



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Trust in Intercultural Meetings between Vietnamese and Swedes - Swedish Experiences in The Bai Bang Project

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Acronyms

BAPACO	Bai Bang Paper Company
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam (until 1975)
MoLI	Vietnamese Ministry of Light Industries
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SEK	Swedish currency - <i>krona</i>
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority (until 1995)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (formed through the merger of five Swedish development cooperation agencies in 1995)
VINAPACO	Vietnam Paper Corporation
WTO	The World Trade Organization
\$US	United States currency - <i>dollar</i>

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Author

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"Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate." (Simmel, 1990, cited in Möllering, 2001:404)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on trust in intercultural communication between Swedes and Vietnamese through investigating Swedish experiences in the Bai Bang project - one of the largest aid programs in Swedish assistance history. A historical study including a literature review and individual interviews is employed to analyze how Swedish expatriates experienced trust in meetings with the Vietnamese throughout the project time from 1970 to 1995. The paper has three purposes: (1) To examine problems concerning trust in the project through looking at the chronological events; (2) To examine the major intercultural communication factors that had an influence on these trust problems and the solutions of the Swedes; (3) It also examines how Swedish experiences contributed to the 47 year relationship of the two countries after the project ended in 1995 and Sweden phased out their development assistance to Vietnam in 2013, leading to the two countries starting a commercial partnership in the same year. The aid program was based on the Swedish ethical considerations of the Vietnamese, yet a lack of basic trust in the beginning of the project led the Swedes to many cooperation problems with the Vietnamese. Nevertheless, the tones and limits of Swedish trust changed over the project history thanks to efforts made by both sides, such as the creation of the Bai Bang language and an attitude of "learning by doing," to improve communication. This is therefore one evidence to prove that Bai Bang is not a result of a "leap of faith."

Key words: trust, intercultural communication, intercultural meetings, Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation, the Bai Bang project, Bai Bang paper mill

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Trust plays an essential role in cooperative relationships, and it holds even more crucial significance when it comes to partners' communication in a global context. Studies have been conducted throughout history to analyze trust and cooperative principles from various perspectives such as a semantic viewpoint (Allwood, 2013), health care system (Thom et al., 2004, Egede & Ellis, 2008, Meyer et al., 2008), logic and conversation (Grice, 1975, Davies, 2007, Allwood, 2013), business (Blois, 1999, Solomon & Flores, 2003), culture (Graham, 1985, Heffernan, 2004, Liu et al., 2012), and seek dimensions as well as suggestions to help people from different countries gain mutual understanding and cooperative achievements (Frey-Ridgway, 1997, Hofstede & Bond, 1998, DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000, Lewis, 2000, Lustig & Koester, 2010).

This study investigates the intercultural communication between Swedes and Vietnamese, with a focus on trust in meetings before and after Sweden and Vietnam phased out their traditional development cooperation (donor and receiver) and moved forward to partnership relation in 2013. The mutual achievements and trust developed during the 47 years since the two countries officially established diplomatic relationship was grounded on their first cooperation, the Bai Bang project, in 1969. (Jerve et al., 1999, Blower et al., 1999, McGillivray et al., 2012, Mattsson, 2013, Nguyễn, 2014)

The project is the result of a three-year program of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction aid of Sweden to North Vietnam in 1969 after an unsuccessful effort to carry out a joint Nordic support due to the fact that Denmark and Norway were NATO's members, and Finland wanted prioritize its neutrality (Bjereld, 1998:8). Despite the fact that it was named the most costly (SEK 2.8 billion in current prices) and one of the longest lasting projects (25 years, 1970 - 1995) Sweden has ever undertaken, Bai Bang was regarded as a case of "successful transfer of technology" and of accomplishing the seemingly impossible mission of "constructing a complex industrial venture through development co-operation between a Western state and a communist country in times of war and economic crisis" (Jerve et al., 1999:258, Blower et al., 1999, McGillivray et al., 2012, Sida, no date). Bai Bang is currently one of the largest and most successful paper mills in Vietnam (Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi, no date, Nguyễn, 2006, Bùi, 2015).

1.2 Research problems

In 19979, Norway's Chr. Michelsen Institute published an independent evaluation of "the most controversial project in the history of Swedish aid" - the Bai Bang project, a troubled assistance project which did not reach full production capacity during its 25 year history. Another study on the sustainability of Bai Bang made by the Australian Centre for International Economics also admits such "extraordinary cost overruns" while still noting that the project "carried an extensive set of implicit political and strategic objectives that ensured continued funding" (Blower et al., 1999:165). Both reports were introduced in the same year and reflected Vietnam's socio-economic historical context during 1970 - 1995. Despite the fact that the project was a major achievement in terms of both governments' long-term commitments and is currently one of the

most successful paper mills in Vietnam, they claimed that such development cooperation as Bai Bang would almost never be considered or replicated afterwards.

Various alternatives to the problems are brought up, e.g. the lack of knowledge of local sociopolitical conditions from both the Swedes and the Vietnamese, unsuitable relationship between donor and recipient, poor intercultural communication, etc. SIDA's Director-General Ernst Michanek wrote in his note titled "Nevermore" ["Aldrig mer" in Swedish] when returning from the Hanoi negotiations on the project agreement in April 1974: "How can an aid relationship freely entered into between two independent parties be so full of suspicion? My counterpart talks about friendship but treats me as an enemy." This note was later filed away in his private archive. (Jerve et al., 1999:264-265) The misunderstanding and trust problems that appeared in the first stage of their cooperation led to unforeseen consequences and haunted them in all project phases where the skepticism was manifested in numerous reports.

Even though the situation has changed after over 20 years since the project was phased out and gained impressive attainments, and though each party becomes more aware of globalization itself, the efforts they make to gain mutual understanding in cooperation are indispensable. In 2009, on the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Sweden, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Phạm Gia Khiêm pointed that: "With the common sense and determination of the governments and people of the two countries, we firmly believe that the traditional friendly relations and good cooperation between Vietnam and Sweden will continue to grow steadily towards a comprehensive partnership and to meet the common wishes of people from both sides." (Phạm, 2009) According to Carl Bildt, the first Swedish Prime Minister to visit Vietnam in 1994, "Vietnam is a country with great potential for the future; [...] when globalization is gaining momentum, emerging economies are becoming increasingly important, and our dependence on the outside world in all respects is increasing, we need a Sweden that is more - not less - currently around the world" (Bildt, 2011).

1.3 Aim and research questions

This study aims to analyze trust in intercultural communication between Sweden and Vietnam through seeking answers to the following questions:

- *What problems related to trust did the Swedes encounter in meetings with the Vietnamese in the Bai Bang context?*
- *How might the trust problems be explained through the lens of intercultural communication?*
- *How could their experience help Swedes to build trust and cooperation in contemporary Vietnam?*

It is carried out with the hope to not only support academics studying communication in various areas but also contribute to the development of Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation.

1.4 Delimitations

The 47 year cooperation between Sweden and Vietnam has witnessed a promotion of economic relations and bilateral trade in many areas such as infrastructure, health care, administrative reform, poverty reduction, environment, legal assistance, etc. as well as an increasing number of

Swedish companies in Vietnam. This dissertation focuses on the first project between the two countries, the Bai Bang project, from 1970 when it was initiated to 1995 when Sweden phased out their assistance in Vietnam. Till the present days it is considered "Sweden's most expensive and most controversial development projects," the "largest Swedish development assistance project ever," and the "symbol of Sweden - Vietnam friendship". It is the largest paper mill owned by the state company VINAPACO which was established in 1995 and consists of 28 different units, including 19 forest companies and 2 subsidiaries. (Mattsson, 2013, Nguyễn, 2014, Bùi, 2015, Boström, 2015, Embassy of Sweden, no date, Sida, no date)

This study will investigate trust in intercultural communication between Swedes and Vietnamese in the Bai Bang context, with a focus on Swedish experiences. Due to many political and historical reasons in the context of Vietnam and Bai Bang during 1970 – 1995, the data can be found more in paper based archives than in multi-media forms. Critical perspectives from the Vietnamese side have been little discussed throughout Vietnam's history, and therefore less possible to be referred to in this dissertation.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Research overview

The Swedish - Vietnamese relationship has been marked by promotions in such areas as infrastructure, health care, administrative reform, poverty reduction, environment, legal assistance, etc., and a growing number of Swedish companies in Vietnam throughout the 47 year time. In this context, the Bai Bang project is viewed as a premise for the achievements which the two countries have gained since they officially established diplomatic relations in 1969. It is the result of a three-year program of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction aid of Sweden to North Vietnam in 1969. The unique history of Bai Bang is marked by terrible delays and cost overruns. It did not reach full production capacity of 55,000 tons of paper annually during its 25 year history, which enhanced the skepticism among both those who were involved in the project and the media in Sweden. However, in 1996, one year after the Swedes left Bai Bang, the mill exceeded its designed production capacity of 57,027 tons of paper per year and has continued to increase the production to 100,000 tons per year in 2005. Though Bai Bang is regarded as the largest paper mill owned by the state company VINAPACO as well as a major achievement in terms of both governments' long-term commitments till the present day, this case of development cooperation would almost never be considered or replicated afterwards. (Blower et al., 1999, Jerve et al., 1999, Nguyễn, 2002, Nguyễn, 2006, Mattsson, 2013, Nguyễn, 2014, Sida, no date, Embassy of Sweden, no date)

With the reflection of Vietnam's socio-economic historical context when the project was carried out, scholars such as Berlin (1997), Blower et al (1999), Jerve et al (1999), Phạm et al (1997), Hoàng et al (2002), Nguyễn (2002), Olsen (2008) and so on point out various alternatives to the problems related to trust in the Bai Bang project. A misunderstanding appeared right in the first stage of their cooperation, resulting in unforeseen consequences and skepticism that were manifested in many later periods. Both the Swedes and Vietnamese lacked knowledge of local socio-political conditions, leading to difficult cooperation in all phases of the project. Both sides were not confident of their capacity, e.g. English language skills and project management styles, hence establish an unsuitable relationship between donor and recipient. The Vietnamese political restrictions and caution during the war time also contributed to poor interpersonal communication and trust problems between the two parties.

Through a historical study of literature in English, Swedish, and Vietnamese about the Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation and the Bai Bang project, together with personal interviews with several Swedes and Vietnamese who were involved in the Bai Bang context, this thesis investigates the trust problems that the Swedes experienced in this situation. It will analyze the cultural, historical and political preferences and differences in the ways Swedes and Vietnamese perceived and communicated with each other during the project time that had significant influences on trust. It will also examine whether the Bai Bang context during 1970 - 1995 put the Swedish - Vietnamese relationship in the state of a "leap of faith" due to either too much or too little knowledge about their own and the other.

The theoretical background section discusses two issues consisting of (1) a "leap of faith" and (2) Allwood's (2013) five dimensions of trust. It partially agrees with the statement that there is a "further element" or "leap of faith" (Möllering, 2001, Meyer et al., 2008) which impacts on how

people choose whether to trust others and the extent to which they trust others, but also suggests that human decision to trust can be categorized and established according to various facets of trust.

2.2 A "leap of faith"

The notion "leap of faith" is what Simmel calls a "further element of socio-psychological quasi-religious faith" (Möllering, 2001:404) where knowledge plays little role in people's choice of trust. For instance, A trusts B because A has either too much or too little knowledge about A's confidence and/or B's ability and commitment. If A says "everything will be fine," A is viewed to "live *as if* certain rationally possible futures will not occur" (Lewis & Wrigert, 1985, cited in Möllering, 2001:414). That "further element", or "suspension" in Möllering's word, is "the mechanism that brackets out uncertainty and ignorance, thus making interpretative knowledge momentarily "certain" and enabling the leap to favorable (or unfavorable) expectation" (Giddens, 1991, cited in Möllering, 2001:414).

Welter (2012) claims that a "leap of faith" is a stereotyping/taken-for-granted knowledge about things which allows us to deal with the unfamiliar or unknown, and which can result in either negative or positive experience. It can negatively lead to over-trust, a "willful negligence of risk resulting from over-confidence or naivety" (Goel et al., 2005, cited in Goel & Karri, 2006:480). A further outcome might be blind trust, a denial of evidence for distrust despite the fact that it has been exposed to violation and betrayal (Solomon & Flores, 2001:101). The reason for over-trust and blind-trust can originate from a trustor's confidence in holding too much or too little knowledge about a trustee, which leads to a "complete knowledge or ignorance" that will "eliminate the need for, or possibility of, trust" (Simmel, 1950, cited in Möllering, 2001:406). However, a "leap of faith" is more viewed as the nature of trust that allows people to have positive expectations of others (Möllering, 2001, Swift, 2001, Welter, 2012). "Leaping" across the ignorance and what is beyond knowledge is needed both for people to trust and for trust to help reducing the complexity and uncertainty in social life as well as supporting social systems to function properly (Luhmann, 1979, cited in Meyer et al., 2008:180, Allwood, 2013).

Below we will partly agree with the statement that trust is based on "something other than a focused rational decision" (Möllering, 2001:413) or "partial understanding," (Giddens, 1991, cited in Meyer et al., 2008:179), but also suggest in the next part that there are conditions for trust to exist. This is determined by the interrelation between the trustor, trustee, and trust situation which accordingly creates various attributes of trust. The purpose of this discussion is to help structure and examine the case study of the Bai Bang project.

2.3 The formation of trust and Allwood's five dimensions of trust

2.3.1 Trust is socially constructed

Trust is constituted through the collective and individual sense-making which characterizes human behaviour in relationships (Mayer et al., 1995, Davies, 2007, Welter, 2012). The common sense, or mutual *understanding*, between a trustor and a trustee is achieved when received information is connected with already stored information, and the incoming information is then placed in a meaningful context. The parties experience *lack of understanding* when the receiver

is unable to connect incoming information with stored information, or encounter *misunderstanding* if the receiver does connect incoming information with stored information but the resulting connection is seen as inadequate or incorrect (Allwood & Abelar, 1984). From a semantic perspective, two parties can gain mutual understanding in conversation through adhering the *cooperative principles* which require trust and ethics between them (Grice, 1975, Davies, 2007, Allwood, 1984, Allwood, 2013, Allwood, no date).

