

ARTICLE

## Internal Migration and the Transformation of Community Life among Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam

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### Abstract

This article examines the impact of internal migration on the transformation of community life among ethnic minority populations in contemporary Vietnam. Since the implementation of Đổi Mới (Renovation) reforms, rapid urbanization, industrialization, labor mobility, and market integration have significantly reshaped upland communities, particularly in the Central Highlands and mountainous regions. While existing migration studies in Vietnam often focus on labor, poverty reduction, and economic development, this study argues that migration also produces profound transformations in social organization, cultural practices, traditional authority, and forms of belonging. Using a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach grounded in anthropology, migration studies, and sociology of community, the article analyzes how internal migration contributes to livelihood diversification, changing communal structures, and the emergence of translocal communities. The findings demonstrate that migration increasingly weakens territorially bounded forms of communal cohesion while simultaneously generating more flexible and multilocal systems of social connection maintained through remittances, return migration, and digital communication. Ritual practices, kinship relations, and customary authority structures are also undergoing processes of selective preservation, simplification, and cultural adaptation. Rather than causing the disappearance of ethnic minority communities, migration contributes to their restructuring within broader systems of mobility, market integration, and globalization. The article concludes that internal migration in Vietnam should be understood as a broader process of social transformation and negotiated belonging rather than merely demographic movement or labor displacement.

**Keywords:** community transformation; ethnic minorities; internal migration; translocal communities; Vietnam.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Context

Since the implementation of Đổi Mới reforms in 1986, Vietnam has undergone rapid economic transformation, urbanization, industrial expansion, and integration into regional and global markets. Market-oriented reforms significantly accelerated labor mobility, infrastructure development, and the expansion of industrial production zones throughout the country [1,2]. These transformations reshaped not only economic structures but also patterns of migration, social organization, and cultural life across rural, urban, and upland regions.

Internal migration has become one of the most important social phenomena in contemporary Vietnam. Migration flows increasingly involve rural-to-urban mobility, upland-to-lowland movement, migration from the Central Highlands toward industrial zones, seasonal labor migration, and circular

migration associated with industrial production and market integration [3,4]. Economic restructuring and expanding labor markets have encouraged large numbers of people to move in search of employment, education, and improved living conditions. According to migration studies in Vietnam, labor mobility has become deeply connected to industrialization, urban development, and regional economic inequality [5].

These transformations are especially significant among ethnic minority communities in upland and peripheral regions. Communities in the Central Highlands and mountainous areas increasingly experience the effects of infrastructure expansion, labor migration, market integration, tourism development, and new communication technologies [6,7]. Economic change and social mobility expose local populations to broader national and transnational networks of interaction, altering patterns of livelihood, social organization, and cultural participation.

The expansion of commodity economies and labor migration has significantly reshaped everyday life within ethnic minority communities. Younger generations increasingly migrate to urban centers, industrial zones, and tourism areas in search of employment and education opportunities. Circular labor migration and temporary mobility have become increasingly common, particularly among households facing agricultural instability and changing land-use conditions [8,9]. Migration therefore becomes not only an economic strategy but also a broader social process transforming family organization, communal relations, and perceptions of identity and belonging.

Tourism development and expanding communication networks further intensify these transformations. Ethnic minority communities increasingly interact with tourists, market actors, state institutions, and digital media environments that reshape cultural practices and symbolic representation [10]. Traditional systems of authority, ritual participation, and communal organization are increasingly influenced by migration, commercialization, and external cultural interaction.

At the same time, digital communication technologies increasingly connect geographically dispersed populations through online interaction and translocal communication. Migrants maintain relationships with hometown communities through smartphones, social media platforms, and digital communication networks [11]. These technologies contribute to new forms of translocal belonging that extend beyond territorially bounded communities.

Consequently, internal migration in Vietnam should not be understood solely as demographic movement or labor redistribution. Migration increasingly functions as a multidimensional process reshaping social relations, cultural practices, communal organization, and identity within rapidly transforming ethnic minority communities.

## **1.2. Research Problem**

Most migration studies in Vietnam have primarily focused on economic development, labor markets, poverty reduction, urbanization, and regional inequality [3,12]. Existing scholarship frequently examines migration through quantitative indicators related to remittances, employment, industrialization, or development policy. These studies provide important insights into the economic dimensions of migration and labor mobility in contemporary Vietnam.

However, migration also produces profound transformations in social life and community organization that extend beyond economic change. Internal migration increasingly reshapes kinship relations, family structures, communal authority, ritual participation, social cohesion, and cultural identity among ethnic minority populations. Migration affects not only where people live and work but also how they experience belonging, social responsibility, and communal participation within changing social environments.

In many ethnic minority communities, younger generations increasingly spend extended periods working outside their home villages in industrial zones, urban centers, or tourism economies. These migration patterns alter traditional forms of intergenerational interaction and weaken localized systems

of communal participation. Village rituals, customary practices, and collective labor activities increasingly face disruption due to mobility and changing livelihood structures [13,14].

Migration also transforms traditional power structures within ethnic minority communities. Earlier communal systems often relied heavily on village elders, customary authority, ritual specialists, and kinship-based leadership structures [6]. However, labor mobility, education, digital communication, and market integration increasingly reduce dependence on localized authority systems and expand alternative forms of social aspiration and symbolic influence.

Furthermore, migration contributes to changing forms of cultural identity and social belonging. Migrants increasingly navigate multiple social environments simultaneously, including hometown communities, urban workplaces, industrial labor systems, online communication networks, and translocal family relations [21]. These experiences contribute to more fragmented and multilayered forms of identity shaped by mobility and mediated communication.

