



Research Report

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Continuity and Change in
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Abstract

We examine trends in premarital sexual behavior in the Red River Delta and Ho Chi Minh city and surrounding environs in Vietnam using data collected in 2003-2004 from men and women married during three different periods in Vietnamese history. We also describe levels of premarital sex by type of sexual partner (spouse or non-spouse) and with whom individuals first have sex. The recent increases in premarital sex among men in the Red River Delta have led to convergence in the levels of premarital sex between northern and southern Vietnam, although there are important regional differences in whether men have sex before marriage with someone other than their future wife. Women are considerably less likely to report having had premarital sex than men. The findings are compared to those from other recent surveys conducted in Vietnam, and their implications for the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the measurement of related behaviors in surveys are considered.

INTRODUCTION

As the AIDS epidemic continues to spread across Asia, there is growing concern about increases in risky sexual activity among young people. Such concerns are prominent in Vietnam, where the market reforms initiated in the late 1980's (*doi moi*) have introduced a variety of new media and consumer culture from abroad and encouraged migration to urban areas among younger individuals (Dang et al 1997; Marr 1993). This is argued to have led to an increase in sexual permissiveness, sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancies, and abortion among adolescents (e.g. Haub and Huong 2003; Khuat 2003; Pham 2004). Since 1993, the number of new persons infected with HIV in Vietnam has increased rapidly (Nguyen, Nguyen and Trinh 2004). Systematic information on changes in the levels and characteristics of premarital sexual activity in Vietnam is valuable for providing an informed understanding of the implications of social and economic change for premarital sexual behavior and its potential role in contributing to the AIDS epidemic.

To our knowledge, this is the first study to document trends in premarital sexual activity using data that span northern and southern Vietnam and cover the premarital sexual experience of individuals who came of age during different periods in Vietnamese history prior to and after the *doi moi* period. In addition to a lack of reliable evidence on whether premarital sex is on the rise, there is little information about whether premarital sex occurs within a monogamous relationship and between two individuals who intend to marry compared to sex involving multiple partners that may include commercial sex workers. This is a significant gap in knowledge since the extent to which sex is more casual rather than a precursor to marriage is of clear relevance for the spread of AIDS.

In this analysis, we examine trends in premarital sexual activity based on surveys of married men and women in northern (Red River Delta) and southern (Ho Chi Minh City and surrounding provinces) Vietnam conducted in 2003 and 2004. The data were collected from persons who married during three periods in Vietnamese history: the time of the war with the United States (1963-1971), a period of economic crisis after reunification (1977 to 1985), and a time of economic liberalization and greater openness to the West (1992 to 2000). The information affords a unique opportunity to assess changes in premarital sexual behavior across three marriage cohorts that have experienced significant social and economic upheaval. The study describes levels of premarital sex and sexual initiation and also examines the extent to which premarital sex is restricted to a future spouse or also includes other individuals that the respondent did not eventually marry.

BACKGROUND

Current information about premarital sex in Vietnam is largely based on anecdotal studies of selective convenience samples of youth, or women interviewed in abortion clinics in and near Hanoi (e.g. Belanger and Hong 1998; 1999; Gammeltoft 2002, 2003; Long et al 2000; Pham 2004). These studies suggest that younger individuals are more likely to view sex before marriage, particularly with a future spouse, as more acceptable than in the past. Only two studies contain information about premarital sex based on information collected from representative samples. Using data from a survey of young people age 13 to 22 from five provinces and Ho Chi Minh City, Mensch, Clark and Anh (2003) find that by age 22, 29 percent of men and 16 percent of women have had premarital sex. They conclude that these levels place Vietnam below levels for the developed world, most of Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and other Asian countries such as the Philippines and Thailand. The Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth (SAVY) conducted in 2003 found that among 22-25 year olds in urban and rural areas respectively, 33.4 and 26.0 of men and 3.7 and 3.3 percent of women report ever having had premarital sex (Ministry of Health, Vietnam, 2005).

