shorten this period. One can wonder if this is an example of administrative discretion getting out of hand, a lack of accountability or the result of downright corruption.

**Sub-question 3: What factors are of influence to their methods of dealing?**

The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats encounter two factors which influence their methods of dealing. First of all the socio-economic factors which have been described in the first chapter of this research. They mainly originate from the harsh decades of war and poverty followed by a tremendous economic growth since the early 1990s. Originating from a poor country that is rapidly becoming wealthy, it is obvious that the society is changing, Vietnam is a nation in transition. In addition to this new technologies such as the internet and satellite TV have introduced influences from abroad. The Vietnamese people want more personal wealth as is the case in the West. The United States is no longer the enemy, it is the youth's main example. Besides the economic growth the *Đổi Mới* reforms also brought several democratic influences, enabling the Vietnamese citizens more freedom. All these socio-economic factors are of influence to the challenges encountered by the street-level bureaucrats. Table 10 has collected the different challenges and based on the analysis given a value to what extent the socio-economic factor influences it.

Theory	Indicator	Value
Street-level bureaucracy (section B)	<b>Client relationship</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats client relationship.</i>	++ very much
	<b>Goal expectation</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats goal expectation.</i>	++ very much
	<b>Demand vs. supply</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats resources.</i>	+ somewhat
	<b>Performance orientation</b> <i>The extent to which socio-economic factors affect the street-level bureaucrats performance orientation.</i>	+/- more or less

Table 10 – Level of influence of the socio-economic factors

The socio-economic factors very much affect the street-level bureaucrats client relationship and goal expectations. The empowerment of the client is for a part responsible for that, the client demands more while the street-level bureaucrat is not able to give more. A lack of resources mostly responsible for that. However, the socio-economic factors are only somewhat responsible for this. The governments focus on economic growth is triggered throughout society's desire for more personal wealth. As such the socio-economic factor (increase in personal wealth) is somewhat of influence. The performance orientation of the street-level bureaucrat is reduced due to a mismatch between policy and reality. The socio-economic factors are to a lesser extent of influence to this challenge.

Overall the socio-economic factors have a serious influence on the street-level bureaucrat. Using administrative discretion they find ways to cope with the challenges caused by the influences. The changing society forces the street-level bureaucrat to act creatively in his or her work. Unfortunately this bottom-up process is not acknowledged by the higher echelons in the Vietnamese government according to Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats.

The secondly the policy related factors are of influence. These policy related factors are mostly found in the top-down policy implementation process. This is the dominant process currently visible in Vietnam. However, at the street-level there are a number of bottom-up processes visible which combined, frustrate the implementation process. Conflicts arise at (inter-)organizational level but also the disposition of the street-level bureaucrats. Table 11 has collected the different challenges and based on the analysis given a value to what extent the policy related factor influences it.

Theory	Indicator	Value
Street-level bureaucracy (section B)	<b>Client relationship</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats client relationship.</i>	+/- more or less
	<b>Goal expectation</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats goal expectation.</i>	+ somewhat
	<b>Demand vs. supply</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats resources.</i>	++ very much
	<b>Performance orientation</b> <i>The extent to which policy related factors affect the street-level bureaucrats performance orientation.</i>	++ very much

Table 11 – Level of influence of the policy related factors

Although the strenuous client relationship is mainly caused by the socio-economic factors described in the previous sub-question, to a certain extent the policy related factors are also of influence. This is due to the lack of resources which the street-level bureaucrats are confronted with. Street-level bureaucrats have a higher case load with an ever more critical client demanding better service. The goal expectations of the street-level bureaucrats differ per actor involved. In this case the expectations of the organization are different compared to the expectations of the street-level bureaucrat. There is a clear tension visible between the client-centered goals of the street-level bureaucrats (quality decisions) and the organization-centered goals (mass processing). The overall lack of resources and the performance orientation of the street-level bureaucrats are very much caused by the policy related factors. The government's main focus on economic development and to a lesser extent the prevention of pesticide related issues cause serious challenges for the street-level bureaucrats. In combination with the mismatch between the set policies and reality the performance of the street-level bureaucrat is seriously hindered.