Migration therefore should not be conceptualized merely as economic displacement or labor mobility. Instead, it represents a broader process of social and cultural restructuring that transforms communal life, social relations, cultural practices, and perceptions of belonging within contemporary ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

### **1.3. Research Gap**

Although migration has become a major topic within Vietnamese social science research, relatively few studies approach migration from the perspective of the anthropology of mobility or translocal social transformation. Existing scholarship often treats migration primarily as an economic or demographic issue while paying less attention to its broader cultural and social implications for ethnic minority communities.

In particular, insufficient attention has been given to the relationship between migration, community transformation, ethnic minority identity, and translocal social relations. Many studies focus on labor mobility, remittance flows, urbanization, or poverty reduction without examining how migration reshapes communal structures, ritual practices, symbolic authority, and social belonging within upland communities [5,15].

Similarly, migration research in Vietnam often continues to conceptualize community through territorially bounded frameworks associated with locality and stable settlement patterns. However, contemporary migration increasingly produces translocal forms of social life in which migrants maintain simultaneous relationships with multiple social environments through mobility and digital communication [16,17]. These translocal dynamics remain underexplored within studies of ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

Research on ethnic minorities in Vietnam has largely concentrated on poverty reduction, development policy, land issues, tourism, or cultural preservation [6,18]. While these studies provide valuable insights, fewer have examined how migration contributes to changing forms of authority, shifting community relations, and negotiated identities within rapidly transforming social environments.

Moreover, limited scholarship has integrated perspectives from anthropology, migration studies, transnationalism, and cultural sociology into analyses of internal migration in Vietnam. Concepts such as mobility, translocal belonging, negotiated identity, and networked social relations remain insufficiently developed in discussions of migration and ethnic minority transformation [19,20].

This article addresses these gaps by examining internal migration not only as labor movement but also as a process of community restructuring and cultural transformation. It analyzes how migration reshapes social relations, communal organization, traditional authority, ritual practices, and perceptions of belonging among ethnic minority populations in contemporary Vietnam.

### **1.4. Research Objectives and Central Argument**

The primary objective of this article is to analyze the impact of internal migration on the transformation of community life among ethnic minority groups in contemporary Vietnam. More specifically, the study examines how migration reshapes communal organization, social relations, traditional authority, ritual participation, and forms of belonging within upland and ethnic minority communities.

The article argues that internal migration in Vietnam should not be understood simply as labor mobility or population redistribution. Instead, migration represents a broader process of social restructuring that transforms community organization, cultural practices, and symbolic systems within ethnic minority societies.

Migration increasingly alters kinship relations, communal participation, intergenerational authority, and localized systems of social cohesion. Labor mobility and circular migration contribute to more flexible and translocal forms of belonging in which migrants maintain relationships with hometown communities while simultaneously participating in urban labor markets, industrial production systems, and digitally mediated communication networks [11,21].

The article further argues that migration contributes to the transformation of traditional authority structures and cultural practices within ethnic minority communities. Village elders, ritual systems, and customary institutions increasingly coexist with market-oriented values, state modernization programs, labor mobility, and digital communication. Cultural identity therefore becomes increasingly negotiated and adaptive within changing social environments.

By conceptualizing migration as a multidimensional process of community transformation rather than merely economic mobility, this article contributes to broader debates on migration, mobility, translocality, and cultural change in contemporary Southeast Asia. It highlights how ethnic minority communities in Vietnam actively negotiate social transformation through adaptation, mobility, and reconfiguration of communal life under conditions of rapid economic and social change.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Migration and Mobility in Contemporary Society**

Migration and mobility have become central themes in contemporary social theory due to the accelerating movement of people, labor, capital, and information under globalization. Earlier migration studies primarily emphasized labor redistribution, urbanization, poverty reduction, and demographic change. More recent scholarship, however, increasingly conceptualizes migration as a multidimensional process reshaping identity, belonging, social relations, and community structures [5,17].

Contemporary mobility studies argue that movement itself has become a defining feature of modern social life. Rather than viewing migration as an exceptional event, scholars increasingly understand mobility as deeply embedded within globalization, industrialization, labor flexibility, market integration, and transnational connectivity [22]. Migration therefore reflects broader transformations in social organization and everyday life.

One influential contribution comes from Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity," which emphasizes instability, fluid social relations, and weakening attachment to territorially bounded communities under globalization [23]. Mobility becomes not only physical movement but also a broader social condition shaping identity, belonging, and social experience. Migrants increasingly navigate fragmented environments characterized by uncertainty and flexible forms of attachment.

Similarly, John Urry's "mobilities paradigm" highlights how modern societies are increasingly organized around the movement of people, communication, objects, and symbolic systems rather than fixed territorial structures [22]. Migration should therefore be understood not simply as demographic

relocation but as part of interconnected systems linking labor markets, communication technologies, transportation infrastructures, and transnational social relations.

These perspectives are highly relevant to Vietnam, where migration increasingly accompanies industrialization, urban expansion, and market-oriented development. Rural-to-urban migration, seasonal labor mobility, and circular migration have become major dimensions of Vietnamese social life [3,4]. Migration increasingly creates flexible social arrangements in which individuals maintain relationships with multiple social environments simultaneously.

Migration also reshapes social identity and cultural belonging. As Hall [24,25] argued, identity becomes more fluid and relational under conditions of globalization and mobility. Migrants continuously negotiate between hometown communities, urban labor systems, family obligations, and new social environments. Mobility therefore transforms not only economic life but also communal participation, symbolic systems, and perceptions of belonging.

