Reviving French Military Archives:
A Study of Ethnic Minority Depictions in Northern Colonial Vietnamese Borderlands

by

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ABSTRACT

According to officials from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, there are 53 national ethnic minority groups living within the country, the majority of them living in the northern highlands. Considering that most of these groups do not possess any written texts recounting their history and origins, colonial archival documents containing information that pertains to those populations often represent valuable texts from an academic standpoint. In this thesis, I critically analyze the production of French military archives containing ethnographic information on highland ethnic minorities in Tonkin, Indochina. Investigating the French colonial understandings of upland minorities in northern Vietnam, I undertake a critical discourse analysis of a set of military archives written in 1903 by several French officers. Additionally, thanks to interviews conducted with scholars, I interpret the usefulness of colonial archives for current social science researchers who study various topics concerning ethnic minority groups in Indochina.

Keywords: Northern Vietnam, critical discourse analysis, ethnic minorities, historical geography, archives, ethnography

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

From the 17th century to the late 1960s, the French colonial empire undoubtedly played a major role on the world geopolitical chessboard, impacting the local realities of a plurality of locations on every continent. From a geographical perspective, the set of territories outside Europe that were under French rule, as well as their indigenous populations, underwent significant alterations, sometimes for the best, often for the worst. The French colonial expansion was completed in several phases; from the Americas in the 17th century to Africa and Asia until the 20th century (Meyer & Thobie, 1991). Despite the geographical disparities of French colonialism, the large majority of communities that have been under French control share at least one thing in common: social struggles between indigenous communities and French newcomers (Burrows, 1986; Emerson, 1969; Le Cour Grandmaison, 2005; Pakenham, 1991). Although the French colonization of the Southeast Asian peninsula is much more recent than in North America, documentation on the encounters and interactions between indigenous and French people in colonial territories in the New World seems to be more numerous and well-known in the academic world. In fact, many recent historians and anthropologists have published scholarly books specifically pertaining to these North American cross-cultural encounters in North America between the 16th and 18th century (see Cook, 1993; DuVal, 2006; Greer, 2005; and Haefeli & Sweeney, 2003).

In the same vein, one could reasonably believe that analogously equal academic attention is likely to be paid to the interactions between French colonizers and indigenous peoples in the Southeast Asian peninsula. However, there seems to be fewer academic publications about this topic compared to the New World. On one hand, accounts of Jacques Cartier's voyages in Canada have been re-published en mass (see Cock, 1993; and Trudel, 1966) and are commonly studied in universities. On the other hand, the voyages of major French figures in Indochina such as Pierre Lefevre-Pontalis (1902), Commandant Etienne-Edmont Lunet de Lajonquière (1904), and lieutenant-colonel Maurice Abadie (1924) – who all produced detailed documents containing ethnographic data about indigenous populations located in the Vietnamese uplands – are seldom cited or even used in academia, mainly because they have rarely been re-published.

It is clear that there is a need to investigate in depth the ethnographical work concerning ethnic minorities in Vietnam produced by French military explorers; my thesis aims to meet this need.

1.1. Research Aim and Questions

The overarching aim of my thesis is: **To critically analyze the production of French military archives containing ethnographic information on/regarding highland ethnic minorities in Tonkin [1], Indochina and interpret their usefulness for current researchers.**

To answer the first part of this aim, I critically analyze the production of French military archives containing ethnographic information on highland ethnic minorities in the fourth military territory, Tonkin, Indochina in 1903. In order to achieve a thorough and reliable investigation, I focus on completing a Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA). This methodological approach, elaborated by Fairclough (1995, 1992), consists of the core analytical framework of my thesis. In general, CDA helps researchers to study language as a form of social practice and discourse, and focuses on the ways socio-political domination are reproduced by text and talk. This is done via three analytical levels, namely Social Practice, Discursive Practice, and Textual Analysis (Chapter 2 provides more information about CDA). As such, three research questions help me to address the first part of my thesis aim, each research question corresponding to one of the aforementioned analytical levels:

Question 1. What was the broad context of military rule within which these archives were produced in the northern Vietnamese borderlands at the turn of the twentieth century? (Social Practice)

Question 2. Who are the main actors/individuals behind the creation of these archival texts and for what purposes were they written? (Discursive Practice)

Question 3. What are the main themes and elements included in these archives? (Textual Analysis)

[1] Throughout my thesis, I will use the word *Tonkin*, originally employed during the colonial era, as a neutral synonym for the phrase *northern Vietnamese region*.

Secondly, in order to complete the investigation of my aim, I interpret the usefulness of French colonial archives about Tonkin's ethnic minorities for scholars working in various disciplines. I address this with a fourth research question:

> *Question 4.* To what extent are these colonial archives useful and valuable for social researchers in a contemporary context?

Data that I gathered from interviews with four researchers enables me to answer this fourth question.

Hence, my thesis contributes to the sharing of academic knowledge thanks to the examination of archival documents that have never been studied in an intensive fashion before. Prior to answering my four research questions, I will present in the next section a brief introduction of the broad colonial context of Indochina, more precisely the northern Vietnamese region. In light of this general information, I will then explain in more details how my thesis is outlined.

1.2. Contextualization

In this section I provide information about the current day geographical area, socio-historical information concerning the origins of ethnic groups of northern Vietnam, and a brief explanation of the first stages of French colonialism in Tonkin.

1.1.1. Geography of Northern Vietnam

The broad geographic region under consideration in this thesis consists of the northern highlands of Vietnam, also known as Tonkin during the colonial era. Topographically, the region principally comprises of high and low mountains connected by large valleys (see *Figure 1.1*), in which three major rivers flow, namely the Red River, Sông Hông, and Sông Thai Binh (de Koninck, 1994). The mountains, which have several high plateaus, are irregular in form and elevation, consequently affecting composition of soils, fauna, and flora, as well as the lifestyle of the different peoples who have settled at various altitudes (Nguyen Trong, 1992). Additionally, the country's highest peak, named Fan Si Pan, is located in the northwest portion of the region. For centuries these topographical features rendered communication with the southern regions difficult and also acted as an effective natural barrier against lowlanders' control and rule over the area (Papin, 2003).

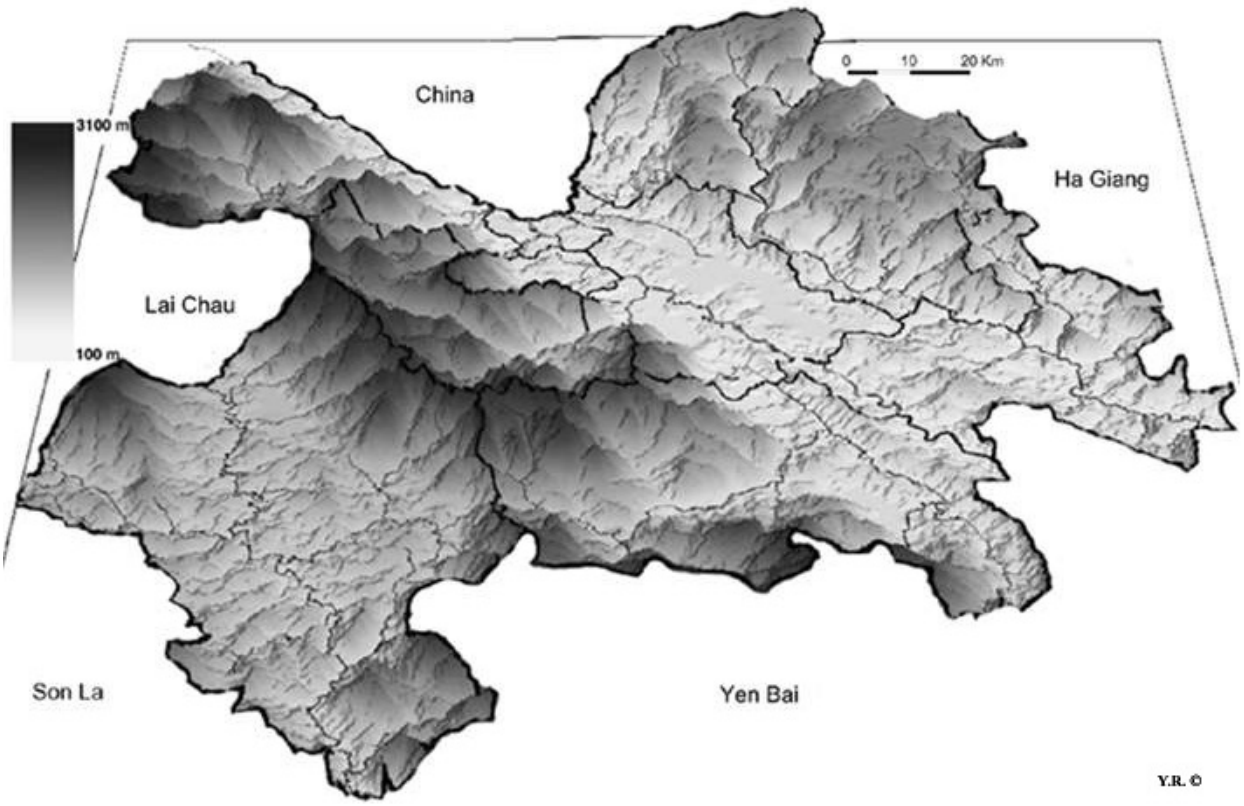


Figure 1.1. 3D Representation of Lào Cai province. *Source*: Michaud J, S Turner and Y Roche (2002)

To be more specific, the ethnographic work I examine in this thesis was originally undertaken by French military officials in a region that corresponds more or less to the contemporary province of Lào Cai and its surrounding area (see *Figure 1.2*). Due to various political decisions throughout the colonial and modern Vietnamese periods, the limits of this province, formerly known as Lao Kai, have undergone major alterations throughout the course of history (de Koninck, 1994).

1.1.2. Origins of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam

The history of ethnic minorities currently living in northern Vietnam is a multifaceted and complex one. The multiplicity of indigenous groups, the lack of archaeological evidence, as well as the nonexistence of indigenous written reports and accounts are all factors engendering difficulties in researching details about ethnic minority origins (Michaud, 2006). Consequently, providing thorough answers to basic, albeit fundamental, questions such as who are these highland peoples and what are their origins is a rather daunting task.

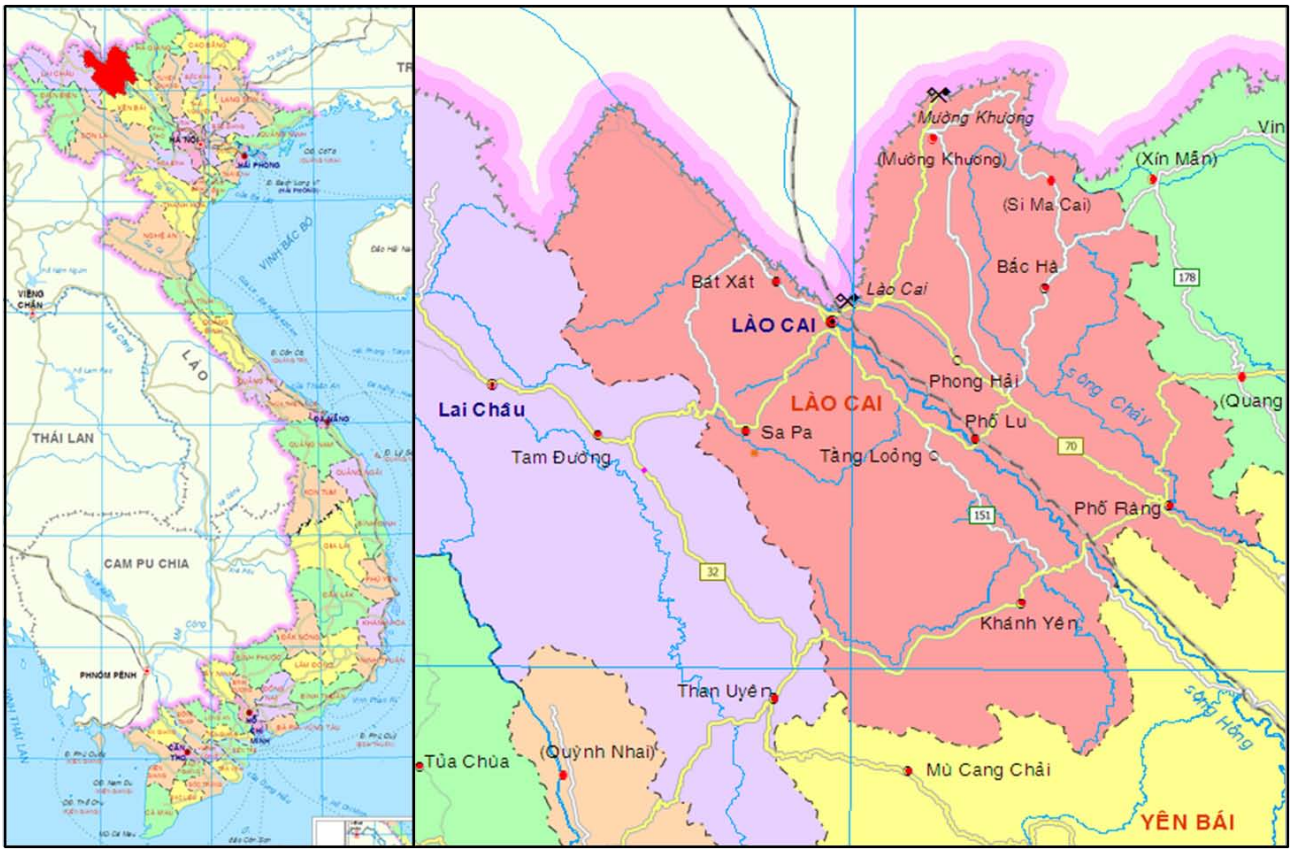


Figure 1.2. Lào Cai Province, 2011. *Source:* Socialist Republic of Vietnam: Government Website (2011)

Due to the colonial aspirations of the French in Indochina from the mid-1880s onwards, French officers Lunet de Lajonquière (1904), Diguet (1908), and Abadie (1924), who all spent considerable time in Tonkin, were amongst the first individuals who estimated the origin and the immigration period of the various highlanders now resident in northern Vietnam. Abadie (1924), for instance, commented that many immigration waves had occurred from the 13th century onwards, following a North-South axis from China, whereas other immigration waves (mainly from the Tai-speaking linguistic family) have occurred before; however they could not be estimated by French officers. Moreover, Lunet de Lajonquière (1906) explained that social turmoil in southern China pushed some highlander groups to move southward into the Tonkin region.

Nevertheless, one may say that these French officers' estimations and understandings are arguably not the most accurate given the limited resources and tremendous challenges they faced in undertaking such historical investigations at the beginning of the 20th century. Despite this, given the scarcity of indigenous written historical accounts, most scholars

today come to the consensus that European testimonies and reports, along with modern comparative linguistic research and archaeological evidences, should be taken into account (Culas & Michaud, 1997; Michaud, 2000; interviews 2010-2011). Although the origins of the numerous ethnic groups of northern Vietnamese highlands are far from clear, scholars generally believe that some minorities, like the Hmong, are descendants of the ancient migrants from southern China whereas other groups, like the Tay, are believed to be related to lowland indigenous, and that immigration periods are very erratically dispersed in time (Cima, 1989, Michaud, 2006; World Bank, 2009).

In 2000, there were approximately 11,240,000 individuals belonging to one of the country's officially recognized 53 ethnic minority groups living in the northern highlands (World Bank, 2009). The most heavily minority provinces in Vietnam are located in this geographical region. The most numerous of these groups are the Tay, the Thai, and the Muong. In general, the lowland Vietnamese (Kinh) do not hold these ethnic minorities in high regard, labelling them 'backwards' and 'uncivilised' (World Bank, 2009). Similarly, these ethnic groups often face governments lacking the interest to learn more about them, even though the Vietnamese state has been implementing policies aiming at cultural integration and economic standardization (Michaud, 2006).

