

REPORT ON SURVEY ON THE LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONDUCTED  
AT XUAN DONG VILLAGE IN CHO GAO DISTRICT, DINH TUONG PROVINCE

1. The General Situation

a. Geographical Position: Xuang Dong village is limited at the east by Long Binh Dien village, at the west by Tan My Chanh village, at the south by Hoa Dinh village and at the north by Dang Hing Phuoc village.

b. Organization of the village administrative committee: The village administration committee includes:

- 1 village committee chairman concurrently registrar
- 1 village committee chairman, deputy, concurrently member in charge of finance
- 1 member in charge of security
- 1 member in charge of civic action
- 1 member in charge of social welfare
- 1 member in charge of agriculture

Besides the village administrative committee, there is the village council.

c. Village public buildings:

- 1 village office
- 1 communal house
- 1 temple
- 1 primary school (Tan Long hamlet) (college prep and higher quality)
- 2 elementary school (Tan Binh and Tan Ninh Hamlets)  
(normal "first school")

d. Private buildings:

- 2 churches
- 1 primary school

e. Superficies:

Public rice fields:	4 hectares 90 "sao"
Private rice fields:	5554 hectares
Public land:	1 ha 26 "sao"
Private land:	252 ha 67 "sao"

2. The Village Administration - Basic Information

a. Population: Xuan Dong village is composed of 7 hamlets and has a general population of 4,275 people (men, women, old and young) divided as follows:

1. 5 relatively secure hamlets:

Tan Binh hamlet:	514
Tan Long hamlet:	251
Tan Thanh hamlet:	821
Tan Ninh hamlet:	1178
Tan Thuan hamlet:	950

2. 2 Insecure hamlets:

Tan Hoa hamlet:	381
An Lac Trung hamlet:	<u>180</u>
TOTAL	4275

b. Voters:

Male voters:	339
Female voters:	676
PF soldiers:	<u>63</u>
TOTAL	1078 voters

c. Religious composing elements:

Catholicism:	60%
Buddhism:	3%
Confusianism:	37%

d. Life style:

2% of the population is rich  
43% of them are living in easy circumstances  
55% are living in want

e. Occupations:

Farmers:	60%
Gardeners:	20%
Tradespeople:	3%
Fishers:	1%
Breeders:	16%

f. Agriculture and kind of crops grown: Besides rice which is the principal agricultural produce, farmers still grow fruit trees like coconut palms, plum trees and mango trees.

3. The Interviews

a. Number of respondents interviewed: 130

1. Male respondents: 74 (13 between 18-25, 26 between 26-40 and 35 between 41-60).

2. Female respondents: 56 (9 between 18-25, 17 between 26-40 and 30 between 41-60).

b. Respondents' occupations:

Farmers:	81
Gardeners:	42
Tradesmen:	2
Notable:	1
Officials:	2
Teacher:	2

#### 4. Peoples' Opinions

##### a. What did people think about the duty of dignitaries in the village council and village administrative committee?

During the period of time we worked in Xuan Dong village, we have got in contact with 130 voters including farmers, government officials, notables and about 95% of them have been of one accord that from the day dignitaries in the village council and committee took office, all their efforts were aimed at serving the population.

A male respondent, 64 years old, let know that everyone in the village council as well as in the village committee has been anxious to serve the population. Not only did they want to build some more schools, repair roads and bridges, they still asked the government to help them to reconstruct places of worship (church and communal houses) and to construct a hospital maternity. All these construction works are those the population were longing for a long time.

##### b. Have elected people really been beloved by people? Was anybody able to run for the election? Did the district chief impose his will?

People elected at the recent election day of 9 April 1967, have been beloved by people, especially the village council and committee chairman who enjoyed a special affection for their aptitude and virtue. Election has been very free, and anyone without distinction whether male or female citizen, has had right to go to vote or to run for the election without being subjected to any pressure of the district chief.

A male respondent, 52, a laborer, let know that more than a half of the village population are Catholics, all the year long they have only thought to occupy themselves with their job, and few people liked to go to work for the village and hamlets. In the last village and hamlet dignitaries elections, campaigns have been made to have candidates running for these elections, and because of that people in the village liked them very much.

##### c. What projects do the people want? Is there any difference between their desires and those of the village officials?