52

The policy related factors also have a serious influence on the street-level bureaucrat. The mismatch between the set policies and the and the reality which the street-level bureaucrat is confronted with causes a tension. Bottom-up processes by the street-level bureaucrats are (as stated earlier) not acknowledged by the higher echelons in the Vietnamese government.

## 6.5. Answering the central research question

Having answered the sub-questions it is now possible to focus on the central research question. The central research question is actually comprised of the three sub-question, however it does cover the entire spectrum of this research.

**Central research question:** *Which challenges, stemming from pesticide related issues, do street-level bureaucrats in Vietnam encounter in their day-to-day work? How do street-level bureaucrats deal with these challenges and what factors are of influence to their methods of dealing?*

The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats encounter four challenges in their day-to-day work. Although these four challenges are partially stemming from the pesticide related issue currently present in Vietnam, they are however very much of influence to these issues. Before focusing in their influence I will give an overview of the challenges that I found during my research.

1. The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats have a strenuous relationship with their clients. The clients demand better service, the street-level bureaucrats are hindered in giving this service due to a structural lack of resources.
2. The goal expectations of the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats do not match with their clients and their organizational focus. Clients expect the street-level bureaucrats to focus on solving their problems, contrary to that the organizational focus is on mass processing. This is

in conflict with the street-level bureaucrats desire to make quality decisions fitting for all, thus not exclusively the clients or organizational expectations.

3. There appears to be a serious discrepancy between supply and demand resulting in a structural lack of resources. As a result of this the quality of work performed by some Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats is below acceptable standards. Cutting corners and even downright corruption is an enormous problem among the street-level bureaucrats.
4. The performance of the street-level bureaucrats is also hindered by an apparent mismatch between policy and reality. The designed pesticide related policies prove very difficult (if not in some cases impossible) to be successfully implemented by the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats.

The Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats tend to deal with these challenges in two ways. First of all they make use of administrative discretion. An example of this was given by a street-level bureaucrat frustrated by lacking policy-tools. However, by using the policy-tools of another policy he was allowed to implement, he was able to perform his work according to standards. Unfortunately, besides this example of administrative discretion Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats also deal with their challenges by cutting corners. An example of this was given at the pesticide permit application department at the MARD. The testing period of new pesticides was according to anonymous sources not adhered to. One could say that this is a form of cutting corners and as such speeding up ones work process to deal with the challenges. However, the anonymous source considered this evidence of outright corruption.

There are two major factors influencing the challenges encountered by the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats. First of all the socio-economic factors and secondly the policy related factors. During the research phase of this thesis it became apparent that the socio-economic factors have a major impact on the challenges of the client relationship and the unrealistic goal expectations. External influences via the internet and satellite TV empower the Vietnamese citizens, they become more critical on their government and as such the street-level bureaucrats. The policy related factors have -in return- a major impact on the challenges of the discrepancy between demand vs. supply and the performance orientation. The pesticide related policies do not receive the priority they deserve. Policies designed to enable further economic growth receive more attention. As a result of this the Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats are caught in a situation where they have to work with a structural lack of resources and respect of their clients.

## 7. Recommendations

This research focused on the implementation challenges which Vietnamese street-level bureaucrats encounter while attempting to combat pesticide related issues. They run into a number of challenges which prevent them from effectively combating the pesticide related issues. A mismatch between policy and reality can be seen as one of the root causes frustrating the work of a street-level bureaucrat. As a foremost recommendation I would recommend that this issue be tackled first. By allowing the bottom-up process in the policy implementation phase the feedback and suggestions of the street-level bureaucrats can be put to use to improve the current policies. A second serious issue present in Vietnam is the presence of corruption and nepotism. This issue needs to be eradicated in a vigorous manner as it is damaging the image of the street-level bureaucrat and therefore directly effecting the success of an implementation process.