1.1.3. First Stages of French Colonialism in Tonkin

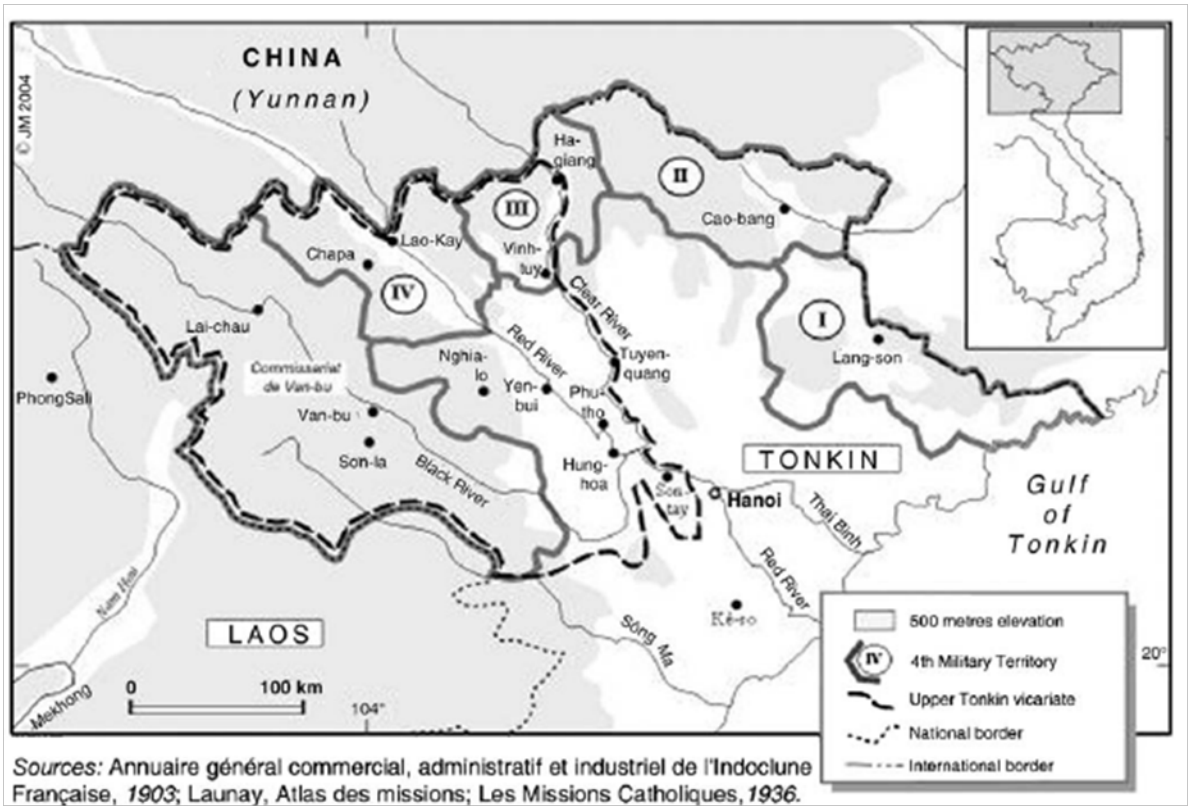
Once French Europeans came to firmly establish themselves in the major lowland areas within the Indochina territory in the late 1800s, interest in the highlands and their inhabitants grew, concurrent with the process of European political and military expansion. Largely influenced by a vociferous colonial party in France, French military explorers followed the footsteps of French missionaries who had travelled around the highlands before them throughout the mid 19th century (Michaud, 2007). Eager to find new routes to penetrate into China and to underscore their claims to the highlands with military expeditions (Salemink, 2003b), the acquisition of this geographical region appeared to be a valuable strategy for the French military as it would allow them to reach Yunnan, the southeast region of China, via the Red River without dealing with port legislation in Chinese coastal provinces (Turner, 2010). Thanks to the Hue treaty signed in 1883, the northern highlands became a French protectorate under the direct political control of France, which

also sought to establish the borders of their new territorial possessions (Salemink, 2003b). For the two next decades, 'France took military action and firmly occupied the Red River basin and its principal adjacent valleys through numerous and violent *missions de pacification.* All opponents were fiercely repressed, and submissive populations were rewarded' (Michaud, 2000: 343).

This intensification of French control in Tonkin sometimes led to strong opposition on the part of some ethnic minority groups (Culas, 2000) who were largely supported by Chinese rebel groups such as the Black Flags (to know more about the Black Flags, see Chere, 1988; and McAleavy, 1968). Although many conflicts concerning cross-border banditry occurred between 1883 and 1885 during this undeclared war between France and China, the French military operating in Tonkin were able to restrain the incursions of these gangs whose armies were considerably less modern than the French (Elleman, 2001). Thereafter, French opinion regarding some ethnic minority residents deteriorated as they were henceforth considered untrustworthy 'borderline citizens' by French officials (Turner, 2010: 274).

Officially, a peace treaty signed in June 1885 stopped Chinese interventions in Tonkin, while also creating a national fixed border, which meant that a variety of upland populations became ethnic 'minorities' in Vietnam (Salemink, 2003b). Subsequently, French authorities decided in 1891 to subdivide the northern highlands along most of the Chinese border, with the exceptions of the Sip Song Chau Tai[2], into four *territoires militaries* (see *Figure 1.3*), each administrated by high command military (Michaud, 2000). From August 1891 onwards, most of the northern highlanders were living 'under the strict jurisdiction of the military territories, […] where they were subject to civil and military administration under *officier supérieur* reporting directly to the *résident supérieur au Tonkin'* (Michaud, 2000: 346).Concurrently, most French officers felt that being assigned in one of these four territories, particularly in the borderlands, was often considered as a punishment due to the rough conditions that had to be endured (Turner, 2010).

[2] Sip Song Chau Tai is a region in northwest Tonkin between the upper Red River valley and the Laotian border.



Sources: Annuaire général commercial, administratif et industriel de l'Indoclune Française, *1903*; Launay, Atlas des missions; Les Missions Catholiques, *1936*.

Figure 1.3. Military Territories (as in 1903), and Upper-Tonkin Vicariate *Source*: Michaud (2004)

1.3. Chapter Outline

Having this context information, I now explain in more details what my thesis consists of by outlining the content of each Chapter. In Chapter Two (Methodological Framework), I present the different methodologies and approaches that I utilize for this thesis. First, I explain how the translation of the archival documents under study was executed and I present the techniques used for accomplishing this task. Moreover, the framework for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) elaborated by Norman Fairclough (1995) – which was adapted for the current study – is presented and explained. The CDA framework deconstructs discourses into three different levels: 1) Social Practice, 2) Discursive Practice, and 3) Textual Analysis. Finally, I illustrate how the different interviews with key informants were conducted, including email and semi-structured interviews.

In Chapter Three (Social Practice), I begin the CDA by undertaking an investigation into the social practices surrounding the creation of the archives. The socio-cultural and political broad context at the turn of the 20th century in the Northern Vietnamese highlands

is explored. Attention is paid to the dynamics stemming from the presence of both upland minorities and French military officers. Most results for this section are drawn from a review of the academic literature.

In Chapter Four (Discursive Practice), I introduce who the individuals behind the creation of the archival documents containing ethnographic information about upland minorities in Vietnam are. The purposes behind the creation of these documents and the implications are also addressed. In other words, I look at how archives are produced and consumed with a focus on the characters at play. Results for this section come from a combination of data gathered from interviews with key informants as well as from a review of the literature, including both archival and academic literature.

Chapter Five (Textual Analysis) holds the results of the archival documents' in-depth analysis. I identified thirteen themes which I then organized in six broader thematic categories, namely material culture; economic life; familial life; social life; spiritual life; and physiological and moral features. The themes are analysed in turn, while linked with the two previous analytical levels for a more inclusive and thorough analysis.

Then, in Chapter Six, I investigate the 'Archives' Usefulness'; that is the extent to which archival documents become useful tools for social researchers in a contemporary setting. Findings are mostly drawn from interviews with key informants as well as some data from the literature. Finally, a brief conclusion rounds out the thesis by drawing the main conclusions stemming from the analysis. I readdress the aim of my thesis by providing succinct answers for each of the four research questions as well as general concluding thoughts.

CHAPTER TWO – METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following chapter, I outline the different methodological approaches I utilized in carrying out my thesis. Section 2.1 concerns the translation of the archival documents under examination. I describe how I translated the archives and explain the main purposes of undertaking this task. Then, in Section 2.2 I explicate what CDA consists of, what discourse is, and how CDA was used as my core analytical framework. Finally, in Section 2.3 I give details about how the interviews with the different key informants were conducted, as well as how the interview data were analysed.

2.1. Translation of Archival Documents

The archives under examination were originally written in French by French military colonists. In order to augment the accessibility of these archives to a greater number of scholars, researchers, and individuals, all the archival documents I analyzed in this thesis were translated into English. As the translation process had already been initiated before the commencement of my thesis, there were three archives out of the ten analysed here that had not been translated; these remaining archives I translated.

In order to come up with the ideal translation results, three main objectives were determined. First, I wanted the translation to be accurate, that is to say, to reproduce as exactly as possible the meaning of the source text. Second, I utilized words and phrases of the receptor language (English) in a way that was appropriate to the kind of text being translated, in my case archival documents written at the turn of the 20th century. Finally, I wanted the translation to be communicative; in other words, it should express all aspects of the original meaning in a way that is readily understandable to the intended audience (Larson, 1998; Munday, 2008). Although I tried to achieve these three objectives while translating the archives in question, claiming that the translated versions have identical meaning would be false and pretentious. Therefore, one should be aware that the archives' English versions cannot convey the exact same meaning as the original French version. Rather, the English documents convey a reliably similar meaning that is re-expressed in another language (see *Figure 2.1*). For the purpose of this thesis nevertheless, I conducted the CDA using the original versions of the archives since French is my mother tongue.

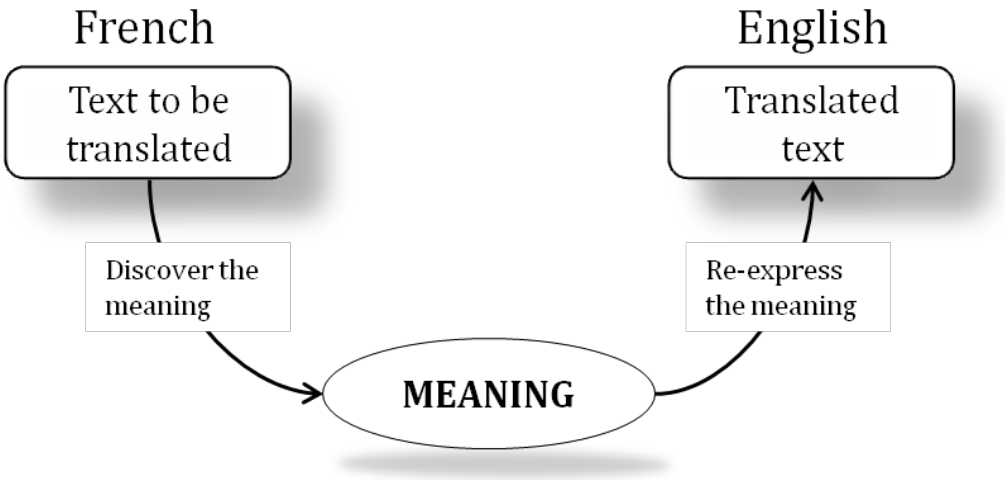


Figure 2.1. Visual Representation of the Translation Process. *Source*: Munday (2008). *Production:* Samuel Dubois

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis.

Although there are several approaches to analyzing discourse (dialogical analysis, critical linguistics, discursive psychology, to name a few), the approach elaborated principally by Norman Fairclough (1992; 1995), namely Critical Discourse Analysis, is particularly appropriate and relevant for the social sciences (Fairclough 1995, Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). The discipline of geography is no exception, as many geographers have used Fairclough's CDA in a wide range of research projects. For instance, Davidson and Henderson (2010) examined issues of identity disclosure of autistic people, Boykoff (2008) studied the politics of climate change discourses in the United Kingdom, Jessop and Osterlynck (2008) investigated the relations between political, cultural, and economic power in Belgium, and Campagna and Fernandez (2007) analysed the mission statements of multiple environmental organizations. All these authors are geographers who have recently utilized CDA as their main analytical framework in order to conduct their research. A reason explaining the popularity of Fairclough's approach is, in my opinion, because it endeavours to determine critically how discourses are shaped by power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995).

CDA allows researchers to examine the extent to which the creation of social identities and the construction of knowledge are shaped by diverse concepts. Fundamentally, CDA allows for an investigation into the way in which opaque as well as transparent structural

relationships of power, domination, discrimination, hegemony and control are promulgated by and manifested in language (Wodak and Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 1998). In other words, people utilizing CDA aim to critically observe social inequalities as they are expressed by the use of specific discourses, be they oral speeches or written texts. Needless to say, the notion of discourse is fundamental to the carrying-out of any CDA. Consequently, in the next section I attempt to reach a meaningful understanding and analysis of the nature of discourses by defining the term.

2.2.1. What is Discourse?

Discourse is a term that has a plurality of meanings and authors often employ it without providing a clear definition. Many linguists have argued that there are two types of discourse: "discourse" and "Discourse" (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Gee, 1999). On one hand, "discourse" corresponds to what most people think of when they are asked to explain what discourse is. For instance, it may consist of an everyday and regular conversation that anyone could have on a given topic. Moreover, a formal oral speech or any form of written text may also be considered as "discourse". On the other hand, from an academic standpoint, the term goes well beyond a simple discussion or text. As such, the academic definition of "Discourse" is much more complex. Dittmer (2010: 275, capital "D" in original) comments that:

> The fusion of material texts with other forms of communication, such as body language, interactions, symbolic arts, technologies, and the like constitutes a Discourse, or a culturally-specific mode of existence. It is through the recognition and interaction of the various discourses in which we are embedded that meaning is created, power is conveyed, and the world is rendered recognizable.

In other words, "Discourse" represents the broader socio-political context wherein "discourses" are produced. Our daily life is composed of a mix of thoughts, words, objects, events, actions, interactions, and contacts that are intertwined and ultimately shape "Discourses" (Gee: 1999).

Authors generally agree that, in order to conduct a thorough discourse analysis, both "discourses" and "Discourses" must be encompassed and analytically seen as intertwined (Dittmer, 2010; Fairclough, 1995; Lees, 2004). Fairclough (1992) argues that the best way to critically analyze this complex and profound relation is through the adoption of a social

theory of discourse. This theory focuses on the interaction between social practice (mostly from "Discourses"), discursive practice (from a combination of "discourses" and "Discourses"), and discourse analysis (mostly from "discourses"). These are the three fundamental components of Fairclough's CDA approach. However, CDA, as any other analytical method, has several limitations or constraints. In this regard, Dittmer (2010: 284-5) warns us that

> discourse analysis can sometimes seem overwhelming because of the fuzziness of the concepts, the time-intensive nature of the method, and the fluidity of the results. A methodology that is rooted in a belief in the open-endedness of social processes, like this one, does not provide a satisfying "Truth" at the end of the research but rather a situated reading of life's phenomena.

In sum, despite this 'fluidity of results', it is clear that the CDA approach is overwhelmingly recognized as a relevant and useful analytical approach in the social sciences.

2.2.2. Use of CDA is this Thesis

How, then, will I utilize the CDA analytical framework to examine French military colonial archives in this thesis? The three components of CDA occupy a central place in the following study (see *Figure 2.3*). The first level, namely Social Practice, allows me to situate the archives under examination by placing them in relation to concepts such as ideology, power, hegemony, knowledge, and control. This may be thought of as the broad background to an event. From a geographical standpoint, this level looks at how "place" impacts the production of texts and how it contextualizes these same texts in a 'wider frame of the society and the culture' (Fairclough, 1995: 62).

The second level, which involves the analysis of Discursive Practice, is used to gain an understanding of how ethnographic information about Tonkin's ethnic minorities is 'produced and consumed' (Fairclough, 1995: 57). The key objective of Discursive Practice is to develop theories and techniques relevant to the analysis of the processes whereby cultural meanings are produced and understood through texts. It treats the full range of social forms and practices in terms of how they are discursively produced and understood (Fairclough, 1995). More concretely, in order to complete a thorough analysis of this second level, I talk about who the archives' authors are, why they wrote these texts, where they were published as well as who the intended audience was.

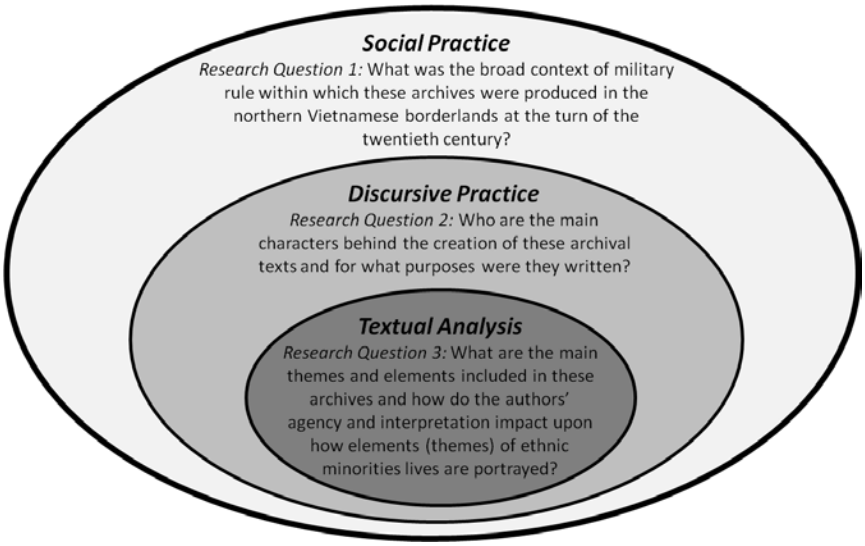


Figure 2.3. Representation of the Use of CDA for this Thesis.

The last level, Textual Analysis, provides a way for me to specifically examine French military colonial archives and determine how the ethnographical conception of minority groups was constructed within the texts analyzed. This strategy recognizes that texts, in this case ethnographic notes, are produced in particular ways, in specific socio-political contexts and that the latter influences how Tonkin's ethnic minorities were seen and "constructed". In other words, Textual Analysis allows me to study 'particular representations and recontextualizations of social practice' (Fairclough, 1995: 58). In this thesis, the emphasis of my analysis is on the extent to which the textual constructions of Tonkin's ethnic minorities reflected wider ideological and hegemonic constructions prevalent at the turn of the 20th century in colonial Indochina.

2.2.3 Textual Analysis: Methodological Approach

My textual analysis methods were adapted from Busch *et al* (2005). Considering that I had no prior in-depth knowledge of French colonial archival work about Vietnamese highland minorities, I drew up a flexible list of thematic categories as the research unfolded. In other words, instead of deductively coding themes from a pre-defined set, I completed the textual analysis using an inductive approach.

The archival documents examined in this thesis are located, in their original format, in the Archives d'Outre-Mer offices in Aix-en-Provence, France. As there are strict rules to respect in terms of archival conservation and manipulation (Michaud, pers. comm., 2010),

the documents were photographed, meaning that their content has been digitally stored. The French language electronic transcriptions of the archives[3] I examined were given to me by Jean Michaud, Professor of Anthropology at Université Laval, Quebec city.