Contemporary migration studies further emphasize that migration cannot be reduced solely to economic rationality. Migration increasingly involves emotional relationships, symbolic mobility, social aspirations, and changing cultural identities [26,27]. Migrants maintain relationships across distance through digital communication, remittances, ritual participation, and translocal family networks [11]. Migration consequently functions as a broader process of social transformation within globalizing societies.

## **2.2. Anthropology of Migration and Translocal Communities**

Anthropological approaches to migration increasingly emphasize translocality, mobility, and the transformation of community under globalization. Earlier anthropological perspectives frequently conceptualized communities as territorially bounded social formations characterized by stable kinship relations, shared rituals, and localized interaction [28]. Contemporary migration, however, increasingly challenges these assumptions by producing fragmented, mobile, and geographically dispersed forms of social life.

The concept of translocality is especially important for understanding migration in contemporary societies. Translocality refers to the maintenance of social, emotional, symbolic, and economic relationships across multiple geographical locations simultaneously [21]. Migrants often sustain connections with hometown communities while simultaneously participating in urban labor markets, industrial economies, and digitally mediated communication networks. Communities therefore increasingly operate through mobile and networked social relations rather than stable territorial organization alone.

From an analytical perspective, a translocal community should be distinguished from a merely dispersed or fragmented population. A community can be considered translocal when social relationships continue to be actively maintained across multiple locations through recurring forms of interaction and mutual obligation. In this study, translocality is identified through several observable dimensions: (1) sustained remittance flows linking migrants and their home communities; (2) periodic return migration for rituals, festivals, funerals, and family events; (3) regular digital communication through social media, messaging platforms, and video calls; (4) continued participation in collective decision-making, symbolic activities, or community affairs despite physical absence; and (5) the maintenance of emotional attachment and social obligations across geographically separated locations. These dimensions do not function as rigid thresholds but provide analytical indicators for understanding how community life extends beyond a single territorial setting.

Anthropological scholarship also highlights the emergence of fragmented and multilocal communities. Labor migration, seasonal mobility, and circular migration frequently separate family members across different locations while maintaining continuing social obligations and emotional attachment. Transportation and digital communication technologies intensify these dynamics by enabling migrants to remain socially connected across distance [11].

These transformations contribute to the emergence of networked communities in which social belonging is increasingly maintained through communication networks, remittance systems, online interaction, and translocal kinship relations. Communities become more flexible and dispersed while remaining socially interconnected through mediated communication and mobility. In this sense, translocal communities are characterized not by permanent co-residence but by the continuity of social participation across multiple locations.

Theoretical discussions of transnationalism further contribute to understanding these developments. Basch et al. [29] argued that migrants increasingly inhabit overlapping social fields connecting multiple locations simultaneously. Although originally developed in relation to international migration, similar dynamics are increasingly visible within internal migration in Vietnam. Migrants working in industrial zones or urban centers frequently maintain participation in hometown rituals, kinship obligations, and community activities through periodic return migration and digital communication.

Mobility also reshapes identity and perceptions of belonging. Migrants increasingly experience overlapping attachments linked to hometown villages, urban workplaces, online networks, and translocal family structures [17]. Identity therefore becomes increasingly multilayered and negotiated within mobile social environments.

This perspective is particularly relevant for ethnic minority communities in Vietnam, where migration increasingly intersects with market integration, education, tourism, and digital communication. However, the effects of migration are not uniform across all ethnic minority groups. Communities differ in social organization, livelihood systems, gender relations, and historical experiences of mobility. For example, migration may reshape community life differently in matrilineal groups in the Central Highlands than in patrilineal groups in northern mountainous regions. Likewise, younger migrants often adapt more rapidly to urban labor markets and digital communication environments than older generations. These differences suggest that translocality should be understood as a differentiated process shaped by local social contexts rather than as a uniform outcome of migration.

Upland communities are no longer isolated or territorially fixed but increasingly embedded within broader systems of mobility and networked interaction [6]. Anthropology of mobility thus provides an important framework for understanding changing forms of belonging, differentiated experiences of migration, and community transformation in contemporary Vietnam.

### **2.3. Migration and Community Transformation among Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam**

Migration has become increasingly important in reshaping social life among ethnic minority communities in Vietnam, particularly in the Central Highlands and northern mountainous regions. Economic reforms, industrial development, infrastructure expansion, and market integration have significantly transformed upland communities over recent decades [1,12].

Research on the Central Highlands demonstrates that migration increasingly intersects with livelihood transformation, commercialization, and social restructuring [6,7]. Ethnic minority populations increasingly participate in labor migration, seasonal mobility, tourism economies, and urban employment networks, contributing to changing patterns of communal organization and social interaction.

One major consequence is livelihood transformation. Traditional subsistence agriculture increasingly coexists with wage labor, tourism, commodity production, and circular migration [8]. Younger generations frequently migrate to industrial zones, tourism areas, or construction sites, reducing dependence on localized agricultural livelihoods.

These economic changes significantly affect community structures and social relations. Earlier communal systems among many ethnic minority groups relied heavily on collective labor practices, ritual participation, kinship organization, and customary authority structures [30]. Migration and labor

mobility increasingly weaken the stability of these localized systems as migrants spend extended periods outside their home villages.

Research also highlights changing forms of authority and communal leadership. Village elders and customary leaders historically regulated ritual activities, dispute resolution, and communal decision-making. However, modernization, migration, education, and digital communication increasingly reshape these traditional authority systems [13]. Younger generations often engage more actively with labor markets, state institutions, and urban lifestyles than with customary communal structures.