This research was limited in its scope, further research on related topics could yield interesting results. The following topics could be of interest:

- *Open market economy*  
The emerging open market economy in Vietnam has an interesting influence on the pesticide related issues. Pham Van Hoi included this as a major influence on his PhD research. For example: currently there are more and more supermarkets opening in Vietnam for the emerging middle class. These large (international) chains demand certain standards of food quality. These demands result in the growing market of safely greened crops, either using biological pesticides or using an IPM solution.
- *International trade agreements*  
As is the case with the (international) supermarket chains demanding safely greened products, also importing nations have such demands. These food quality demands are frequently anchored in international trade agreements. The WTO membership of Vietnam is a prime example of this.
- *NGO's*  
Currently there are numerous NGO's active in Vietnam. However, their influences is strictly monitored by the Vietnamese government. Further research on the actual influence of the NGO's -with regard to the pesticide related issues- could be interesting.
- *Economic development and its influence on the Vietnamese society*  
The current economic development of Vietnam has been defined as one of the prime influences on the results of this research. I am of opinion that future researches should keep this factor as an important influence, if not the most important one. It is to be expected that despite the current economic crisis Vietnam's economy will continue to grow. However, the effects on the society are more difficult to predict.

There is also another recommendation which I would like to mention. During a presentation at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the summer of 2010 an interesting comment was made. How come Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia have underwent such a remarkable (economic) development in recent decades while Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania have not? All of them are former colonies and all of them have geographically seen (relatively) the same climate. A comparative study between one successful and one failing nation could yield interesting results with regard to pesticide related issues. The Tracking Development project has defined the following hypothesis which could be of interest "Sustained poverty reduction takes place in any country where the following three preconditions are all simultaneously and consistently met: 1) adequate macroeconomic management; 2) economic freedom for peasants and small entrepreneurs; 3) pro-poor, pro-rural public spending." (www.trackingdevelopment.net, 2010). In addition to having an interesting source and hypothesis one can attempt to falsify this and earn €5.000,- in the falsification competition.

## 8. Reflection

The research for this thesis started some four and a half years ago when I was introduced to Pham Van Hoi. During the summer of 2006 I was actually in Hanoi for five weeks conducting interviews, researching documents and making many observations. By the end of the summer of 2007 the first version of this research was submitted to the second reader, however some fundamental changes had to be made. Unfortunately this was also the time when I began at my current employment, Capgemini Netherlands. In reality it proved to be very difficult to start at a new employer, remain motivated and find the time to continue working on my thesis. After a several years of juggling my work and my studies a final version of this research now lays in front of you.

Working on such a research for over four years also implies that the information I gathered in 2006 is becoming more and more out of date. The pesticide related issues described in the case study are by all means dynamic of nature. The fast growing economy and its influence on Vietnamese society has accelerated the pesticide related issues. With the recent accession to the WTO this growth has seen a further boost, even in the current global financial crisis. Nonetheless, in the summer of 2010 I took the opportunity to attend a presentation at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and Food Safety. The presentation was about "the miracle of Vietnam" and what we could learn of the rapid development of Vietnam's agricultural sector. After this (inspiring) presentation a feeling of both relief and disillusionment overwhelmed me. Relief that many of the collected data and presumed conclusions were underwritten in the presentation. Disillusionment that apparently the pesticide related issues are still very much present in Vietnam.

Having updated the empirical data through document research has nonetheless not completed the triangulation of the research. Unfortunately the interviews and observations were conducted in 2006 and are (as stated earlier) becoming outdated which is an evident shortcoming of this research. In addition to this another important weakness is the fact that the interviews and observations made during my visit to Hanoi were focused on a different theoretical framework. Where this research was initially focused on the policy cycle in a later phase more of an emphasis came on the theory of street-level bureaucracy. Although relatively enough empirical data was collected on this topic, through document analysis and observations, it does signify another inadequacy.

The shortcomings and inadequacies set aside, I am of opinion that this research still reflects the current situation in Vietnam. A situation where for decades the issues surrounding pesticides, a changing culture and an ineffective and inefficient government have been present. These issues affect the way in which street-level bureaucrats struggle with their day-to-day challenges while trying to combat the pesticide related issues. Unfortunately there are no apparent signs visible that these issues will be solved any time soon.