In total, I analysed 17 transcribed archival documents: six written in 1898 and eleven in 1903. Due to significant dissimilarities in terms of content and its display between the two years, here I examine ten of the archives written in 1903.[4] Although there are other types of ethnographic archives about Tonkin's ethnic minorities (such as missionary texts), I solely analyze military documents in this thesis. The scope of the Textual Analysis therefore consists of the aforementioned ten archives, meaning that one should be aware that the inclusion of other archival documents in my analysis could have led to different results. However, my aim here was to gain a more nuanced understanding of military approaches by focusing on one specific set of archives in the hope of finding more insightful results.

2.2. Interviews with Key Informants

In order to interpret the current usefulness of the general type of archival documents I examine in this thesis – as noted in the second part of my aim – interviews with key informants were conducted (analyzed in Chapter Six). Since there is a relatively limited number of social researchers who have undertaken scholarly research projects using these archival documents, I recruited potential key informants through purposeful sampling.[5]

I contacted a total of six social researchers whose knowledge and familiarity with colonial archives about Tonkin's ethnic minorities are relevant to my investigation. Since all the key informants live and work in other continents (except for one being geographically accessible), their interviews were conducted via e-mail. Although the literature suggests that there are some concerns associated with the use of e-mail interviewing regarding the profoundness of participants' answers (Meho, 2006), the e-mail interview appeared to be the most appropriate method for my thesis. Considering the nature of the questions, which related purely to their work experience, no harm, psychological for instance, was likely to arise. Also, all key informants had easy internet

[3] I used the electronic transcriptions of the archives rather than the originals due to the time it would have taken to comprehend the handwriting, which was not central to my textual analysis.
[4] One of the documents from 1903 was too different to be analytically compared with the others.
[5] Purposeful sampling is non-probabilistic; that is, participants are selected in a non-random fashion. (Landreneau, 2005).

access and could answer at a time convenient for them. As for the one key informant who was geographically accessible, a face-to-face interview was conducted. Ultimately, four out of the six key informants I initially contacted agreed to be interviewed.

As in any academic work involving participants, my project was approved by the McGill Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A) and informed consent was provided to key informants via e-mail. Detailed information about the research in which they were asked to participate was included in an introductory email, ensuring that they understood fully what their participation would entail[6]. Key informants were explicitly informed that replying affirmatively to the e-mail indicated their agreement to participate in the study (c.f. Kraut et al, 2004; Meho, 2006). In addition, an informed written consent form was signed by the key informant who had a face-to-face interview.[7]

Assuming that open-ended questions better reflect a person's own thinking than structured questions for instance (Kitchin & Tate, 2000), the collection of responses and opinions from key informants was done through structured open-ended questions. Kitchin and Tate (2000: 213) claim that the 'structured strategy is meant to try and increase the comparability of responses and ensure responses to all questions for every interviewee'. Moreover, structured open-ended questions are recognized as a thorough qualitative method in human geography (Hay, 2005; Longhurst, 2010; Valentine, 2005).

The analysis of qualitative data collected from the interviews consisted of comparing and contrasting answers between key informants. To do so efficiently and appropriately, I used thematic coding since it enabled me to organize logically the different responses from the interviewees, and discover specific patterns in answers (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), for instance the convergence or divergence among opinions. By doing so, I extracted insightful and relevant information to answer *Research Question 4,* discussed in Chapter Six.

In sum, I utilize two main approaches in order to answer my research questions. First, the three different levels of analysis associated with CDA allows me to answer my first three research questions. Second, the interviews conducted with western scholars allow me to answer my fourth research question. Overall, the combination of these two approaches leads to a more thorough analysis of my aim.

[6] See Appendix B for a blank version of the e-mail interview.
[7] See Appendix C for a blank version of the informed written consent.

CHAPTER THREE – SOCIAL PRACTICE

Following Fairclough's three stage approach to CDA, in this chapter I study the social practice aspects that ground my later Discursive Practice and Textual Analysis examinations. An investigation of socio-cultural practices allows for an analysis of the context surrounding the production and consumption of the archives studied in this thesis. More precisely, I first examine French colonial understandings of upland minorities in northern Vietnam from texts written in 1903 in relation to geography (Section 3.1.1), demography (Section 3.1.2), as well as ethnic groups' interactions (Section 3.1.3). Then, I contrast French colonial understandings with more recent analyses, that critically address French colonial power and control over local ethnic minorities and the region as a whole (Section 3.2). By doing so, I wish to highlight the impacts of *place* and *peoples* on the final texts created by French military officers stationed in Tonkin. Note that this analysis covers colonial Tonkin as a whole, as the French military were active throughout this space in the creation of their social practice, while my later textual analysis focuses more specifically on the fourth military territory.

3.1. French Colonial Understandings of Upland Minorities

3.1.1. Geographical Data

Abadie (1924), a lieutenant-colonel in the colonial infantry at the time his book was published, argued that the different groups living in Northern Vietnam at the turn of the 20th century had a very specific geographical distribution, also described by Diguet (1908) as a layered distribution based of local relief that has implications on hierarchical positions for each group (explained further in section 3.1.3). Abadie (1924) noted that Tai-speaking groups were one of the first peoples who arrived in the region and established permanent settlements. He thought that it made sense that they mostly occupy lower valleys, normally lower than 300 meters, as they were rich with fertile soil. After, most settlements located between an altitude of 300 and 900 meters were inhabited by "Man"[8] people and, at the top of the mountains above 900 meters, there was usually an overwhelming presence of "Meo" people. Regarding the two last groups, Lunet de Lajonquière (1906) affirmed that their

[8] These names depicting ethnic groups are those used by the French at the end of the 19th century in Tonkin. I interpret these names later in Chapter Five (see *Table 2*).

irregular settlement movements over time were difficult to explain. Finally, Abadie (1924) noted that Lolo peoples did not seem to have a specific altitude at which they lived, while Diguet (1908) said that all lowland Vietnamese (also known as the Kinh) were settled in the Red River delta's immediate edges.

Nevertheless, Abadie (1924: 23) makes clear that *'cette répartition par altitudes successives ne constitue pas une règle absolue*' *[this repartition following successive altitudes does not consist of an absolute rule]*. Yet, the author added that the aforementioned limits satisfactorily corresponded to the conditions specific to each group's agricultural processes, traditional lifestyle, and other particularities. Furthermore, the spread of ethnic minorities in northern Vietnam could, according to Abadie (1924), be considered as the result of two factors. On one hand, land choices made by various tribes who had always wanted to settle in altitude and climate conditions which they were previously accustomed to; on the other hand, chronological migration successions. In that regard, Abadie (1924) said it was therefore not surprising that Tai-speaking groups had been living in lower valleys where fertile soils are located since they were one of the first peoples to migrate to the region.

3.1.2. Demographic Data

Both Lunet de Lajonquière (1906) and Abadie (1924) attempted to classify the various ethnic groups they encountered in broad categories. French commandant Lunet de Lajonquière (1906) identified seven main groups ("Chinese", "Vietnamese", "Thai", "Muong" or "Mon", "Man", "Meo", and "Lolo") as well as an "Unclassified" category. Two year later, French military Diguet (1908: 7) did the same exercise and also came up with seven '*bien distincts' [well distinct]* ethnic groups. However, the "Xa" or "Kha" was added, while the "Muong" and "Mon" groups, formerly identified by Lunet de Lajonquière, were disregarded. Furthermore, in 1924, French officer Abadie (1924) identified only four groups. These Colonial classification dissimilarities reflect the difficulties in properly identifying the various ethnic identities present in Tonkin; difficulties that are still encountered by Western scholars today (Michaud, 2000; World Bank, 2009). As for statistical data, Lunet de Lajonquière (1906) is one of the first individuals who succeeded in creating a mini census of the main ethnic groups living in *Haut-Tonkin* at the beginning of the 20th century (see *Table 3.1*).

Table 3.1. Population of Tonkin's Groups, 1906.

Group	Population
Thai	239,175
Man	50,651
Meo	21,471
Lolo	2364
Mon	30,000
Unclassified	270
Vietnamese	8772
Chinese	21,935

Source: Lunet de Lajonquière (1906).

According to Lunet de Lajonquière (1906: 40), '*ces chiffres doivent être tenus [...] comme suffisamment exacts saufs en ce qui concerne les Chinois et les Annamites*' *[these numbers must be considered as sufficiently accurate except for the Chinese and Vietnamese]*. Moreover, Lunet de Lajonquière (1906) argued that, in order to accurately comprehend Tonkin's ethnic diversity, these numbers had to be spatially interpreted according to the regional geography, which the author attempted to do in one of his monographs (see *Figure 3.1*).

3.1.3. Interactions amongst Ethnic Groups

Abadie (1924) argued that although ethnic minorities had maintained continuous neighbourly relations throughout history, the extent to which these various groups had influenced each other was relatively negligible. Due to their dissimilar physical look, customs, and lifestyle, as well as the infrequency of unions amongst different groups, Abadie added that most of the groups kept all their own specific features. The same author also wrote that some ethnic groups among which inter-group unions were prohibited had succeeded to maintain '*toute la pureté de leur ancien type et l'intégrité de leurs traditions plusieurs fois millénaires*' *[the purity of their past and integrity of their millennium-lasting traditions]* (Abadie, 1924: 25). Additionally, Diguet (1908) argued that the geographical distribution of ethnic groups in Tonkin (explained in Section 3.1.1) also corresponded to the overall hierarchy amongst all peoples. For instance, the author affirmed that lowland Vietnamese people have '*a un profond mépris pour toutes les peuplades qui habitant les régions montagneuses de [leur] pays' [have a profound contempt for all peoples inhabiting the mountainous regions of their country]* (Diguet, 1908: 10).

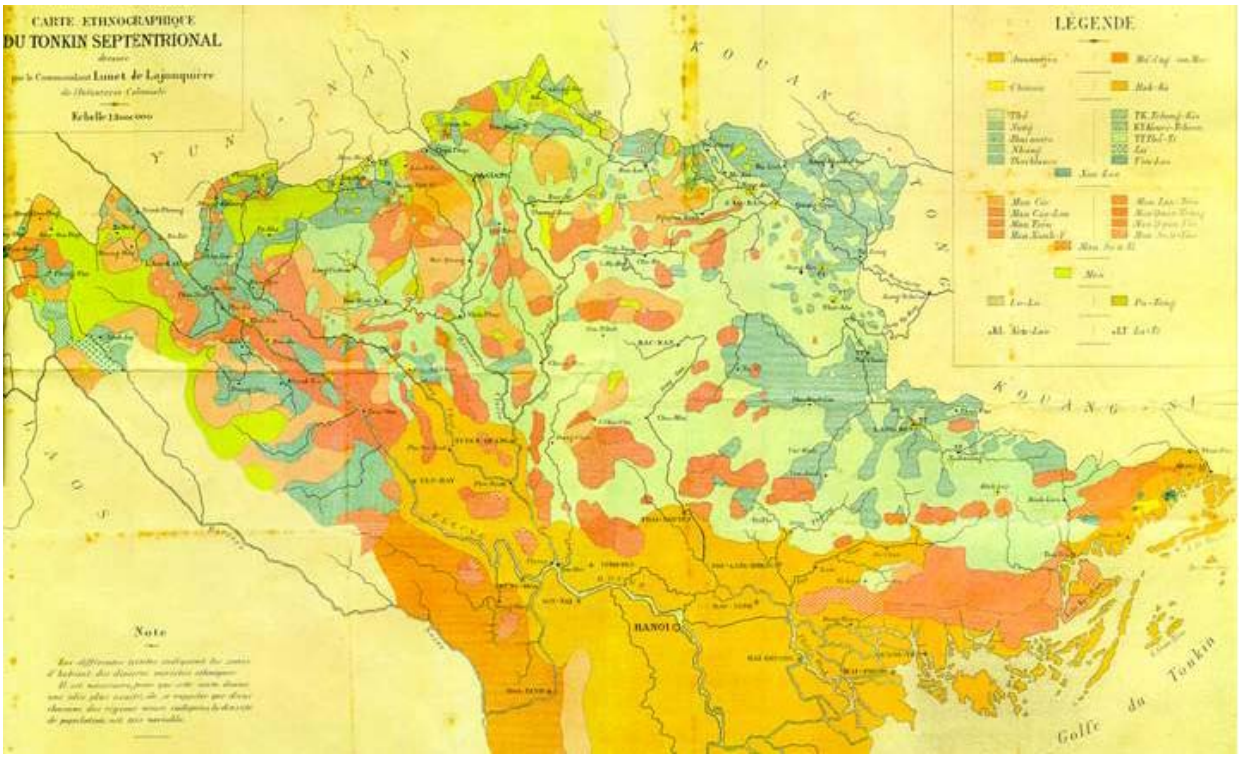


Figure 3.1. Lunet de Lajonquière's 1904 Ethnographic Map of Tonkin. *Source*: Lunet de Lajonquière, 1904.

In sum, authors like Lunet de Lajonquière (1904), Diguet (1908), and Abadie (1924), who published monographs while colonisation was still occurring, enable the social practices taking place in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century, and the broad context in which the archives were created, to be understood.

3.2. French Agency and Ethnic Minorities

In light of the colonial information described above, I now examine the social practices that come to light from arguments and facts based upon contemporary critical research. I delve into the extent to which French agency, on many levels, was impacting on local ethnic minority groups.

Although French observers were little interested in the mountain peoples of Indochina at the beginning of the colonization process in Vietnam (Salemink, 2003a), the accentuation of French military control that occurred in the 1890s had major repercussions on ethnic minority groups living in Tonkin. Economically, one of the major consequences resulting from the new colonial conjuncture was the consolidation of the borderline between China and Vietnam (Turner, 2010). More concretely, there was 'greater control by French colonial

forces over commodity production, transportation, and taxation of goods such as opium, with which borderland residents were directly involved' (Turner, 2010: 272). Furthermore, in the late 1890s, the French started the construction of a major railway passing through the province of Lào Cai (World Bank, 2009). Although some could think that this transportation infrastructure was a mean whereby the northern region could develop, it concurrently led to an increase of the French and Kinh presence in Tonkin, thus accentuating overall colonial control over ethnic groups (Turner, 2010).

From a political perspective, Michaud (2000) argues that French officers in charge of the military territories in these borderlands possessed important decision-making powers when disputes occurred between highlanders and lowlanders or between highlanders and French citizens. Additionally, French officers also intervened, albeit in less intrusive ways, when major disputes between highlanders occurred (Michaud, 2000). Another key element of French colonial rule was 'the attempt to link people, both individuals and local/ethnic groups, to particular places, either inhibiting movement or, where necessary, promoting tightly supervised migration' (Salemink, 2003a: 26). Consequently, French forces could then organize groups of local highlanders and assign them specific political roles, such as acting as counterguerrillas to fight bandits and pirates (like the Black Flags noted earlier) claiming land access (Michaud, 2000). Furthermore, the reintegration of Mandarins by the French in some parts of Tonkin had major political consequences. The French colonial administration could henceforth finance its new infrastructure, introduce reforms, implement new laws, and so on, increasing their overall control and domination (Poisson, 2002).

In terms of state service throughout the French period, especially education and health facilities, highlanders generally received a fairly insignificant portion of the budget (or none of it). Tai-speaking groups, usually living in lower valleys and closer to Kinh settlements, were the most favoured in this regard (Michaud, 2000). One of the major obstacles encountered in the field for French colonial military personnel was arguably the language barriers between themselves and local inhabitants. Be it as it may, the people at the periphery 'were receiving more than their share of military and missionary attention, and hardly anything else (Michaud, 2000: 349).

Finally, scholars usually agree upon the fact that French minority policy for the northern Vietnamese highlands acted as 'a colonial divide-and-rule policy guided by ad hoc considerations, aimed at protecting metropolitan economic interests and keeping the highlands and their populations under loose but steady control' (Michaud, 2000: 345). For the same French rulers, control and domination of highlanders also required gaining knowledge about their local customs, traditions and forms of socio-cultural organization. To do so, French military troops were ordered by higher command to undertake massive data collections that would provide additional and insightful information on the different minority groups living in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century. Subsequently in the 1890s and the 1900s

> major figures like diplomat Pierre Lefèvre-Pontalis (1892), Commandant and later Lieutenant-Colonel Louis-M. Auguste Bonifacy (1919), Commandant Étienne-Edmont Lunet de Lajonquière (1904) and his colleagues Lieutenant-Colonel Diguet (1908), Commandant Révérony, and Capitaine Fesch produced detailed ethnographies of the populations inhabiting the vast areas under their command (Michaud, 2000: 347).

In this vein, the next section draws upon these individuals who produced crucially important ethnographic information on the history of Vietnamese ethnic minorities. More specifically, in the next Chapter (Discursive Practice*)* I examine how colonial archival military reports were 'produced and consumed' (Fairclough, 1995).