Migration additionally contributes to cultural transformation and changing forms of identity. Ritual participation, communal festivals, and collective cultural practices increasingly adapt to changing demographic patterns and labor mobility. Some rituals are selectively maintained as symbols of ethnic identity and continuity, while others decline because of economic pressures and migration-related absence [10].

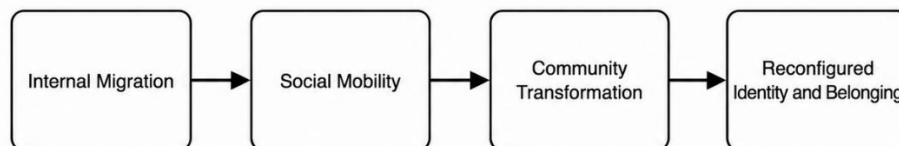
Tourism and digital communication further intensify these transformations. Ethnic minority communities increasingly interact with tourists, online media environments, and transnational symbolic systems that reshape cultural representation and self-perception. Digital communication technologies also allow migrants to maintain relationships with hometown communities while participating simultaneously in urban and industrial environments [31].

Research on migration in Vietnam further demonstrates growing forms of translocal social organization. Migrants maintain economic and emotional ties to hometown communities through remittances, online communication, and periodic return migration [32]. Community life therefore increasingly extends across multiple geographical locations rather than remaining territorially fixed.

Despite these insights, migration research in Vietnam often remains fragmented across separate discussions of labor mobility, tourism, development, or poverty reduction. Fewer studies comprehensively examine how migration simultaneously transforms identity, social relations, authority structures, and ritual participation within ethnic minority communities. This article contributes to this broader understanding by analyzing migration as a multidimensional process of community transformation and reconfigured belonging.

#### 2.4. Analytical Framework

This article develops the following analytical framework:



**Figure 1.** Analytical Framework of Internal Migration, Social Mobility, and Reconfigured Identity and Belonging

This framework conceptualizes internal migration as a multidimensional process extending beyond demographic movement or labor redistribution. Migration contributes to social mobility by connecting ethnic minority populations to urban labor markets, industrial production systems, tourism economies, educational opportunities, and digital communication networks.

As mobility expands, traditional community structures increasingly undergo transformation. Labor migration, circular mobility, and translocal communication reshape kinship relations, communal participation, authority structures, and localized systems of social cohesion. Communities become more flexible, fragmented, and networked across multiple geographical locations. However, the effects of migration are not uniform. Different ethnic groups, generations, genders, and socio-economic categories experience mobility and community transformation in distinct ways depending on local social organization, livelihood structures, and access to migration opportunities.

A central concept in this framework is the emergence of translocal communities. Rather than treating translocality as a purely theoretical condition, this study approaches it as an observable social process through which community life extends across multiple geographical locations while maintaining meaningful forms of social participation and belonging. For analytical purposes, five interconnected dimensions are used to identify translocal community formation:

1. Remittance-based connections linking migrants and households in places of origin;
2. Periodic return migration for rituals, festivals, funerals, agricultural activities, and family events;
3. Digital communication networks that sustain regular interaction through social media, messaging applications, and online platforms;
4. Continued participation in community affairs, including symbolic, cultural, or decision-making activities despite physical absence;
5. Maintenance of emotional attachment and social obligations connecting migrants to their hometown communities.

These dimensions do not represent rigid measurement criteria but serve as analytical indicators for examining the extent to which social belonging and community participation continue to operate across multiple locations. The presence of these interconnected practices suggests that migration has not simply fragmented community life but has contributed to its reorganization in translocal forms.

These transformations contribute to the reconfiguration of identity and belonging. Migrants increasingly negotiate attachment to hometown communities, urban workplaces, family obligations, digital communication networks, and broader systems of mobility simultaneously. Identity therefore becomes increasingly multilayered, mobile, and context-dependent within changing social environments.

The framework allows this article to analyze migration not simply as economic movement but as a broader process of social restructuring that transforms community organization, symbolic systems, and forms of belonging among ethnic minority populations in contemporary Vietnam. It also provides a basis for examining how translocal forms of community emerge through the interaction of mobility, communication, social obligations, and differentiated experiences of migration across ethnic minority groups.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Approach**

This study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach to examine the relationship between internal migration and the transformation of community life among ethnic minority populations in contemporary Vietnam. Rather than conceptualizing migration solely as demographic movement or labor redistribution, the article approaches migration as a multidimensional social process reshaping communal organization, social relations, cultural practices, and forms of belonging within rapidly changing upland communities.

A qualitative orientation is particularly appropriate because the study seeks to interpret social transformation, mobility, symbolic participation, and changing communal structures within specific cultural and historical contexts. The article integrates perspectives from anthropology, migration studies, development studies, and the sociology of community in order to analyze how labor mobility and economic restructuring affect everyday social life among ethnic minority groups.

Anthropological perspectives are especially important because they emphasize the relationship between mobility, cultural change, and local social organization [6,19]. Anthropology of mobility and translocality provides analytical tools for understanding how migration reshapes kinship structures, ritual participation, and communal belonging across multiple geographical locations. This perspective

also highlights the importance of symbolic attachment and cultural negotiation within contexts of social transformation.

Migration studies contribute broader theoretical frameworks for understanding labor mobility, social mobility, and changing patterns of migration under globalization [17,22]. These approaches conceptualize migration not only as economic movement but also as a process that transforms identity, social relationships, and community organization. In Vietnam, labor migration increasingly accompanies industrialization, market integration, and expanding systems of mobility associated with economic modernization.