## Sources

- Alpert, W. T., Diem, B., Thien, T. T., Sanders, S. W., Le, M. H., Kiem, T. V., et al. (2005). *The Vietnamese Economy and Its Transformation to an Open Market System*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Beyer, R. (2003). *The greatest stories never told*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
- Birkland, T. (2001). *An introduction to the policy process: theories, concepts and models of public policy making*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Dollar, D., Glewwe, P., & Litvack, J. (1998). *Household welfare and Vietnam's transition, Volume 1* (No. 18081).
- Douglas H. Shumavon (ed.), & H. Kenneth Hibbeln (ed.). (1986). *Administrative Discretion and Public Policy Implementation*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Dr. Dang Quoc Nam et al. *Safety use and storage of pesticide in agriculture and oriented measures*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/ipcs/capacity\\_building/dang\\_qn.pdf](http://www.who.int/ipcs/capacity_building/dang_qn.pdf).
- Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United States of America. (2006). Government Officials. Retrieved 30 December 2006, from [http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/learn\\_about\\_vietnam/politics/government\\_officials/](http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/learn_about_vietnam/politics/government_officials/)
- FAO. (2002). International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides. Retrieved November 27, 2006, from <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/AGRICULT/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Code/Download/code.pdf>
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2002). *International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides*. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/AGRICULT/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Code/Download/code.pdf>.
- Fritzen, S. (2003). *Getting Organized in Vietnam*. Singapore: Seng Lee Press Pte Ltd.
- Fromonteil, P. (2009). Vietnam: "Doi moi" and the World Crisis. Retrieved 6-9-2009, from <http://humaniteinenglish.com/spip.php?article1230>
- Hill, & Hupe. (2002). *Implementing Public Policy: Governance in Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hill, M. (2005). *The Public Policy Process*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Hoi, P. V. (2006). *Towards better pesticide governance in Vietnam: a way in seeking*.
- Hoi, P. V., Mol, A. P. J., & Oosterveer, P. J. M. (2009). Market governance for safe food in developing countries: The case of low-pesticide vegetables in Vietnam. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 91, 380-388.
- Hupe, P., & Hill, M. (2007). Street-level bureaucracy and public accountability. [Article]. *Public Administration*, 85(2), 279-299.
- Jamieson, N. L. (1995). *Understanding Vietnam*. London: University of California Press, Ltd.
- Kruschke, E. R., & Jackson, B. M. (1987). *The Public Policy Dictionary*. Santa Barbara, CA.
- Lindskog, E., & Long, V. N. (2001). *Sida Environmental Fund in Vietnam 1999–2001*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
- Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy. Dilemmas of the individual in public service*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Luong, Q.-T. (2001). Timeline of Vietnam History. Retrieved August 20, 2006, from <http://www.terragalleria.com/vietnam/info/timeline.html>
- Norlund, I. e. (2006). *CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Vietnam*: Vietnam Institute of Development Studies (VIDS), UNDP Vietnam, SNV Vietnam and CIVICUS Civil Society Index.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Schneider, A. L., & Ingram, H. (1997). *Policy Design for Democracy*.
- Shumavon, D. H., & Hibbeln, H. K. (1986). *Administrative Discretion and Public Policy Implementation*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Valken, M. e. (1989). *Kroniek van de 20ste eeuw*. Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij Agon b.v.