Trust is socially constructed because its establishment and existence need to be interpreted within certain socio-historical contexts. In specific social situations, trust is explicitly and artificially manifested in promises and contracts between a trustor and a trustee (Blois, 1999). In an intercultural situation, trust can be built on the common understanding of sociocultural knowledge and matchings of "interactional structure's minutiae based on cultural and sociocultural conventions" (Hinnenkamp, 1999:66). Nevertheless, the cohesive interplay between personal and institutional trust may result in a "social trap" in which mutual trust/distrust can encourage/prevent trust-building (Welter, 2012). This shares some consequences with the previously mentioned over-trust and blind trust.

2.3.2 The trustor and trustee

The formation of trust is exhibited not only in the social contexts where trust is embedded but also in the characteristics, experience, evaluation, expectation, abilities, and morality of the parties involved in it (Khodyakov, 2007). It requires not only (1) A and B share a mutual understanding of what trust is but also (2) A and B have actual experience of working with each other, (3) a slow progress for A to become aware of B's trustworthiness and commitment to A, and even (4) a correct navigation that will not lead B's attempts to build trust to a skepticism of motives and hence to mistrust (Blois, 1999). Therefore, trust is a "firm belief based on experience, qualities such as honesty and veracity and actions, such as justice and strength of a person or thing" (The Oxford Dictionary, 2010, cited in Allwood, 2013:196). It also involves the acceptance and vulnerability of a trustor and a trustee and a belief that each side ethically considers and acts for the sake of the other (Egede & Ellis, 2008, Thom et al., 2004, Mayer et al., 1995).

As trust is socially shaped by human interaction and can result in favorable or unfavorable experiences, one cannot freely trust but instead makes conscious choices (Solomon & Flores, 2001). The decision to trust is made by a trustor with his/her own cognition, need for trust, and previous experience with the trustee. Mayer et al (1995) claims that it is characteristic of the trustor's perspective to have "varied levels of trust for various trustees" (p. 716), which shares some similarity with Allwood's (2013) five dimensions of trust. This means a person can assume different degrees, types, and durations of trust for others. A can trust B because A believes in her-/himself that "it is right to trust" rather than to count on evidence, which is regarded by Solomon and Flores (2001) as self-conscious commitment, a "genuine faith" (p. 93), or what Allwood calls "basic self-trust." Solomon and Flores explain that trust rests in one's interest (p. 95) as one can be "well aware of the risks, dangers, and liabilities of trust" while maintaining the self-confidence to trust (p. 92). A trusts B because A cares about the significance of the relationship with B, and makes efforts to create, maintain, deepen, and restore that relationship. Even under the circumstances in which a trustee B's stated commitment to a trustor A is absent,

A can rely on B's proven capability (Blois, 1999:200, also see dimension 5, Allwood's five dimensions of trust).

The trustor's perspective plays a major role in evaluating the trustee's trustworthiness. Two in three qualities of a trustworthy trustee depend on the trustor's belief that the trustee wants to do good to the trustor as well as adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable (Mayer et al., 1995). We can also notice this in Allwood's (2013) five dimensions of trust. Nevertheless, if A is too confident of his/her knowledge about B, it can lead to the situation where A needs less information and control in the act of trusting (Tomkins, 2001, Swift, 2001, Solomon & Flores, 2001), possibly putting A in a state of "lack of conscious trust" (Blois, 1999), over-trust, or blind trust.

For a trustee B to be trusted, she/he needs several stages to establish a common understanding of what trust means with a trustor A. This requires a certain effort on the part of the trustor, e.g. an acceptance to participate in a trust situation. After that, A assesses B's trustworthiness through learning from the experiences built on trust as well as the trust built on experiences. These experiences consist of A's knowledge about B's competencies, motivations, and contribution to the formation of trust. Gradually, the more they share cognitive frames, the more A becomes tolerant in developing trust in B. Welter (2012)

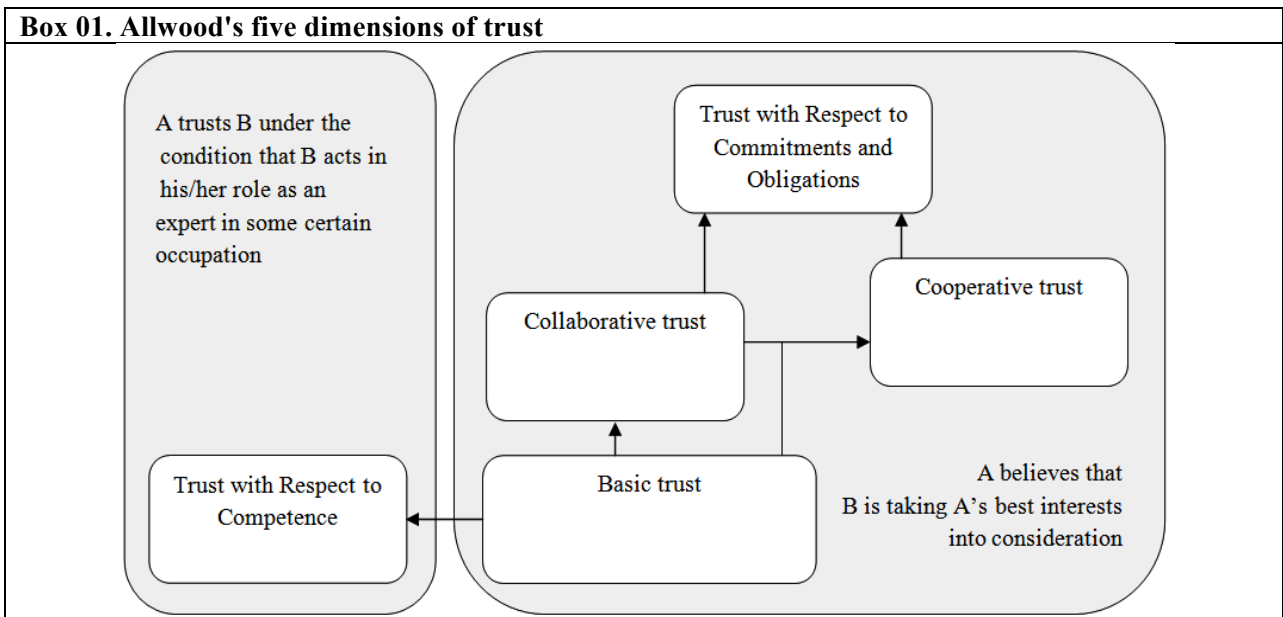
Additionally, a trustee B must manifest a proof of trustworthiness which is based upon his/her own motivation and reputation in a certain trust situation. B's motivation to demonstrate his/her trustworthiness explains if and to what extent B ethically considers the self and/or A's interests, whether and how much B regards the self as honest to A, etc. B's reputation is grounded on B's past behaviour and/or ability to influence A's judgment. If B wants to prove his/her trustworthiness, B must maintain and improve the reputation. B can create a specific context to demonstrate his/her trustworthiness to A's judgment, e.g. B proves his-/her-self as a punctual person by fulfilling the promise to see A at an exact time, which makes A aware of B's reputation. (Mayer et al., 1995, Blois, 1999)

Through analyzing the concept of trust in relation to its fundamental aspects such as the trustor, trustee, trust context, different dimensions and a "further element" of trust, this dissertation restates that trust requires conditions to be established and to exist, also can be categorized in various attributes that determine a person's decision of what, whom, and how much to trust. Even though one chooses to trust through a vague cognition of a "leap of faith" there is still the presence of reasons which are rooted from one's own experience in social life. The context of the Bai Bang project will be investigated by means of a historical study through the lens of intercultural communication to see how the trust between Swedes and Vietnamese is contextualized and manifested.

2.3.3 Allwood's five dimensions of trust

Allwood (2013) investigates trust through its "meaning potential" and proposes the definition: "Trust is a socio-emotional epistemic attitude involving belief/faith/reliance in the expected positive/optimal function/behavior of whom/what is trusted." (p. 193) When analyzing Allwood's five *levels* of interpersonal trust, I call this model "five *dimensions* of trust" as one dimension

does not always need to happen before or after another, even though basic trust is fundamental at every level. In this model, A is the trustor and B is the trustee.



This model can be explained in the following table:

Box 02. Explanation of Allwood's five dimensions of trust

Sense	Dimension	Explanation
1	Basic trust	Refers to A's reliance on his/her own ability and competence (basic self-trust) and/or B's ability and competence (coordinative trust).
2	Collaborative trust	Based on basic trust, A believes that B will adopt and collaborate toward a joint purpose with A.
3	Cooperative trust	Based on basic trust and collaborative trust, A believes that "B takes A into ethical consideration," and that "B treats A ethically," e.g. do not hurt, do not coerce/force, do not lie/mislead.
4	Trust with respect to commitments and obligations	Based on cooperative/collaborative trust, A believes B to be trustworthy (reliable, dependable) regarding commitments and obligations related to A.
5	Trust with respect to competence	A believes that B, besides having normal basic competence (basic trust), is especially competent in some area.

In further meanings, the variability in trust can be dependent on the temporal duration and tasks of trust, degree of trust, and types of trust, and accordingly contribute to the sufficiency and gradability of trust (Allwood, 2013:195-196). We therefore can see that there are conditions embedded in every dimension regarding the role of the trustor, trustee, and certain contexts.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was mainly conducted in Göteborg, Sweden, except for 3 individual interviews made in Borås, Stockholm, and Norrköping together with a visit to Sida in Stockholm. The method consists of literature review of the history of the Bai Bang project (1970 - 1995) and its contribution to the Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation till the present day, together with 11 individual interviews with 9 Swedes and 2 Vietnamese who were involved in the project. All original citations and quotes in Swedish and Vietnamese literature and interviews were translated into English. The reliability of data presented in this paper can be checked through the referenced documents and audio-recorded interviews. One interview was shown in the Appendices as an example.

3.1 Literature review

Conducting historical studies through reflecting on literature was the most essential part in this dissertation. The literature list was divided in 5 categories including perspectives on trust, trust and culture, Study method, Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation, and the Bai Bang context. The documents were written in English, Swedish, and Vietnamese. Books and journals with critical views were more preferred. This table shows details of the literature classification referred to in this thesis:

Box 03. Literature classification				
Category	Total number (59)	English (40)	Swedish (11)	Vietnamese (8)
Trust theories	18	18	0	0
Trust and culture	10	10	0	0
Study method	1	1	0	0
Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation	7	3	2	2
The Bai Bang context	23	8	9	6

Swedish support to Vietnam in the Bai Bang project from the early 1970s to early 1980s mainly concentrated on investments, from the early 1980s to mid-80s on supporting operations, and from then to the early 1990s on supporting environment for paper production (Berlin, 1997). I divided the chronological history of the project in three phases: (1) Planning (1970 - 1974), (2) Construction (1975 - 1983), and (3) Operation within a reform (1984 - early 1990s), to see how the Swedes experienced trust in meetings with the Vietnamese in the Bai Bang context and how this issue could be studied and explained through the viewpoint of intercultural communication. These three periods concerned the paper mill project but also had tight relations to all other side projects of the whole Bai Bang project. This thesis also analyzed the documents which evaluated the Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation after the project was eliminated in 1995, to see how the outcomes of the project and experience of both sides in Bai Bang influenced each country's view of their ongoing relationship with each other.

Besides the documents found in the libraries of Chalmers University, Gothenburg University, and Jönköping University, this paper also used journals on Google Scholar, the media, official websites of the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi, VINAPACO, Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, and so on. Many of the hard copy literature reviewed in this paper were provided by Sida in Stockholm and the VINAPACO in Vietnam.

3.2 Individual interviews

An oral history methodology was also an important contribution to the reflection of the literature review. "Oral history is a method of qualitative interview that emphasize participants' perspectives, and generally involves multiple open-ended interview sessions with each participant" which is now "a multidisciplinary method used in the humanities, social sciences and interdisciplinary fields." It was initially used by anthropologists to study cultural anthropology in specific contexts, and officially credited as a legitimate research method by historians. (Leavy & Ebrary, 2011:3)

3.2.1 The interviewees

The interviewees consisted of 9 Swedes (6 males, 3 females) and 2 Vietnamese men who were involved in the Bai Bang context and experienced themselves the communication with the other party. This included both the people working in the Bai Bang project and those whose living in Bai Bang were financed by the project budget.

Swedish interviewees were born in Sweden and/or had Swedish as their nationality and spoke Swedish as their mother language. Vietnamese interviewees were born in Vietnam and/or had Vietnamese as their nationality and spoke Vietnamese as their mother language.

Most of the Swedish interviewees were contacted via *Bai Bang, Vietnam - Vi som bodde där!* - a Facebook closed group of 512 Swedish and Vietnamese members (by the research time of April 2016) who lived in Bai Bang during the project time. A proposal was sent to the admins and one of them posted it on the group's page for anyone interested in the research topic to voluntarily contact me. Some members connected me with their relatives or former colleagues, both Swedes and Vietnamese, who were also working and even having great influence in the Bai Bang context. 7 interviewees worked in the project, 2 only spent their teenage period with their expatriate parents. The interviews took place in Sweden among which 6 were face-to-face conversations carried out in Göteborg, Borås, Stockholm, and Norrköping, and 3 others were made via telephone/internet calls due to distant locations and time constraints. Language used in the interviews was English for the reason that Swedish interviewees confirmed they used English as regularly as their native tongue Swedish. However, during the interviews several of them sometimes mixed some Swedish and Vietnamese.

The two conversations with the Vietnamese interviewees were made via internet calls as they are both living in Bai Bang. They were recommended by their former Swedish and Vietnamese colleagues in the aforementioned Facebook group. One of them joined the project in its early years, was in several manager positions, and had a good command of English. However, the language used in both interviews was Vietnamese, for the interviewees found it more comfortable to speak in their mother tongue. They requested to view the interview questions in advance.

The following table shows details about the interviews in which the interviewees' name, gender, and some personal data remained as anonymous variables. The number order represented the interview date, from the oldest to the newest, with each interviewee.