Development studies further support the analysis by examining how infrastructure expansion, market economies, tourism development, and industrialization reshape upland livelihoods and social organization [12,18]. Economic transformation increasingly connects ethnic minority communities to national labor markets, commodity economies, and systems of mobility extending beyond territorially bounded village structures.

Finally, the sociology of community provides important perspectives for examining changes in social cohesion, communal authority, and collective participation. Earlier forms of ethnic minority community organization often depended heavily on kinship relations, communal rituals, and territorially rooted systems of social interaction [30]. However, migration and labor mobility increasingly contribute to more flexible and fragmented forms of communal belonging.

By combining these interdisciplinary perspectives, the study conceptualizes migration as a broader process of community transformation rather than merely labor displacement. This framework allows the article to examine how migration reshapes social organization, authority structures, cultural practices, and perceptions of belonging within contemporary ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

### **3.2. Research Methods**

#### **3.2.1. Document Analysis**

The primary method employed in this study is qualitative document analysis. This method enables the systematic interpretation and synthesis of academic scholarship related to migration, ethnic minority transformation, labor mobility, development, and community change in contemporary Vietnam. Document analysis is particularly appropriate for examining community transformation because it allows the integration of migration theory, anthropological scholarship, and development studies into a broader analytical framework of mobility and social restructuring.

The study draws upon international scholarship on migration, mobility, translocality, and globalization. Theoretical contributions by scholars such as Bauman [23], Urry [22], Levitt and Glick Schiller [21], and Vertovec [17] provide important conceptual foundations for understanding migration as a broader process of social transformation rather than purely economic movement. These approaches help explain how mobility reshapes social relations, identity, and forms of belonging within contemporary societies.

The article also incorporates scholarship on anthropology of migration and translocal communities. Studies on fragmented communities, mobility, and networked social relations are particularly important for understanding how migration alters localized systems of communal participation and social cohesion [11]. These perspectives conceptualize community as increasingly flexible, multilocal, and mediated through mobility and communication networks.

In addition, the study draws extensively upon research concerning ethnic minority communities in Vietnam, especially in the Central Highlands and mountainous regions. Scholarship by Saleminck [6], Bierkamp et al. [7], and Nguyen et al. [10] provides important insights into upland transformation, livelihood change, migration, tourism, and cultural restructuring among ethnic minority populations.

The study also incorporates migration and development research focusing on labor mobility, rural transformation, and livelihood diversification in Vietnam [3,4,15]. These studies demonstrate how

industrialization, commodity production, and labor migration increasingly reshape household organization and economic strategies among rural and upland populations.

Research on digital communication and translocal social relations is additionally important for understanding how migrants maintain connections to hometown communities through social media and online interaction [11]. Communication technologies increasingly allow migrants to sustain emotional attachment, ritual participation, and social obligations across geographical distance.

Through document analysis, the article identifies recurring themes related to labor migration, livelihood transformation, community fragmentation, changing authority structures, cultural adaptation, and translocal belonging. Rather than examining these dimensions separately, the study synthesizes them into a broader analytical interpretation of migration-induced social transformation among ethnic minority communities in Vietnam.

### **3.2.2. Theoretical Synthesis and Interpretive Analysis**

In addition to document analysis, the study employs theoretical synthesis and interpretive analysis to connect migration theory with social transformation in ethnic minority communities. This approach allows the article to move beyond descriptive discussion and develop a broader analytical understanding of how migration reshapes communal life under conditions of economic modernization and globalization.

Theoretical synthesis involves integrating perspectives from anthropology, migration studies, mobility studies, and development sociology in order to explain how labor migration contributes simultaneously to economic transformation, social restructuring, and changing forms of identity and belonging. Rather than applying a single theoretical model, the study combines multiple perspectives to capture the complexity of migration-related social change in contemporary Vietnam.

Interpretive analysis is used to examine how ethnic minority communities negotiate mobility, social transformation, and changing forms of communal participation. This approach recognizes that migration does not affect all communities uniformly. Different ethnic groups and regions experience migration differently depending on livelihood conditions, market integration, infrastructure development, generational dynamics, and access to mobility opportunities [8].

The analysis therefore focuses on processes of community fragmentation, adaptation, symbolic negotiation, and reconfigured belonging. This interpretive orientation is particularly important because migration in Vietnam rarely results in complete breakdown of communal life. Instead, communities actively adapt to mobility and economic change through flexible forms of social organization, selective preservation of tradition, and translocal communication networks.

The study also examines tensions associated with migration and modernization. While migration may expand economic opportunities and social mobility, it may simultaneously weaken traditional authority structures, reduce communal participation, and transform ritual practices. These tensions are central to understanding how migration contributes both to fragmentation and reconfiguration of ethnic minority communities in contemporary Vietnam.

### **3.3. Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on Vietnam during the post-Đổi Mới period, particularly from the 1990s to the present, when labor mobility, industrialization, and market-oriented development significantly accelerated internal migration throughout the country. This period marks the expansion of industrial zones, urban labor markets, tourism economies, and infrastructure systems that increasingly connect upland communities to broader national and global economic networks.

The analysis concentrates particularly on ethnic minority communities in the Central Highlands and mountainous regions of Vietnam. These areas have experienced significant social transformation associated with migration, livelihood diversification, infrastructure expansion, market integration, tourism development, and communication technologies.

Special attention is given to communities strongly affected by labor migration and economic restructuring. Migration from upland villages toward industrial zones, urban centers, tourism economies, and seasonal labor markets increasingly reshapes household organization, social participation, and communal structures within these communities.