To conclude this chapter, it appears clear that an examination of the social practices is a vital step for critically understanding the production of French military archives regarding highland ethnic minorities in Tonkin. The relationships between upland minorities living in the northern uplands and French military officers who were both present in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century have important implications in the ways local indigenous groups are represented in military ethnographic archives. In other words, the physical, social and political environment and context within which the authors of the archives lived and worked play a major and influential role in the documents' creation. I discuss the importance of these Social Practice findings in relation to French military perceptions of upland ethnic minorities in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER FOUR – DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

In this chapter I explore the second analytical level of CDA, namely Discursive Practice. This fundamental component of CDA is defined as the study of 'the ways in which texts are received by audiences (readers, listeners, viewers), as well as how [...] texts are socially distributed' (Fairclough, 1995: 57). This definition emphasizes that both the production of texts as well as their consumption must be taken into account. In the same vein, Fairclough (1995) envisions Discursive Practice as a 'mediator', linking text to its broader socio-cultural and political context. By examining the discursive practices associated with my thesis, I consequently attempt to bridge the gap between text (French military archives) and society (broad social context in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century) and I shed light on the complex relationships between these two components. Simply put, in this chapter I wish to convey an understanding of how ethnographic information on Tonkin's ethnic minorities is discursively produced and understood, as well as to find out more about the main actors behind the creation of the studied archival documents.

Chapter Four is divided into three main sections: I first identify and explain what the main purposes of the production of the archives were (Section 4.1), then I introduce and describe the archives' authors (Section 4.2), and I end the chapter by addressing who the intended audience was (Section 4.3). Ultimately, because of the scant academic literature pertinent to the elements I examined in Chapter Four, most of the data I gathered was from an interview conducted with Professor Michaud (previously mentioned in Chapter Two), one of the rare scholars who has an extended knowledge pertaining to what is examined in the present Chapter.

4.1. Purposes of the Archives

After the agreement between China and France on the delimitation of the Sino-Vietnamese frontier in 1887 noted in Chapter Three, the French army started to increase the number of settlements in the upland region, rather than maintaining mainly non-permanent military troops, in order to suppress Vietnamese opposition to French rule imposed at that time (Deroo & Vallaud, 2003; Fourniau, 2002). This period of the French colonization in northern Vietnam is known as the *Pacification*. With an increased presence in Tonkin, the

next step for the French colonial army was to learn more about the local populations that they governed. This gathering of ethnographic information also aimed to facilitate the integration of the native inhabitants of Tonkin into the French colonial regime. It can therefore be argued that this collection of observational data was more for logistic than scientific in purposes.

The ten archival documents under examination in this thesis were a result of this project undertaken by the French colonial military. More precisely, the archives consist of military reports containing ethnographic information on the different minority groups that lived in the fourth military territory in French Tonkin in 1903. The production of these reports was part of a mandate imposed by the staff officer of the Tonkin's French army. In addition to their various military obligations, low-ranked officers in the field had to obey different orders, one of which was the writing of ethnographic reports (Michaud, pers. comm., 2010). In general, the information contained in the specific archives relevant to my thesis was gathered and transcribed fairly quickly. Michaud (2010) comments that after being read and commented upon by higher commanders of the French army, the reports were given to the French colonial military system in France – under the jurisdiction of the Governor General – and were almost never distributed beyond this level. As such, these archives were not produced with the expectation that the French general public, be it French residents in Tonkin, or civilians back in France, would read them.

4.2. Authors of the Archives

At the time when Tonkin was being colonized by the French, fifty or so French officers wrote texts pertaining to the ethnography of the region. In total, within the four military territories, more or less forty reports were written by multiple French officers. Each report was written by one – sometimes a few – individuals employed by the French colonial army (Michaud, pers. comm., 2010). These individuals represented an educated military minority who, for the most part, possessed an elitist familial background. To become a high-ranked officer of the French army at the end of the 19th century, individuals required a certain level of education that was usually more accessible to wealthy people that lived in urban areas. Consequently, most of the officers aiming at an intermediate or superior position in the army had a background associated with an upper class and potentially

aristocrat perspective. Thanks to their background, French officers in Tonkin did the ethnographic work very well and produced an output of high quality. As Michaud (pers. comm., 2010) comments:

> French officers at the time were very educated with an intellectual rigor that was not comparable to that of the average trooper or the general population. Therefore, even today they would be considered as very well-informed and quite smart individuals.

While the reports contained various biases, this factor was almost always remarked and taken into account by the logical and critical approach of these more formally educated officers. As an analogy, Michaud (pers. comm., 2010) argues that the situation in the uplands of Tonkin at the end of the 19th century could be compared to modern armies of today hiring individuals who have completed a Masters' degree to go in the field. Michaud adds, however, that the closer to fieldwork French officers were, the less "educated" they usually were.

4.3. Intended Audience of the Archives

The archival documents relevant to my thesis consist of raw data collected in the field by low-ranked French officers in 1903. As mentioned earlier, this raw data had to be submitted to higher French officers – usually High Commanders – who were expected to review them, comment on the quality of the work, and "sign off" at the end of each document. As such, this task did not involve any censorship whatsoever as the High Commanders never changed anything in the archival documents. Amongst the fifty officers or so who wrote ethnographic texts on Tonkin's ethnic minorities, only a handful took the initiative to go beyond their military mandate by making these raw data available to a broader audience. Lunet de Lajonquière was one of these French High Commanders who synthesized and critically analysed the raw data he had been provided with. In fact, he undertook this process with the ten archival documents under examination in my thesis (see Lunet de Lajonquière, 1906). This French officer summarized thousands of pages of raw ethnographic data and wrote two monographs of roughly 250 pages each: one published in 1904 for internal military circulation and another one published in 1906 for the French-speaking population at large. Like other French officers such as Bonifacy (1905) and Diguet (1908), Lunet de Lajonquière (1904; 1906) stayed in Tonkin for a longer period

of time compared to the majority of other French officers. These specialized officers developed skills in local vernacular languages and were able to acquire more accurate knowledge on the different populations settled in Tonkin's highlands.

As a result, the contributions of these high-ranked officers provided valuable historical syntheses of ethnic identities from different geographical regions. They married various ethnographic reports in order to come up with specific ethnologic monographs that were much more inclusive and critical in relation to the whole ethnic group, regardless of the specific geographical location where they were from.

CHAPTER FIVE – TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I investigate the last analytical level of Fairclough's CDA, Textual Analysis. First, I provide general and statistical information about the archival documents under examination (Section 5.1). Then, I present the results of my text analysis, including the thirteen analytical coding themes that I identified while undertaking analysis. This section of the chapter is based upon these aforementioned themes, some of which overlap with headings in the archives as well as others that I created in order to enhance the pertinence of the overall analysis. In the interest of clarity and organization, the thirteen themes are organized into broader thematic categories: material culture (Section 5.2), economic life (Section 5.3), familial life (Section 5.4), social life (Section 5.5), spiritual life (Section 5.6), and physiological and moral features (Section 5.7).

5.1 General Information about the Archival Documents

5.1.1. Length and Structure

The ten archival documents I studied for my analysis cover the towns or large villages of ten military sectors (see *Figure 5.1*). The archives have an average word count of 7,136 words, ranging from 2,522 to 12,575 words.[9] In terms of structure, all of the archival documents are divided into subsections, each of which describes one particular ethnic group. Descriptions of these ethnic groups are then divided into briefer categories that are generally identical: Name; Situation, Rough Number, List of the Towns; Physical Features; Language, List of Common Words; Dwelling, Clothing; Social State, Village and Family Organization; Economical State, Agriculture, Industry, Trade; Intellectual State, Religious Beliefs; Birth, Marriage, Death, and Social Customs. Furthermore, five of the ten documents begin with "General Considerations", a section which provides general information on the human and physiographical aspects of the group under study.

[9] Looking at page number did not make sense as I utilized the archives' transcription.

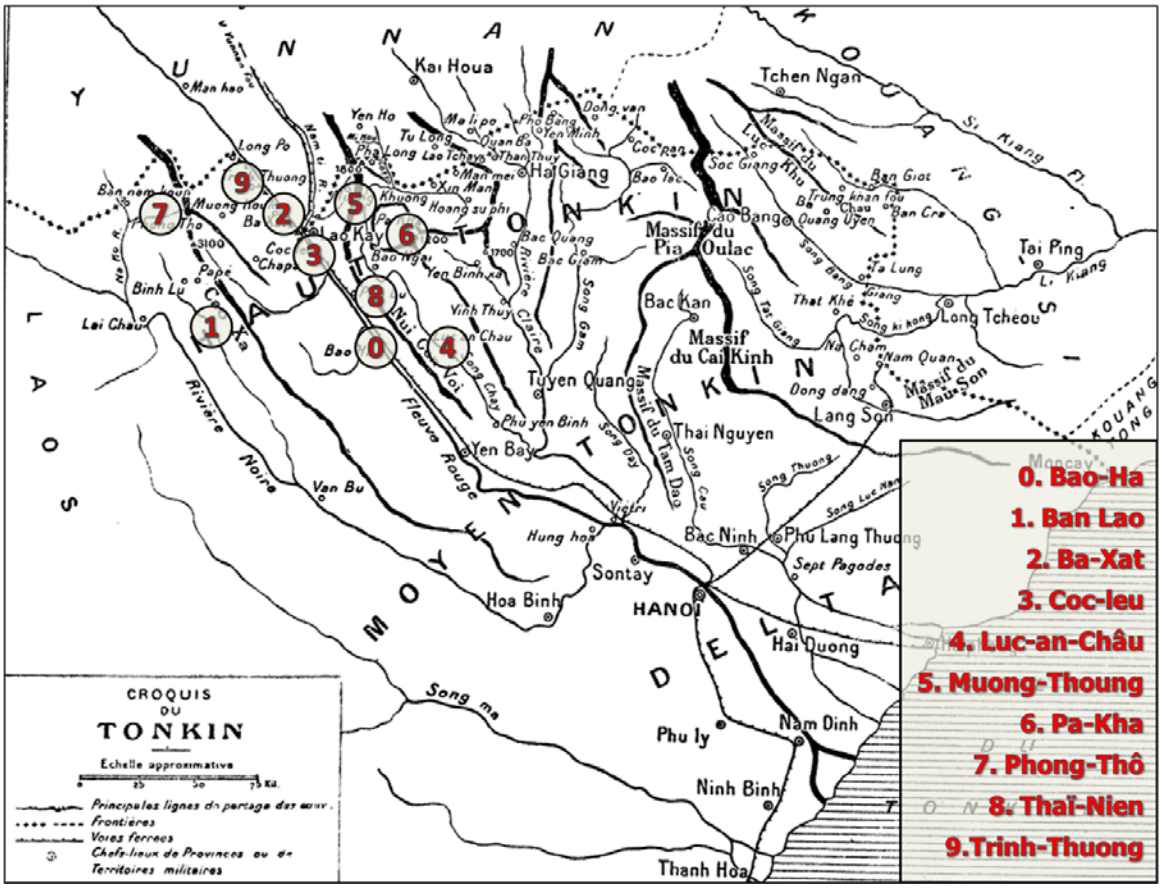


Figure 5.1. Location of the Different Military Sectors. *Source*: Abadie (1924)

5.1.2. Ethnic groups

Each archival document includes an ethnographic description of the studied minority groups. However, not all groups are depicted in each document as – rather obviously - only the groups present in the sector were studied and written about. All of the archival documents provide an estimated population for each minority group[10], with the exception of Pha-Kha sector.[11] Additionally, the number of words devoted to each group differs fundamentally from group to group (see Appendix D). For instance, *Figure 5.2* illustrates the amount of words used to describe each ethnic group within the sector of Ba-Xat in that archival document, compared to how many individuals there were for each of these groups. It can be seen that far more energy and space is devoted to the three largest groups by population, than the other residents in the area.

[10] In the interest of standardizing the data, one family is taken as five individuals and "some" individuals equal ten individuals. These equivalences were based upon information contained in the archives.

[11] The demographic data for this specific archival document has not been added in the electronic French transcriptions that I used for my analysis.

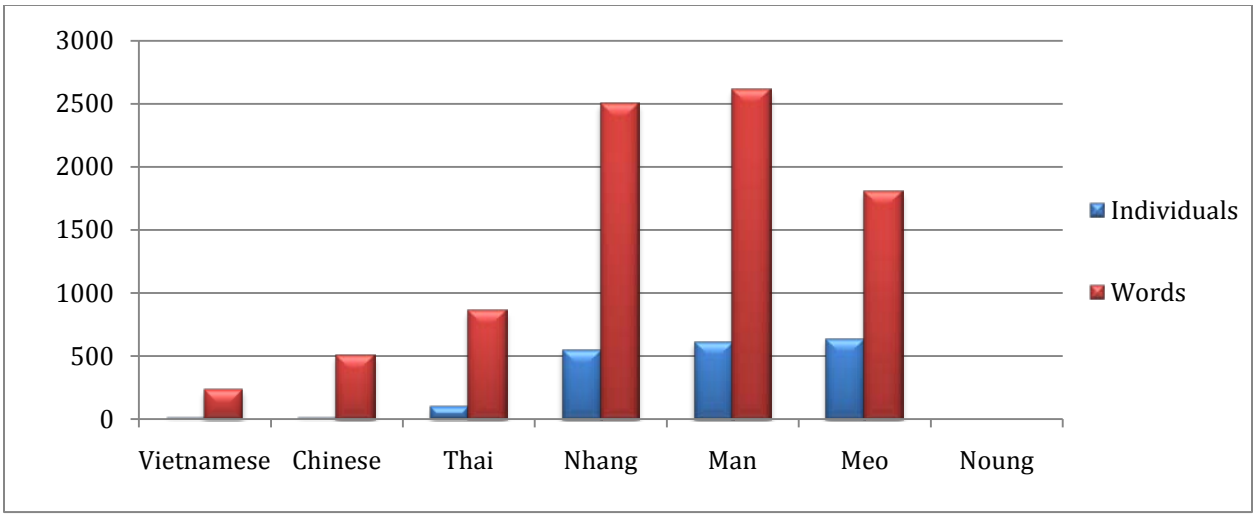


Figure 5.2. Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Ba-Xat Sector, 1903.

For the purposes of my analysis, based upon the *Historical Dictionary of the Peoples of the South-East Asian Massif* (Michaud, 2006), I identified seven ethnic families that often encompass more than one ethnic minority originally identified by the French officers who wrote the archives (see *Table 5.1*).

Table 5.1 – Names for Ethnic Minority Groups of Northern Vietnam

For Analysis	1903 (French)	Today (English)
Vietnamese	Annamite	Vietnamese (Kinh)
Chinese	Chinois	Chinese
Thai	Thaï	Thai
Nhang	Nhang, Niang, Nyan, Yang	Gìay
Man	Man, Man-Lan-Tien, Man-Xapho	Yao
Meo	Méo, Miao, Tze	Hmong
Noung	Noung, Nhung, Nung	Nùng

Insofar as there were many alternative names and subgroups in the archives, I came up with this identification in order to group together ethnic minorities that belong to the same broad ethnic family, focusing on the most important groups in terms of population size. Readers should note that this broad ethnic classification does not fully reflect the complex and complicated ethnic realities of the region. Nevertheless, as Michaud (2000: 339) comments regarding these French colonial documents,

> it would be a hazardous enterprise with little scientific grounding, and a high risk of error, to try to decide *a posteriori* to which categories the groups should belong in today's ethnolinguistic classification. It therefore [seems] wiser to bear with this imprecision and its colonial tone [...].

Table 5.2 represents the general quantitative data for each sector and ethnic group.[12] This includes the total number of words devoted to each ethnic group in the archives for a sector; compared to the actual population of that group, in that same sector.

Table 5.2 – Quantitative Data for Individuals in a Military Sector and Word Count in Archives Devoted to that Group

Sector	Man		Thai		Meo		Nhang		Noung		Chinese		Vietnamese	
	Ind.	Words	Ind.	Words	Ind.	Words	Ind.	Words	Ind.	Words	Ind.	Words	Ind.	Words
Ba-Xat	611	2614	100	858	361	1807	547	2501	0	0	10	506	10	232
Ban Lao	230	1308	15	116	465	662	525	1059	390	1124	10	94	0	0
Coc-leu	1180	582	1100	1237	400	89	800	232	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trinh-Thuong	600	2090	0	0	240	1196	600	2368	0	0	140	941	30	80
Muong-Thuong	354	2083	39	98	1665	2716	0	0	954	3935	0	0	0	0
Pa-Kha	N.A	3434	N.A	1674	N.A.	1895	0	0	N.A.	2119	0	0	0	0
Phong-Thô	1500	1812	990	3485	1200	1761	700	726	0	0	250	155	0	0
Thaï-Nien	295	998	5	51	0	0	265	3452	0	0	16	46	41	45
Bao-Ha	2075	1593	2800	1454	19	494	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luc-an-Châu	920	1940	0	0	0	0	N.A.	285	500	350	0	0	250	492
Total	**7765**	**18,454**	**5049**	**8973**	**4620**	**10,620**	**3437**	**10,623**	**1844**	**7528**	**426**	**1742**	**331**	**849**

Source: Archives. Production: Samuel Dubois.

Now that the general information on the archival documents under examination is presented, I undertake in the next few sections the last analytical level of CDA, namely the *Textual Analysis*, based upon the analytical coding themes previously mentioned.

5.2 Material culture

Generally, the descriptions of material culture for each ethnic group are fairly factual and detailed in relation to, for instance, how houses were actually built and which techniques were used, as well as how groups dressed themselves and what type of fabric was used. That is to say, there is generally little analysis, or interpretation and comment made, beyond what appear to be fairly standard observations. However, regarding both habitation and clothing, more specific interpretations appear, of interest to analyse further.

[12] Refer to Appendix E for the original disaggregated data for individuals in all military sectors and word count devoted to every group originally identified by French officers.

5.2.1. Habitation

On five occasions, the houses of "Man" (Yao) were compared to three other groups, namely the "Nhang" (Giay), "Meo" (Hmong), and "Thai". "Man" houses were generally described by the French officers as quite well-constructed (3 references), clean (4 references) and without any animals in them (3 references).[13] In stark contrast, two authors wrote that "Man" houses were very dirty. In itself this contrasting analysis leads one to question the subjectivity of the authors involved, although perhaps they did just stumble across 'dirty houses'.