Box 04. Individual interview details							
Nationality	Code	Gender		Language		Interview type	
		Male	Female	Native	Interview	Face to face	Call
Swedish	S1 to S9	6	3	Swedish	English	6	3
Vietnamese	V1 to V2	2	0	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	2	0

Other interview data used in this dissertation include:

- a Skype interview with Sigvard Bahrke - Bai Bang Chief Advisor at Scanmanagement from 1984 to 1986;
- an e-mail interview with Dinh Tich who was the Vietnamese Counsellor Chargé in Stockholm from 1993 to 1996, and is currently the Vice Chairperson of the Vietnam - Sweden Friendship Association; and
- a face-to-face interview conducted by Quang Evansluong - PhD Candidate in Business Administration at Jönköping International Business School, with the present Swedish ambassador to Vietnam Camilla Mellander. Quang was also the person who recommended the Facebook group mentioned above to me when I called for supports of information from my Facebook network.

3.2.2 The interview questions

The interviews were conducted based on an agreed schedule with the interviewees and were accepted to be audio recorded. Each interview lasted 2 hours on average, with the same questions in both English and Vietnamese versions, and consisted of 6 parts as follow:

Part I: Personal information about the interviewees including full name, age, nationality, occupation, place of birth, place of living, mother language, other languages and levels of using them, and so on.

Part II: The interviewees' involvement in the Bai Bang project, e.g. the duration of their stay in Bai Bang, their main tasks in the project, their communication with the counterparts, etc.

Part III: Language and communication. The interviewees were asked about the languages they used to communicate with people from the other side, their opinions on communicating through interpreters or a common language, the problems they faced in using languages to converse, whether they were supported to learn any foreign language, etc.

Part IV: Political and historical context. This part concentrated on the interviewees' viewpoints on the contexts of Sweden and Vietnam that could influences their ways of communication with people from the other side, the regular topics they talked about, the problems they encountered and how they solved them, their opinions on whether the communication between the Swedes and Vietnamese has changed during their stay in Bai Bang, etc.

Part V: Intercultural communication aspects. The interviewees were asked about topics such as how they perceived Swedish and Vietnamese culture that could have impacts on their communication with people from the other side, what they liked and disliked about the other's culture, what made them trust people from the other side, the problems they experienced due to

cultural differences and how they solved them, how they identified themselves and were identified by people from the other side, and so on.

Part VI: Level of interest. This part aimed to figure out how much the interviewees showed their interests in the Bai Bang project, and further, the Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation. The questions focused on how the interviewee observed or experienced the changes in Vietnamese culture and its possibility to improve the intercultural communication, and how the Vietnam - Sweden relationship has changed throughout the history. The interviewees were also asked about whether Swedes and Vietnamese could learn from each other for better communication.

3.3 Ethical considerations

All the interviewees were informed about the author, research purpose and process of this study. They accepted their interviews being recorded and their personal information such as name, age, gender, present place of living, and current occupation were maintained as anonymous variables. The data provided by the interviewees only served the research purpose of this thesis. Should the dissertation be published in a scholarly journal or in electronic format online, the author has the responsibility to inform the interviewees in advance.

3.4 Restrictions

While analyzing historical materials, reports, memories and other sources from both Swedish and Vietnamese sides, this dissertation focused more on the Swedish experience and considers the Vietnamese memories as a supplement. This was partly due to the lack of Vietnamese literature, especially ones with critical viewpoints, on the Bai Bang project as a result of the Vietnamese political and historical context during the project time.

The time, location and the use of languages also challenged this study. As this thesis was written in Sweden, the dissertation could not reach the data sources in Vietnam, whereas the poor online archives of libraries in Vietnam made it impossible for this paper to seek Vietnamese academic references. There were more data sources in Sweden, however, most of them were written in Swedish which I could not handle completely. Though the majority of the literature written in English about the Bai Bang project were independent reports or evaluations, many of them were published or even sponsored by Sida, which could affect the objectivity of this thesis. The research scope made it impossible for this study to present more stories or carry out more interviews although people continued to approach me to share their Bai Bang experiences.

Other aspects that might have some impacts on the investigation of this paper included such variables as gender (more males than females), interview languages, types of interview, and personal memories of the interviewees. Data can be found more in paper based archives than in multi-media forms such as audio and video.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before we discuss the results of this study it is important to notice that the interviewees' different involvement in the Bai Bang context can have an influence on their opinions. It was fortunate for this thesis that the interviewees' participation in various professions ranged throughout the project time, in all phases and many significant events, possibly showing an overview of the Bai Bang project's history.

Box 05. Interviewees' involvement in the Bai Bang project ^(*)												
Interviewee		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	V1	V2
Duration of involvement	< 3 years	x							x			
	3 - 7 years		x	x		x		x		x		
	8 - 12 years				x		x					
	13 - 25 years										x	x
Period of involvement	1970 - 1974										x	
	1975 - 1983)	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x
	1984 - early 1990s			x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Manager position					x	x	x	x	x		x	
Accompanying family member		x	x							x		
Mainly used language to communicate with people from the other party	English	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		
	Swedish										x	
	Vietnamese			x			x					x

(*): All the interviewees who worked for the project had their Vietnamese/Swedish counterparts or colleagues. All the Swedes lived in the Swedish camp. S = Swedes. V = Vietnamese.

The Swedish trust experiences in meetings with the Vietnamese are discussed both in a chronological view and via the essentially influencing factors of intercultural communication throughout the Bai Bang context. These discussions about actual issues and interpersonal communication, together with an examination of Allwood's five dimensions of trust, will show that there was a shift in the shades of Swedish trust, and that it is imprecise to describe the Bai Bang project as a result of a "leap of faith."

4.1 Question 1: *What problems related to trust did the Swedes encounter in meetings with the Vietnamese in the Bai Bang context?*

We will now investigate the trust contexts in three phases of the Bai Bang project: (1) Planning (1970 - 1974), (2) Construction (1975 - 1983), and (3) Operation within a reform (1984 - early 1990s) to see the major trust problems which the Swedes experienced.

4.1.1 Planning phase (1970 - 1974)

The prospect of the Bai Bang project was initiated in 1970 when the first Swedish government delegation visited Vietnam to determine appropriate sectors for Swedish aid to help Vietnam recover from its difficult conditions after decades of warfare. Based on the Vietnamese interest in Western technology and knowledge transfer, the two governments agreed to cooperate in the field of pulp and paper production which was one of Sweden's strengths. The first reports on the Vietnamese forest resources were conducted by SIDA - the assigned aid agency, and its

consulting company Jaakko Pöyry. An intergovernment agreement was signed in August 1974, aiming to produce books and publications for Vietnam's education system. WP-System was hired by SIDA as the Swedish project management firm. The Vietnamese side provided manpower, building materials, equipment and services, while the Swedish side supplied goods and services to the project. "Bai Bang paper mill" was an informal name of "Vĩnh Phú paper mill," representing the whole Bai Bang project. (Brauns, 1977, Rehnvall, 1981, Berlin, 1997, Nguyễn, 2002, Vinapaco, 2013)

It was not easy for both sides to reach an agreement. The Vietnamese revealed their limitations in all areas, whereas "SIDA's experience of cooperation with DRV on the project level is limited as well as SIDA's experience of this type of project." (SIDA memorandum in 1973, cited in Berlin, 1997:5) The political - technical conflicts made this five year phase "more typical of negotiations between adversaries than co-operation among partners in a development project" (Jerve et al., 1999:45). The Vietnamese wanted their autonomy to decide the use of the aid. A sense of pride generated by victories against many superpowers during the wars confirmed their confidence in overcoming obstacles. They also stated that the Swedes did not have enough comprehension of the adequate local raw material availability (p. 53, 55).

"On the Vietnamese side, the first leadership was Mr. Vũ Tuân - Deputy Minister of MoLI, had the first negotiation in which I was both the technical assistant and interpreter, to open an understanding between the two sides. Mr. Vũ Tuân affirmed that there were many things which foreigners cannot do but the Vietnamese, once determined, would make it all. After that negotiation, the Swedish side accepted Vietnam's proposal of designed production capacity." (V1)

The Swedes wanted a thorough planning to give the project "a reasonable chance of success," stressing the significance of detailed, exact numbers instead of the Vietnamese "magic numbers." They proposed that Vietnam - as recovering from the war, inexperienced in enormous projects, weak in statistic work - should not overestimate existing forests and must start the planting immediately. However, Swedish "good honest intentions" to minimize risks was seen by the Vietnamese as "intrusive." The prolonged planning due to technical concerns and the American objections to reconstruction aid during the war time was regarded as Sweden's rigidity and unwillingness to cooperate with Vietnam. (Jerve et al., 1999:46, 48, 51-52, 55, 72, Nguyễn, 2003:33, Olsen, 2008:89)

Falk: We do not believe Vietnamese experts can do planning. This is a Vietnamese project but we Swedes should do the planning.

Nghiep: This is a Vietnamese project, hence it must be organised and carried out by Vietnam.

Falk: Do not discuss and argue. You cannot change our mind and position. Your Vice-Minister cannot change the mind of Mr. Michanek.

Nghiep: So even when our requests are rational, you will not change your mind either?

Falk: No." (Jerve et al., 1999:77)

The Vietnamese, while yearning for a friendship project and quick results, showed hesitation in sharing information due to military security. Crucial data were missing in Swedish reports as the Swedes were not allowed to investigate certain forest areas. (Berlin, 1997:2, Jerve et al., 1999:60, Nguyễn, 2002:32) The former Swedish ambassador to Vietnam Jean-Christophe Öberg recalled a rumor spread by Russians that "the apparently insatiable Swedish demand for data on

forests and communication was motivated by interests other than building a factory" (Jerve et al., 1999:58-59). Therefore, "the Swedes were taken aback by the mistrust and tough bargaining of the Vietnamese" (p. 46). Unsatisfactory discussions nearly reached a risk of eliminating the project: "I ask you: do you believe in [the present] data? If not, we will report to our two governments that the investigations in the last few years have not brought results. Our governments can decide whether to continue the investigation." (p. 76)

Politics determined the decision-making even though the scope of the project was interpreted differently by both sides. Swedish humanitarian assistance was monumentalized by the Vietnamese as a political support against America and "a gateway to economic co-operation with non-socialist countries". The "recipient orientation" in Swedish aid policy meant that they should respect the Vietnamese wish depending on local politics and practice. A sense of "cultural sensitivity" (in Swedish: "kulturellt ömhadade") was also required in diplomatic relation where the highest levels of the Swedish side must not bring up the trust issue when the first sign of misunderstandings or unclear intentions emerged. (Berlin, 1997:2, Jerve et al., 1999:7, 45, Olsen, 2008:34, 47)

Hence, SIDA prioritized political issues to approve the agreement in 1974 despite the great concerns for technical matters. Several background documents produced during this period, including the secret-stamped ones about Vietnam's poor material availability, were declassified in 1975 - 1976 and became subject to criticism in Swedish media (Frühling, 1978:11, S6). The agreement required an urgent start (Frühling, 1978, Berlin, 1997:2, Olsen, 2008:89). Jerve et al (1999) claimed that it "overlooked many of the obstacles looming in the way of smooth co-operation" (p. 79) whilst Olsen (2008) thought it was a working paper committed by the two governments on the scopes and outcomes before further steps were taken to develop the "greenfield" Bai Bang where no modern Western infrastructure had existed (p. 89).

What happened in the Swedish mass media?

Most of the debates on Bai Bang were politically dominated by the conservative press and ideology/partisan battles. An eagerness to urgently help Vietnam in the early 1970s was followed by increasing criticisms in 1973 and the "year of storm" 1974. Bai Bang was seen as a link between Sweden and communist dictatorship, betrayal of Swedish trust in humanity, causing an enmity with Russia while reducing the sympathy from the West. It was also argued that Swedish "nasty cynical billion rolling to support communism" could not change the political unfreedom and poor material conditions in Vietnam. However, the media appeared not so neutral by disregarding the Vietnamese perspective and the role of Bai Bang as a project with its own factual issues, hence making it hard for the reality to come into debate. (Frühling, 1978, Frühling, 1984:10 - 25, Jerve et al., 1999:248, Olsen, 2008:47, 54, 58, 89).

4.1.2 Construction phase (1975 - 1983)

The establishment of the Bai Bang project initiated the largest Swedish aid to Vietnam contributed by thousands of Swedes in both the pulp and paper mill project and other side projects. 70% - 80% of the purchases of imported goods were made in Sweden. The Vietnamese inputs accounted for about 20% of the value of the Swedish contribution. In the summer of 1980, Scanmanagement was hired to manage the whole project, while WP-System was still responsible

for the construction and installation process. This period saw a dramatic increase in costs and duration of the project, but the cooperation between the two parties became more efficient. (Brauns, 1977:129, Frühling, 1978:9, Rehnvall, 1981:2, 11, 129-130, Berlin, 1997:19, Jerve et al., 1999: 78-79, 264, Vinapaco, 2013) The Swedes stated that "[...] we should not blame [the increasing costs and delays] on each other but have to take a joint responsibility. [...] We have a common voice." (Phạm et al., 1997:47-48)

The issues of professional and managing competence, and social interactions with the Vietnamese had strong influence on Swedish experience of trust. The Swedes wanted more control rather than remaining in the financier position of an aid donor and letting the Vietnamese perform their aid owner role. The reason was that Vietnam, with an emaciated postwar look, was extremely lacking in everything from material resources to skilled labor. The transportation infrastructure was terribly destroyed after the war. The administration was rigid and bureaucratic. A great deal of equipment was stolen and skilled labor was misused in Bai Bang, urging the Swedish representatives to directly complain to the Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. This was responded by a visit of Pham Van Dong to Bai Bang, suggesting solutions to improve the workers' motivation and even giving all decision-making roles in the project to Swedish leaders. In 1982, the Deputy Prime Minister Do Muoi said: "It is time now for all ministers to make contact with the Swedish project leadership to learn about the requirements for a functional unit." (Jerve et al., 1999:93, 100, 205-208)

SIDA also doubted the ability of both MoLI and Swedish consultants: "The Vietnam group had the authority but not the capacity; for WP it was the reverse." (Jerve et al., 1999:90) SIDA was confused itself about this 'unprecedented sophisticated' project with a great shortage of manpower coordination within the Swedish side. It was blamed by the Vietnamese General Director of the mill Nguyen Trong Khanh for the prolongation of the project. The CEO of Jaakko Pöyry, Magnus Spangenberg, claimed that the unclear responsibility between SIDA, WP-System and Vietnam partly contributed to the delays and cost overruns of the project. (Frühling, 1978:16, Jerve et al., 1999:91, Spangenberg et al., 1999:35) However, the inauguration of the factory in November 1982 contributed much to improving trust between the two sides. The CEO of Scanmanagement said: "[I am] proud to work with qualified people and satisfied with the good cooperation though there were a lot of difficulties in language and thinking." (Phạm et al., 1997:50)