The AIDS epidemic has spread to all provinces in Vietnam, and HIV cases are concentrated in urban centers such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and contiguous areas (Nguyen, Nguyen and Trinh 2004). The percentage with HIV is also highest among men age 20 to 39 years old, intravenous drug users, and is higher in the south than in the north. HIV has yet to spread to the general population as suggested by an infection rate of less than one percent among pregnant women. There is concern that the epidemic will permeate beyond core high risk groups via men who frequent female sex workers (and/or use intravenous drugs) and who will then transmit the infection on to their wives or other female partners. Such a pattern of transmission has been the main reason for the spread of HIV in Thailand and Cambodia, making this possibility all the more plausible (United Nations Development Programme, 2004; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2004). The HIV prevalence rate among female sex workers in Vietnam appears to be rising and studies suggest that condom use with clients is inconsistent and that many sex workers are also injecting drugs (Nguyen et al 2004; Nguyen et al 1998). This indicates an important need for further information about the premarital sexual behavior of men in Vietnam, particularly casual sex with multiple partners including sex workers, since this places their current or future spouse at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

There are differences in the economic, social and political histories of northern and southern Vietnam that are likely to have important implications for premarital sexual behavior. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam formed in 1945 has had an important influence over both personal and public aspects of Vietnamese life that did not extend to the south until the reunification period.¹ In the South, French rule from 1875 to 1954 was followed by the country's division at the 17th parallel. Both the French occupation as well as the American presence that began in the mid 1960's exposed the population in the south, particularly in urban areas such as Ho Chi Minh City, to Western ideas via education, civic life, music, print media, and consumer goods in unprecedented ways (Taylor 1999; Jamieson 1993). Private enterprise and commerce date back to the start of the French occupation in 1875, and endured during the reunification period when collectivization of farm production was much less successful in taking hold than in the north (Beresford 1988; Taylor 1999). A wider array of information and perspectives in the form of newspapers, journals, magazines and television are found in the south than in the north (Heibert 1996). Accordingly, observers of Vietnamese society suggest that social mores and lifestyles are less conservative in the south (Heibert 1992; Taylor 1999). Commercial sex outlets were also likely to be more common in the south, particularly Ho Chi Minh City, in part to cater to Americans during the war, although many were subsequently closed by the government during reunification. Reliable estimates of the distribution of sex workers across Vietnam are difficult to obtain. Commercial sex outlets are thought to be making a resurgence in recent years and by some accounts there are nearly 50,000 female sex workers in Ho Chi Minh city (Heibert 1996; Nguyen and Wolffers 1994). Taken together, this suggests that premarital sex may be more common in the south than in the north, and that individuals in the south may be less likely to restrict their premarital sexual activity to a partner who is their future spouse. To date, however, there is little credible evidence on how social context has shaped premarital sex in Vietnam.

DATA AND METHOD

The data used in this analysis were collected by the Institute of Sociology in Hanoi as part of the Vietnam Surveys of Family Change. The first survey was conducted in March and April of 2003 in seven provinces in the Red River Delta including Hanoi in northern Vietnam. The second survey occurred one year later in 2004 in Ho Chi Minh City and six contiguous provinces spanning substantial parts of the Southeast region and Mekong Delta. Both surveys used identical questionnaires. The design of each involved a random sample of 1,296 married individuals that was split equally between men and women, rural and urban settings, and the three marriage cohorts described above. A total of 2,592 respondents divided equally into each of the 12 (2x2x3) different cohort-gender-residence combinations are available

for analysis. The sample was also restricted to women who married under the age of 40 and men whose wife was under 40 at the time of marriage. In any given household either the husband or the wife was interviewed but not both. Each regional sample was designed to be representative and self-weighting within each of the 12 categories.