Twice "Meo" (Hmong) houses were compared to "Man" (Yao) houses and once to "Noung" (Nung). Two authors mentioned that the "Meo" kept their animals inside the household, which these authors thought made their house untidy and dirty. However, a French officer from Trinh-Thuong contradicted these reports, noting that "Meo" kept their animals outside. Perhaps focusing more on the watchdog behaviour of local canines, a French officer from the Ba-Xat sector added that each "Meo" house was looked after by highland dogs.

Generally, "Nhang" (Giay) houses were portrayed in a positive light by the French. Their houses were described as clean (2 references), without animals (2 references), and better than those of the "Thai" and "Man" (Yao) (1 reference). A sole French officer from Phong-Tho claimed that "Nhang" houses were identical to "Vietnamese" houses.

"Thai" houses were compared to those of the "Chinese" and "Nhang" (Giay) (1 reference each). Although a French officer from Coc-Leu said that hygiene precautions were totally neglected by the "Thai", two other authors claimed that animals were put under houses, making the general house cleanliness better than the other groups.

Little information was provided about "Noung" (Nung) houses, other than being tidy (1 reference). Also, a French officer from Pa-Kha found it surprising that some "Noung" consented to live in houses built by the "Thai" or the "Meo" (Hmong).

Whereas a few words were devoted to a factual description of "Chinese" house in the Ban Lao archive alone, nothing was mentioned about "Vietnamese" houses in any of the ten archival documents, presumably because of the focus on ethnic minority groups, and because so few Vietnamese were living in the upland regions at this time.

[13] For sake of clarity, there may be more than one reference made about a given topic in one archive.

5.2.2. Clothing

On three occasions, French officers noted that the "Man" (Yao) clothing acted as the primary element to differentiate them from other groups. "Neat", "stylish", and "sumptuous" were words used to describe their clothes. Two authors drew on their own experiences elsewhere and their upbringing to write that "Man" female attire had some resemblances to Breton women clothing, while another author found Italian similarities. Two other French officers claimed that "Man" attire was similar to those of the "Thai" and "Chinese".

On four occasions, officers wrote that the "Meo" (Hmong) 'costume' enabled them to distinguish themselves from other groups. "Meo" clothing were said to be 'simple' (2 references). Furthermore, two French officers from Ba-Xat and Ban Lao both compared "Meo" 'costume' with the look of European sailors, presumably describing the male attire. While, "Nhang" (Giay) clothing was compared on two occasions to that of the "Chinese" and on one occasion to that of the "Thai".

One author said that other upland ethnic minority groups identified "Thai" people differently within the "Thai" people according to the 'costume' and colour they wore. Some authors tended to compare "Thai" clothing to "Vietnamese" clothing (3 occasions). Again, making broad cross-cultural comparisons, a French officer from Phong-Tho wrote that the "Thai" hairstyle was similar to that of Alsatian women in France. Finally, it was mentioned once that indigo was largely used to colour "Thai" 'costumes.'

French officers pointed out similarities between "Noung" clothing and "Chinese" clothing (3 references) and "Vietnamese" clothing (2 references). A French officer from Muong-Khuong affirmed that the "Noung" (Nung) 'costumes' were quite clean and good-looking.

Finally, "Chinese" clothing was said to be similar to their counterparts across the Sino-Vietnamese border in China (1 reference). While, as for housing, nothing was mentioned regarding "Vietnamese" clothing.

In sum, for both housing and clothing, French officers commonly compared and contrasted ethnic minority groups, and for housing especially, stated their opinions regarding cleanliness. For clothing, similarities were made with the clothing styles that the officers were far more familiar with, back in Europe.

5.3 Economic life

5.3.1. Agriculture

The archival documents revealed that agriculture was, according to the French officers, the main resource for "Man" (Yao) households. More specifically, rice (12 references), corn (8 references), indigo (5 references), cotton (5 references), cunao (3 references), sugar cane, tea, colza, tobacco (1 reference each) were all observed and recorded as cultivated by this group. On four occasions, authors noted that "Man" cut down and burnt entire forests in order to cultivate their crops. Moreover, it was said that "Man" were also hunters and fishers (3 references each). Finally, one author mentioned "Man's" excellence at horse raising.

All the archives in which the "Meo" (Hmong) were described contained information regarding their agriculture (10 references). Officers reported that they mostly cultivated corn (8 references)[14], which some people distilled to make alcohol (3 references). The "Meo" also cultivated smaller-scale crops such as highland paddy rice (8 references), hemp (3 references), livestock (3 references), tobacco (2 references) and sugar cane (1 reference). On three occasions, it was mentioned that "Meo" usually clear the forest to make agriculture possible; while one author noted that "Meo" hunt and fish.

A French officer stationed in Trinh-Thoung sector commented that agriculture was the most important resource for "Nhang" (Giay) people. The primary crops cultivated by "Nhang" were paddy rice (7 references), vegetables (4 references), corn (3 references), honey (2 references), indigo (2 references), cotton, tobacco, livestock and the opium poppy (1 reference each).

According to the French officers stationed in the fourth military territory, the main crops cultivated by the "Thai" were paddy rice (7 references), corn (4 references), cotton, and indigo (2 references each). Fishing (2 references), hunting, and livestock farming (1 reference each) were also practiced.

On five occasions, it was mentioned that the "Noung" (Nung) would typically cultivate rice (5 references), corn (2 references), tobacco, cotton, and opium poppy (1 reference

[14] This piece of information is rather interesting as Hmong people today cultivate corn to the east of the Red River, but mainly cultivate rice on the west of it (Culas & Michaud, 1997).

each). A French officer from the Muong-Khuong sector also wrote the "Noung" bred many valuable horses.

The only information pertaining to "Chinese" agriculture was that they sometimes cultivate paddy rice, corn, and vegetables (1 reference each). Nothing was mentioned about "Vietnamese" agriculture in any of the ten archival documents.

5.3.2. Industry

On four occasions, "Man" (Yao) were noted to have no industry. Nevertheless, two authors said that "Man" produced small cast-iron objects, and another observed the production of indigo as their sole industry.

Although four officers wrote that "Meo" (Hmong) industry was not very developed and almost non-existent, two other officers expressed that "Meo" were a fairly industrial group, specializing in ploughing tools. One reference was made to the presence of blacksmiths amongst the "Meo" group.

Four French officers said that there was no "Nhang" (Giay) industry per se, though they usually made diverse little objects in small quantities. However, there was no mention regarding the types of objects they made and the material they used.

Twice it was mentioned that the "Thai" had a negligible industry, only making and dying fabrics; while three authors claimed "Noung" (Nung) were not very industrial.

As for "Chinese" industry, one French officer in the Ba-Xat sector confirmed that they had almost no industry, while another French officer stationed in Phong-Tho sector observed that the "Chinese" were, in fact, more industrious than any other groups (however perhaps he meant 'hardworking' rather than engaged in a specific industry). "Vietnamese" industry was not mentioned.

5.3.3. Commerce

Two French officers noted that the commercial activities of "Man" (Yao) consisted of exchanges along the Red River; while two other authors from Ban-Lao and Trinh-Thuong observed that "Man" traded indigo, cunao, and rice at the closest market within the limit of the sector they live in. An officer in Ban Lao sector furthermore wrote that "Man" often purchased objects on the other side of the border in China. Two references were made signalling that the sale of small quantities of alcohol within the Tring-Thuong sector's limits

existed, much to the chagrin of the "Vietnamese". Finally, a French officer noted that the "Man" in the Pa-Kha sector had no commercial activities.

Although three references were made alluding to the inexistence of any "Meo" (Hmong) commercial activities, a French officer from the Ban-Lao sector wrote that "Meo" still sold wooden objects (like coffins), rattan, sugar cane, and cotton along the Red River in China.

Thrice it was written that paddy rice was the most traded crop by "Nhang" (Giay), which relates back to their main agricultural activities in Section 5.3.1, and that this group utilized similar commercial techniques to the "Thai" (2 references). French officers wrote that the "Nhang" also traded livestock and vegetables (1 reference each). Additionally, an officer from Ban-Lao claimed that the "Nhang" practiced salt smuggling, which was purchased in the colonial city of Lao Kay on the border with China, and smuggled into China. Another author from the Trinh-Thuong sector noticed that the "Nhang" settled where commercial relations were favourable and that they represented a serious commercial competitor to the "Chinese". Nevertheless, on four occasions, it was said that commerce by the "Nhang" was almost inexistent.

One officer from the Phong-Tho sector claimed that the "Thai" group had large commercial activities regarding salt in the city of Lao-Kay and town of Phong-Tho, despite two other officers stationed in different sectors claiming otherwise. Moreover, two references were made signalling that "Thai" commerce consisted mainly of the sale of livestock in local markets. Such disparities in official observations could point to visits on different days (for example if there was a periodic market taking place), length of time on location or simply the amount of enthusiasm that official held for their observational tasks.

Two authors, one from Muong-Khuong and one from Ban Lao, claimed that "Noung" (Nung) commerce consisted of smuggled salt out of the country, from Lao-Kay to China, and another author noted that "Noung" imported embroideries and jewels from "Chinese" salesmen. In contrast, another author in Pa-Kha sector stated that the "Noung" had no commercial activities.

Five French officers wrote that the "Chinese" were active merchandisers and coolies, purchasing salt and petroleum in Lao-Kay city, while only one officer observed that they were reselling them for profits afterwards. In addition, another author affirmed that the "Chinese" usually settled in commercial areas of villages.

As for the "Vietnamese", commerce was one of the themes most elaborated upon for this group, in the archives. On three occasions, it was said that the "Vietnamese" were mobile storekeepers. A French officer from Luc-an-Chau said that the primary commercial activity of the "Vietnamese" consisted of the sale of rice and alcohol. The same author posited that the "Vietnamese" were trading on behalf of "Thai" as well. Finally, a officer stationed in the Trinh-Thuong sector affirmed that the "Vietnamese" '*se livre avec passion effrénée à l'opium' [engage with unbridled passion to the opium trade]*.

In sum, a very broad range of economic activities were reported upon in the archives. While it was clear that the majority of upland residents focused upon agriculture as their main livelihood, industry and commerce were also noted. Archival authors seemed to contradict each other at times regarding who was engaged in selling what and where, but otherwise descriptions appeared fairly straightforward. It is interesting, however, to note the lack of comments made about Meo (Hmong) involvement in opium production and commerce, given how they have been recorded in more recent documents as the main growers in the region (Culas & Michaud, 1997)

5.4 Familial life

5.4.1. Customs

Generally, French officials wrote that "Man" (Yao) customs were comparable to those of the "Thai" (3 references) and those of the "Nhang" (Giay) (2 references). The typical "Man" marriage, compared once to that of the "Nhang", consisted of buying a woman from their own ethnic group (2 references), or from the "Chinese" or the "Nhang" groups (1 reference). Another author wrote that the "Man" did not marry "Meo" (Hmong) or "Thai" people. Additionally, French officers noted that the "Man" were polygamist (3 references). Finally, again pointing to comparisons being made with more familiar places and peoples, an officer from the Trinh-Thuong sector noted that one of the "Man's" dances was similar to a dance from Auvergne, France.

One author noted that "Meo" (Hmong) customs were largely influenced by those of the "Thai" and "Man". Although polygamy existed (1 reference), it was mentioned that the "Meo" married solely within their own ethnic group (2 references).

On three occasions, it was said that the "Nhang" (Giay) married exclusively within their own group or with "Thai" people; however another author hypothesized that marriages with "Chinese" people were also permitted. "Nhang" people were considered by French officials as being polygamist (3 references).

"Thai" birth and death ceremonies were once compared to those of the "Nhang" (Giay). Whereas a French officer from the Ba-Xat sector wrote that their customs were identical to those of the "Nhang", another officer from Bao-Ha presented similarities to "Vietnamese" customs. As for marriage, officers wrote that the "Thai" married people from their own group (3 references), as well as "Chinese" (2 references), "Nhang" (2 references), "Man" (Yao), and "Vietnamese" (1 reference each). Twice "Thai" were observed as being polygamist if the man was affluent enough. Finally, one author remarked that "Thai" women danced in a similar fashion to young French girls.

"Noung" (Nung) customs were said to be analogous to those of the "Meo" (Hmong) (1 reference); however, a French officer from Luc-an-Chau claimed that the "Noung" adopted identical customs and habits as those of the "Thai". Additionally, although one author wrote that the "Noung" were monogamous, two other clarified that polygamy was permitted but not practiced, therefore explaining why divorce was allowed in "Noung" culture. Finally, one author signalled that "Noung" women rarely marry "Thai" men.

As for the "Chinese", archival documents revealed that polygamy was allowed but rarely practiced, with repudiation permitted (1 reference). "Vietnamese" customs were not mentioned in any of the ten archival documents.

5.4.2. Familial organization

Some archive authors wrote that "Man" (Yao) familial organization was similar to that of the "Nhang" (Giay) (2 references), the "Nhung" (Nung) (one reference), and the "Meo" (Hmong) (1 reference). It was said that "Man" families were independent (1 reference), with an absolute paternal head of the house (2 references). Moreover, a French officer from the Ba-Xat sector affirmed that "Man" tried their best to 'educate' their children (presumably according to French standards) and that they preferred having boys for labour. On the contrary, another author from Phong-Tho wrote that education was not a priority as diseases killed numerous children. Adoption for the "Man" was perceived by the

French as a commonplace act (2 references). An officer from the Bao-Lan sector expressed in his writings that "Man" women had a secondary role in the family, probably reflecting the officers own positioning of women at that time.

Three references were made regarding the striking paternal respect and authority present within the "Meo" (Hmong) culture. One French officer noted that the "Meo" familial organization was identical to that of the "Man" (Hmong). As for child education, a reference was made in the Ban-Lao sector's archive that "Meo" people were too insouciant and poor to provide education to their children.

"Nhang" (Giay) households were deemed to be under the authority of the ancestor, (2 references), and that they represented a strong paternal authority (3 references). Although it was mentioned thrice that having a lot of children was important to the "Nhang", another author wrote that "Nhang" parents did not hesitate to sell their children if the household needed money urgently. Furthermore, a French officer from the Thai-Nien sector thought that "Nhang" children were fairly well educated considering the general poverty of the group. This same author noted that "Nhang" women held a degraded position within the patriarchal family structure.

Three authors noted a strong "Thai" paternal authority and affection. An officer from the Phong-Tho sector commented that the "Thai" liked their children and educated them well. He added that "Thai" children were respectful to their parents, obeyed, yet '*n'ont rien de la gaîté et de l'exubérance des gamins de France' [do not have the cheerfulness and exuberance of the children in France]*.

One author noted that "Noung" (Nung) family organization is the same as that of the "Nhang" (Giay), including a strong paternal authority which, according to a French officer from the Muong-Khuong sector, resembles that of some communities in France. It was also noted in the archives that familial authority is patrilineal (1 reference), and that the "Noung" preferred big families with more boys (1 reference).

The only thing mentioned about "Chinese" familial organization is that it was similar to that of the "Nhang" (Giay). There was no information concerning "Vietnamese" families.

In sum, with regards to familial life, especially customs, while it has to be mentioned that birth, death, and marriage ceremonies are described in details in several archives, the multiple comparisons that are made with other groups often contradict themselves,

underlining the fair bit of confusion regarding ethnic minority customs amongst the various officials. As for familial organisation, French officers seem to depict and comment subjects such as gender relations, education, position of children, and paternal head of household in a way that particularly reflect Western European standards at that time.

5.5 Social life

5.5.1. Social organization

"Man" (Yao) social organization was compared to that of the "Nhang" (Giay) (3 references) and to the "Chinese" (1 reference); while an author from Coc-leu stated that "Man" social organization was comparable to that of the "Thai", though much more simplified. Finally, two references noted that each "Man" village had a chief.

One author mentioned that every "Meo" (Hmong) village in his sector was under the authority of one chief, as was the case for the "Man" (Yao) and the "Nhang" (Giay). In that regard, an officer from the Ban Lao sector observed that village's chiefs were elected. However, another author clarified that village notables had no authority over the greater population. This later observation is more in tune with current day understandings of Hmong clans as acephalous (Michaud, 2006, Tugault-Lafleur & Turner, 2011).

It was mentioned in the archives that every "Nhang" (Giay) village had a chief (4 references), that territories were communal (3 references), and that the overall "Nhang" social organization was similar to that of the "Thai" (2 references).

French officers commented about "Thai" social organization that every village had a chief, several notables (1 reference), and communal territories (2 references). While, a French officer once wrote that "Noung" (Nung) social organisation was identical to that of the "Nhang" and that territories were communal (1 reference).

The sole thing mentioned about the "Chinese" group was that its social organization was similar to that of the "Nhang" (Giay). Finally, no information was available about the "Vietnamese".

Section 5.5.2. Relations with other groups

On one hand, the "Man" (Yao) were described as having social relations with the "Nhang" (1 reference) and some of them were generally very dependent upon the "Thai" (1 reference), without however clarifying for what. On the other hand, another author stated that the

"Man" did not really associate with other groups. Another author from Coc-Leu commented that everyone in the sector denied the "Man" as being their relatives.

As for the "Meo" (Hmong), French officers noted that economic exchanges were frequent between the "Meo" and "Chinese" (2 references). While, in the Ba-Xat sector's archive, "Nhang" people were portrayed as thinking themselves superior to other ethnic groups.