The study focuses specifically on several interconnected dimensions of transformation, including livelihood change, labor migration, communal authority, ritual participation, cultural adaptation, and translocal forms of belonging. Rather than examining migration solely through economic indicators, the article investigates how mobility reshapes everyday social life and perceptions of community within ethnic minority societies.

Although the article draws upon examples from multiple regions and ethnic groups, it does not attempt to provide a comprehensive ethnographic account of any single community. Instead, the study develops a broader analytical interpretation of how migration contributes to social restructuring and changing forms of belonging among ethnic minority populations in contemporary Vietnam.

#### **4. MIGRATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNITY LIFE AMONG ETHNIC MINORITIES IN VIETNAM**

##### **4.1. Migration and the Transformation of Community Livelihoods**

Internal migration has significantly transformed livelihood systems among ethnic minority communities in contemporary Vietnam. Economic restructuring, industrial expansion, and integration into national labor markets increasingly shift households away from dependence on traditional subsistence agriculture toward diversified and mobile livelihood strategies [12]. Labor migration has become an important economic strategy for many upland households facing agricultural instability, declining access to land, and changing market conditions.

Younger generations increasingly migrate to industrial zones, urban centers, tourism economies, and construction sectors in search of wage labor and educational opportunities [3,4]. Circular migration and seasonal labor mobility have become common among ethnic minority households, particularly in the Central Highlands and northern mountainous regions. Migration therefore increasingly functions as part of broader household survival and mobility strategies rather than as isolated demographic movement.

One important consequence of migration is the growing dependence on wage labor and remittance economies. Remittances sent by migrants increasingly support household consumption, education, healthcare, housing construction, and agricultural investment. In many communities, labor migration reduces reliance on traditional agricultural production and contributes to greater integration into market economies [9]. The transformation of livelihood systems can be summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Migration and Livelihood Transformation among Ethnic Minority Communities

<b>Traditional Livelihood Structure</b>	<b>Emerging Livelihood Transformation</b>
Subsistence agriculture	Wage labor and labor migration
Collective agricultural labor	Individualized labor mobility
Localized economic activity	Integration into labor markets
Dependence on farming	Diversified household income
Stable village residence	Circular and seasonal migration
Limited cash economy	Remittance-based household support

As shown in Table 1, migration increasingly reorganizes economic life and household strategies within ethnic minority communities. Households become more economically diversified and mobile, while labor migration contributes to greater dependence on external labor markets and industrial employment systems.

At the same time, migration transforms social relations associated with livelihood organization. Traditional communal labor practices and collective agricultural activities increasingly decline as

younger community members spend extended periods working outside their home villages. Household structures also become more fragmented due to prolonged absence of working-age migrants.

These changes are especially visible among younger generations, who increasingly associate migration with social mobility, education, consumer aspirations, and modern lifestyles. Migration therefore becomes linked not only to economic necessity but also to changing symbolic values and aspirations within ethnic minority communities.

Despite these transformations, migration does not completely eliminate traditional livelihood systems. Many households continue to combine agricultural production with wage labor, remittances, and seasonal migration. Livelihood strategies therefore become increasingly hybrid and flexible under conditions of economic modernization and mobility.

#### **4.2. Transformation of Community Structure and Traditional Authority**

Migration has also significantly reshaped community organization and traditional authority structures among ethnic minority populations in Vietnam. Earlier communal systems often relied heavily on localized settlement patterns, kinship cohesion, collective rituals, and customary leadership structures centered around village elders and communal decision-making [6,30].

However, labor mobility and migration increasingly weaken the territorial stability of these traditional community systems. Working-age populations frequently spend long periods outside their villages in industrial zones, tourism areas, and urban labor markets. As a result, community participation becomes more fragmented, and localized systems of social cohesion experience increasing instability.

One important consequence concerns the changing role of village elders and customary authority structures. Traditionally, village elders played central roles in dispute mediation, ritual organization, communal decision-making, and preservation of customary law. However, migration, formal education, digital communication, and market integration increasingly reduce dependence on localized authority systems [13].

Younger migrants often gain access to alternative sources of symbolic status and social influence through wage labor, education, urban experience, and digital communication. Authority therefore increasingly shifts from purely customary systems toward more fragmented and negotiated forms of social influence. Traditional leadership structures increasingly coexist with state institutions, labor market systems, and digitally mediated social interaction.

Migration also contributes to spatial fragmentation of communities. Earlier ethnic minority villages were often characterized by stable territorial settlement and intensive face-to-face interaction. However, labor mobility increasingly disperses households across multiple locations while maintaining only intermittent physical presence within home villages. The transformation of community structure can be summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Migration and Transformation of Community Organization

<b>Traditional Community Structure</b>	<b>Emerging Social Transformation</b>
Stable territorial settlement	Spatially dispersed households
Elder-centered authority	Fragmented and negotiated authority
Collective communal participation	Reduced ritual participation
Strong kinship cohesion	Flexible translocal relations
Face-to-face social regulation	Mediated and networked interaction
Village-based belonging	Multilocal belonging

Table 2 demonstrates that migration increasingly destabilizes territorially bounded communal organization and contributes to more flexible and translocal social structures. Nevertheless, migration does not entirely destroy communal life. Migrants frequently maintain emotional attachment and symbolic participation within hometown communities through remittances, ritual return visits, and digital communication.

Consequently, migration should be understood not simply as community disintegration but as a broader process of community restructuring in which traditional systems adapt to mobility and changing social conditions.