Due to the sampling design, these respondents differ from the overall population of Vietnam. Almost three-fourths of the population is rural; this sample reflects a relatively greater proportion urban (United Nations 2004). Very young married persons are disproportionately omitted because the most recent marriage cohort excluded persons married for less than 3-4 years. If the premarital sexual activity of individuals married for very short durations and adolescents is increasing rapidly, then this analysis is likely to understate the occurrence of premarital sex. Given the many unique features and limitations of the sample, we do not attempt to weight results to make them representative of the Vietnamese population. However, as we note below, the findings for premarital sex among those in the 1992-2000 marriage cohort in our study are similar to those reported among roughly comparable individuals from the recent and nationally representative SAVY study. Thus although our data are not strictly representative of Vietnam as a whole, this finding suggests that our results regarding premarital sex are broadly reflective of the current situation.

In the survey, respondents were administered three items pertaining to premarital sex. First, they were asked whether the first time they had sexual intercourse with their spouse was before or after they got married. All respondents were then asked whether they had sex with someone other than their spouse before marriage. A comparison of these two items provides information on what proportion of the sample had sex before marriage with anyone, with their spouse, with someone other than their spouse, or with a combination of the latter two categories. All respondents were asked who their first sex partner was, where response options were spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, casual acquaintance, and commercial sex worker. We restrict the analysis to the 2,518 respondents married once. Items on premarital sex take on a different meaning for the 74 individuals married more than once who are much more likely to report having had sex with someone other than their current spouse before they married him or her. For example, while 8 percent of those who are married once report having sex with someone other than their current spouse before marriage, 68 percent of those married more than once report doing so and are most likely referring to the fact that they have had sex with their previous spouse.

The collection of accurate data on private and sensitive activities such as sex in surveys poses a number of methodological challenges (e.g. Dare and Cleland 1994; Fenton et al 2001; Turner, Miller and Rogers, 1997). Measurement error that arises from difficulty recalling events is likely to be relevant particularly for the individuals that were married during the war or reunification period. Premarital sex, particularly if it occurs outside of a stable union that will lead to marriage is considered socially taboo in Vietnam (Gammeltoft 2002, 2003). This suggests that in a face to face interview setting, respondents may be reluctant to report sexual activity, particularly regarding sex that is not a precursor to marriage (or even sex that was). Prior studies on Vietnam show that the reported levels of premarital sex among men are between one and a half to six times higher than for women (see Mensch, Clark and Anh 2003; Ghuman 2005; Ministry of Health of Vietnam 2005), suggesting that women are more reticent than men about disclosing their sexual behavior in an interview.

Previous studies on sexual behavior in Vietnam show that the availability of a sample of married persons is likely to mitigate some of the reporting bias, since married individuals, particularly women, are considerably more likely to report having sex before marriage than the unmarried (e.g. Mensch, Clark and Anh 2003 and Ministry of Health of Vietnam 2005 for Vietnam; Xenos 1997 for the Philippines). For example, Mensch, Clark and Anh (2003) find that by age 22, while about half of married women report having had premarital sex, about six percent of unmarried women report doing so. Married women may feel more at ease reporting sex before marriage to an interviewer since, as shown in Table 2, they generally do so with the man they marry.

In several U.S. surveys, despite being self administered and presumably mitigating respondent shyness and embarrassment in a face to face interview, non-response to items on sexual behavior is widespread (e.g. Call, Sprecher and Schwartz 1995; Turner, Miller and Rogers 1997). In this survey non-response is low; less than 1 percent of the sample (N = 20, 12 men and 8 women) did not answer the question on whether they had sex with their spouse for the first time before marriage; most of these (N = 19) went on to report that they did not have sex with anyone else before marriage. One half (N = 10) also did not answer the item on the first person with whom they had sex and the other 10 respondents named their spouse. Since we cannot infer whether these 20 people had premarital sex, they are not included in this analysis. Low non-response does not guarantee accurate responses and instead of declining to answer respondents may falsely deny having had premarital sex. Our findings regarding sex with one's spouse before marriage, for example, suggest that underreporting is a problem among women.