Another trust-related issue was the two parties' lack of social interaction. The project was founded on a vision of knowledge transfer, but both sides encountered a big gap in mentality, education, working styles, language, etc. which created many problems in explaining drawings and work instructions. The "imposed distance, miscommunication, and culturally inappropriate behaviour" generated hostility at the workplace. (Jerve et al., 1999:111)

"The relationship between us and our friends [the Swedes] was problematic: the language barrier as well as different perceptions of issues. On the other hand, our initial assessment and judgment of the experts from capitalist countries was unobjective, our behavior was also biased. These obstacles and deviations were only slowly overcome, causing a lack of sympathy and even misunderstandings between the two sides. This situation made our early cooperation loose, unopened, really directly affecting the work outcome." (Phạm et al., 1997:35)

The Vietnamese war mentality created their suspicion of outsiders. Therefore, in the recruitment process, the Swedes must prioritize candidates with experience in developing-country assignments or professional background from Asia, and certain political personality such as friendly, reliable, and neutral. Non-Swedish international expertise needed Vietnam's permission to be used in the project. Social interactions between foreigners and local people were also limited. The Swedes lived in the Swedish camp surrounded by a fence, with Vietnamese policemen guarding at the entrance. It was meant to protect them from thieves or unsecure situations, and perhaps to also keep the Vietnamese away from adopting the capitalist lifestyle. (Brauns, 1977:132-133, Rehnvall, 1981:10, Phạm et al., 1997:131, Jerve et al., 1999:93, 113)

The two parties sought to enhance communication through the support of a paltry number of interpreters, the counterpart work method, Vietnamese language courses for Swedes, and training courses in Swedish and technology for selected Vietnamese men and workers. However, both the quantity and quality of interpreters and people with a certain command of English could not meet the demand of translating a large number of complex documents and issues. (Brauns, 1977:133, Berlin, 1997:7, Phạm et al., 1997:42, Jerve et al., 1999:110, 272)

What happened in the Swedish mass media?

Criticisms during this phase continued the 1974's ideological struggle but with several shifts in tone. The political battles were supported by debates focusing on the delays and cost overruns, forced labor (yet no evidence was found), and weak cooperation between Vietnam, SIDA, and WP-System. The project's magnitude and related facts (e.g. difficult conditions in Vietnam, the world's severe inflation) were ignored, though the press started to see Bai Bang as a "successful venture" bringing "a golden rain to Swedish industry" after several positive news (e.g. the first paper roll was produced, the involvement of Scanmanagement, etc.) Many controversial topics were disregarded by the non-socialist media after the right wing parties came to power in 1976. There was also little reaction of SIDA to communicate the Vietnamese voice and the pioneering role of Bai Bang in community development. (Brauns, 1977:130-131, Frühling, 1978:11-16, Frühling, 1984:37, 41-44, Pandolfi, 1998:34-36)

4.1.3 Operation within a reform (1984 - early 1990s)

This period witnessed noticeable political changes in Vietnam, especially the foreign policy and the reform program (Đổi mới) that altered the whole economic system, though cumbersome administration remained a massive problem. Vietnam's normalization of relations with many countries in the region and in the West brought it closer to international trade. Bai Bang - one of the most significant projects in Vietnam, also experienced a great operational transform. The factory became a profitable financial entity with autonomy in selling and exporting without the state's command, budget or capital funds. The project also had certain impact on the implementation of the reform (e.g. a pilot cooperation between two different regimes, the communist country was interested in expertise from a 'capitalist' one, etc.). In 1993 BAPACO was established. Its paper production fully met the requirements of domestic and selected export markets, though several fluctuations in the world's paper prices and domestic markets seriously influenced the company's survival. Swedish support during this phase concentrated on operations of the mill and other side projects to help solving local problems including education, training, living quality for the workers, transportation, and environment. The Bai Bang project was phased

out in 1996, welcoming new investments from the world. (Berlin, 1997:8, 10, 13, 19, 23-24, Jerve et al., 1999:197, Vinapaco, 2013)

The trust-related problems that the Swedes experienced during this phase remained mostly in the area of management, but with much improvement mainly thanks to the long cooperation and less complex coordination between the two sides, and the Đổi mới in Vietnam. Swedish experts doubted that Vietnam, with its problematic political system, could manage the project very well when the aid ended. A SIDA memorandum in 1985 stressed the Vietnamese shortcoming of required industrial experience for a continuous operation and the workers' lack of motivation and responsibility. Reliable data on forestry areas was still in question. (Berlin, 1997:9, Phạm et al., 1997:59, 63, Jerve et al., 1999: 200-204)

"Those responsible for fulfilling the mill's requirements for wood report to another ministry than the mill. They will not be affected by the economic, psychological, and other consequences if the mill has to close due to lack of pulpwood. They don't see the mill. They won't hear it when the machines stop. [...] who cares?" (Bai Bang Project Director at Scanmanagement, Sigvard Bahrke, 1985, cited in Jerve et al., 1999:210)

The Vietnamese nonetheless recognized the impressive "Scandinavian management" model applied in Bai Bang which had been unprecedented in Vietnam. They found the advanced knowledge and development of the Western management style attractive, wishing to learn and emulate it to solve their existing weaknesses. The "Scandinavian management" model, with human-oriented principles, aimed to maximize the profits of both consumers and society and satisfy all reasonable social demands related to these activities. In the paper factory, this model focused on economic efficiency, self-responsibility, and anti-bureaucracy. Their exposure to this model brought Bai Bang many achievements till the present day although it did not work well in the early 1980s. (Phạm et al., 1997:74-75, Jerve et al., 1999:193-194, 201)

"The knowledge transfer of SM [Scanmanagement], particularly in the application of the Scandinavian management model in the beginning of the period, encountered big difficulties due to the cumbersome procedures of the bureaucratic central management mechanism, subsidy routines, and rigid regulations of the old industrial management system. [...] SM did not understand this, hence not sympathize with the Vietnamese limitations. On the other hand, the factory could not carry out their good ideas." (Phạm et al., 1997:67)

The Swedish Chief Advisor Per-Axel Sveningsson wrote before he left the project: "Never forsake Bai Bang, the results we have gained are really an achievement. If Sweden lets Bai Bang handle the situation by itself the future can be a gamble." The General Director of the factory Nguyễn Trọng Khánh responded in the end of 1990 when the paper mill achieved an impressive production: "The achievements of the factory proved our belief. It will gradually dispel the skepticism of the Vietnamese capacity and competence [...]." (Phạm et al., 1997:84)

There still existed a Vietnamese doubtfulness of 'suspicious outsiders' from capitalist countries (Jerve et al., 1999: 197-202). Bai Bang was a "political low point" with Western lifestyle of hundreds of foreigners from various nations living in the Swedish camp. The communist party organizations in the project played a crucial role in executing the strict "regulations of interaction with foreigners" (Phạm et al., 1997:129, 131). However, this study found that the problems of social interaction during this period did not appear as serious as in the previous phases.

What happened in the Swedish mass media?

The name "Bai Bang" was still regarded as a fiasco of Swedish development aid, "monster in the rice fields," and metaphor for describing other large and expensive assistance projects. An unfair feature of the press was that they focused much more on such issues as forced labor and explicit technical problems rather than the real conditions in Bai Bang and contributions of the Vietnamese side. SIDA hired a consulting firm and several journalists to produce positive articles about the project, yet the criticisms blamed the Vietnamese for the 'failure' of Bai Bang, and the Swedes for being too optimistic and naive. The theme changed in the early 1990s when Bai Bang gained impressive outcomes without Swedish support. The "uncertain future" project now became a Swedish pride. (Liljeström et al., 1987, Pandolfi, 1998:35-54, Berlin, 1997:14-19)

What we have seen was the establishment and shifts of Swedish trust experiences with the Vietnamese in a chronological view. However, the investigation should be carried out in both horizontal and vertical dimensions of the Bai Bang context, for there were several main factors that influenced the trust situations throughout the project's history. This issue will be discussed more clearly in the following part of this paper.

4.2 Question 2: How might the trust problems be explained through the lens of intercultural communication?

The trust problems that the Swedes experienced in meetings with the Vietnamese were mainly affected by (1) language barriers, (2) political and historical constraints, and (3) different cultural aspects. These difficulties contributed much to growing social tensions between the Swedes and Vietnamese in both the workplace and their living neighborhood. A SIDA memorandum in 1980 emphasized that: "[...] lack of trained personnel, lack of knowledge about Vietnam had hampered SIDA's achievement of objectives [...] our ignorance of history, tradition, political system, the public administration's capacity, not to mention the language, have been the greatest obstacles" (Berlin, 1997:7).

4.2.1 Language barriers

The language barrier was one of the most formidable problems in the Bai Bang project. The project was built upon a vision of knowledge transfer, therefore a confidence in English, the project language, should be uppermost. Regarding Vietnam's conditions where the influence of Chinese, French and even Russians was dominant long before the Americans came there was no surprise that the number of Vietnamese who could speak English was low. This linked to a terrible shortage of qualified Vietnamese interpreters in the project where, according to the 1974 agreement, they were responsible for the provision of interpreters. In 1976, there were only four Vietnamese interpreters together with 60 - 70 Swedes and some hundred Vietnamese working in the project, "trying to communicate in the complicated technical language required by the construction of a modern paper mill." It should also be noticed that many Swedes involved in the

project were not competent in English. Sometimes the training processes were postponed or even cancelled due to language problems. (Jerve et al., 1999:109, 268)

"No one of the [Vietnamese] people working in the workshop spoke English. Some workers knew some Russian but very few Swedes knew Russian. [We had] low level of conversation such as Yes-No, or evaluating by saying Tốt [Good], Không tốt [Not good]. [...] If you have problems you use all the Vietnamese knowledge you know and sign language, body language, or wait until the interpreter shows up. [...] Every time in meetings we needed the only one interpreter [...] who was sometimes absent to support other areas of the project [...]." (S1)

"The number of drawings, work instructions, etc. increases continuously. Every word is translated to Vietnamese. What the result is we do not know. Judging from the quality of the interpreters working at the site and in meetings, qualifications in English are deficient and cause many misunderstandings." (Petter Narfström, Chief Engineer of SIDA during the project consultations in September 1977, cited in Jerve et al., 1999:110)

Scanmanagement introduced the "Transfer of Knowledge" program which was based on the counterpart work method (learning by working together) and formal training which demanded certain levels of communication for effective cooperation. Positive outcomes were recognized in the daily interactions between Swedish advisers and Vietnamese counterparts but not in the formal training where language barriers remained problematic. Language problems were even worse in the forestry site where Swedish experts had to deal with communication with people from different minority ethnic groups who did not speak the national Vietnamese. In a report on the living conditions of the forestry workers carried out by Liljeström et al (1987), the research team had a member with good command of Vietnamese plus the support from professional Vietnamese and Swedish interpreters. Yet communication through the interpreters was still challenging as they had to discuss the Vietnamese linguistic peculiarities and various ways of interpreting and expressing common daily phrases. (Liljeström et al., 1987:14, Blower et al., 1999:75, 101-102, 106, 272, Jerve et al., 1999:243-244)

Reports and articles about Bai Bang recognized the efforts of both sides to enhance the use of English as a working language. It started from a small technical and language training program for Vietnamese technicians in the early 1970s to thousands of Vietnamese attending English (and even Swedish) training in Vietnam and Sweden till mid-1990s. The Swedes added in their recruitment list new categories of specialists such as interpreters and anthropologists which they had never done in Swedish project organization before. Language proficiency was the "first and almost insurmountable" job requirement for the Swedes who applied for manager positions in the project. Vietnamese language training programs for Swedish interpreters were carried out by SIDA from the beginning of 1980s. Vietnamese employees were required to hold such qualities as education, professionalism, and good command of foreign languages. The vocational school aimed to improve English skills for Vietnamese workers. (Blower et al., 1999:21, 72-74, Jerve et al., 1999:109-111, 267-268)

Discussing language problems in meetings with the Vietnamese, most of the Swedish interviewees in this thesis referred to their colleagues in the project rather than to the ordinary local people. However, as most of the Vietnamese employees lived in the Bai Bang area, they can be considered as local people who had interactions with the Swedes out of the work time and

workplace. The following table is a summary of the Swedish response when talking about their use of languages in communication with the Vietnamese, problems caused by language barriers, ways of learning Vietnamese, and opinions on the role of a common language in the project.

Box 07. Interview data of language barriers in communication in the Bai Bang project	
Taxonomies	Interviewee's response
Language of communication	<p>- English was the project language and mainly used, but people also communicated in other languages such as Vietnamese, Swedish, German, and French. Most of the Swedes did not speak Vietnamese and some were even not good at English; whereas the Vietnamese in general did not know English or learn Swedish. Therefore, spoken languages were frequently mixed up with body language, sign language, drawings, tables, etc.</p> <p>- The "Bai Bang language" ["Baibangska" in Swedish or "tiếng Bãi Bằng" in Vietnamese] was a Swedish convention through practical training, covering some 30-40 simple overused Vietnamese vocabularies to be mixed with Swedish or even English for personal communication purposes. Some persons were professional speakers of this language. Even people in the villages around the mill and in Hanoi understood it rather well. Some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A Swedish inspector of work quality had difficulties to explain if the work was good or bad, so he went to Hanoi, printed a T-shirt with simple Vietnamese terms in the chest: Tốt lắm [Very good], Ít tốt [Less good], Không tốt [Not good], Bốc phét [Lying]. He went to work in this T-shirt and pointed on the chest to state his evaluation of the Vietnamese work performance. + Many Vietnamese words were added with some Swedish suffixes to imply word types. For example, when the Swedes wanted to ask someone to wait, instead of saying "please wait" or "en minute" ["one minute" in English or "một phút" in Vietnamese], they said: "một phút-ar". The Swedish word "arbetar" ["to work" in English or "làm việc" in Vietnamese] was changed into "làm việc-ar". + On a duty trip, a Swede wanted the Vietnamese driver stop the car for him to go the toilet. He said: "Xì tốp! Xì tốp! Đi làm việc nước." [Stop! Stop! Go make water]. The driver replied: "Không bia không đái" [No beer no pee], meaning "Give me some beer, otherwise I will not stop." + A Swedish expert wanted to purchase some food in the biggest market in Hanoi, he asked the driver: "Mister biết market một?" [You know market one?]. If he wanted to go to a market where the Swedes usually purchased alcohol, he said: "Mister đi market hai" [You go market two]. + When the Swedes and Vietnamese chatted, they found the Swedish term "ojoj" in Swedish very similar to "ôi giờ ơi" in Vietnamese in both the pronunciation and meaning in expressing emotions.