One author wrote that other groups would have taken the "Thai" group as an ideal because of its cultural and social superiority and, according to an officer from the Phong-Tho sector, their dominance of the region. On the contrary, an officer from Ban Lao expressed that, due to their alliances with the "Noung" (Nung) and the "Nhang" (Giay), "Thai" people seemed to have lost all commonalities with their counterparts on the west side of the Red River. In this vein, a French officer from the Muong-Khuong sector commented that it was likely that the "Thai" were soon to be assimilated by the "Nhung".

Once, an author recounted that the "Noung" (Nung) considered themselves superior to the other ethnic groups, which were seen as lower class groups by the "Noung". Finally, no information pertaining to "Chinese" or "Vietnamese" inter-group relations was found in any archival documents.

Overall, the French officers who depicted the social life of ethnic minorities seem to be quite interested in hierarchies among the groups; perhaps reflecting their own reality within the highly hierarchical French army. Moreover, officers seem to pay a lot of attention to land ownership and territorial possession, which is arguably a central component of political and economic domination associated with colonialism.

5.6 Spiritual life

5.6.1. Superstition and Beliefs

Whereas a French officer from the sector of Phong-Tho affirmed that the "Man" (Yao) had no religious beliefs, three other references stated that their religion and beliefs were, in fact, comparable to those of the "Nhang" (Giay), without however mentioning in what way. The "Man" were also described as being superstitious Buddhist (1 reference), one of their superstitions being that deer horns had a special virtue.

Although one French officer noted that the diverse beliefs and religious practices of the "Meo" (Hmong) were the same as those of the "Man" (Yao), another author claimed that the "Meo" were religiously and spiritually influenced by the "Nhung" (Nung). Perceived as Buddhist by the French officers from Ban Lao and Coc-leu sectors (2 references), it was also said that the "Meo" believed in spirits as well as in good and harmful genies (1 reference). One author commented that the "Meo" had no religious beliefs.

Some French officers described the "Nhang" (Giay) as being Buddhist (5 references), superstitious (2 references), and believing in spirits (1 reference). Nonetheless, three references posited that the "Nhang" were not very religious.

Depicted as Buddhist (4 references) and superstitious (2 references) by the French, it was said once that the spiritual life of the "Thai" was similar to that of the "Nhang" (Giay). Another author noted that "Thai" believed in spirits and spiritual life after death. The "Thai" believed that familial bounds never break up, even after death (1 reference).

Thrice, authors described the "Noung" (Nung) as being superstitious (2 references). A French officer from Muong-Khuong even compared "Noung" superstitions to those formerly existing in the French countryside. Although three French officers wrote that the "Noung" were Buddhist, another author claimed that they made significant changes to traditional Buddhism.

As for the "Chinese" and the "Vietnamese", no information was provided concerning their religious and spiritual life. In sum, the great majority of ethnic minority groups are all seen as superstitious and Buddhist, without making any nuances that could differentiate certain groups from another, except for a sole French officer, who points out a variant to traditional Buddhism when depicting the "Noung" (Nung).

5.7 Physiological and moral features

5.7.1. Physiological features

The adjectives most frequently used to describe "Man" (Yao) were vigorous and energetic (3 references each). Within the description of physiological features of this group, seven comparisons were made with other groups. Twice, authors mentioned that the "Man" were 'beautiful'. Although it was signalled on three occasions that "Man" men were rather 'brown-skinned', three references were made regarding the relative whiteness and general

beauty of “Man” women. In the same vein, two authors noted that the “Man” succeeded in keeping their ‘racial purity’. Finally, an French officer from the Thai-Nien sector said that “Man” people were so miserable that they could only be compared to the French ‘*crétins’ [knuckleheads]* living in the French Alps.

“Meo” (Hmong) individuals were usually described as short and bold. A French officer from the Trinh-Tuong sector commented that the “Meo” ‘*représente le vrai type du montagnard’ [embodies the genuine highlander]*. As for “Meo” women, four references emphasized their skin whiteness, two mentioning blond hair. One officer compared their appearance to French peasants and another officer from Muong-Khuong put forward an assumption that the paler features of the “Meo” women might come from previous fraternizing with Europeans.

The physiological description of the “Nhang” (Giay) by the French was on four occasions compared to that of the “Chinese”, one author referring to their unusual tallness and two others referencing to their shaved heads. While the “Nhang” people in the sector of Ban Lao were qualified as ‘good-looking’, “Nhang” people from Coc-leu were described as having “rough” and “vulgar” facial features; again pointing to the very subjective takes that officials, who appear to be very opinionated, had while writing these reports.

Four French officers mentioned that the “Thai” generally were tall and lean individuals. On three occasions, this ethnic group was compared to three other groups of the region, namely the “Nhang” (Giay), “Meo” (Hmong), and “Chinese”. In addition, whereas three authors wrote that “Thai” women had lacquered teeth, an author from Bao-Ha explicitly stated that the “Thai” did not lacquer their teeth.

The general physiology of the “Noung” (Nung) was qualified as ordinary twice. One reference noted resemblances with the “Mongol” and the “Chinese”. Two authors commented that “Noung” people were usually more slender than the “Thai”. In contrast, two other authors wrote that the “Noung” tended to be fairly “sturdy”.

Among all of the archival documents, only one author, stationed in the sector of Ban Lao, referred to Chinese physiology. He wrote that the “Chinese”, who had long braids, stood out because of their dirtiness and the feet deformities of the women associated with cultural practices. No reference was made about their physiology of “Vietnamese” highlanders.

Overall, we can observe that some of the physiological descriptions made by the French are of a highly subjective nature, basing their depictions upon Western definitions of beauty and positive physical image. This subjectivity on the part of French officials is even more obvious in the next section.

5.7.2. Moral features

Although there is no specific categorical subheading in the archives called *moral features*, I include this theme in my textual analysis in order to analyse and interpret how French officers perceived Tonkin's ethnic minorities in this regard, thus engendering findings that are more rigorous and interesting from an analytical standpoint. These moral features were found throughout the archival texts, particularly within the p*hysical features* subsections.

Whereas two references were made regarding the hospitability of the "Man" (Yao), there were also three references signalling their desire to be independent, as well as one reference assessing that they were somewhat unsociable. Additionally, one author said that "Man" were intelligent, whereas a French officer from Ba-Xat thought "Man" were more cunning than intelligent. Another author affirmed this ethnic group was less intelligent than "Thai" people, but much more loyal and frank. The range of interpretations amongst officials therefore just about ran the continuum of possible comments.

As for the "Meo" (Hmong), they were most frequently described as hardworking and agile. With regards to their relationship with Europeans, one reference signalled that the "Meo" were welcoming and respectful. Another reference asserted the contrary, claiming that this group was timorous to the point of unsociability. Moreover, whereas one author claimed that the "Meo" were of an exemplary sobriety, another French officer compared them to the "Man" (Yao), both seemingly having a penchant for alcohol.

Thrice, "Nhang" (Giay) people were qualified as intriguing, one author affirming this statement by mentioning their desire to get closer to Europeans. Additionally, two authors wrote that the "Nhang" were fairly quiet and docile. Finally, whereas it was said once that the "Nhang" from the Ba-Xat sector saw themselves as superior to the other groups, one author from the Phong-Tho sector commented that *'ils sont considérés par les Thais comme une race moins intelligente' [they are considered by the Thai to be a less intelligent race]*.

The most recurrent moral characteristic of "Thai" people pertained to their laziness (3 references), qualified as extraordinary and incredible by two other authors. Another officer wrote the "Thai", albeit somewhat reserved, were still sociable.

Twice, French officers observed that the "Noung" (Nung) had an average intelligence. One reference signalled that their pride was similar to that of the "Chinese" and that they were overly judgemental. Finally, a French officer from the sector of Muong-Khuong wrote that the "Noung" thought they had *'supériorité sur les autres races qu'ils ne se gênent pas pour considérer comme des sauvages ou des bêtes' [superiority over the other races who they considered as savages or beasts]*.

As for the "Chinese", only one French officer from Phong-Tho talked about their moral features, commenting that they were quiet, welcoming to the Europeans, and that they were much more laborious than all the other groups. Furthermore, the only moral reference made about the "Vietnamese" was that they had an unbridled passion for the opium commerce.

In brief, although the theme *moral features* was not explicit in the archive, it is evident that the textual analysis of this theme is very interesting as it reveal how individual officers, influenced and shaped by French colonialism, perceived highland ethnic minorities from a subjective way. The different terms that are used, be they positive or derogatory, and personal comments to describe the *morality* of the these ethnic groups consist of a clear manifestation of the authors' agency and opinions. I analyse and interpret these findings in more details in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SIX – USEFULNESS OF THE ARCHIVE

In this Chapter I attempt to interpret the extent to which European colonial archives that contain diverse information on different populations of the Indochinese peninsula are useful and valuable to social researchers in a contemporary context. Insofar as the specific archival documents I examined in this thesis have never been extensively used nor studied by scholars to date, I necessarily broadened the scope of my research for this Chapter to interview researchers with experience in Indochina and Chinese archives per se. This Chapter is chiefly based on data I gathered from conducting e-mail interviews with four scholars, namely Frédéric Bourdier and Grégoire Schlemmer (research fellows at the Institut de recherche pour le développement, France), Jean Michaud (professor in Anthropology at Université Laval), and Stéphane Gros (research fellow at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France). I asked them questions regarding the practical aspects of undertaking research with archival documents (Section 6.1), the reasons for using them (Section 6.2), their knowledge about the authors who wrote the documents they were analyzing (Section 6.3), how they analyze the documents (Section 6.4), and associated ethical considerations (Section 6.5).

6.1. Practical aspects of the archive

Finding the archival documents that contain the information that researchers are looking for is often a difficult and time-consuming task. Most of the archival documents utilized by the interviewed researchers (be they military, missionary, or official state reports) are now located, in their original version, in two cities in France (Aix en Provence and Paris, including Vincennes – in the eastern suburbs of Paris). While Gros also consulted a few archives in Switzerland, Bourdier is the sole researcher who has had firsthand access to archives located in Indochina, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Although all the scholars confirmed that the process of obtaining the archival documents, reading them, and identifying the pertinent information they may contain is potentially a daunting task due to multiple reasons, including illogical classification, logistical constraints, and difficulties with accessibility of archives in developing countries, they all claimed that the process has proven to be well worth the effort.

6.2. Why Use the Archives?

Considering that all of the interviewees study populations of the Indochinese peninsula that, most of the time, do not possess written texts recounting their history and origins, it is important to pay particular attention to the other existing written sources concerning these populations. Thus, the different types of archives produced by Europeans during the colonial period in Indochina are one of the rare means by which researchers today can find documented descriptions pertaining to a past that has often been forgotten. Even though we can still rely on the memory of the local people, these oral traditions and testimonies can have been changed and reworked through time, lacking academic accurateness; Europeans archives written from 1860 onwards are, in Western terms, often deemed more scientific (Michaud, pers. comm., 2010).

Furthermore, Gros (pers. comm., 2011) mentioned that although a certain number of publications referring to the archives pertinent to his work were very useful, consulting the original archives made him realize the extent to which authors could sometimes selectively use certain pieces of information. Thanks to this consultation, he could then account for the biases as well as work in close proximity to the sources.

6.3 Knowledge about the Authors

When asked about how much they know about the authors of the archives they utilized for their work, all researchers said that in order to be critical when reading an archival document, it is important that they have knowledge of the authors' general background, position, ideology, reason of their presence, and intended audience (Schlemmer, pers. comm., 2011). Although it was not necessary in his case, Gros mentioned the option of contacting the family of certain authors in order to know more about these specific individuals. All researchers mentioned that none of the texts they examine are neutral, while Gros (pers. comm., 2011) added that 'even though [researchers] are not forced to put a name behind what is left as the expression of an individual subjectivity, being able to do so could eventually lead to a better comprehension and interpretation'.

6.4. Analysis of the Archives

According to the authors I interviewed, knowing about the authors of the archives seemed to be, for analytical purposes, as important as knowing about the general context and environment wherein the archives were written. Although every researcher has their own broad method to analyze historical texts, my interviewees seemed to agree upon the necessity to compare and contrast different documents in order to reconstruct the course of what happened in a specific place and time. Gros (pers. comm., 2011) thought that archival documents must be analyzed alongside other non-archival sources that shed a new light on a particular event or social conjuncture. Moreover, the presence of long, over-detailed descriptions, often analytically irrelevant, as highlighted by Michaud (pers. comm., 2010) and Schlemmer (pers. comm., 2011), represents a challenge and makes their task as researchers fairly difficult. Be that as it may, Bourdier (pers. comm., 2010) said that 'there is no miraculous recipe to optimally analyze the type of documents [we] are dealing with'. Furthermore, all researchers confirmed that the utilization of colonial archives, albeit very valuable, generally consists of a secondary approach to enhance the rigor and validity of other sources such as archaeological evidence, interviews, and contemporary analyses.

6.5. Ethics of the Archive

Upon being asked whether there are ethical considerations when utilizing European colonial archives pertaining to Tonkin's minority groups, three of the authors responded that they are no ethical issues. Bourdier (pers. comm., 2010) said that by delving into a part of the forgotten memory, the concerned populations can be the first group to express the desire to know this past. However, Gros (pers. comm. 2011) claimed the contrary:

> In contrast, when archival documents are used to better understand the past of some populations that remained marginal thus far, due to little access to formal education, and for whom the memory practice have subsisted through oral history, it is legitimate to ask what the responsibility of the researcher is in the sharing of such archival material with the concerned population.

In this regard, Moore (2010) points out in one of her articles that questions of ethics related to the utilization of archives in historical geography have received little consideration to date. The author argues that researchers using archives for working on sensitive subjects – sexual behaviour, illegal or political behaviour, or experiences of

violence for instance – within the sub-discipline must pay particular attention to ethical considerations. Even though Moore does not mention anything concerning the use of European ethnographic archives depicting minority groups in the colonial period, there seems to be a need to reflect more upon the ethical repercussions stemming from the academic use of this kind of archival material.

In sum, social researchers today generally agree that colonial archives about ethnic minorities of Indochina, though difficult to access and manifestly influenced by a certain colonial tone, are tremendously valuable and essential to enhance contemporary research, if examined in a critical manner.

CHAPTER SEVEN – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this last chapter, I contextualize the emergent themes from the Textual Analysis by linking them back to the findings of Chapter Three (Social Practice) and Chapter Four (Discursive Practice). The integration of all three CDA analytical levels aims to prompt a more inclusive and thorough analysis of the archival documents' content. I was then able to illustrate how the different ethnic minority groups living in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century were perceived and understood by French colonial officers. In Section 7.1, I argue that, although there are broad thematic commonalities, the portrayal of highland Vietnamese minorities is nevertheless often contradictory within and between the different archival documents/authors. Finally in Section 7.2, I draw the main conclusions of this thesis by providing brief answers to my four original research questions.

7.1 Major Findings

One of the most noticeable observations regarding the results of the textual analysis is the large number of contradictions and dissimilarities contained in the ethnographic descriptions. While differences in opinions may be normal among different authors, contradictions often emerged in several descriptions that were supposed to be more factual. For instance, while one French officer in the Ba-Xat sector wrote that the "Chinese" had almost no industry, another French officer stationed in the Phong-Tho sector claimed that this group had, in fact, a larger industry than any of the other groups. Another example concerns "Man" (Yao) religious beliefs: while a French officer from the Phong-Tho sector confirmed that the "Man" had no religious beliefs, three other references stated that the religion and beliefs of the "Man" were, actually, comparable to those of the "Nhang" which were influenced by the Buddhist religion. These are only two instances amongst many others outlined in Chapter Five exemplifying the various contradictions that generate inconsistencies throughout the archival documents.

In the same vein, the *physiological and moral features* section is undoubtedly the section wherein the authors' agency became the most exposed through the texts. In addition to many contradictions, this section also contains a considerable amount of subjective comments on the part of the archive's authors. For instance, a French officer from the Thai-

Nien sector wrote that "Man" (Yao) people were so miserable that they could only be compared to the French "knuckleheads" living in the Alps. Additionally, "Nhang" (Giay) people from Coc-leu were described as having "rough" and "vulgar" facial features, while two authors wrote that the "Noung" (Nung) tended to be fairly "sturdy", and one author pointed out the innate laziness of the "Thai". The utilization of these kinds of words illustrates the extent to which personal comments and interpretations were crept in, thus providing evidence concerning the author's agency in writing the reports. This also proves that even though these reports, consisting of raw data collected by lower-ranked officers, were reviewed by more educated high commanders – as was mentioned in Chapter Four – these texts were not ultimately censored by anyone in the army. Furthermore, the authors from the Pa-Kha and Luc-an-Chau sectors on several occasions used the first person singular, supporting again the argument concerning author agency.

Nevertheless, the presence of subjective remarks and interpretations, as well as of perhaps derogatory terms – according to today's standards at least – do not necessarily mean that ethnic minority groups were inherently seen in a negative light by these French officials. As Michaud (pers. comm., 2010) explained, the French response to their first interactions with ethnic minorities was generally influenced by a Rousseauian sensibility, stemming from the broad socio-philosophical context at that time in France. There was a prejudice in favour of the ethnic minority who embodied a kind of idealized picture of an 'exotic noble savage' that was not necessarily barbarian and uncivilized (see Duchet, 1971; Ellington, 2001). Generally, 'French officers stationed in Tonkin thought that highland people were interesting, as opposed to many other lowland majority groups in Indochina at that time who thought highland communities were uninteresting' (Michaud, pers. comm., 2010).