The main focus of the analysis is descriptive. Due to much lower reported levels of premarital sex among women, for the presentation of some results (i.e. those conditioned on having had premarital sex, or the distribution of first sex partner) we restrict attention to men or men in recent marriage cohorts because most observations are located within these sub-groups. For premarital sex among men and premarital sex with a spouse among women, we show predicted probabilities of engaging in each behavior, separately by region and by characteristics including schooling, wealth, urban or rural residence and marriage cohort, where the probability is adjusted for the mean value of the remaining variable set.²

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the distribution of select background characteristics of the sample: years of schooling completed, urban or rural residence, and the percentage that falls below the sample median on a proxy measure of wealth, all by region, gender and marriage cohort. As in the general population, respondents in the Red River Delta attain higher levels of schooling than those in the south (Committee for Population, Family and Children and ORC Macro 2003). In the recent cohort, for example, while 47 and 32 percent of men and women in the north have 10-12 years of schooling, the corresponding percentages in the south are 33 and 23 percent. By design, for each gender and marriage cohort combination, about half of respondents live in urban areas. Consistent with other evidence, within rural and urban areas, a lower percentage of respondents in the south are below the median wealth level, indicating relatively higher socioeconomic levels than in the north (Benjamin and Brandt 2004).

Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who report having had premarital sex by cohort, region and gender. Levels of premarital sex in the Red River Delta show a striking increase among individuals married in the 1992-2000 period. Among men in the most recent cohort, 31 percent report having had premarital sex compared to 7 and 13 percent among the two earlier cohorts. In the south, among men, levels have also risen across cohorts, but modestly so. Premarital sex has historically been higher in the south than in the north, but the recent increase in the north has led to convergence in the percentage of men that have had premarital sex between the two regions. Women are considerably less likely to report having had premarital sex than men in all region and cohort groups. Among married individuals age 22-25 interviewed in the SAVY, 27 percent of men and 13 percent of women report having had sex before marriage (SAVY, original tabulations).³ The SAVY findings are thus fairly consistent with the levels for the 1992-2000 marriage cohort (31 percent for men in both regions and 8 and 12 percent respectively for women) shown in Figure 1.

The top portion of Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents who have had premarital sex (also shown in Figure 1), premarital sex with a spouse, or premarital sex with someone they did not marry. The latter two categories are not mutually exclusive since those who had premarital sex with their spouse may also have had premarital sex with a non-spouse and vice versa. In the north, about 22 percent of men in the post reform marriage cohort had sex with their spouse before marriage. Premarital sex with one's spouse has increased progressively across marriage cohorts. Premarital sex with someone other than one's

future spouse shows an increase concentrated among the most recent cohort where 17 percent of men report doing so. In the south, 15 and 22 percent of men in the recent cohort have had sex with their spouse and someone else, respectively, and the increase across cohorts is less pronounced. Among women, very few report having had sex with someone other than their future spouse, regardless of cohort or region. For the most recent marriage cohort, women are about half as likely as men to report they had sex with their future spouse before marriage in both the north and the south.⁴ On average, the percentage who report having sex with their spouse prior to marriage should be similar between married men and married women. The gender difference on this item thus suggests considerable underreporting of sex with one's spouse before marriage among women. Since the survey did not interview more than one respondent within a household, we cannot directly compare husband and wife reports on this item.

The bottom of Table 2 shows mutually exclusive categories for the type of premarital sex partner among men who have had premarital sex. The results for women are omitted since there are relatively few cases of women who report premarital sex (N = 69), and of the few who had sex about 86 percent do so with their future spouse only (not shown). Given the small number of cases in the pre-1992 cohorts, especially in the north, it is difficult to reliably assess patterns across cohorts for men.