Xuan Dong village spreads along both sides of the Ky Hon River which glides from Tan My Chanh village to Long Binh Dinh village, through the hamlets of Tan Hoa, Tan Thuan, Tan Thanh, Tan Long and Tan Binh of the village. From the Ky Hon River, there are 8 great and small canals which run through the above hamlets, and because of that the most earnest desire of people is to be helped with construction materials to accomplish these following projects called by order of priority:

- to build 5 heavy-duty bridges
- 1 bridge 45m long and 3m,50 wide at Tan Thanh hamlet
- 2 bridges 35m long and 1m,20 wide at Tan Thuan hamlet
- 2 bridges 30m long and 1m,20 wide at Tan Ninh hamlet

To make communication with the village and hamlets easier and especially to insure life of people's children who must go twice a day to school (on 19 Sep 67 it was just the village committee chairman's boy who was dead in an accident when falling from a bridge near the school in Tan Ninh hamlet, he drowned himself in the river).

To transfer the village office to the other side of the Ky Hon River and to build it behind the church where there is enough place to develop the village town in every aspect.

To reconstruct places of worship destroyed during the resistance war against the French (1945-1954): A Catholic church, a communal house to adore the tutelary genies (i.e. to worship household gods - ed).

To help the population to develop their agriculture by reselling them insecticide and fertilizers with controlled price to avoid them from being exploited by the dishonest intermediary tradespeople.

Through the opinions they expressed, the above kinds of projects have been their earnest desires. There was no difference between people's desires and those of the village officials.

d. Do the people feel that the village officials are honest?

Through the opinions they gave, not any people had had something to complain about the village officials. They all let know that the Xuan Dong village officials are serious. Never have they been guilty of corruptive or oppressive acts towards them and never have they caused them any trouble.

A male respondent, a notable, 67, let know that dignitaries in the village are very affable, they behave quietly with people. Anyone who has a problem will be helped to solve it; he will not have to wait long or to waste his time to go through and from and up to now there not yet is any rumor that they are open to bribery.

e. Do the people trust the local government?

95% of people whom we made contact with let know that dignitaries in their village have been all beloved and trusted because of their good attitude and because of that people have had a great confidence in the local government.

A female respondent, a tradeswoman, 36, let know that today people who work for the village have been real people's representatives. All their activities are aimed at serving the population and protecting their life and interests. So, when the village officials take the initiative in doing something, a community development work for instance, the population have always responded to their call with enthusiasm and joy.

f. Is it true the population dared not participate in civic actions because they are afraid of the VC?

All social actions on community development works proposed by the village government have been strongly backed up by the population. However, before the VC pressure, before their terrorist acts, people in hamlets adjacent to insecure area have worked with fear.

A male respondent, a farmer, 40, let know that people are afraid of the VC although up to now there not yet is any people who are living far from a post must always pay taxes, in kind or in money, when the VC come to collect.

5. Security

a. Is the village located in a secure area?

Xuan Dong village is relatively secure

b. If not, is the village well protected?

If the village is not located in a secure area (sic), it can be well protected because at present, the village PF includes 3 platoons (93 soldiers) divided to defend important hamlet.

One platoon responsible to mount guard at the village office at Tan Long hamlet. One platoon to encamp in a post at Tan Thanh hamlet and 2 posts at Tan Binh hamlet. One platoon to be ready for action and encamp at Tan Thanh hamlet. This platoon is put under the disposition of the Cho Gao district sub-sector to make operations, lay ambush, to join in battle, etc.

c. Do the popular forces obey the requests of the village chief in matters concerning security and troop disposition?

According to PF soldiers and the village chief, PF soldiers are always ready to carry out his orders in matters concerning security and disposition.

6. Private Organizations

a. Find out if there are in the village notables who are not in the government, but have a lot of influence.

In Xuan Dong village, the most influential man in the Catholic priest, Dang ngoc Linh.

b. Find out if important private organizations exist in the village and how active, influential and powerful they are.

1. The Catholic organization: Under the leadership of the priest Dang ngoc Linh:

It can be said that all the Catholic population in Xuan Dong village must carry out and be ready to obey the requests of the priest Dang ngoe Linh. For example, when the latter makes a call to his followers to contribute money and labor to achieve any project interesting all the village, his request will be thoroughly carried out. According to some village dignitaries, not only the priest is influential in the village, he still is influential with officials of higher level.