Moreover, this general sensibility towards ethnic minorities is also, in my opinion, intertwined with the sense (and level) of care for the work done by the French officers in the field. Although the ethnographic information was collected with a military precision at times and a pre-established structure, we can assess that the authors had relatively large individual freedom with regards to both the content of the reports and the amount of information reported. Quantitatively, there is an impressive difference of 10,053 words between the shortest and the longest archives, exemplifying the relative lack of restrictions

concerning the length of the archives. Another reason that might explain the substantial variation in word counts is the authors' level of devotion to their work. In fact, the numerous differences in document length, amount text written on each group, care of descriptions, attention to detail, and nuanced understanding of finer points are all factors of the archives that clearly show that some French officers appeared much more interested in the work they had to do, as opposed to other who seemed to care less; perhaps about their work and/or the ethnic groups they had to study.

For instance, the author of the Muong-Kuong archival document is one of the only authors who addressed directly and substantially the origins of each ethnic group settled in his sector. In the same vein, the French officer who wrote the ethnographic report for the sector of Ban-Lao noted that the lack of documentation and evidence made the task of assessing ethnic minorities' origin impossible, suggesting that he had actually looked for such evidence. Additionally, the Pa-Kha sector's author seemed to be one of those who cared a lot about the rigor of the work he undertook in the field at that time. In addition to being one of the only officers who included direct quotes from local people that he got information from (most of the time by village chiefs), he is also the sole officer who included photographs in his report and referred to them. Interestingly enough, this author was also the sole one who, throughout his report, used brackets each time he wrote an ethnic name. We can suppose that this decision from the Pa-Kha sector's author aimed to emphasize the subjectivity of the colonial ethnic classification, or maybe brackets were utilized simply because the ethnic names were not proper French words. Whether this author remarked upon the subjectivity of the use of ethnonyms or not, it is evident that the French colonial ethnic classification was not representative of the tremendous ethnic diversity of the region. As a result, this classification issue has major repercussions on how the ethnographic data can be analyzed on the basis of ethnic group. While there was arguably a considerable amount of people belonging to each ethnic group, the French officers generally did not take into consideration individual, household, hamlet and geographical variations when writing their ethnographic reports. No distinction among the numerous individuals/households of one single group was ever made. The way a group was portrayed was subsequently through an archetypal figure envisioned and constructed by the French.

When we think about how meanings and understandings of Vietnamese highland minorities are situated in actual contexts of use, the property of language appears to play a crucial role (Gumperz & Levinson, 1996; Hanks, 1996). The language that was used in the archival documents is manifestly influenced by both the time and space dimensions. Archives were written in 1903 in Tonkin, a period of European colonialism in the region. In other words, the texts in archival documents are construed in a very specific fashion because of the vital role of *time* and *space*. As Gee (1999: 101) illustrates, language and context – or practices – are like 'two mirrors facing each other and constantly and endlessly reflecting their own images back and forth between each other'.

In the same way, my own interpretation of the words and meanings in the archival documents is influenced by my surrounding environment and context. As a young Caucasian, western-educated student, my analysis, interpretation, and comprehension of the three analytical levels associated with the CDA framework certainly impacted, in more than one way, the findings I came up with. The "facts" of historical geography (particularly when dealing with European colonial perceptions of Asian ethnic minorities) are not always easily established and there is often as much debate about them as about their interpretation (Baker, 1997). However, without basic "facts" about the historical timing and geographical distribution of European colonial perceptions of Vietnamese ethnic minorities, it would be rather difficult to say much of interest about the topic. Thus, the finding I expressed and the general conclusion I draw in this section are amongst an infinite number of possibilities.

7.2 Conclusion

In sum, the aim of my thesis was twofold: I first critically analyzed the production of French military archives containing ethnographic information on highland ethnic minorities in Tonkin, Indochina. Following Fairclough's CDA framework, I attempted to answer three main research questions. Examining the broad socio-political context of the Tonkin, I argued that French military officers authors like Lunet de Lajonquière, Diguet, and Abadie, who published ethnographic monographs while colonisation was still occurring, contributed to the creation of particular social practices in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century. The relationships between upland minorities living in the northern uplands and

French military officers have important implications in the ways local indigenous groups are represented in military ethnographic archives. Then, attempting to bridge the gap between text (French military archives) and society (broad social context in Tonkin at the turn of the 20th century), I shed light on how ethnographic information about Tonkin's ethnic minorities is discursively produced and understood. I argued that the background of the chief individuals behind the creation of the studied archival documents contributed to shape and influence how the studied archival documents were produced and consumed. Finally, undertaking a textual analysis, I argued that the representation and depiction of highland minority groups in Vietnam were time- and place-specific, and therefore heavily reliant on broader socio-political and discursive practices. Furthermore, I argued that the authors' individual agency exposed through the texts was manifested in a way that impacted how ethnic minority groups were depicted differently.

Second, I interpreted the usefulness of colonial archives for current social science researchers who study various topics concerning ethnic minority groups in Indochina. In order to achieve this second component of my overarching thesis aim, I conducted interviews with several scholars. I argued that colonial archives about ethnic minorities of Indochina, though difficult to access and manifestly influenced by a certain colonial tone, are, in general, indispensable and greatly valuable to enhance the rigor of contemporary research, given that they are analysed in a critical manner.

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APPENDIX A – Ethics Approval Form

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
McGill University
1555 Peel Street, 11th floor
Montreal, QC H3A 3L8

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4644
Ethics website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board I
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 238-1110

Project Title: Analyzing Military Archives of the Northern Colonial Vietnamese Borderlands: A Geographical Study of Ethnic Minorities and Their Usefulness to Researchers Today.

Principal Investigator: Samuel Dubois

Department: Geography

Student Status: Undergraduate Student

Supervisor: Prof. S. Turner

This project was reviewed on Nov. 25, 2010 by

Expedited Review __x___
Full Review _____

Rex Brynen Ph.D.
Chair, REB I

Approval Period: __Nov. 29, 2010__ **to** ___Nov. 28, 2011____

This project was reviewed and approved in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects and with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

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* All research involving human subjects requires review on an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date.
* When a project has been completed or terminated a Final Report form must be submitted.
* Should any modification or other unanticipated development occur before the next required review, the REB must be informed and any modification can't be initiated until approval is received.

APPENDIX B –Email Interview Sample

Cher monsieur X,

Mon nom est Samuel Dubois et je suis étudiant à l'université McGill de Montréal. Je suis en train de mener un projet de recherche sur la production d'archives coloniales françaises au Tonkin en Indochine, sous la supervision de professeure Sarah Turner que vous avez récemment rencontrée à Chiang Mai. Le premier objectif de ma recherche est d'analyser de manière critique une série d'archives coloniales françaises, incluant la compréhension de leur contenu ainsi que les motifs des auteurs à l'origine de ces écrits. Le second objectif est d'évaluer l'utilité et la valeur des archives coloniales pour les chercheurs en sciences humaines dans un contexte contemporain. Puisque vous êtes un spécialiste ayant une connaissance fiable à propos des archives coloniales françaises et que vous les avez utilisées dans le cadre de vos propres recherches, j'aimerais si vous me le permettez vous poser quelques questions par le biais de ce courriel.
Avant de procéder davantage, je vous invite à lire la section ci-dessous concernant votre consentement à participer à cette entrevue.

Déclaration de consentement:
Cette déclaration de consentement vise à acquérir votre accord à répondre à une brève liste de questions à propos de votre expérience avec l'utilisation d'archives coloniales indochinoises. Votre participation, qui se fera via courriel, prendra approximativement 30 à 40 minutes et se fera à un moment qui vous jugerez opportun pour vous. Les renseignements que vous me fournirez seront traités pour la rédaction d'un mémoire de recherche dans le cadre d'un programme de premier cycle à McGill.
Je garderai vos réponses confidentielles, à moins que vous indiquiez dans votre future réponse que vous n'avez aucune objection à ce que j'utilise votre nom. Veuillez donc m'aviser clairement si je peux vous citer en utilisant votre nom ou pas; ceci est complètement à votre discrétion.
Afin de garder vos réponses confidentielles, ces dernières seront copiées dans un autre document Word qui sera protégé par un mot de passe. Par la suite, votre courriel original sera supprimé de façon définitive du serveur informatique. Votre participation est volontaire, vous pouvez donc refuser de répondre à certaines questions.
Une réponse à ce courriel de votre part indiquera que vous acceptez de participer à ce projet.
Si vous avez des questions ou des inquiétudes concernant vos droits ou votre bien-être en tant que participant à ce projet de recherche, veuillez contacter le Bureau d'éthique de la recherche de McGill par téléphone au 514-398-6831 ou par courriel à lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Merci de bien vouloir considérer ma requête pour une entrevue.

Samuel Dubois
Mon adresse courriel est samuel.dubois@mail.mcgill.ca et celle de ma superviseure est turner@geog.mcgill.ca.

Liste de questions

Généralités
1. Désirez-vous garder l'anonymat dans le cadre de ce travail de recherche?

2. Pourriez-vous brièvement décrire votre passé académique, votre champ de spécialisation ainsi que vos recherches actuelles?

Aspect pratique relié à l'utilisation des archives
3. À quel(s) bureau(x) d'archives êtes-vous allé pour accéder aux documents coloniaux français? Où étaient-ils?

4. Comment avez-vous déniché les documents et archives dont vous aviez spécifiquement besoin pour vos recherches?

5. Lorsque vous étiez dans les bureaux d'archives, comment avez-vous utilisé les documents en question? Les avez-vous simplement lus, photographiés, photocopiés, ou avez-vous pris des notes sommaires, etc.?

Contenu des archives que vous avez utilisées
6. Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de consulter des documents d'archive pour vos recherches?

7. Quels types de documents utilisez-vous (rapports militaires des officiers locaux pour leurs supérieurs, journaux de missionnaires, rapports officiels d'état, etc.)?

8. Pourriez-vous brièvement décrire les thèmes généraux des archives que vous utilisez pour vos recherches?

9. Que connaissez-vous de ou des auteur(s) des documents que vous utilisez?

10. Est-il important pour vous de savoir qui a écrit les documents d'archive? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?

Analyse et utilisation
11. Comment avez-vous analysé les documents en question?

12. Est-ce que ces archives sont une partie centrale à vos recherches ou sont-elles complémentaire à une autre approche?

13. En général, comment pensez-vous que ces archives peuvent être utilisées de façon optimale pour des recherches académiques?

14. Croyez-vous que certains biais doivent être pris en considération lors de l'analyse de ces documents d'archives à des fins académiques? Si oui, quels sont-ils?

15. Croyez-vous qu'il existe certaines considérations éthiques découlant de l'utilisation de ces documents d'archives?

16. Quelles sont les points forts et les points faibles centraux de ces documents d'archive?

Si vous avez des commentaires ou des suggestions, je vous invite à me les faire parvenir. Pour terminer, si vous pensez à des collègues qui seraient susceptibles d'avoir les connaissances nécessaires pour m'aider dans mon projet et répondre aux questions ci-dessus, auriez-vous, s'il vous plait, l'obligeance de leur transférer ce courriel ou de me fournir leur noms et adresse courriel?

Je tiens sincèrement à vous remercier pour le temps et l'effort que vous avez investis afin de participer à mon projet de recherche. Ceci est fortement apprécié.

Cordialement,
Samuel Dubois, Université McGill.

APPENDIX C – Informed Written Consent Sample

Project Title: Reviving French Military Archives: A Study of Ethnic Minority Depictions in Northern Colonial Vietnamese Borderlands.

Research Description: This project aims to critically analyze the production of French colonial archives in Tonkin, Indochina, and interpret their usefulness for contemporary social researchers. First, I use a critical discourse analysis approach as a methodological framework in order to evaluate the general context wherein the aforementioned archives were written, determine why they were created and by who, and assess what was produced in them. Second, I investigate the extent to which these archival texts are useful and valuable for contemporary research projects by interviewing scholars who have experience with archival work.

Statement of Informed Consent

If you decide to participate in this interview, you assess that you have been briefed on the nature of this research project and have had the opportunity to discuss it with the interviewer. All your questions about the project have been answered satisfactorily.

You know that:

1. Information gained for this project will be used for the purpose of a McGill undergraduate thesis project only.
2. Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary,
3. If you feel uncomfortable with the interview at any stage, you may decline to answer any questions.
4. You may end the interview at any time and/or withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. Information for this interview may be used in the thesis project. You wish your identity to be recorded as:

    _____ You agree to have your name recorded in the research and in the final thesis.

    _____ You wish to remain completely anonymous.

I agree to take part in this interview and I agree to be recorded.

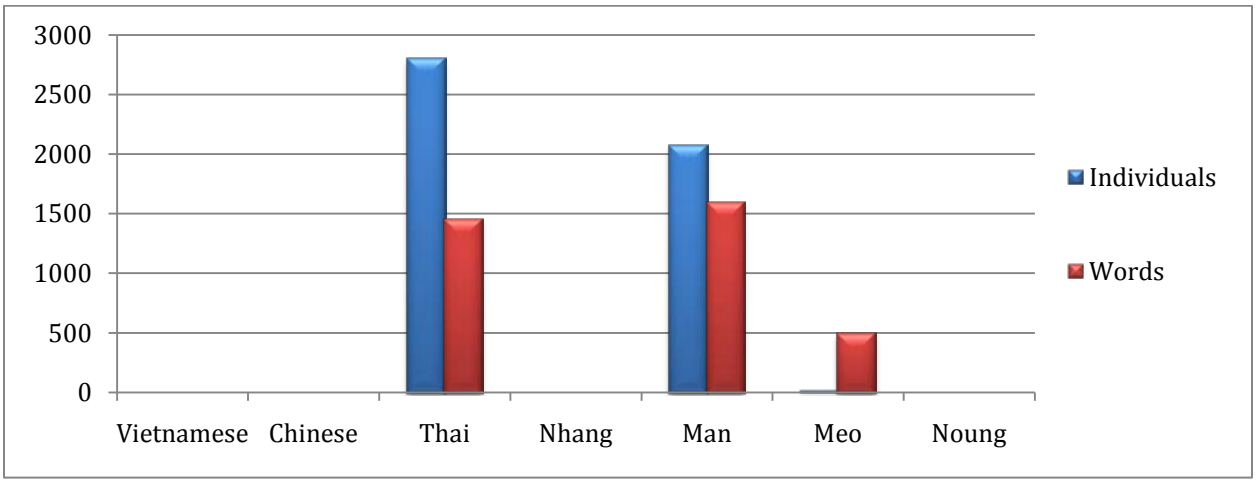
_____ _____

Signature of the Participant *Date*

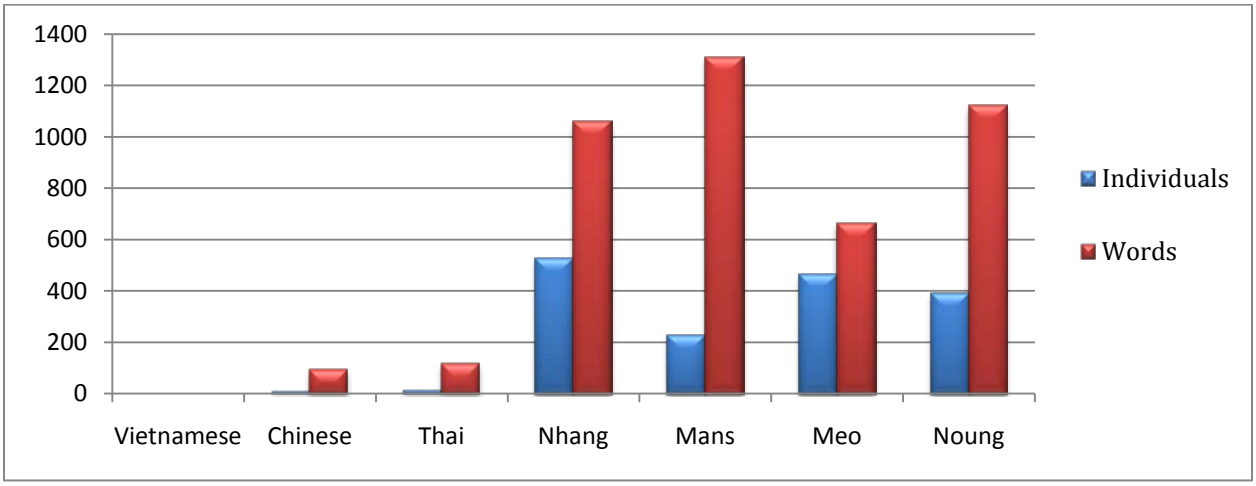
_____ _____

Signature of the Interviewer *Date*

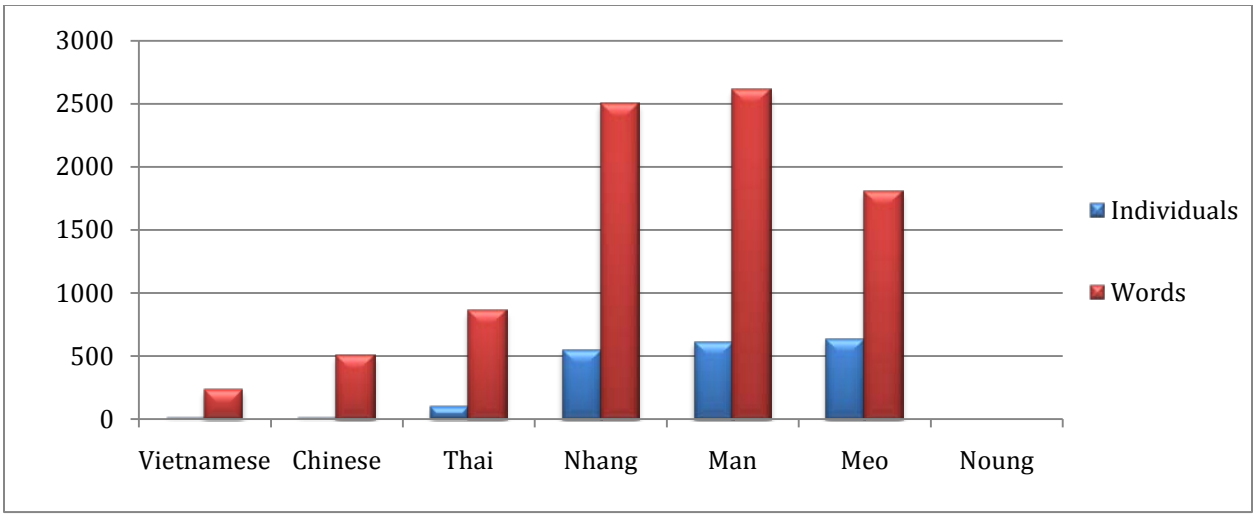
APPENDIX D – Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group per Sector