Communication through interpreters	<p>- Communication depended much on the interpreters but there was a big lack of interpreters from both sides. The Vietnamese interpreters were used as a shared support within the project. Translations made by interpreters from the south were better than by those from the north. However, there were cases where they did not need interpreters, such as communication between people who shared certain level of expertise , or people who carried out designed commands (e.g. truck and car drivers).</p> <p>- SIDA financed a number of Swedes to learn Vietnamese to support the translation. The Swedish interpreters were present in important meetings to double check to ensure the messages came through correctly, but did not make any interpretation.</p>
Problems caused by language barriers	<p>- The biggest problem in Bai Bang was the language. Many misunderstandings occurred in discussing problems, complaining, and explaining special instructions or drawings due to very poor and simple conversation language. Some Vietnamese took advantage of the language barrier to pretend that they did not understand the Swedes.</p> <p>- The communication through the Vietnamese interpreters was not good enough, for they caused many misunderstandings (especially in the early years of the project) and made un-understandable translations. The interpretation problems were caused by both the interpreters' competence and the differences in culture and thinking.</p>
Learning Vietnamese language	<p>- The Vietnamese language preparation courses were short lectures with little study materials, and many of them were limited compared to the actual conditions. Not all Swedes were offered these courses. Their accompanying family members never had the official courses. Those who attended the courses had no further learning in Vietnam due to the decisions of the consultants that SIDA hired in the project. Only a small number of Swedes were financed by SIDA to study academic Vietnamese language to be interpreters.</p> <p>- The Swedes taught themselves some picked-up Vietnamese words and numbers to talk about basic topics through the help of their interpreters, counterparts, and contacts with other local people. Many times they failed to make the Vietnamese understand their pronunciations, as Vietnamese is a tone language with multiple meaning vocabularies.</p>
Opinions on the role of a common language	<p>- It is fundamental to facilitating the knowledge transfer and better comprehension between the two sides. It is also the key to get along with local people and social rules. However, if people are keen on trying to understand each other, frequent social interactions can compensate for the low level of English.</p>

From this table we can see that language barriers were the biggest obstacle in communication in the project regardless with or without the interpreters. This exhibits a lack of basic trust between the two sides when people could not gain their mutual understanding due to poor command of their medium of communication. As language problems were not properly considered by SIDA and its consultants, and in order to solve the matters rising from daily communication, the Swedes created themselves many ways of learning Vietnamese and even invented a better communication tool - the Bai Bang language. It is a manifestation of Swedish goodwill in executing collaborative and cooperative trust as well as enhancement of their communication competence.

4.2.2 Political and historical constraints

Generally, most of the reviewed literature and interview data in this dissertation focused very much on historical and political obstacles when referring to Swedish communication with the Vietnamese. The Swedes, with eighty per cent of the manpower being on their first developing-country assignment, had never experienced such a large project and in the "5th poorest country in the world" (S1) where people had to struggle to survive and knew little about the outside world. The wide gap between two ideologies and development levels resulted in reluctant and unpleasant cooperation. (Berlin, 1997, Pham et al., 1997, Blower et al., 1999, Jerve et al., 1999) Liljeström et al (1987) encountered several trust problems when studying the living conditions of forestry workers in the Bai Bang project (see box 08 below).

Box 08. Studying the living and working conditions of forestry workers

The day that we formally started to visit workers, the Vietnamese presumed that a cadre should follow us and be present during the interviews. When we then sat interviewing a female forestry worker, the Vietnamese interpreter interrupted the conversation by saying - "you do not need to ask her, I can explain our policy to you". And he went on saying: - "The workers are shy and badly informed. She cannot give you the correct answers. The workers do not even know how to talk to foreigners."

- You embarrassed the poor couple by asking them about possessions they did not have. And you did not seem to believe in her answers. That is against Vietnamese customs.
- But you are not a Vietnamese. It makes a difference.
- But it is important for us to have the same information as you receive. I will be very discreet, the cadre promised. Our situation is quite complex. You might need our explanations to avoid wrong conclusions.
- If I wanted to have the correct official answers, I said turning to the interpreter, I would not ask forestry workers. But I want to know what the official policies and regulations mean to them in practice.

But it would take a much longer time before I realized that the cadre that accompanied us really cared for the welfare of the workers and that he in some sense wanted to protect them from our intrusion. I could not easily understand the peculiar impression generated by the foreign investigators' wish to keep their respondents out of earshot whilst asking about topics loaded with political suspicion and lack of trust.

Source: Liljeström et al., 1987:18-19.

The Vietnamese war mentality extremely influenced the cooperation between the two parties, especially in the early years of the project. In a meeting with Swedish experts, the Vietnamese Deputy Minister of MoLI, Vu Tuan, said: "To be frank, there is a war going on in our country. In some places, even Vietnamese are not allowed to pass freely." (Jerve et al., 1999:55) If one important Swedish legacy was trust and openness in dealing with foreigners, the Vietnamese had their "regulations for interactions with foreigners." The Swedish forestry expert Jägmästare Blomkvist wrote about the bad experience in communicating with the Vietnamese authorities when studying the forest areas in 1974:

Box 09. Cooperation between the DRV and Sweden to survey the forest areas for the mill

- 1971 November. Personnel from the Inventory Institute of the Directorate of Forests and the 5th Inventory company started working without our participation. They refer to the pressure of time.

They started in the wrong end (sampling before stratification), and with insufficient training in the new methods. We fear the results will be poor.

[...]

- 1972 February. Several days of discussions with M. Dien, head of the Inventory Institute, about cooperation and methods. It is not enough for us to do desk studies. Norin (the other Swedish specialist) and I were permitted to go into the raw material area and to stay there for several weeks to instruct the Vietnamese and avoid further delays. We were also allowed to "control" (without using the word) the results. A good time – shades of "close co-operation". When we discovered mistakes in photo-interpreting we offered DRV interpreters 10 days training. Offer refused without explanation.

[...]

- 1973 June. Attempts to get concrete discussion of continued inventory of bare areas and additional bamboo areas, but with no results ... Vu Tuan [the Vice-Minister of Light Industry] promises to arrange for me to make an assessment of [the additional] forests. We meet a few weeks later ... but nothing is said about this matter.
- 1973 August-October. DRV specialists say they have inventoried bare areas. It takes me two weeks to pull the information out of them. They present their methods and results very reluctantly. I find their work of doubtful value. Discussion with Truong and Son (of the Directorate of Forests) about principles of "co-operation". Agreement reached on methods for inventorying and the time schedule. The work is done in Ham Yen, but we are not allowed to follow it.

Source: SIDA memo, Skogsinventering – samarbetet DRV-Sverige, prepared by Industry Division/Blomkvist, 5 April 1974. SIDA archive. English translation in Jerve et al., 1999:64.

Even though the Swedes knew about the context in Vietnam and went to Vietnam with a communist friendly perspective, many of them could not stand the Vietnamese rigid regime, bureaucratic administration, state subsidies, corruption, and low standard of expertise that hampered the project process and communication among people. "Communism is very beautiful, but the ideal of it does not exist on this earth. My experience was that people had the same standard of life, but it was bad standard of life." (S9) An interviewee said: "I didn't trust them, but I knew the rules and I had to deal with that knowledge." (S3)

"It is possible to find anyone in this country who doesn't lie? - Sometimes it felt so especially when I had been there for some months. People promise very much and don't fulfill the agreement in the office from the smallest things. They just ignored but I think it was more of a political thing." (S5)

The Swedes were not permitted to walk 2 kilometers from the camp to the mill (Blower et al., 1999:83). The phrase "we were not allowed to" appeared in all conversations with the interviewees when they referred to security restrictions.

"Really heavy controlling system. We were not allowed to talk to the Vietnamese people outside, nothing more than duty tasks. We were not allowed to visit each other. The politics was closed, isolated, did not allow the Vietnamese to have any kind of information from the West, otherwise they got punished." (S3)

The following table exhibits the interviewees' viewpoints on Swedish communication with the Vietnamese under the political and historical constraints.

Box 10. Swedish communication with the Vietnamese under political and historical constraints

Taxonomies	Interviewees' response
Impressions of political and historical contexts	<p>- The differences between Vietnam and Sweden were too enormous. Vietnam had been involved in wars for a long time and their terrible situation shocked the Swedes. Poverty led people to starvation, crimes, thieves, prostitution, etc. The country was closed and isolated from information from the West. Capitalists from the south were sent to the north for political indoctrination. The corrupted system scared and irritated the Swedes, but they learnt about it and to adapt to it.</p> <p>- Bai Bang was criticized for the increasing delays, costs, and especially Swedish support to a communist country. Many Swedes working in Bai Bang were questioning the project they participated in, but a lot of them did not concern much rather than focusing on the well paid jobs.</p>
Communication problems influenced by contexts	<p>- At the workplace, the rigid management did not allow the technical staffs to decide their work without a manager with political power. Though Sweden was a special case in Vietnam's relation with the Western world, their communication with the Vietnamese was still suspected. Many Swedes became irritated by thieves, dishonesty, and the Vietnamese reluctance to share information. Colleagues from the two sides were not allowed to socialize out of work time. The Vietnamese working in the camp were not allowed to be there after daytime.</p> <p>- People needed permissions from the police to visit each other's home, but the conversations can be observed by the security staffs. The Swedes did not dare to communicate to not put their Vietnamese friends in troubles with the police. The Vietnamese were not expected to have close contacts with or receiving gifts from the Swedes. Romantic relationships between Swedes and Vietnamese were discouraged or even banned. Couples had to be very secret if they did not want the Vietnamese partners to be arrested and put into jail.</p> <p>- A fence was built around the Swedish camp to ensure the Swedish living demands, partly to keep the Vietnamese from being influenced by the Western lifestyle and keep the Swedes from having social interactions with local people.</p>
Swedish efforts to communicate	<p>- The Swedes were excited about visiting villages to see and talk to local people, children went out of the camp to socialize with local peers. Coming from a different world, they understood that they had to be careful with the local security, be open and transparent. After some time they gained a special reputation and less difficulties in approaching certain areas. People with open-minded perspective claimed that poverty was not a crime, but the lack of mutual language and fear of having contacts were very problematic.</p>
Vietnamese efforts to communicate	<p>- The Vietnamese were eager to talk rather than staying away from or showing any suspicion toward the Swedes. Their hesitation to talk in the workplace was also explained as their politeness in communication and observance of the state policy of focusing more on the work than other issues. They can invite the Swedes to their place for parties (with permissions). Local people were curious but friendly and gentle, though their ways of following and crowding around foreigners made the Swedes very annoyed.</p>
Most frequent topics conversed	<p>- Topics of the work, daily life, history, culture, etc. were most frequently talked about. Personal topics were limited, and political topics were usually avoided.</p>

We can see from this table that the political and historical constraints had a wide and strong influence on all communication situations between the Swedes and Vietnamese, making it difficult for them to build and have trust in each other. Nevertheless, according to several interviewees the system cannot control people in communicating and having relations, especially in Bai Bang where they needed to interact regularly for better work. The Swedes believed that social tensions became less serious since the mid-1980s and the communication was improved dramatically thanks to the reform program, political transforms, and their long experience of working together. The efforts to communicate made by both sides played a significant role in breaking the ideological barriers and filling the development gap. "I had no problem with the Vietnamese, [...] I said if you go out of Sweden you should take off your overcoat away and start to adapt, [...] take it easy and learn." (S4)

4.2.3 Different cultural aspects

One noticeable cultural difference that had big impact on Swedish trust experiences in communication with the Vietnamese was the problem of theft. A great amount of special parts and equipment that took much time and money for delivery disappeared. Even the big SCANIA trucks were taken away from the harbor and found in another part of Vietnam in later years (S2). The loss of a great deal of raw materials was also recorded. 6,000 meters of imported forming wood were taken away as the workers chopped them in pieces of smaller than 70 centimeters, making them useless for construction, and then bringing home to make food (S4). The Swedes had to build a brick wall around the site to protect the materials. (Jerve et al., 1999:97-80, 161) Things in the Swedish camp were stolen very often. A Swedish expatriate couple firmly stated to their Vietnamese housemaid in her first working day: "No ăn cắp!" ["No stealing" in English], as they had had very bad experience with the previous maid (S7). Another Swedish man initiated a rumor in Bai Bang as he went to the manager of the heavy duty workshop and ordered a one meter long solid steel pipe which was seemingly not useful for any vehicle. He said: "I heard that the Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are a big risk for theft, so I would use it as a baton to bit the thief." (S5) Regarding the persistent poverty in the post-war Vietnam, Bai Bang was a magnet to thieves within and outside of the project, meaning Swedish cooperative trust in the Vietnamese could be in question.

"I had a colleague who was really admired by the Vietnamese working in Bai Bang. He drove his car to his farewell party with them, and when the party ended he went out and discovered that all the light bulbs of the car disappeared. The Vietnamese manager had not been aware of that, so he told my friend to come back the next morning. When he came back there, all the employees were standing in lines saying sorry, and in front of them was a table with all the light bulbs on, and two guys kneeling. Can you see? Only two persons can destroy the project and all our trust!" (S7)

Another culture-related problem in the Bai Bang context was the worker's lack of focus on the work. "In 1982 when the fence around the factory was still under construction, the workers took this advantage to go home doing the farm. They could not work fulltime." (V2) Swedish Project Directors such as Per-Axel Svenningsson and Sigvard Bahrke continually emphasized that the problem of theft and workers' irresponsibility was partly caused by the low motivation they had at work. "They had big personal problems. They had one leg in the factory and one at home, and they relied more on the leg at home." (Skype interview with Sigvard Bahrke, 2016) In the early 1980s, significant actions were discussed, including enhancing the welfare of the workers: "The

most important thing is that living conditions must be such that the worker sees his job in the mill as his main and only job." (Mill Management Board meeting in 1981, cited in Jerve et al., 1999:172-173) A bonus system for task accomplishment for the workers was introduced with two types of gift corresponding to two bonus levels: a bicycle and a cassette player. Swedish media reported that the work process in Bai Bang ran several months faster as the Vietnamese workers worked more productively thanks to the incentives (Frühling, 1984:38-39).