Although the overall percentage of men in the most recent cohort who had premarital sex is the same in the north and south, there are important regional differences in the types of premarital sexual partners. In the north, 55 percent of men who have had premarital sex did so with a non-spouse (regardless of whether or not they had premarital sex with their spouse). In the south, 71 percent of men who engaged in any sexual intercourse before marriage did so with someone other than their current spouse. This indicates that particularly in the south, men who have premarital sex are largely not restricting this activity to their future wife and thus they are placing their future spouse at some level of risk of HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. However, this finding must be qualified by the fact that it is based on the small number of respondents that have ever had premarital sex. The greater importance of sex with a future wife in the north is also highlighted by the result that about 42 percent of the increase in premarital sex between the earliest and most recent cohorts is due to sex with a spouse only, and the remaining 58 percent is due to sex that involved someone other than a spouse (not shown). In the south, only about one fourth of the increase is due to sex with a future wife only, while the rest is attributable to premarital sex that does not involve a future spouse.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the first person that the respondent had sex with among men by region, cohort and gender. The results for women are omitted because virtually none report first sexual intercourse with a man who is not their spouse. In the north, having sex for the first time with one's spouse has declined from being near universal in the pre-reform cohorts to 84 percent of men in the most recent cohort. The remaining 16 percent report that their first sexual intercourse occurred with a girlfriend (13 percent), a casual acquaintance (.5 percent) or commercial sex worker (2.3 percent). The south differs from the north in that pre-reform cohorts are more likely to start having sex with girlfriends and casual acquaintances compared to a future wife. The percentage that report that their first act of intercourse occurred with their spouse has also declined in the south, while sex with a girlfriend has increased to 17 percent of men married after 1991. As with premarital sex, the distribution of first sex partner among men in the most recent cohort is converging between the north and south, and this is mostly due to the recent rise in initiating sex with girlfriends rather than a future spouse in the north.

Table 4 examines more closely the distribution of first sexual partner among men in the most recent marriage cohort who had sex for the first time with someone they did not eventually marry. A caveat is that these percentages are based on a small number of cases. As shown in Table 3, in both the north and south, most men who had premarital sex with someone other than their spouse started out having sex with a girlfriend; relatively few initiated sex with their future spouse and also had sex with someone else. About 14 percent in the north had sex for the first time with a sex worker. In the south, 15 percent of men report initiating sex with a sex worker and 5 percent with a casual acquaintance.

Table 5 shows predicted probabilities for premarital sex among men and premarital sex with a future spouse among women separately by region. Since the results for premarital sex with a non-spouse among men mainly highlight the finding from Table 2 that this practice has increased markedly in the 1992-2000 cohort, we do not show predicted probabilities for this outcome. Schooling, residence, the wealth measure and cohort do not have any significant association with premarital sex among men in the southern sample. In the north, those who live in urban areas are significantly more likely (21 percent) to have premarital sex compared to rural residents (7 percent). Among men and women in the north, there is a significant and steady increase in the probability of having premarital sex or premarital sex with a future spouse, respectively, among more recent cohorts relative to the 1963-1971 cohort. In the south, premarital sex with a spouse among women in the most recent cohort is significantly different from the earliest cohort.

CONCLUSION

In Vietnam, premarital sex is becoming more common, and in the Red River Delta, premarital sex has risen perceptibly among individuals who married between 1992 and 2000 compared to those married during earlier periods. The level of premarital sex among men marrying in this period in the north is now at par with the level observed in the south. Of the many factors including schooling, area of residence, wealth and marriage cohort that we consider as correlates of premarital sex, being in a recent cohort has the most consistent and strong positive association with premarital sex among men in the north, as well as premarital sex with a future spouse among women in both north and south. The evidence supports the hypothesis that in recent years, important socio-economic, cultural and attitudinal changes arising in part from economic liberalization have contributed to rising sexual activity before marriage.