#### **4.3. Migration and the Transformation of Cultural Practices**

Migration also contributes significantly to changes in ritual practices, kinship relations, language use, and religious life among ethnic minority communities in Vietnam. Earlier cultural systems were strongly connected to localized communal participation and territorially rooted ritual organization [6]. However, labor mobility increasingly reshapes the temporal organization and social participation of cultural practices.

Rituals and festivals increasingly undergo simplification due to migration-related absence, economic pressures, and changing livelihood structures. Migrants working in industrial zones or urban areas often cannot participate fully in extended ritual activities or agricultural ceremonies. Some rituals therefore become shorter, less collective, or more symbolically selective than in earlier periods [10].

Selective preservation becomes increasingly important under these conditions. Communities strategically preserve rituals and symbolic practices considered central to ethnic identity and communal continuity while adapting or abandoning others. Cultural preservation therefore increasingly operates through negotiation and adaptation rather than strict continuity of traditional forms.

Migration also reshapes kinship relations and intergenerational interaction. Younger migrants frequently spend extended periods outside their communities, reducing participation in collective family activities and customary obligations. At the same time, digital communication technologies allow migrants to maintain symbolic and emotional relationships with family members through online communication and social media interaction [11].

Language practices also experience transformation under conditions of migration and market integration. Migrants increasingly use Vietnamese as a dominant language within industrial workplaces, educational systems, and urban environments, contributing to changing patterns of ethnic language use among younger generations. The transformation of cultural practices can be summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Migration and Cultural Transformation among Ethnic Minority Communities

<b>Traditional Cultural Practices</b>	<b>Emerging Transformation</b>
Extended communal rituals	Simplified ritual participation
Stable ethnic language use	Increasing bilingual communication
Localized religious practice	Hybrid religious and symbolic forms
Collective kinship participation	Fragmented family interaction
Customary cultural continuity	Selective cultural preservation
Territorial ritual organization	Translocal cultural participation

Table 3 illustrates that migration contributes to hybrid cultural practices shaped by adaptation, mobility, and changing social environments. Cultural transformation rarely involves complete disappearance of tradition. Instead, communities selectively reinterpret rituals, symbols, and communal practices within broader systems of mobility and market integration.

Migration therefore contributes not simply to cultural decline but to negotiated forms of cultural continuity in which ethnic minority communities adapt tradition to changing economic and social realities.

#### **4.4. From Territorial Communities to Translocal Communities**

One of the most significant consequences of internal migration in contemporary Vietnam is the emergence of translocal forms of community organization among ethnic minority populations. Earlier forms of communal life were strongly tied to stable territorial settlement, localized kinship networks, and face-to-face social interaction. However, migration increasingly reorganizes community through mobility, communication technologies, and multilocal social relations.

Translocal communities emerge when migrants maintain active social, emotional, and symbolic connections with hometown communities while simultaneously participating in labor systems and social environments elsewhere [21]. Community therefore increasingly extends across multiple geographical locations rather than remaining territorially fixed. Rather than indicating the dissolution of community, migration often contributes to the reorganization of communal life across interconnected social spaces.

In the context of ethnic minority migration in Vietnam, translocal community formation can be observed through several recurring practices. Migrants frequently continue to support households through remittances, maintain regular communication with family members, participate in community affairs from a distance, and return periodically for important social and cultural events. These practices demonstrate that social belonging and communal participation increasingly operate beyond the physical boundaries of the village.

Digital communication technologies play a crucial role in sustaining these translocal communities. Smartphones, social media platforms, online messaging, and video communication increasingly allow migrants to maintain relationships with family members, participate symbolically in rituals, and remain connected to village affairs despite geographical distance [11]. Through these technologies, migrants are often able to engage in everyday social interaction, exchange information, monitor family matters, and sustain emotional attachment to their communities of origin.

Migrants also frequently return to hometown communities during festivals, agricultural seasons, funerals, weddings, and major rituals. Such return visits allow migrants to reaffirm social obligations, maintain kinship ties, and participate in collective cultural activities despite prolonged physical absence. For many ethnic minority households, migration therefore involves simultaneous participation in both destination and origin communities rather than a complete shift from one social environment to another.

For example, ethnic minority migrants working in industrial zones in Bình Dương, Đồng Nai, or Hồ Chí Minh City often remain actively involved in village affairs through remittance contributions, online communication, and participation in major ceremonies during return visits. Although physically absent for much of the year, they continue to perform important social, symbolic, and familial roles within their home communities. These patterns illustrate how community membership increasingly operates across multiple locations simultaneously.

The emergence of translocal communities can be summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4.** From Territorial Communities to Translocal Communities

<b>Territorial Community</b>	<b>Translocal Community</b>
Stable village residence	Multilocal mobility
Face-to-face interaction	Digital communication networks
Territorial belonging	Flexible translocal belonging
Localized communal participation	Periodic and mediated participation
Stable kinship proximity	Dispersed family networks
Fixed community boundaries	Networked and mobile communities

As shown in Table 4, migration contributes to more flexible and networked forms of belonging rather than complete dissolution of communal life. Ethnic minority communities increasingly operate through multilocal systems of participation shaped by labor mobility, communication technologies, remittance networks, social obligations, and periodic return migration. These characteristics correspond to the analytical indicators of translocality discussed in the theoretical framework and demonstrate how community life increasingly extends across multiple geographical settings.

Importantly, the development of translocal communities does not occur uniformly across all ethnic minority populations. Variations in livelihood systems, migration patterns, gender roles, generational experiences, and access to communication technologies influence how communities maintain translocal connections. Some groups may rely more heavily on periodic return migration, whereas others

increasingly depend on digital communication and remittance networks to sustain communal relationships across distance.