2. The communist organization: In Xuan Dong village, party committee or chapter organizations, which includes:

Secretary: Ngo Van Ba  
 Deputy Secretary: Nguyen Van Huan  
 Military section: Nguyen van Thao

and five members responsible for 5 sections: Finance section, Propaganda, Culture and Education section, Young People Propaganda section, Security section, Military section and Front activities section:

SECRETARY  
 DEPUTY SECRETARY

STANDING COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION  
 LIAISON SECTION

PROPAGANDA	PROPAGANDA	FINANCE	SECURITY	MILITARY	FRONT
CULTURE	TO YOUNG	& ECONOMIC	SECTION	AFFAIRS	ACTIVITIES
EDUCATION	PEOPLE	MINISTRY		SECTION	SECTION

In each hamlet, there is a cell comprised of 1 cell leader and 2 members to assume the responsibility of the Party activities in the hamlets.

To support the Party committee to easily carry out its activities of organization, sabotage, tax collection, etc. there is in the village a guerrilla platoon of about 23 people to permanently mount guard, clear the way, harass, etc. In addition to this guerrilla strength, there is the district mobile 225th Company which, well equipped and under the leadership of the company commander, Tran van Trich, coordinates its activities with the village guerrilla strength to attack our posts.

Generally speaking, the security situation in hamlets at Xuan Dong village is relatively good, apart from the hamlets of Tan Hoa and An Loc Trung which are insecure. From 1954, this village has never been destroyed or attacked by the VC. However, on the political point of view, the VC are very busy and influential, they exert an influence on almost all the population by this threat, coercion and extortion, that is to say that they are able to collect land tax of all farmers, not taking into consideration that farmers are living in secure or insecure hamlets. According to the village dignitaries, really people here have never liked to pay taxes to the VC but they dare not refuse for fear of their power and retaliations.

## 7. The Village Council

### a. Was the village council freely chosen by people?

Most of 130 respondents have considered that the village council election on 9 April 1967 was carried out fairly and well.

A female respondent, a housewife, 50, let know that election in the present time is different from that under the old regime. At present, voters are free to choose their candidates. They have right to vote for people of good behavior they consider as worthy to represent them and are most careful in not being coerced into voting for any people. So, people who have elected in the council are beloved and trusted by the population.

### b. Present activities of the council. Does it meet?

The village council has right to deliberate, to control and to advise.

Deliberation: The village council has right to bring up for discussion miscellaneous taxes, sundries, management of the market, organization of fair, to support, to raise loan, to make special concession and to sum up all matters interested to the village.

Control: The village council controls all practices of the committee and policies and projects of the government, verifies book-keeping of the village committee, the village administration and the village budget management.

Advice: The village council has an extensive consulting power. It can present people's opinions, propositions and desires on matters interesting the village to the district and province governments or to the province council and the Special Commissariat for Administration.

The Xuan Dong village council has usually met twice a month. The ordinary meeting is held on the 5th of each month and the extraordinary meeting is only held when there is an urgent matter to be solved. All the meetings are convened by the village council chairman. In the Xuan Dong village council composed of 8 members (5 male councilmen and 3 councilwomen) there are two female councilwomen named Truong thi Ngo and Ngo thi Lie who because of their lack of sense of responsibility, have been proposed to be dismissed in the recent meeting of 5 October 1967.

### c. Does the council really represent the people? Or does it carry out the orders of the province and district?

Based on what it has done from the day it took office, people found that the village council was aware of its duty to represent people and to fight for their interest. The council has asked to be helped to construct bridges, to build a hospital maternity and some schools. This proved it has understood its position and acted upon people's desires rather than to carry out the orders of the district and province governments.

A male respondent, a landlord, 55, let know that people in the village have a great desire to be helped to construct some bridges to make the communication easier and to abort accident for their children who must go everyday to school. Their desire was forwarded by the village council to the government of higher level a long time ago, but up to now, they have received no answer.

d. Are members in the council capable to carry out their duty?