Although men in the north and south look similar in terms of their overall propensity to report premarital sex, there are important regional differences in the characteristics of premarital sexual behavior. Men in the north are more likely to have premarital sex with their future wife exclusively, while premarital sex with someone other than a future wife is more common in southern Vietnam. The practice of having sex in a union that leads to marriage has made a greater contribution to the rise in premarital sexual activity in the north than in the south. The differences in socio-political history and context between the north and south likely contribute to the more conservative style of premarital sex in the north. Among men in the recent marriage cohort who have sex before marriage with someone other than their spouse, most initiate intercourse with a girlfriend; about 15 percent of this small group of respondents report having their first sexual intercourse with a sex worker.

Gender differences in the reported levels of premarital sexual activity highlight the challenging task of measuring sexual behavior in interviewer administered surveys. For example, we find that women are about half as likely as men to report that they had sex with their spouse before marriage. This is suggestive of systematic underreporting by women although over reporting by men is also a possibility. A comparison of face to face interviews, self administered questionnaires, and an audio assisted method that confers more privacy by allowing respondents to hear and answer questions with a computer indicates that reporting of a variety of sensitive sexual behaviors is often higher with the audio assisted method (e.g. Mensch, Hewett and Erulkar 2003 in Kenya; Potdar and Koenig 2005 in India). Studies that compare men's responses using different modes of data collection about activities that are important for understanding the spread of AIDS beyond high risk groups (e.g. sex with multiple partners including sex workers, condom use in these encounters) can convey important information about the relative face validity of responses obtained across methods. Such studies may also be useful for obtaining a better understanding of patterns of condom and injecting drug use among female sex workers.

Although premarital sex in Vietnam is rising, these results show that it remains a far from widespread practice. About 70 percent of men and 88-92 percent of women marrying in recent years report that they do not have premarital sex. Of those that do, particularly in the north and among women, at least a majority are doing so in a committed relationship with a future partner only. In both the north and south,

of the small percentages of men who have premarital sex, most start their sexual activity within a relatively stable relationship rather than with high risk groups such as sex workers. It is possible that reporting bias has resulted in underreporting of commercial sex patronage given that such behavior is widely denounced by the government as a 'social evil'. However, to the extent that this evidence is accurate, it supports the view that, at this point, scarce resources to combat HIV/AIDS in Vietnam are likely to be best used for interventions that will successfully aid groups such as injecting drug users and sex workers in reducing their risk of contracting and spreading the virus. The question of how premarital sexual behavior continues to evolve as Vietnam undergoes further economic and social change will remain an important area of future inquiry.

NOTES

1. Practices such as arranged marriage, polygamy, child marriage, and elaborate marriage ceremonies were discouraged through several laws that were ultimately successful in changing the nature of mate selection and marriage practices in northern Vietnam (see Belanger and Hong 1996; Goodkind 1996).

2. We consider schooling as a categorical variable: 1-5, 6-9, 10-12 and more than 12 years of completed. The few individuals ($N = 38$, 1.5 percent of the sample) who are illiterate are grouped with those that have 1-5 years of schooling. In Vietnam, completing at least secondary typically refers to those who have attained 10 or more years of schooling. The wealth index is taken as the first principal component of the following assets and housing characteristics: ownership of a color television, dvd player, radio, radio cassette player, motorcycle, telephone, cell phone, car, refrigerator, air conditioner, washing machine, cupboard, gas cooker, hot water heater; flush toilet, bathroom inside the house, ownership of a permanent structure in fair or good condition (compared to a shack, hut or temporary structure). About 36 percent of the variance in the items is explained by the first eigenvector.

3. We compare our results to the 22-25 year olds rather than 15-21 year olds since the younger age group is likely selective of those who have had sex and are marrying due to a pregnancy. The sexual activity of this group may also be higher because they are younger.

4. These gender differences in reporting are also observed in the SAVY, where among the married respondents 22-25 years old, 28 percent of men report that they had sex with their wife before marriage, while women are about half as likely (13 percent) to report having sex with their husband before marriage (SAVY, original tabulations). If the reports of the men age 22-25 are compared to women below age 22 to account for the fact that men marry women who are younger than them, men are about 1.5 times more likely to report having had sex with their spouse before marriage than women (28 percent of men compared to 18 percent of women).