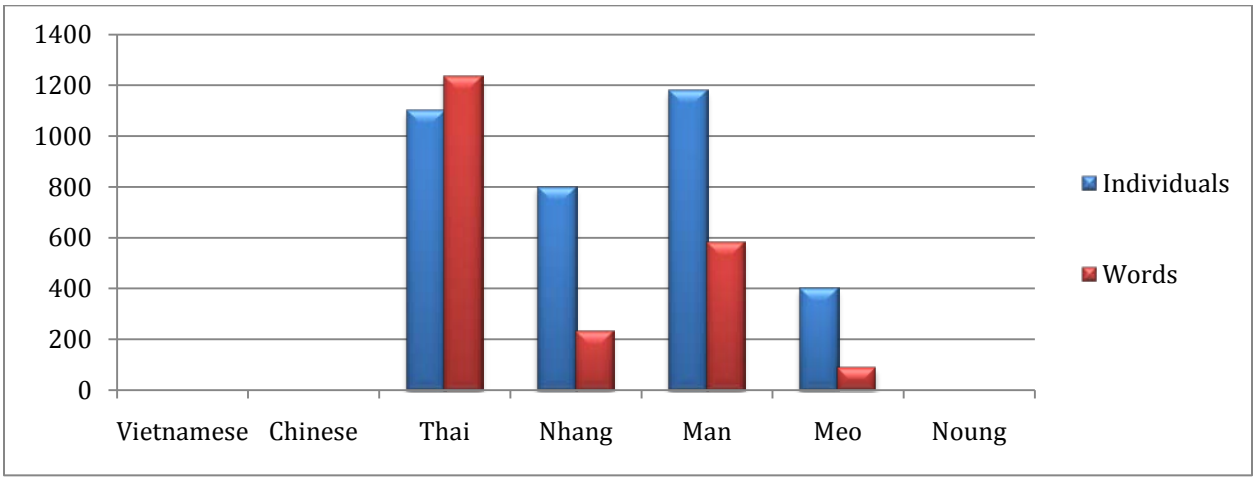
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Ban-Ha Sector, 1903.



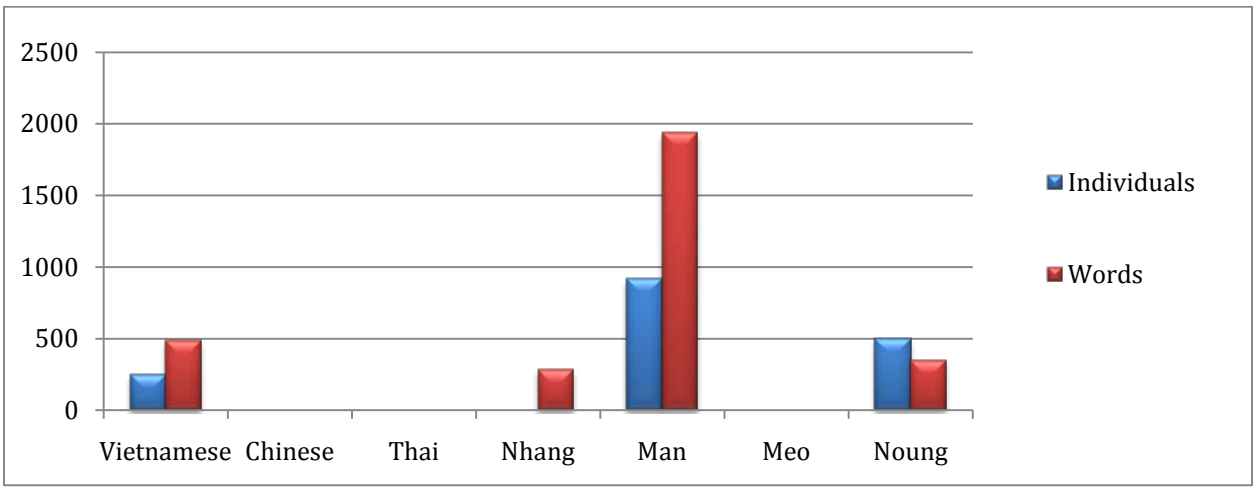
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Ban Lao Sector, 1903.



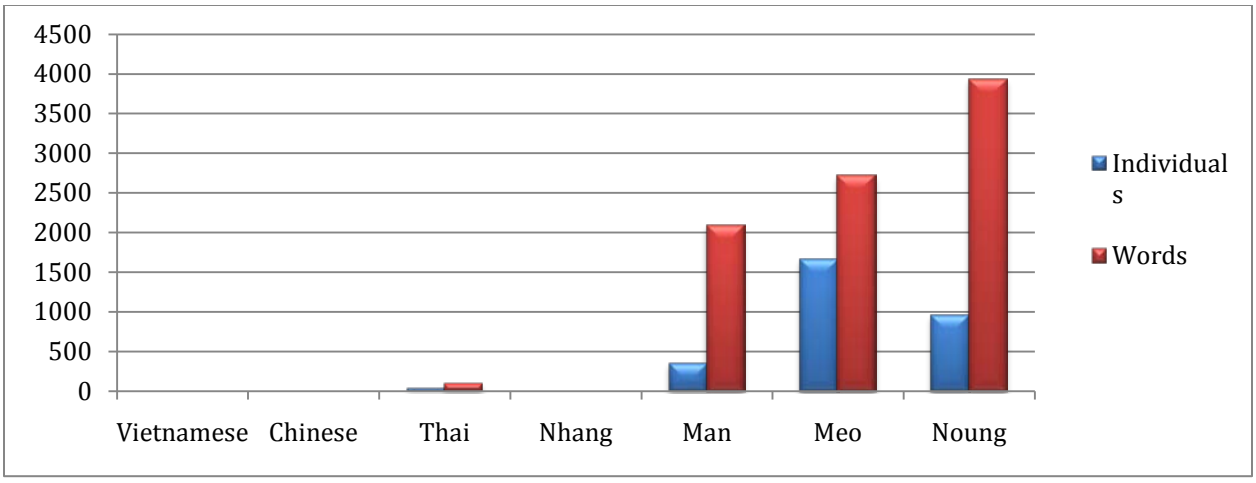
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Ba-Xat Sector, 1903.



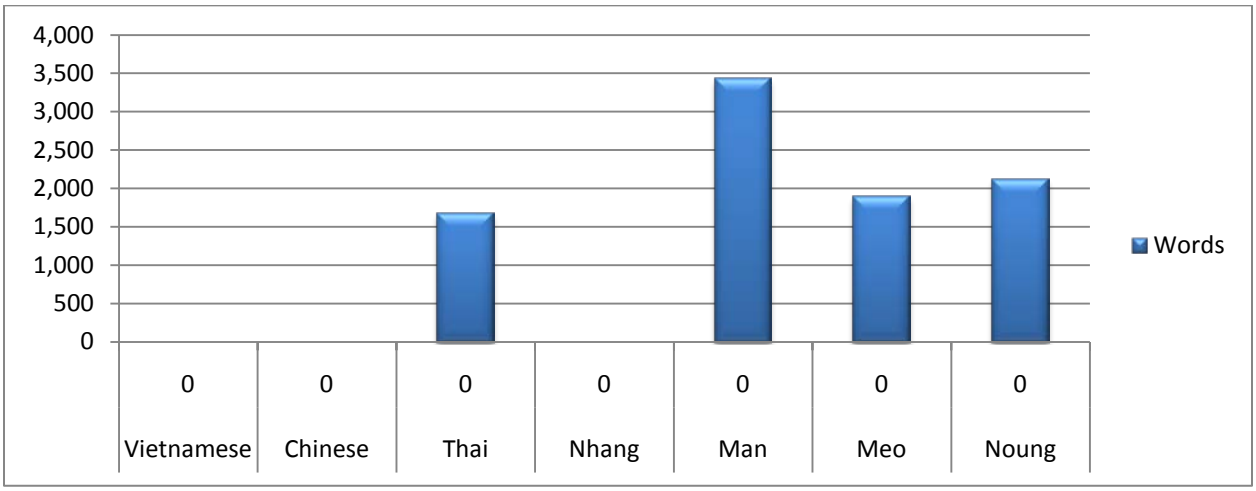
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Coc-leu Sector, 1903.



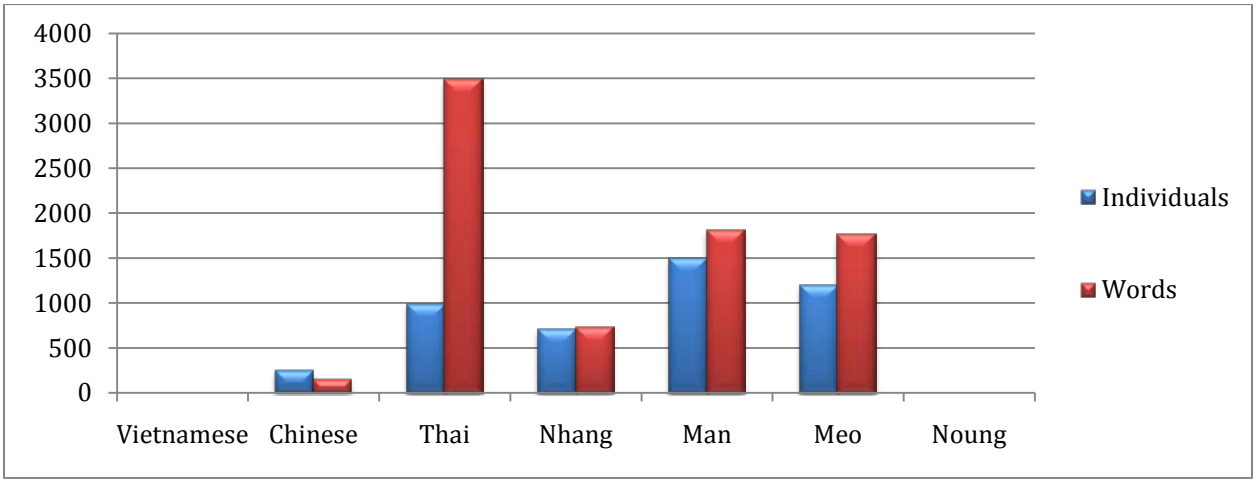
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Luc-an-Châu Sector, 1903.



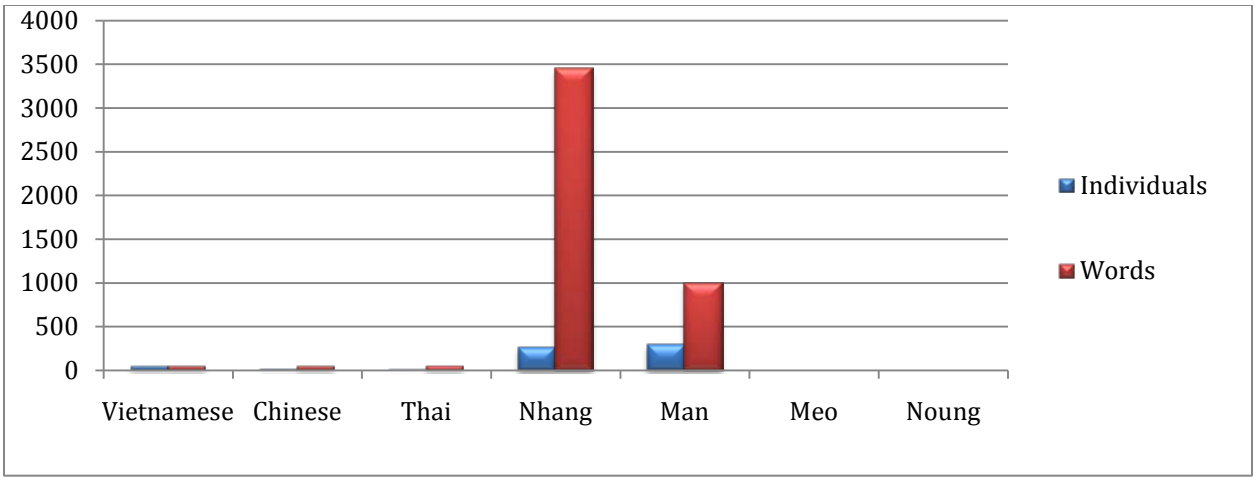
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Muong-Khuong Sector, 1903.



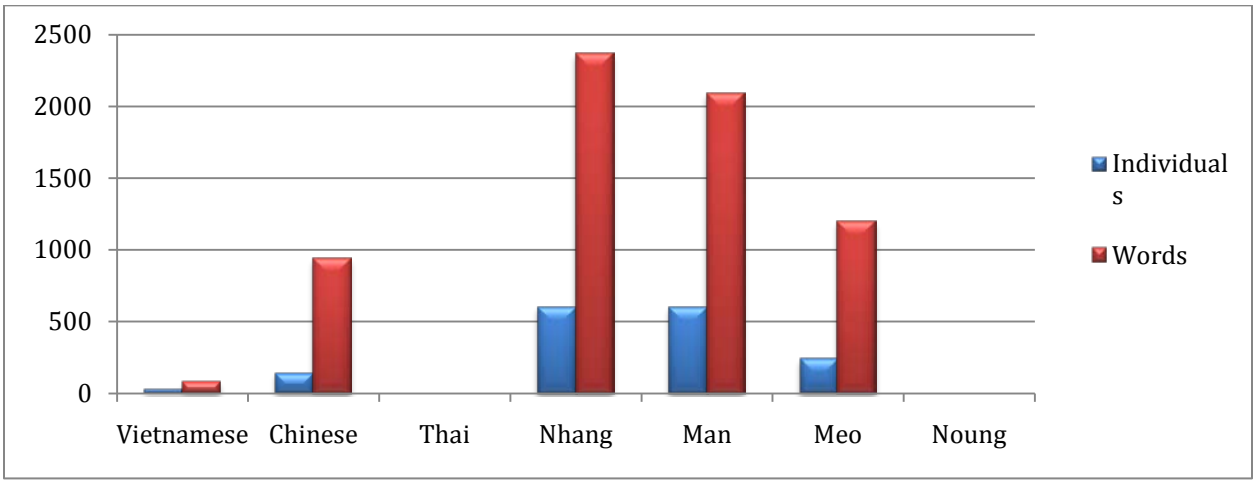
Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Pa-Kha Sector, 1903.



Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Phong-Tho Sector, 1903.



Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Thaï-Nien Sector, 1903.



Relationship Between Individuals and Words Devoted for Each Group in Trinh-Thuong Sector, 1903.

APPENDIX E – Original Disaggregated Data for Individuals in All Military Sectors and Word Count for Each Group

(Part one of three)

1903	Annamites		Chinois		Thaïs		Nhangs		Mans		Pou-Las		Méos		Niang	
	Individus	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*
Bat Xat	Quelques	232	Quelques	506	20 familles	858	547	2501	611	2614	3 familles	150	631	1807	X	X
Ban Lao	X	X	2 familles	94	3 familles	116	X	X	17 familles	1187	X	X	X	X	105 familles	1059
Coc-Leu	X	X	X	X	1100	1237	X	X	1000	375	X	X	400	89	X	X
Trinh-Thuong	30	80	140	941	X	X	600	2368	400	1646	X	X	240	1196	X	X
Muong-Khuong	X	X	X	X	39	98	X	X	354	2083	X	X	1665	2716	X	X
Pa-Kha	X	X	X	X	Tableau	1674	X	X	Tableau	3434	X	X	Tableau	1895	X	X
Phong-Tho	X	X	50 familles	155	990	3485	X	X	1500	1812	X	X	1200	1761	X	X
Thaï-Nien	41	45	16	46	1 famille	51	265	3452	295	998	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bao-Ha	X	X	X	X	560 familles	1454	X	X	415 familles	1593	X	X	19	494	X	X
Luc-an-Chau	50 familles	492	X	X	X	X	X	X	184 familles	1940	X	X	X	X	X	285
Les MÉOS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5626	X	X

(Part two of three)

Noung		Man-Lan-Tien		Miao Tzé		Nyans		Mans-Xaphos		Hunnis		Nhung		Tou-Lao		Poulah	
Individus	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
78 familles	1124	29 familles	121	93 familles	662	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	800	232	180	207	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	200	444	X	X	X	X	X	X	100	939	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	954	3935	Quelques	325	95	269
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

(Part three of three)

Nung		**Nyang ou Yang**		**Koui tchou**		**Ounis**		**Loeus ou Laos**		**Xa**		**Thos**		**Thos Gyaï**	
Individus	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*	*Individus*	*Mots*
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tableau	2119	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	700	726	500	435	100	440	250	397	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Quelques	351	X	X	X	X
100 familles	350	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	400 familles	880	10 familles	205
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X