The fair sex occupies about a half of the members in the council (3 out of 8) and because of that their competency is not equal, especially when women have only been elected to symbolize the question of equal rights between men and women rather than to carry out activities of the council. Apart from the council standing committee chairman and deputy chairman and the village committee chairman who are capable dignitaries, other members in the council are not very competent. And it is only the council chairman and committee chairman who is able to create a prestige among the population.

8. The Village Administrative Committee

a. How often does the village committee meet?

The village committee meets 6 times a month, on the 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 of the month, with the chairman in the chair, to check operations completed during the period prior to the meeting, to draw experience and discuss on weak and strong points and to schedule a plan and program for future operations.

b. Does the committee feel that it actually has power and authority and does it use it?

The village committee chairman let know that the committee represents the population. "In my capacity as a committee chairman, I have used all my power to develop hamlets and to manage the administration affairs in the village. I have proposed a program to build more schools, to transfer the village office, to construct a maternity, to lay down a plan to defend the village, etc."

c. Does the committee consider itself an agent of the village or of the province/district level?

The village committee chairman let know that his committee is an agent of the village and is not dependent on the province and district levels and these two levels of government are only to help and control the village committee and have not right to interfere with its internal affairs.

d. Are the committee members competent and well trained?

About this question, the committee deputy chairman let know although they are not very competent, members in the committee can carry out their daily works with vigor.

They have been called to attend a training course on village administration and Revolutionary Development, opened for 15 days at the province headquarters.

e. Summary description of activities of the committee members:

1. The committee chairman:

To make known and carry out orders of the government  
To make report on what has happened in the village to the district and province chiefs  
To certify administrative papers  
To manage the village committee and assume responsibility of the committee before the village council  
To represent the village before the government of higher level and before the law  
To sign on orders of receipt and expense of the village budget  
To settle quarrels and disputes in the village

2. The deputy chairman:

To represent the chairman when the latter is absent  
In the capacity of member in charge of Finance, to be responsible for the management of the village property, for the question of budget, tax and supply, etc.

3. The member in charge of security:

To be responsible for the question of security, public order, administrative and judicial police, military service and military matters.

4. The member in charge of propaganda:

This member is responsible for the organization of people into groups, organizations, information, Chieu Hoi, propaganda-to-people, youth and postal affair.

5. The member in charge of agriculture:

This member is responsible for the organization of people into groups on land reform and agriculture, and in cooperation with the member in charge of Finance, he manages the village public land and rice fields.

6. The member in charge of social welfare:

He is responsible for cultural, educational, social affairs, construction, labor and public health.

7. The principal secretary:

To manage the village office  
To be responsible for the question of general administration  
To keep the seal and book of the village budget  
To assume the function of treasurer if necessary

f. Is the village chief a true leader in the village?

Among the 130 respondents, 125 let know the village chief is worthy to govern the village.

A female respondent, tradeswoman, 39, let know the committee chairman is a Catholic with an anti-communist spirit. Although he is not well-educated, he is impartial, straight and serviceable and because of that he is beloved by people. Because he has just taken office for some months, not any outstanding work has been accomplished but with his virtue, he is meritorious being the village chief.

But there are 5 respondents who let know the village chief was appointed by the district chief and, after all, he must be an instrument of the latter.

A male respondent, an official, 39, let know that PF soldiers troubled the population. They gambled, they stole their poultry, everyone was afraid of them and dared not criticize them.

According to the new decree, the district chief has no right to spend money from the village budget but the village always had to cover expenses of the district so much that the village committee has no money to buy paraffin lamp and lamp oil to light the post and village office and to repair the village office furniture. It must ask money from the district.

g. Between the council chairman and the committee chairman, who is more influential?

Most of the respondents let know that they both are influential, but to make a comparison, the council chairman is more influential than the committee chairman.

A male respondent, farmer, 50, let know the council chairman is a retired Army sergeant-major and the last year he was the village deputy chairman. Polite, serious and resourceful, he is respected and beloved by people. In comparison with the committee chairman, he is more influential, especially with older people, and because he has been working for a long time, he is more experienced and has a wider acquaintance.

9. The Hamlet Chiefs

a. Were the hamlet chiefs freely elected?

130 respondents let know that the population were free to elect the hamlet chiefs, but here, because of the VC pressure, few people dared to run for the election.

A male respondent, farmer, 40, let know that there was election but because in each hamlet there were just 2 people who ran for the election, people did not have a real choice. The one who got the job the second highest ballot was elected deputy hamlet chief; the election was only a way to regularise their positions.

b. How many candidates ran for hamlet chiefs?