- Vietnam Trade Office in the United States of America. (2002). Political System and International Relations. Retrieved 30 December 2006, from [http://www.vietnam-ustrade.org/Eng/political\\_system\\_&\\_international\\_relations.htm](http://www.vietnam-ustrade.org/Eng/political_system_&_international_relations.htm)
- WHO. (2006). *Pesticides and their application*.
- World Trade Organization. (2006). *Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Viet Nam*.
- www.adb.org. (2005). Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries, Vietnam. Retrieved September 26, 2006, from [http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Key\\_Indicators/2005/pdf/VIE.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Key_Indicators/2005/pdf/VIE.pdf)
- www.britannica.com. (2006). Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Retrieved December 30, 2006, from <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9105999/Union-of-Soviet-Socialist-Republics>
- www.business-in-asia.com. (2006). What Impact Vietnam's New WTO Membership Will Have and What Vietnam Has Committed. Retrieved August 13, 2010, 2010, from [http://www.business-in-asia.com/wto\\_vietnam\\_impacts.html](http://www.business-in-asia.com/wto_vietnam_impacts.html)
- www.caicachanhchinh.gov.vn. (2004). State administrative system in Vietnam. Retrieved 2 January 2007, from <http://www.caicachanhchinh.gov.vn/English/AdministrativeSystem/AminBackground/>
- www.cia.gov. (2006a). The World Factbook - China. Retrieved November 13, 2006, from <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/la.html>
- www.cia.gov. (2006b). The World Factbook - Laos. Retrieved November 13, 2006, from <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/la.html>
- www.lgean.org. (2008). Applying Pesticides. Retrieved July 27, 2008, 2008, from <http://www.lgean.org/html/lgo/PESTICID-01.cfm>
- www.trackingdevelopment.net. (2010). Tracking Development Falsification Award. Retrieved 22 September 2010, 2010, from <http://www.trackingdevelopment.net/news/727>
- www.ufl.edu. (2006). Forest Terminology for Multiple-Use Management. Retrieved November 30, 2006, from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR063>
- www.vietnam-ustrade.org. (2002). Political System and International Relations. Retrieved 30 December 2006, from [http://www.vietnam-ustrade.org/Eng/political\\_system\\_&\\_international\\_relations.htm](http://www.vietnam-ustrade.org/Eng/political_system_&_international_relations.htm)
- www.vietnamnet.vn. (2008). Vietnam one year after joining the WTO. Retrieved August 8, 2010, 2010, from <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/reports/2008/02/767918/>
- www.volkskrant.nl. (2007a). Een gezinsvoogd 'kan niet alles zien'. Retrieved December 30, 2007, from [http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article474369.ece/Een\\_gezinsvoogd\\_kan\\_niet\\_alles\\_zien](http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article474369.ece/Een_gezinsvoogd_kan_niet_alles_zien)
- www.volkskrant.nl. (2007b). OM niet in beroep in zaak-Savanna. Retrieved December 30, 2007, from [http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article482590.ece/OM\\_niet\\_in\\_beroep\\_in\\_zaak-Savanna](http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article482590.ece/OM_niet_in_beroep_in_zaak-Savanna)
- www.worldbank.org. (2007). New Five-Year Plan for Vietnam. Retrieved August 18, 2007, from <http://go.worldbank.org/OFJCJNJJM0>
- www.worldbank.org. (2010). World dataBank. Retrieved August 4, 2010, 2010, from <http://databank.worldbank.org/>
- www.wto.org. (2010). Viet Nam and the WTO. Retrieved August 13, 2010, 2010, from [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/countries\\_e/vietnam\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/vietnam_e.htm)