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Table 1. Background Characteristics by Marriage Cohort, Region and Gender, Vietnam 2003-2004

	Marriage Cohort and Gender					
	Men			Women		
	1963 to 1971	1977 to 1985	1992 to 2000	1963 to 1971	1977 to 1985	1992 to 2000
Red River Delta						
<i>Schooling:</i>						
1-5 years	2.8	1.4	1.9	8.9	1.4	3.7
6-9 years	46.0	49.1	37.2	63.9	55.8	54.0
10-12 years	35.6	39.2	47.4	15.0	33.5	32.1
12+ years	15.6	10.3	13.5	12.2	9.3	10.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Residence:</i>						
Urban	51.2	50.0	50.2	50.2	49.8	50.2
<i>Wealth Index</i>						
Rural:						
% below median	89.8	87.0	94.4	87.8	89.7	89.8
Urban:						
% below median	31.1	32.7	37.4	28.3	26.0	26.2
N	211	214	215	213	215	215
Ho Chi Minh City & environs						
<i>Schooling:</i>						
1-5 years	40.8	19.2	14.4	61.5	41.2	26.3
6-9 years	25.2	40.4	40.3	20.2	28.9	45.5
10-12 years	24.8	30.3	33.3	14.0	25.6	23.4
12+ years	9.2	10.1	12.0	4.3	4.3	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Residence:</i>						
Urban	50.0	48.4	50.7	49.5	49.8	50.2
<i>Wealth Index</i>						
Rural:						
% below median	57.3	56.4	66.7	56.3	64.8	66.7
Urban:						
% below median	13.6	21.8	21.0	17.5	14.2	17.3
N	206	198	203	209	211	208

Figure 1. Percentage who had premarital sex by marriage cohort, gender and region, Vietnam

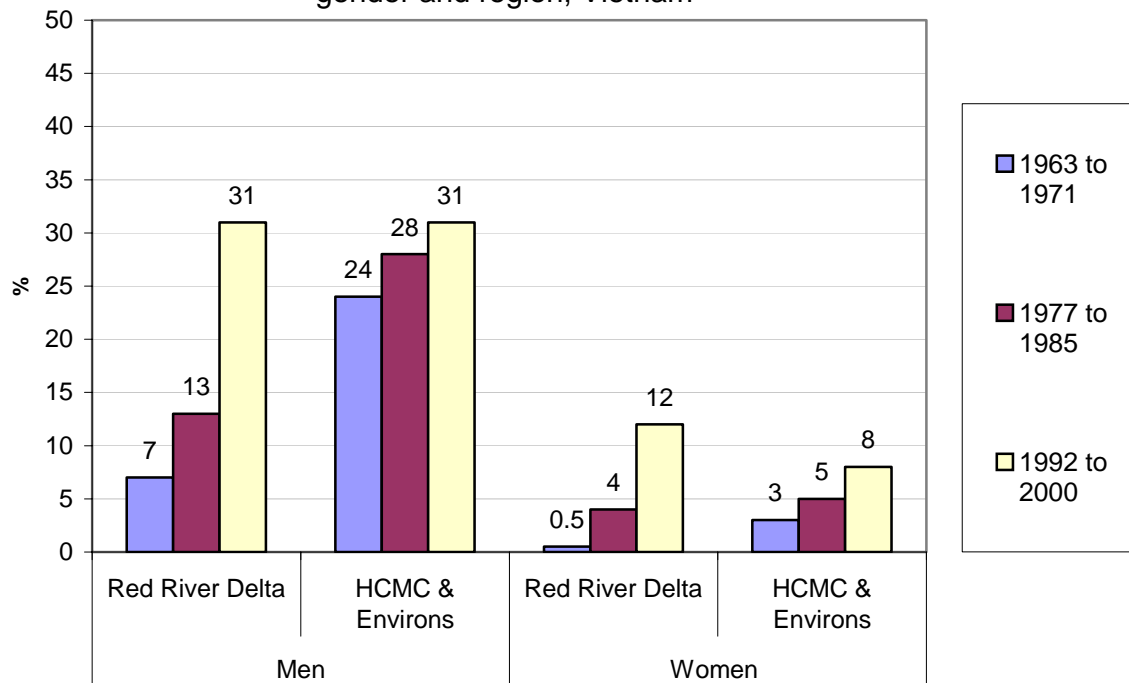


Table 2. Indicators of premarital sex by marriage cohort, region and gender, Vietnam 2003-2004 (percentages)