There were 10 people (9 male - 1 female) running for the election in 5 hamlets.

c. Is the hamlet chief a true leader and influential man?

All the 130 respondents let know that people who dared to run for the election were men who have an anti-communist spirit. From the day they took office, not any outstanding work has been accomplished, but, generally speaking, they all are relatively influential.

d. Do people support the hamlet chiefs?

Most of the respondents let know that hamlet chiefs are residents in the village. Therefore, they are their friends and are supported.

e. How well-trained are the hamlet chiefs?

All the 5 hamlet chiefs let know they have attended a 15 day training course opened at the province headquarters on decree to reorganize the village/hamlet administration.

f. Do the hamlet chiefs possess much authority and provide leadership on programs or do they simply feel they are the arm of higher level of government?

117 respondents let know that the hamlet chiefs are competent to work, they all have an anti-communist spirit and spring from farmers families, they know how to help people.

A male respondent, farmer, 40, said: "Although they are not well-educated or capable, hamlet chiefs are practical and living in close relation with the population, they know how to struggle for and protect the people's rights and interests."

9 respondents let know that hamlet chiefs have been appointed by the district chief to run for the election. Most of them are incompetent; they have no initiative to work and can be more or less directed by the district government.

g. What do the hamlet chiefs do?

They carry out regulations, government policies and orders of administrative higher levels in the local area, take care of security and public order in their hamlets, manage the hamlet board of administration, make report on the general situation of the hamlet to the village committee, certify administration papers and help the village committee to collect taxes.

10. General

a. Who pays these local officials?

In principle, among villages whose budget exceeds 500,000\$VN, the village must issue money to cover 1/3 of the salary of the village officials. The remaining 2/3 of salary will be defrayed by the national budget.

At Xuen Dong village, because the budget is too poor, salary of village officials are defrayed entirely by the national budget. Salary is paid at the end of month by a check of the province. Someone will go to cash this check to pay salary to village and hamlet officials.

b. Are they paid on time?

Generally, they are not paid on time. Until the 20 Oct 67, they did not receive their pay for September.

c. Salary of village and hamlet officials:

Committee chairman	4230\$
Committee deputy chairman	3840\$
Committee members and hamlet chiefs	3450\$
Assistant hamlet chief	3190\$

11. Training

a. Are local government officials trained to carry out their activities once they have been elected?

The following officials have been trained to carry out their activities: the council chairman, deputy chairmen and general secretary; the committee chairman, members in charge of Security, Social Welfare, Propaganda and Agriculture; the hamlet chiefs of Tan Binh, Tan Thanh, Tan Ninh and Tan Thuan.

b. How long and in what subjects have they been trained?

Members in the village committee and hamlet chiefs have attended a 15-day training course:

Subjects: Method of guiding, way of working, attitude and morals, and RD policy.

Members in the village council have attended a 7-day course:

Subjects: RD policy and 3 duties of councilmen; control, advice and deliberation.

c. Is the training effective in preparing them for their job?

About this question, the committee chairman and hamlet chiefs of Tan Ninh and Tan Thuan let know that the training is only effective about 40%.

in preparing them for their job; most of officials elected from the recent election are not well-educated and are not equal to follow the course which is too stressed in theory and they have no time to discuss and bring up their troubles to be solved. Owing to that the training is not very useful to them.

12. Finance and the Village Budget

a. Financial year 1966:

Receipts:	115,645.54\$
Expenditures:	-115,163.00\$
Balance	<u>582.54\$</u>
Money deposited at the province treasury:	-232.74\$
Money kept at the village budget:	<u>349.80\$</u>

b. Financial year 1967:

Balance brought from FY66 (kept in village budget):	349.80\$
Balance from FY66 in province treasury:	232.74\$
Land Tax:	772.42\$
Cowden Tax:	4,305.27\$
License Tax:	332.00\$
Sampan Tax:	292.00\$
Buffalos, Ox Tax:	135.00\$
Public rice fields Tax:	4,000.00\$
Slaughter house Tax:	4,050.00\$
Ferry duties:	36,600.00\$
Money contributed by the province to pay salary of village and hamlet officials:	214,636.00\$
Water products:	12,870.00\$
Certification of administrative papers:	17,000.00\$
Miscellaneous:	<u>4,000.00\$</u>
TOTAL:	<u>299,575.00\$</u>