## Appendix I – Classification of pesticides

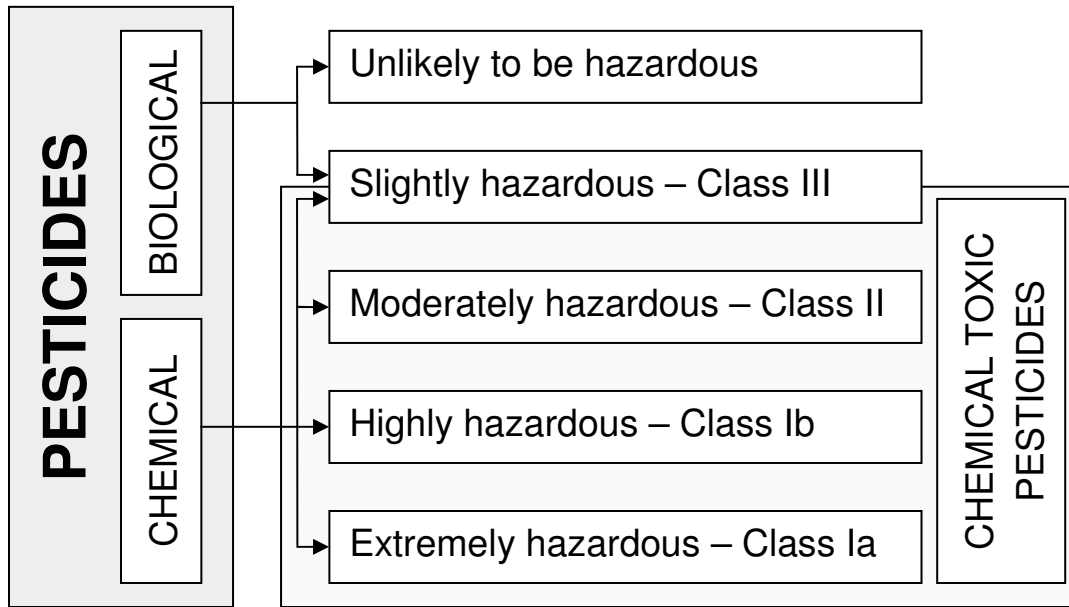


Figure 7 – WHO classification of pesticides

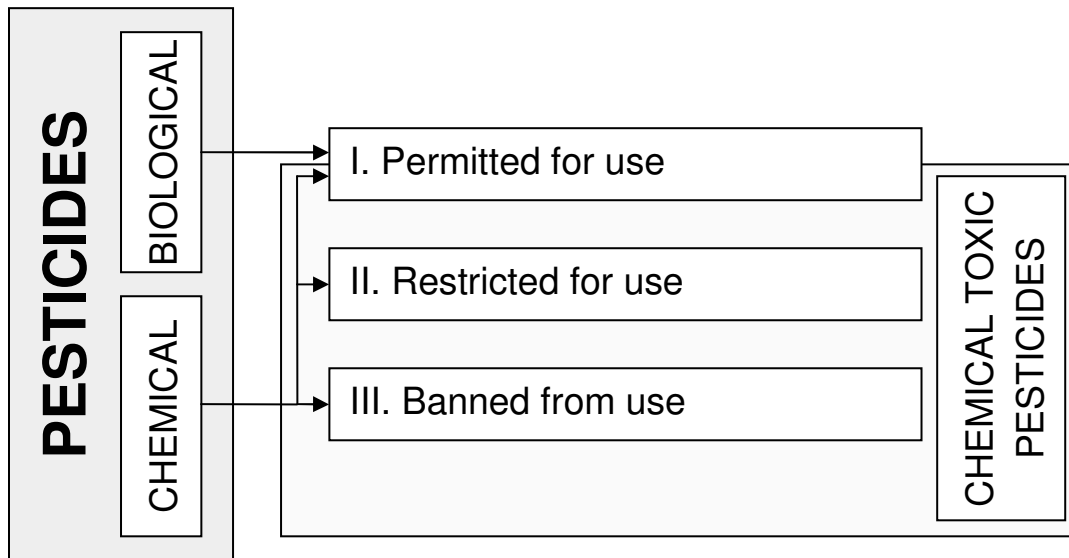


Figure 8 – Vietnamese Government classification of pesticides

## Appendix II – Overview of pesticide related policies

The following table gives an overview of all major policies (*decisions, decrees, circulars, ordinances and regulations*) issued by the Vietnamese government with regard to pesticides. This table does not present the policies in a chronological order due to the correlation between some of the policies that have been implemented throughout the years.

Policy	Date	Short description
Decision No. 32/CT	21 January 1984	The Decision simply mentioned the responsibility of relevant state departments in pesticide management of which Ministry of Agriculture and Food Technology (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development at the present) takes the leading role.
Circular No. 04-TT/LB		Requires the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Technology to issue list of pesticides for use in Vietnam annually (the list also means permission for registration / import / production / package / distribution).
Decision No. 208/BTVT-KHKT/QD	1991	List of some 77 active ingredients which could mainly be categorized as class Ib and class II from the WHO toxicity class.
Decree No. 92-CP	27 November 1993	The objectives of plant protection, the requirements for pesticide production, the requirements for packaging, the requirements for distribution, the requirements for uses, "responsibilities and rights of relevant state offices in monitoring and inspecting all activities related to pesticides. The establishment of a plant protection system from central to district level of which the Plant Protection Department (PPD) is in charge of helping MARD to fulfill state administration affairs in every aspects related to pesticides." Also regulates that pesticide users are obliged to follow the guidelines as stated on the packaging of the pesticide and/or the technical staff. These guidelines regulate and explain the proper dosage in time and by crop-type.
Decision No. 100 NN-BTVT/QD	23 February 1995	This decision specified that new registration of second category pesticides were no longer applied, with an exception for pesticides use in the wood industry, disinfection and health care system.
Circular No. 05/1999/TT-BYT	27 March 1999	All organizations and individuals need to declare, register and being certified for use of second category pesticides issued by MARD among other toxic chemicals.
Ordinance No. 36/2001/PL-UBTVQH10	25 July 2001	Pesticides are considered to be special goods and as such have strict limitations in the conditions of the trade. In practice this means that the registration, import, export, production, storage, transport and trade from now on is managed by the state and in accordance to its regulations. This ordinance also gives a high priority for the research, investment, production, trade and use of biological pesticides.
Decision No. 145/2002/QD-BNN	18 December 2002	Biological pesticides are to be prioritized. They do not have to follow regulations applied for chemical pesticides in terms of field test and experiment. Companies which register for biological pesticides only have to make to PPD of MARD a research result report available (if pesticides are domestically produced) or pest and disease controlling effect of pesticides as tested in