	Region and Marriage Cohort					
	1963 to 1971	Red River Delta 1977 to 1985	1992 to 2000	1963 to 1971	Ho Chi Minh City & environs 1977 to 1985	1992 to 2000
Men:						
Any	6.2	12.6	30.5	24.0	27.7	31.2
With Spouse	3.3	11.7	22.1	12.7	11.3	15.1
With Non-Spouse	2.9	2.8	16.9	16.7	23.1	22.1
N	210	214	213	204	195	199
Women:						
Any	0.5	3.7	12.2	2.9	5.2	8.2
With Spouse	0.5	3.7	11.7	2.4	4.8	8.2
With Non-Spouse	0	0.9	0.5	1.5	0.5	1.4
N	211	215	213	206	210	208
<i>Among men who had premarital sex:</i>						
Men						
With spouse only	53.8	77.8	44.6	30.6	16.7	29.0
With someone else only	46.2	7.4	27.7	47.0	59.3	51.6
With both	0	14.8	27.7	22.5	24.1	19.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	13	27	65	49	54	62

Table 3. Percentage distribution of first sex partner among men by region and marriage cohort, Vietnam 2003-2004

	Region and Marriage Cohort					
	Red River Delta			Ho Chi Minh City & environs		
	1963 to 1971	1977 to 1985	1992 to 2000	1963 to 1971	1977 to 1985	1992 to 2000
Spouse	97.1	97.2	84.0	83.7	77.2	79.1
Girlfriend	1.9	1.4	13.2	9.4	16.1	16.8
Casual acquaintance	1.0	.9	.5	2.5	3.6	1.0
Commercial Sex Worker	0	.5	2.3	4.4	3.1	3.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	211	214	213	203	193	196

Table 4. Percentage distribution of first sex partner among men in 1992-2000 marriage cohort who had premarital sex with a non-spouse, Vietnam 2003-2004

	Red River Delta	Ho Chi Minh City & environs
Spouse	8.3	2.4
Girlfriend	77.8	78.1
Casual Acquaintance	0	4.9
Commercial Sex Worker	13.9	14.6
Total	100	100
N	36	41

Table 5. Predicted probabilities of premarital sex by region, Vietnam 2003-2004

	<i>Premarital Sex among Men</i>		<i>Premarital Sex with Spouse among Women</i>	
	Red River Delta	Ho Chi Minh City & environs	Red River Delta	Ho Chi Minh City & environs
Characteristic:				
<i>Schooling:</i>				
Less than secondary ^a	11.3	26.1	2.5	4.2
Secondary or higher	13.7	30.1	2.6	4.6
<i>Residence:</i>				
Urban ^a	21.2	26.6	3.8	4.2
Rural	7.2*	28.7	1.7	4.5
<i>Wealth Index Quartiles</i>				
Lowest ^a	13.6	30.5	3.4	5.4
Second	12.8	25.6	1.6	3.4
Third	13.2	26.6	2.5	3.1
Highest	10.2	29.3	2.9	6.7
<i>Marriage Cohort</i>				
1963 to 1971 ^a	5.4	24.2	0.4	2.3
1977 to 1985	11.3*	28.0	3.4*	4.3
1992 to 2000	28.3*	31.1	10.7*	8.0*
N	637	593	639	622

^a omitted group

Predicted probability calculated with variable values set at the sample mean.

* significantly different from omitted group at the .05 level.



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