Items of expenses:

Salary and travelling expenses of councilmen and committeemen:	228,502.00\$
Allowance for radio operator:	4,000.00\$
Lamp-oil and writing materials:	8,092.00\$
Maintenance, repairing:	5,090.00\$
Ceremonies:	1,300.00\$
Furniture:	400.00\$
Contribution to the Can Son and district:	30,500.00\$
Contingent expenses:	12,292.00\$
Salary of road-mender:	<u>3,250.00\$</u>
TOTAL:	<u>293,426.00\$</u>

Balance to date of FY 1967:	6,149.00\$
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Considering the total receipts and expenses of the Xuan Dong village budget, people remark that it is too poor in comparison with that of other villages.

Theoretically, at the end of Oct 67, the village has received 299,575.23\$ but in reality, not counting the sum of 214,636.00\$ contributed by the national budget, it has only received: 84,939.23\$.

It is all the same for the expenses. In theory, the village has spent 293,426.00\$ but in reality, it has only spent 78,790.00\$. And if we do not count the sum of 30,300.00\$ used to contribute to the Can Son and district, it has only really spent: 48,490.00\$. With a so poor budget with the receipts of 84,939.00\$ and expenses of 48,490.00\$, the village authorities will never be able to accomplish any project, how useful it can be, to develop their village.

c. Other sources of funds in the village: Aside from taxes, NONE.

d. Do the people feel that they must pay too much in taxes?

121 respondents let know that the rate of taxes they have to pay is reasonable. 9 respondents consider it slight.

A male respondent, farmer, 54, let know that here the government likes the population rather than dislikes them. When it does everything, or when it levies taxes, it always sticks to people's interests. Besides the fact they must pay taxes to the government, the population must have something left to keep themselves and their families. It is not the same in communist controlled areas where people must step by step sell their property to pay taxes to the VC.

A male respondent, farmer, 41, let know that tax is not heavy when for an hectare of first class rice field they have only to pay 110\$ as tax and for an hectare of garden they have only to pay 285\$. This tax rate cannot be compared with that in communist controlled area where the population are burdened with taxes.

e. If the village authorities had some more funds, for example 200,000\$, how would they choosa to spend them? If the people themselves could decide, how would they want additional funds spent?

If there were an additional fund, people in Xuan Dong village would spend it to build 5 bridges in ferro-concrete; as explained previously before; to repair the communal house and cathedral; to transfer the village office to have place to build a maternity; to buy fertilizers and insecticides; and to repair the road before the cathedral which is in connection with the provincial Route #24.

Concurrently speaking, the village authorities would also like to spend money for works of common interest the population are longing for.

### 13. Observations

#### a. Situation:

Xuan Dong village is about 3km away from Cho Gao district town. In the front, it is limited by the provincial route #24 and at the back by Hoa Dinh, an insecure village and a departure point of the VC to harass the two hamlets of Tan Hoa and An Loc Truong. The village spreads on an area of 4km in length from Tan Hoa to Tau Thanh hamlet and about 3 km in width from Tan Long to An Loc Truong hamlet. Traversed by a network of arroyos, canals and Ky Hon River which glides until Cho Gao district town and pours its water into the Mekong River. Communications by boat in the village have been very easy.

#### b. People's standpoint:

About 60% of the population in the village are Catholics. They all have an anti-communist spirit but living under a pressure of the enemy coming from neighboring villages, they must live in a passive situation.

#### c. People's living style:

Most of people in the village are living on agricultural and gardening although rice fields are few, they are very fertile. People have usually grown 3 crops in a year. Besides, they can earn more by planting fruit trees and breeding poultry.

According to the population, their production can support them sufficiently but, because of insecure situation, they are obliged to pay taxes to the VC, and because of that about 55% of them are living in want.

#### d. Capability of the village authorities:

Generally speaking, village authorities are beloved and supported by people. They are all residents of the local area. Having been working for a long time, they are experienced and equal to their function to serve the population.

### 14. Proposals

To help the population to improve their living conditions, we propose the population be helped to realize their construction and repairing projects mentioned above.