Hostility toward foreigners was sometimes viewed as a Vietnamese culture in the Bai Bang context, though the skepticism and anxiety were more related to the Vietnamese war mentality after their long engagement in the warfare. In fact, the Swedes found that the Vietnamese were friendly, gentle, and generous. The Swedes, with their fair skin and blonde hair, were usually surrounded by a crowd of local people in public places because of the Vietnamese curiosity. Throwing small items at the Swedes was sometimes a Vietnamese way of drawing attention rather than attempting to harm the strangers (Blower et al., 1999, S2, S6). The Vietnamese hesitation in early conversations with the Swedes was to show their politeness (V1). They expressed an unpleasant attitude, and hence even terminated the relationship, if the Swedes directly discussed problems that shamed them, regardless they committed the wrongdoing or not (S4, S5, S6, S7). When studying the living conditions of the forestry workers in Bai Bang, Liljeström et al (1997) showed their interests in the Vietnamese culture (see box 11 below).

Box 11. The Vietnamese versus Swedish culture through the view of Liljeström et al (1997)

The Vietnamese listen patiently when we Swedes tell them what they already know. They support us in investigating a situation that does not reveal anything that is new for them. Maybe they hope that one day the Swedes themselves will understand better.

[...] It is very easy to like the Vietnamese. The innocence and sophistication of the adherence to rural virtues in an old peasant culture and the dignity of people adhering to a relatively well integrated world view, rouses a feeling of nostalgia. The radiation of honesty and hospitality, the deference for age and shrines for the dead parents, the grace and beauty of an ancient-Asian civilization - it all seems unpoisoned by urban indifference and shallowness.

There is something edifying in the "inner-directed" modal personalities, to use a Western label for a character that resists changes during transitional periods - people with strong internalized values, deep commitments and a normative orientation. It is common amongst the Vietnamese to believe in self-discipline and to be ready to postpone personal gratifications and sacrifice for a common cause. Such is the heritage of revolutionaries and patriots.

[...] Do the Vietnamese get much of their emotional satisfaction from public life? They seem to exhibit an emotional appeal that we in our culture reserve for personal relations. We Westerners, tend to take the privacy of strong emotions for granted, while they cultivate a lot of expressiveness in public life and the public interaction with the Vietnamese emotionally engaging and gratifying.

[...] I became aware of the Western tendency to privatize emotions. We might have difficulties in sorting out when emotions are personal and when they are public, when they appeal to an individual and to a collective. We are often not aware of moving in different emotional cultures where the familiar relationships are loaded with different emotional meanings. Our Western conceptual arsenal is not yet well enough equipped to give a fair treatment to non-Western cultures. Very often this does

not even worry us.

In fact, it is so easy to get involved in so many ways that it seems advisable to have some in-depth awareness of the fallacies. When there are things we dislike, we have to guard ourselves against misjudgments. Maybe we should spend more time with those we mistrust and perceive as vaguely/defined enemies. At least we should abstain from jumping from personal feelings of compulsion to hints about systems of forced labor that grows to serious political accusations.

Source: Liljeström et al., 1997: 14, 15, 17.

In this clash of cultures, both sides had certain influence on each other, making the cooperation more effective and the social relations closer. The Swedes stated that people may look different but basically they are of the same mood and needs, hence they tried more to adapt to the local culture. "Taking away the politics, they were calm and kind. [...] don't stress, take it a little bit slower and listen to these people. The Asian thinking is not the way we think and behave." (S7) Sigvard Bahrke said when he was asked about his manners to be trusted by the Vietnamese:

"When I came to the project some Swedish experts were taking advantages of different things there and did not follow the rules. In the first two months I sent home 8 persons [...].In commercial projects people just want to take out as much money as possible and don't bother about people, but in Bai Bang the Swedes had no other motive than assistance. [...] We have to build up trust by sorting out things within our own group. The Vietnamese noticed that we were careful with our own behavior." (Skype interview with Sigvard Bahrke, 2016)

He also emphasized a firm belief in the Vietnamese ability even in a theft situation:

"[...] raw materials were taken from the yard at the mill, so we put up barbed wires around. Two days later the wires were stolen. Some days later we saw for the first time light in the nearby village. Our neighbors had connected by themselves to the electric net of the factory! Some Swedes said it was hopeless to work and give support in a country where such things could happen, but I said: "We have the privilege to work with and train the people who are so rich in initiative, so skilled, so brave, if we see and use these capabilities."

Several Vietnamese characteristics that attracted the Swedes were politeness, collective organization (e.g. the cooperation in growing rice in villages), attention to the past (look back to draw experience before moving forward), patience, generosity, etc. The Vietnamese were impressed by the Swedish kindness, compassion, carefulness, honesty, enthusiasm, punctuality, and so on. Many of these cultural aspects had great impacts on Bai Bang until today (V1, V2). The following table presents how the interviewees viewed the cultural differences in the Bai Bang context in relation to their communication and trust with people from the other side.

Box 12. Interview data of the differences in cultural aspects in the Bai Bang project	
Taxonomies	Interviewees' response
Impressions of culture differences	- The differences were like night and day: one was modern, and one was very poor and underdeveloped. Swedes were industrial people, Vietnamese were mainly farmers. Swedes were one meter people, Vietnamese were half meter ones. Swedes were very serious and exact in everything, Vietnamese culture was very simple and people could easily overlook what they thought unimportant. Swedes were

	<p>straightforward, Vietnamese were sensitive in face and honor. Saying "Yes" for Vietnamese is to show politeness rather than an agreement.</p> <p>- Several Western cultural aspects (e.g. freedom, capitalism, individualism, etc.) were sometimes viewed by the Vietnamese as "a cancer in the Vietnamese communist body." However, the Swedes believed that it took long time for the Vietnamese to get familiar with the presence of foreigners who they were not exposed to before.</p>
Problems caused by cultural differences	<p>- Theft, dishonesty, and corruption were among the worst Vietnamese characteristics. They were ill-organized, unpunctual (one minute can mean 2-3 days), did not keep promises, downgraded the roles of women, had annoying ways of drawing attention or showing curiosity, close proximity, unclear meaning in saying "Yes" and "No."</p> <p>- The Swedes were advised to be modest and never put themselves on a higher level when talking to the Vietnamese, but in fact that manner made the Vietnamese think the matter was not serious unless the Swedes exhibited anger and spoke with strong voice.</p>
Preferred Vietnamese cultural aspects	<p>- The Buddhist and South East Asian mentality made the Vietnamese very gentle and friendly as long as you are friendly to them. Their philosophy of forgiveness and acceptance was stronger than hatred. They were intelligent, foreseen, patient, understanding, polite, calm, sensitive, and very close to jokes and laughter.</p>

From this data, we see that the Swedish interviewees appeared more tolerant when discussing cultural differences rather than political and historical constraints. In reality, they also exhibited an open-minded perspective to communicate with the Vietnamese, and this helped both sides gain more trust from each other. "Living close and working together creates friendship" (Liljeström et al., 1997:16) was proved by the warm recognition of the Vietnamese when several Swedes visited Bai Bang years after they left Vietnam and by many of their close contacts until the present day of this dissertation. Despite the many barriers in language, social constraints, and cultural differences, they described their time in the project as a "fantastic" experience.

4.3 Question 3: *How could their experience help Swedes to build trust and cooperation in contemporary Vietnam?*

Swedish experience in the Bai Bang project had a great contribution to the achievements of BAPACO, living quality of the people working in Bai Bang, and Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation today. However, it is said that both Sweden and Vietnam have not taken the best advantage of the trust and cooperation they have had throughout their 47 year relationship.

4.3.1 Bai Bang after 1995

Swedish proposal in the mid-1980s to exit from the Bai Bang project was carried out in the early 1990s. The last Swedish advisor left the factory site in June 1990, but Swedish support to forestry in the region continued to the mid-1990s. (Berlin, 1997, Phạm et al., 1997, Jerve et al., 1999) In 1993, BAPACO was officially established, under the administration of MoLI. Three years later, the company "attained the legendary goal of producing 55,000 tons of paper annually without any injection of Swedish aid," (Jerve et al., 1999:221) and the workers confirmed to "not to let the country's most modern paper mill deteriorate, otherwise we deserve to be accused and ashamed" (Báo Nhân dân, 1997, cited in Phạm et al., 1997:102).

"While most of the aid projects have been failures in Swedish history, Bai Bang is still working. [...] The project has made it possible for Vietnam to proceed on a commercial basis with the world. Bai Bang skills have been spread all over Vietnam as I was recognized by many people during my trip to investigate potential areas for an investment company. There are rings in the water." (*Skype interview with Sigvard Bahrke, 2016*)

In 2005, BAPACO reached the production capacity of 100,000 tons of paper per year under the new investments. Since 2005, the company became a subsidiary of the state company VINAPACO and is the largest paper mill owned by VINAPACO. Ten years later, in 2015, Bai Bang produced around 100,000 tons of paper and 71,000 tons of paper pulp annually, providing 40 per cent of all copy paper in Vietnam and further being one of the largest toilet paper manufacturers nationally. Yet their export capacity was still limited. The event that Vietnam became the 150th member of WTO was believed to open the export market for BAPACO instead led them to a tough competition with paper producers from abroad. Bai Bang has been longing for new investments to modernize the factory and boost their international competitiveness. (Mattsson, 2013, Vinapaco, 2013)

Discussing the effectiveness of the Bai Bang project, Sida Evaluations Newsletter (1999) commented that the advantages of both sides and the interests of Vietnam were taken into account for a pulp and paper mill project to be carried out. Not only "all official project objectives have been met" but many other side effects and intangible benefits were created for both the Swedes and Vietnamese, such as reforestation, management model, cultural comprehension, personality, and so on. Following is a summary of the interviewees' opinions on the whole Bai Bang project as well as the possible lessons for both sides to learn from to improve their communication and cooperation.

Box 13. Interview data of Swedish opinion after the project was phased out	
Taxonomies	Interviewees' response
Short description of the Bai Bang project	- Bai Bang has been a landmark in the relations of the two countries which is very much built on trust and good intention. Although many things went wrong during the whole project time, but in the end it became a very functional paper mill and an industrial area. A lot of people got jobs and education, learnt about new technologies, and adopted good Swedish influence. The Vietnamese took care of everything after the Swedes handed over the mill to them, exceeding the designed production capacity. The Swedes can now be proud of their good investment in aiding Vietnam.
Following the information about Bai Bang	- After years a lot of the bad experiences became romantic. Swedes cherished their time in Bai Bang although they might not do so previously. Many of them were pretty much updated when it came to news on Bai Bang. They kept contact with their Vietnamese friends and spoke the Bai Bang language with each other. They were recognized and warmly greeted when visiting Bai Bang. A number of them are living in Vietnam and/or working with Vietnamese partners.
Lessons learnt and suggestions for better communication	- There should have been a better planning and studying of the local conditions. A white book about Vietnam for the Swedes who went there to work, intercultural communication studies and facilitation activities, and education and training of interpreters should have been paid attention at the beginning of the project. - Many Swedes isolated themselves in Bai Bang. They should have participated more

	<p>in social interactions with local people to gain more understandings and be more open-minded. They should learn from the Vietnamese in being patient, polite, respectful, and less individualistic. They learnt a lot about ways of working efficiently in a big project (e.g. master plans, time schedules, etc.).</p> <p>- The Vietnamese learnt too much in working with machines, fulfilling high demands and specifications to get the job done. They learnt to be more careful, hard working, organized, responsible, punctual, and exact in the work. They should be more polite, responsible, service-minded, and reduce the hierarchy at the workplace.</p>
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The interviewees' response summarized in this table showed a general positive perspective on the Bai Bang project. They exhibited a certain level of cooperation through the objective views on what should be learnt from and improved in the project. Additionally, when being asked about their opinion on the criticisms in Sweden, the interviewees thought the press was unfair and not neutral, and the journalists were lack of actual experience in Bai Bang. An interviewee claimed that there were two types of Swedes working in Bai Bang: the ideological and the job-focused ones, but they all finally admitted the over-expected success of the project.

"Many of the people of my age said that was a fantastic time in Vietnam. Given the very hard condition at the factory, the project was a big success and today it's still working and even doubled the designed capacity. If you ask middle age people now in Sweden they would say 'Oh, that scandal project,' But I said: 'Wait a minute, it's not a scandal. It's the best ever!'" (S6)

4.3.2 Swedish - Vietnamese cooperation after the Bai Bang project

The Swedish - Vietnamese relation is credited to many aid programs in which the Bai Bang project represents the first remarkable cooperation. An independent evaluation of the long-term development cooperation between the two countries from 1969 till 2011 by McGillivray et al (2012) pointed that during the 47 year relationship built on mutual trust and goodwill, Sweden has "contributed to lifting millions of Vietnamese out of poverty." Vietnam, though being negatively influenced by the East Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and economic pressures, enjoyed considerable growth including a free trade agreement with America in 2000, comprehensive banking reform program in 2001, full membership in WTO in 2007, and graduation to Middle Income Country status in 2009. In dealing with their major concerns for decentralization, anti-corruption, transparency and democracy improvement, the Vietnamese continued to have great supports from the Swedes. From 1999 to 2009, Vietnam received a total of \$US480 million in ODA from Sweden, focusing on such areas as public administration reform, democratic governance, and global development. Their unique relationship exhibited a high level of trust, enabling Swedish participation in sensitive areas in Vietnam such as anticorruption and media sector. In the end of 2013, Swedish development aid to Vietnam was officially terminated, ending the traditional donor - receiver relation between the two countries, offering them more cooperation opportunities as equal partners. (McGillivray et al., 2012:5, 82-85, Mattsson, 2013)

Again, an essential requirement for new types and purposes of business is the old-but-new issue: trust. The Swedish ambassador to Vietnam, Camilla Mellander, stressed the vital issues Vietnam should pay great attention to:

"Some of the small and medium size companies might sometimes feel a little bit discouraged by the corruption in Vietnam. [...] Swedish companies are very unfamiliar with corruption environments [...]. The labor [in Vietnam] is cheaper, but the system is less transparent. There is no rule of law. I think what Vietnam needs to do is to really take a strong grip of the corruption culture that exists here [...]."