		Vietnamese conditions (if pesticide is imported). It also adds a legal aspect to the usage of pesticides, that is: users are responsible lawfully for their activities especially those related to improper uses of pesticides, uses of banned or unknown origin pesticides that may harm people and animal health as well as environment.
Decision No. 193/1998 /QD/BNN-BVTV	2 December 1998	Specified the field testing of pesticides, the aim of pesticide field test is to determine pest and disease controlling effect of pesticides, and other effects on plants, people, animal and environment. This decision states three reasons for a pesticide to be field tested in a PCC: 1. Pesticides are new to the list of pesticides issued by MARD, 2. Pesticides which have been officially registered in Vietnam, but subjected to some change in target pest and disease, dosage, percentage of active ingredients or additives, or combined with (an) other active ingredients, 3. Pesticides which have been officially registered in Vietnam but negatively affect on plant and environment.
Decision No. 50/2003/QD-BNN	2003	Further specified the characteristics of the field tests
Decree No. 58/2002/NĐ-CP	3 June 2002	Specifies the technical background further, it must be at a university/college level. Individuals active in the service sector of pesticides need to be certified by a health center at least at a district level.
Decision No. 91/2002/QD-BNN	11 October 2002	Further regulates the owners of individuals that possess pesticide business certifications. They regularly need to participate technical training sessions organized and given by the PPD at provincial level. These trainings provide the individuals of updated information on pesticides as well as state regulations
Regulation No. 367-BVTV/QD	19 June 1996	Many pesticides and active ingredients were –from then on- not allowed to be used on vegetables, also the field testing of pesticides used on vegetables was further adjusted.
Decision No. 50/2003/QD-BNN	2005	A list of pesticides and active ingredients that are allowed to be used on vegetables, all other kinds of pesticides and active ingredients will not be allowed to register, produce, distribute, advertise and use on vegetables.
Decision No. 19/2005/QD-BNN	2005	A list of pesticides and active ingredients that are allowed to be used on vegetables, all other kinds of pesticides and active ingredients will not be allowed to register, produce, distribute, advertise and use on vegetables.
Decision No. 21/2005/QD-BNN	2005	A list of pesticides and active ingredients that are allowed to be used on vegetables, all other kinds of pesticides and active ingredients will not be allowed to register, produce, distribute, advertise and use on vegetables.

Table 12 – Overview of pesticide related policies

## Appendix III – List of interviews

The following interviews were conducted in and around Hanoi between the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 and the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2006. The transcripts of these interviews are available upon request.

- Interview 1 – Mr. Neil Jamieson, 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2006.  
Sociologist and Anthropologist  
Author *Understanding Vietnam*.
- Interview 2 – Mr. Bill Todd & Mr. Chiranjibi Tiwari, 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2006.  
SNV Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Interview 3 – Mr. Ngat, 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
Employee Fresh Partners farming collective.
- Interview 4 – Mrs. Huong, 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
Farmer
- Interview 5 – Ms. Misha Coleman, 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2006.  
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) Country Manager (Vietnam).
- Interview 6 – Mr. Dinh Van Thao, 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
Plant Protection Department, district level.
- Interview 7 – Mr. Le Thanh Hai, 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
An Giang pesticide corporation.
- Interview 8 – Anonymous, 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
Representative large pesticide corporation.
- Interview 9 – Mr. Tran Hoang Son, 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
Representative Monsanto Corporation.
- Interview 10 – Civil servant, 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2006  
Plant Protection Department, national level.
- Multiple interviews – Mr. Pham Van Hoi, between April 26<sup>th</sup> 2006 and July 19<sup>th</sup> 2006.  
Lecturer at the Hanoi Agricultural University.