"There is pride of a middle income country as not having to have a help from outside, but [...] can trap the situation as a lot of donors are considering and doing the same thing at the same time as we are. Vietnam is not actually making use of all the capitals available at the moment [because] the system is very bureaucratic. [...] I don't feel very worry that Vietnam will be left without possibility of financing further development. They just have to become more efficient on the government side." (*Interview in person with Camilla Mellander, 2015, by Quang Evansluong*)

In today's business cooperation, the Swedish - Vietnamese relationship has witnessed the appearance of big Swedish corporations in Vietnam such as Ericsson, Electrolux, Volvo, ABB, SKF, Tetra Pak, Flygt, Atlas Copco, Frigoscandia, Svedala, Sanvik, IKEA, H&M, and so on. The Swedish telecom provider Comvik presented in Vietnam in the late 1990s to build the country's largest GSM network - Mobifone. The Nordic Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam was established in 1998 and the Swedish Trade and Invest Council - Business Sweden - has been active in Vietnam since 1999. "The mutual respect and confidence that has grown out of Swedish support to Vietnam beginning a few decades ago, is now being transformed into good commercial relationships." (Vietnam Economic News, 1999, Business Sweden, no date)

However, Camilla Mellander emphasized that the modest 1 billion US dollar bilateral turnover is not commensurate with the nearly half-century relation between the two countries. Moreover, the participation of Swedish companies in the Vietnamese market did not appear very dynamic (e.g. mainly in heavy industries, low proportion of small and medium size enterprises, etc.). The presence of Vietnamese firms in Sweden was even more disappointing. An interviewee said: "Sweden and Swedish companies could have taken much better advantage of the good image that they have. I think Sweden lost the real opportunity of not going into Vietnam, not realizing that it would be a very interesting market." (S8) The Vice Chairperson of the Vietnam - Sweden Friendship Association, Dinh Tich, believed that "entrepreneurs of the two countries will soon exploit the cooperation potential to put the economic-commercial ties on par with the good relationship we have built up together" (E-mail interview with Dinh Tich, 2016).

4.4 Examining Allwood's five dimensions of trust

The following table presents how Allwood's five dimensions of trust can be related to the Swedish experiences in meetings with the Vietnamese during the project time. The data mention the Swedes as both trustors and trustees, with experiences of both trust and distrust.

Box 06. The manifestation of Allwood's five dimensions of trust in the Bai Bang context		
Trust dimension	Swedes as trustors	Swedes as trustees
(1) Basic trust <i>A's reliance on his/her own ability & competence</i>	- The Swedes trusted in their own competence and good intentions rather than in the Vietnamese regime and ability in running the project.	- The Swedes were trusted for their competence in expertise, technology, and development. - The Swedes were distrusted in

<p><i>(basic self-trust) and/or B's ability & competence (coordinative trust)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Swedes trusted that the Vietnamese needed their support, their determination of overcoming obstacles, and efforts to improve the quality of local labor. - In the beginning, the Swedes distrusted the competence of both sides in communication and understanding. - The Swedes recognized some achievements of Bai Bang in later periods but still doubted that the Vietnamese could handle the large project by themselves in poor conditions. 	<p>relation to their knowledge of the reality in Vietnam (e.g. raw material availability, the Vietnamese persistence in achieving goals) and experience in handling the progress of a big project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the beginning, the Swedes were distrusted with regard to their language ability to communicate with the Vietnamese.
<p>(2) Collaborative trust</p> <p><i>(1) + A believes that B will adopt & collaborate toward a joint purpose with A</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Swedes trusted the Vietnamese interest in and desire to run the aid, support in initial forest studies for further political decisions, efforts in gaining better communication at the workplace, efforts to manage the project by themselves and to learn and emulate the Scandinavian management model. - The Swedes trusted that bringing motivations to the Vietnamese workers could help improving the work productivity. - Trust and openness in dealing with foreigners is one important Swedish legacy that facilitated collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Swedish ways of planning was seen as 'intrusive' that delayed the 1974 agreement. Yet most of the time they were trusted for their eagerness to start the project, fulfillment of political agreements and signed documents, enhancement of their understanding of Vietnam. - The Swedish counterpart work method was trusted to help improving work performance of the Vietnamese. - The Vietnamese "regulations for interactions with foreigners" restricted social interactions at work.
<p>(3) Cooperative trust</p> <p><i>(1) + (2) + A believes that B takes A into ethical consideration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No data was found in terms of the Vietnamese cooperative trust in the early years. The fence around the Swedish camp was believed to force the Swedes remain inside their community without socialization with local people. - The Swedes trusted that the Vietnamese in general were open, friendly, polite, and more curious than hostile. - Thieves, dishonesty, and corruption reduced the Swedish cooperative trust in the Vietnamese. The Swedes also saw problems on their side as many people took advantage of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Swedes were trusted (even by the highest level leadership of Vietnam) for their goodwill, humanity, enthusiasm to support the Vietnamese. - In the beginning the Swedes were suspected of their motivations for aiding Vietnam (e.g. the delayed agreement process, Russian rumors). - The Swedish lifestyle was believed to have a bad influence on the Vietnamese tradition and culture.
<p>(4) Trust with regards to commitments &</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political commitments determined the trust situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Swedes were strongly trusted to carry out their political commitments and signed documents, regardless the

<p>obligations</p> <p><i>(2)/ (3) + A believes B to be trustworthy based on commitments & obligations related to A</i></p>	<p>- The Swedes distrusted the Vietnamese management system as well as commitments regarding providing enough raw materials, thorough statistics, and skilled labor.</p> <p>- The Swedes distrusted the Vietnamese punctuality and fulfillment of ordinary agreements at work.</p>	<p>storm of criticisms in Sweden.</p> <p>- The Swedes were trusted for their responsibility and punctuality at work.</p>
<p>(5) Trust with regards to competence</p> <p><i>(1) + A believes that B is especially competent in some area</i></p>	<p>- The Swedes distrusted the Vietnamese raw material availability, manpower quality, research competence, administration, management system, honesty and transparency, and ability to run the mill by themselves.</p> <p>- The Swedes finally became proud of the achievements handled by the Vietnamese and trusted that the project was a good contribution to Swedish industry.</p>	<p>- The Swedes were trusted for their competence in paper production, expertise in working with modern technologies and Western management method (e.g. the achievements of the Scandinavian management model), etc.</p> <p>- The Vietnamese distrusted the Swedes in understanding Vietnam's incompetence in working with new technologies.</p>

Swedish experiences of trust/distrust in meetings with the Vietnamese went through changes in all five trust dimensions throughout the history of the Bai Bang project. Initially, mutual Swedish - Vietnamese trust was strong and strongly based on a high level of commitment - political decisions between the two governments and contractual obligations. Generally, the Swedes were trusted more by both sides regarding all trust dimensions, but because of information and communication difficulties there was a mutual lack of basic trust in the early years. The more the project progressed, the collaborative and cooperative trust increased between the two parties played, yet a lack of cooperative trust by the Swedes towards the Vietnamese was noticeable. A certain degree of Swedish trust in the Vietnamese competence started to increase after the second project period ended.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Some of the conclusions of this historical study on Swedish experiences of trust in intercultural meetings with the Vietnamese in the Bai Bang project are:

- a) Throughout the project, the Swedes encountered a lot of communication problems mainly related to political - technical conflicts, dissimilar expertise standards, and different ways of thinking. Among the major reasons for these problems, language barriers played the central role because people from both sides could not communicate properly even in English which was the project language. Political and historical constraints appeared more problematic than cultural differences in causing troubles in meetings between the two parties. Besides contributing to carrying out long-term solutions to socio-economic matters in Vietnam, the Swedes managed to find ways of better communication, especially the creation of the Bai Bang language and an attitude of "learning by doing".
- b) The long and actual engagement of both sides contributed to forming and changing the tones and limits of trust, which became more positive in the later years of the project. There were changes in relation to all trust dimensions depending on different historical conditions. Language was the most influencing factor that both led to and solved the trust problems.
- c) It is inaccurate to describe the Bai Bang project as a result of a "leap of faith" because Swedish decisions to aid Vietnam was mainly initiated through their ethical considerations of the Vietnamese. Though the Swedes believed in their goodwill and competence, and the real conditions in Vietnam were sometimes beyond their calculation, there is no evidence to say that Swedish decisions were based on too much or too little confidence. The term "leap of faith" also fails to represent the actual interpersonal communication in Bai Bang.
- d) The controversial discussions in Swedish media did not have much influence on the Swedes who were involved in the factual context in Bai Bang, partly because of the lack of updated information in 'exotic' Bai Bang, or the fact that Swedish expatriates were more neutral, open-minded and/or duty-focused. A small number of Swedes showed their concern for the success of the project, but their worry was based on problematic facts rather than on the political-based arguments in the press.
- e) Generally, the Swedes had good memories or little problem in communication with their Vietnamese colleagues and the local people. The communication was limited in the early years of the project, with mainly formal meetings or political negotiations and became less limited during the later periods with more social interactions at the workplace and in other daily activities. The "bittersweet" Swedish impressions in Bai Bang imply their interests in the local people and environment but bad experiences with the social communist regime.
- f) Swedish trust experiences in the Bai Bang project made a great contribution to the cooperation between Sweden and Vietnam throughout their 47 year bilateral relation. The shift of their relationship from traditional development cooperation to equal partnership in 2013 laid the foundation for further commerce in numerous areas. A practical understanding of each country's culture therefore becomes more essential in today's business cooperation, revealing a strong demand for training courses in intercultural communication for both sides.

Though answers to the research questions were found, there are some issues which this thesis does not cover and hence become good suggestions for further research, such as a more thorough study of the Vietnamese perspective and experience, communication creativity in dealing with language barriers, intercultural communication in formal meetings versus ordinary work conversations or other daily interactions, etc. Despite several challenges including time and location limitation, the languages used in the literature, and the dominant number of Sida reports, hopefully this study could offer certain facts and ideas to those Swedish and Vietnamese organizations who wish to cooperate with each other. Even though many negative experiences in the project time can become romantic after a long period, the stories narrated by the interviewees can contribute a material for historical studies, and perhaps can also be useful for a few types of publication such as scientific journals, monographs, conference contributions, and so on.

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APPENDICES

1. Research interview questions

Part I: Personal information

1. Could you tell me about yourself?
 - Your full name
 - Age
 - Nationality
 - Place of birth
 - Place of living
 - Mother language and other languages you use. How frequent do you use them?
 - Occupation

Part II: Involvement in the Bai Bang project

1. Could please you describe in as much detail as possible about your involvement in the Bai Bang project? E.g.
 - When and how long were you involved in this project?
 - Where did you stay during your time in the Bai Bang project?
 - What were your main tasks in this project?
 - How much were the Vietnamese involvement in your tasks?
 - How much did you communicate with the Vietnamese?
 - Who did you report to in this project?

Part III: Language and communication

1. In which languages did you communicate with the Vietnamese in the Bai Bang project?
2. What problems related to language did you face in communication with the Vietnamese?
3. Were you supported by interpreters? How much did it help you to communicate with the Vietnamese? What problems did you experience in this way communication? How did you communicate without the interpreters?
4. Did you participate in training/language courses before and/or during your time in Bai Bang? If yes, how much did it help you to communicate with the Vietnamese?
5. Did you learn Vietnamese? How did you learn it? Was it helpful?
6. What do you think about the role of a common language in your communication?

Part IV: Political and historical context

1. What were your impressions of the political and historical situations in Vietnam? How did it influence your communication with the Vietnamese? What were the biggest problems? What did you do to solve the problems? Was it helpful? Why?
2. What did you do to get closer to the local area and people? Was it helpful? Why?
3. Were the Vietnamese open to talk to you? Why? What did they do to get in contact with you?

4. How easy was your possibility to talk to them? Why?
5. What topics were mostly talked about? Why? How did they talk about political issues?
6. Did you think the communication between the Swedes and Vietnamese changed during your stay in Bai Bang? Why? What happened to make it change?

Part V: Intercultural communication aspects

1. What were your impressions of the Vietnamese culture? What were your impressions of the Vietnamese culture? How did it influence your communication with the Vietnamese? Did you face any problem? What did you do to solve the problems? Was it helpful? Why?
2. Please give some examples of the differences between the Vietnamese culture and your culture.
3. What behaviors/habits of the Vietnamese did you like? Why? How did it help you to communicate with them?
4. How did you culturally identify yourself when communicating with the Vietnamese? Why?
5. How did the Vietnamese identify you? Did they keep distance from you? Why?
6. What cultural aspects of the Vietnamese made you trust and/or distrust them? Why?

Part VI: Level of interest

1. How different is Vietnam today? Has it changed and if so how? Can the changes help improve their intercultural communication? What cultural aspects should be improved? Why?
2. What can Swedes and Vietnamese learn from each other for better communication? Can you suggest how to do it?
3. What did you know about the discussions about Bai Bang in Swedish media?
4. How do you know about Bai Bang after you left it?
5. How do you know and think about the Vietnam - Sweden relationship during the latest 20 years?
6. How do you describe the Bai Bang project in brief?

2. Skype interview with Sigvard Bahrke in May 2016

Being the Bai Bang Chief Advisor at Scanmanagement from 1984 to 1986, Sigvard Bahrke with his high-level managerial and political experience played a significant role in the phase-out of Swedish aid in the project.

What was most importance in the phase-out of the Bai Bang project?

You have to start with the aim of how to proceed and how to exit the aid. My purpose was to see how Sweden could go out of Bai Bang in such a way that this project could survive and live under the responsibility of the Vietnamese. There are many aid projects that stop when the assistance ends. No continuation after the phase-out means that the aid is counterproductive, there will be a lot of disappointment and nature destruction. So exit is a key word in aid projects. You should make a successful exit.

The discussions in Sweden were very unstructured. Some said the aim of the Bai Bang project was to supply paper to Vietnam, but I thought it would have been much cheaper to instead send paper to Vietnam. Others said: to assist Vietnamese in management skills and employment. To identify the aim of the project, I talked to the ministers, taxi drivers and everyone about "what is it for?" I noted down what they said, without any argument from my side, and tried to find out some joint interests that can satisfy them all, what motivates and forces the Vietnamese to perform. I put up a form for Swedish withdrawal and for the Vietnamese to go in and take over the project. In the hands of the Vietnamese, the factory produced much more than when Swedish experts were there.

To form the model for exit, I had to estimate when it was good time for the Vietnamese to take over. We knew that many electrical engineers were skilled enough to solve problems, but it was much easier to ask an experienced Swedish expert. So, the model emphasizes that if there is a failure after the Vietnamese have taken over the Swedes should never go back to that. If they keep on calling the experts they would never make the efforts themselves, the project would never be handed over, and all the aid money would go away.

In the exit model, the production flow does not allow for any failure, otherwise the whole factory would stop, the central in Hanoi would say that the Swedes have made a drawback in the diplomatic relationship, the knowledge transfer would fail, the aid would not succeed, the costly aid would be a disaster, the embassy would have to decrease their staff. It has great importance even on political side. Also, the workers in Bai Bang had their lives improved with better income, healthcare, electricity, so they wanted to the factory to continue. The model forced an interest and effort in the Vietnamese to take over the operation, and it was a success.

How do you compare to 'enter and build trust' with to 'exit and maintain trust'?

It's very important to bring up trust. There was a very high level of trust between the two countries. It started with the Social Democrats and our former Prime Minister Olof Palme who was a big supporter of Vietnam. He criticized the Americans in the Vietnam War. It was a basis

to build up trust in the mind of people. I have to be careful and patient in building trust with the Vietnamese, but once people trusted me it was much easier. My counterpart was Mr. Minh whom I still respect very much till today. He has a respect for me as well, so when we discussed there was no hidden agenda. We could be quite open with each other, which is based on trust. The Vietnamese knew that there were no commercial or economic thoughts from the Swedish side. It was a good atmosphere between the two countries.

What did you do to be trusted by the Vietnamese?

When I came to the project some Swedish experts were taking advantages of different things there and did not follow the rules. In the first two months I sent home 8 persons because they had been drunk at work, stolen things, or had women in the camp which was not allowed. They went home, lost jobs and had no tax benefits. There was no tolerance on the Swedish side when we sorted out people, but I had to do it. In commercial projects people just want to take out as much money as possible and don't bother about people, but in Bai Bang the Swedes had no other motive than assistance. After that, during two years I didn't have to send anybody home because they knew and followed the rules. We have to build up trust by sorting out things within our own group. The Vietnamese noticed that we were careful with our own behavior. We had joint aims, and I never found any one who did not cooperate.

Did you trust the Vietnamese ability to accomplish their tasks?

We did, but we had to mobilize their willingness to use their competence. That was the whole aim of the exit model. When I came there were many highly skilled engineers and other people in the factory, but they didn't use those skills. The factory was there but was not used very much, many breaks in the production, and not much action from the Vietnamese overcome the difficulties. They just asked the experts to come and solve the problems instead of going ahead themselves. My interpretation was that: they were not rewarded with some extra for efforts but could be punished for a wrong undertaking. In Swedish culture you are allowed to make some mistakes, as long as you make efforts to solve them, but it was not that forgiving in Vietnam. The problem was to bring life into the dead machineries and give the workers some incentives.

Let me give one example. They floated bamboo on the river and to the riverbank for the trucks to carry raw materials to the factory. There were two machineries picking up the bamboo up with a rope from the riverbank. Very often the bamboo moved in the machineries and was trapped there, making the whole operation stop automatically. After a few hours the factory stopped because of the lack of materials. I went out, sitting down having some tea and taking some time to talk to the Vietnamese there. "My grandmother is ill," "My pigs needed to be fed." They had big personal problems. They had one leg in the factory and one at home, and they relied more on the leg at home. I remember there was an investment proposal on my desk that wanted to cope with this lack of capacity by ordering the third pick-up machinery. So I said: "Of course you have to overcome real rules within the law, but let's make a deal. When you have taken up enough the bamboo needed for the factory in a day, you are free to go home." After that, they needed only one machine to bring up the bamboo, the other one was standing still in reserve, the workers could go home when they had finished the tasks, I tore that investment proposal into

pieces and threw them to the waste paper basket. So, if you motivate people to stand their problems you can move mountains with the Vietnamese.

There was great differences in trust among the foreign/Swedish experts themselves. Many had mistrust regarding the Vietnamese possibility to handle the project and take care of it in the future. Mr. P-A Svenningsson belonged to those who were skeptical. I had another opinion, that what we saw of the Vietnamese could be turned into something positive to bring success to the project. For example, raw materials were taken from the yard at the mill, so we put up barbed wires around. Two days later the wires were stolen. Some days later we saw for the first time light in the nearby village. Our neighbors had connected by themselves to the electric net of the factory! Some Swedes said it was hopeless to work and give support in a country where such things could happen, but I said: "We have the privilege to work with and train the people who are so rich on initiative, so skilled, so brave, if we see and use these capabilities. Wow!"

How did your communication contribute to building trust?

We had difficulties in the use of language in the beginning. We used English in Bai Bang, but I spoke some German and French as well, which meant I could meet and talk to people on the technical side who spoke French or German. We had a rough way of communicate in the factory where sometimes everyone in the technical group spoke Vietnamese and I can only use Swedish and a little Vietnamese. But we understood each other quite well with a goodwill and using signs, drawings, and all the words we had. We also had some lessons in Vietnamese and 3 interpreters in the project. During leisure time the interpreter and I went out to markets, buying things and talking to people, and that was interesting.

The problem is not in the language, but the cultural meanings. For example, when we had a negotiation with the Vietnamese everybody said "Yes". After the meeting I talked to my Swedish colleagues that the Vietnamese agreed with everything. I didn't know that they said yes to show politeness. A "Yes" is not a "Yes", it could be a "No". It's a cultural difference because the Vietnamese don't want to upset others.

Can you give some more examples of the cultural differences?

A very good Vietnamese background in the Bai Bang project is that they are good at organization because they have to cooperate in growing rice, and the whole village has to agree on things. They are used to talking to each other, and the one that takes the leadership will organize: now we decrease the water level, now we do this and that. I was involved in a paper mill in Tanzania, but the Africans don't have that organizational skills. They are more individual and not willing to join efforts as the Vietnamese are.

In general the Vietnamese have a great attention to the past. They look back into the mirror because they move ahead, which is not often seen in the Western world. The meaning of time in Sweden is present and straightforward, but in Vietnam is looking back before moving forward. That's good because they have a long culture and experience drawn from it. The Vietnamese are also much more patient to wait, whereas in our culture we want things to happen immediately.

They are very polite, which we did not always notice to behave properly. I invited some Vietnamese government people to a dinner in the guesthouse in the camp. I was inside preparing and waiting, but they never came. It was strange because the Vietnamese were good in keeping time. When I looked out, the whole government group was standing outside and waiting for me to open the door and welcome them in. In Sweden they knock on the door, you come and open it.

What did the Swedes and Vietnamese gain from their experience in the project?

I don't think the Swedes gained so much on the technical or management side, but yes in the personality. The undertaking in Vietnam meant a lot for me personally, for it changed my opinions and views on different things. I gained the understanding for other people, positive perspective when looking at things, and trust of my former colleagues. To many experts Bai Bang was an important part of their lives, with nice relations between the Vietnamese and Swedes. I was hesitant at first but after some time I felt like home in Vietnam.

Do you think Bai Bang is a success?

Indeed, but you don't hear about that in Sweden because the media like to talk about disasters. What is healthy you don't hear about. But now it's agreed by many people who had been involved in the project. While most of the aid projects have been failures in Swedish history, Bai Bang is still working. Until today I still read everything mentioning the name Bai Bang.

Should Bai Bang be paid attention again at a partnership level between Sweden and Vietnam?

It should be, but in a commercial cooperation. The project has made it possible for Vietnam to proceed on a commercial basis with the world. Bai Bang skills have been spread all over Vietnam, as was recognized by many people during my trip to investigate potential areas for an investment company. There are rings in the water. Vietnam is now a developed country that should not ask for aid any more. But they should go away from the state. I believe in private operations. I have seen so many disasters with politicians and civil servants running operations without having the skills needed in the open market.

What knowledge should they have about each other to gain more trust in today 's cooperation?

They should know the cultural differences, the different ways to look on things. Our experience in Bai Bang results in a commercial basis today where many Swedish operations are successful in Vietnam, many Swedes engaged in the project are still working and living in Hanoi as travel agencies, interpreters and so on. There was a lot to do in the project, but we could have done more for better intercultural communication./.

3. History of Bai Bang project: some milestones

1969	Vietnamese delegation visits Sweden - discussions about possible Swedish aid to Vietnam's industrial sector.
1970	Swedish delegation visits Vietnam to determine appropriate sectors for Swedish assistance – preliminary report prepared on potential in forestry sector.
1971	Project alternatives evaluated.
1972	Specific report on Bai Bang project delivered. Envisaged budget of less than SEK500 million for a four year project.
1973	Preliminary work and negotiations on project.
1974	Inter-government agreement signed to implement project.
1975-76	Preconstruction phase.
1977-80	Construction phase. SIDA contribution of SEK770 million (adjusted to SEK920 million to cover higher than anticipated inflation and further adjusted to SEK1055 million to cover increased costs because of delays in purchasing equipment) was for a complete project covering investment in the pulp and paper mill, development of forest operations, vocational training and social infrastructure investment.
1980	Budget estimated to blow out to SEK2000 million.
1981	Commencement of pulp and paper production at mill.
1982	Official inauguration of facilities.
1983	Recognition of the need for input support through independent side projects. – Housing project (to supply mill employees with good quality housing). Budget of SEK55 million. – Transport project (to ensure effective transport to and from mill). Budget of SEK30 million – increased to SEK97 million in 1984. – Vocational training side project. Budget of SEK44 million.
1984	Poor conditions of forestry workers exposed. Additional SEK170 million agreed for forestry component (to create a forestry organization capable of supplying the mill with enough fibrous raw materials in an environmentally acceptable manner). Disbursement of SEK120 million of this conditional on improved working conditions for forest workers and new project organization between the mill and forestry. Additional SEK330 million agreed for mill.
1986	– Specific agreement for forestry component as a side project – plantation and soil conservation project. Budget of SEK40 million. – Additional SEK10 million to support recurrent costs of vocational training centre.
1990	– End of SIDA support for mill and forestry under Bai Bang project. – Withdrawal of Swedish management.
1991	– Project to improve living conditions of forest workers. Budget of SEK5 million. – Ongoing forest support program by SIDA until 1995.
1994	Technical assistance program funded by SIDA (SEK20 million) spare parts (SEK18 million), transport project (SEK10 million), vocational school (SEK4 million) and environmental protection (SEK20 million).
1995	Significant new investment at mill by Vietnamese management.
1996	Mill production reaches planned capacity of 55 000 tons of paper.

Source: Blower et al., 1999:6.

4. Benefits and costs from the project

Category	Benefits	Costs	Reasons for divergence
Inputs			
Logs	Income to forest workers and farmers	Alternative use of resources	Forest workers or farmers may not have alternative employment opportunities
Chemicals	Income to suppliers	Alternative use of resources	Taxes or subsidies or quantity restrictions
Imported pulp		Foreign exchange	
Workers	Income (wages)	Opportunity cost of time, that is, employment elsewhere	Lack of employment opportunities. The donated capital (mill) and associated training may increase the marginal product of labour and so allow higher wages than otherwise
Outputs			
Paper	Sales revenue	Resources used to produce paper	Tariff protection. It may be cheaper to import the paper than to produce it domestically
Emissions		Effects on health, farm production etc	Not counted in mill costs except in cases where compensation has been paid
Converters	Income	Opportunity costs	Lack of alternative opportunities
Taxes	Government revenue	Cost to the mill	Government provision of public goods elsewhere in the economy
Other effects			
Training schools	Higher skills for workers	Opportunity costs of time and resources	Potential public good
Worker amenities	Services to workers	Cost to mill	Potential public good
Maintenance team	Services to township	Cost to mill	Potential public good
Hillside rehabilitation	Allows agricultural production to increase		Benefits not counted in mill revenues
Management system	System adopted elsewhere in Vietnam	Cost of training	Public good

Source: Blower *et al.*, 1999:117.

5. Evaluation of project objectives

1973

Initial overriding objective

To satisfy the country's demand for paper from domestic production by expanding the existing paper industry

Project objectives

- Investment in a pulp and paper industry
- Development of forestry activities, harvesting and transport
- Development of social infrastructure such as housing, roads and dispensaries

Subsequent objectives

Main project

1980

- Align all parts of the mill and put them into production
- Establish a Vietnamese organisation able to run the mill independently

1983

Overriding objective

- Raise the standard of living in Vietnam by increasing the supply of paper, mainly for educational purposes

Project objectives

- Complete investment phase and start operations
- Improve conditions so that Vietnam can run the operation independently in a rational, smooth and viable manner, and thereby slowly increase its production of paper

Side projects

Housing project

- Supply employees with housing of good Vietnamese standard

Training project

- Prepare Vietnamese labour for employment at the mill

Transport project

- Ensure transport facilities to and from the project

- 1984** *Overriding objective*
- Through production of paper mainly for educational purposes, contribute to an increased standard of living

Project objectives

- Create feasible conditions for sustainable operations by Vietnamese management
- Create forestry organisation capable of supplying mill with enough fibrous raw material in an environmentally acceptable manner

1986

Soil and conservation project

- Ensure raw material supply to mill
- Maintain ecological balance
- Engage population in forestry to increase firewood supplies

Training project

- Ensure availability of operational and maintenance personnel with basic education at level appropriate for modern processing industry

1991

Technical Assistance Program

- Assist Bai Bang Paper Company in its transition to a free market economy

Source: Blower et al., 1999:144.