These developments challenge earlier assumptions that migration necessarily destroys traditional communities. Instead, migration increasingly contributes to reconfigured forms of communal organization adapted to mobility and changing social conditions. Community becomes less territorially fixed and more dependent on communication, symbolic attachment, and translocal social networks.

Ultimately, internal migration in Vietnam should therefore be understood not simply as labor displacement but as a broader process of social restructuring that transforms how ethnic minority communities organize belonging, maintain cultural continuity, and negotiate identity within rapidly changing economic and social environments.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. Migration as a Process of Social Restructuring**

The findings of this study demonstrate that internal migration in contemporary Vietnam should be understood not simply as labor movement or demographic redistribution but as a broader process of social restructuring that reshapes community life, cultural practices, and forms of belonging among ethnic minority populations. Migration increasingly transforms not only economic organization but also kinship relations, communal participation, authority structures, and symbolic attachment within upland communities.

The Vietnamese case strongly supports perspectives from mobility studies and migration anthropology that conceptualize migration as transformative rather than purely economic [22,23]. Mobility increasingly reorganizes everyday life by connecting migrants to multiple social environments simultaneously, including hometown villages, industrial labor systems, urban workplaces, digital communication networks, and translocal family relations. Community therefore becomes less territorially stable and increasingly dependent on flexible and multilocal systems of interaction.

Migration also contributes to changing forms of identity and belonging. Earlier communal structures among ethnic minority groups often emphasized stable territorial settlement, collective rituals, and localized social cohesion [6,30]. However, migrants increasingly navigate overlapping social worlds characterized by mobility, labor migration, and mediated communication. Identity and belonging consequently become more fluid, negotiated, and context-dependent under conditions of mobility and economic transformation.

These transformations are especially visible among younger generations. Youth migration increasingly exposes ethnic minority populations to urban lifestyles, industrial labor systems, market-oriented values, and digital communication environments. Younger migrants frequently develop aspirations and social experiences that differ significantly from earlier communal structures organized around subsistence agriculture and customary authority. Migration therefore contributes to intergenerational change and symbolic transformation within ethnic minority communities.

At the same time, migration does not necessarily produce complete fragmentation or disappearance of communal life. Migrants often maintain emotional attachment, ritual participation, and social obligations through remittances, return migration, and digital communication [11]. Community therefore becomes increasingly translocal and networked rather than entirely dissolved. These findings suggest that migration simultaneously destabilizes and reconfigures communal structures within contemporary Vietnam.

### **5.2. Community Transformation in Contemporary Vietnamese Society**

The transformation of ethnic minority communities in Vietnam reflects broader changes associated with market integration, social mobility, and expanding systems of mobility under globalization. Ethnic minority communities are not disappearing under modernization and migration; rather, they are

increasingly reorganized according to new economic and social conditions shaped by labor markets, communication technologies, tourism economies, and translocal interaction.

One important finding of this study is that community transformation in Vietnam increasingly operates through the logic of mobility and networked social relations rather than exclusively through territorially bounded social organization. Labor migration, seasonal mobility, and circular migration increasingly disperse households across multiple locations while maintaining continuing social and symbolic connections with hometown communities [21].

This process contributes to the emergence of more flexible forms of communal organization. Earlier communal systems often relied heavily on face-to-face interaction, collective agricultural labor, and territorially rooted authority structures. However, migration increasingly reorganizes social cohesion through remittances, online communication, periodic return migration, and multilocal family networks. Community therefore becomes increasingly mobile and translocal.

Importantly, these transformations do not occur uniformly across all ethnic minority groups. Vietnam's ethnic minority populations differ significantly in social organization, livelihood systems, historical experiences, and patterns of mobility. Communities in the Central Highlands, for example, may experience migration differently from those in northern mountainous regions because of differences in economic integration, land-use systems, cultural traditions, and migration opportunities. Likewise, groups more closely connected to tourism economies or industrial labor markets may experience more intensive forms of social and cultural transformation than communities where migration remains relatively limited. These variations suggest that migration should be understood as a differentiated process rather than a uniform force affecting all ethnic minority populations in the same way.

Economic transformation also plays a central role in this restructuring process. Market integration and labor mobility increasingly reduce dependence on traditional agricultural systems and collective subsistence practices. Households diversify income sources through migration, wage labor, tourism participation, and commodity production [8]. These changes contribute to more individualized livelihood strategies and greater integration into broader systems of market exchange.

The effects of migration are also shaped by generational, gender, and socio-economic differences. Younger migrants generally adapt more rapidly to urban labor markets, digital communication technologies, and new forms of social interaction, while older generations often maintain stronger attachment to localized traditions and customary institutions. Similarly, women and men may experience migration differently due to variations in labor opportunities, family responsibilities, and social expectations. Households with greater educational resources, stronger social networks, or more diversified livelihoods are often better positioned to benefit from migration opportunities and maintain translocal connections than more economically vulnerable households.

At the same time, traditional authority structures increasingly undergo negotiation and adaptation. Village elders and customary leaders continue to hold symbolic importance within many ethnic minority communities, yet migration, education, and digital communication increasingly reshape patterns of influence and communal participation [13]. Authority therefore becomes more fragmented and flexible within changing social environments.

The findings further demonstrate that cultural practices increasingly adapt to mobility and economic transformation rather than disappearing entirely. Rituals, festivals, and kinship obligations are often selectively preserved and reorganized according to migration schedules, labor demands, and economic constraints [10]. Cultural continuity therefore increasingly operates through adaptation and negotiation rather than rigid preservation of traditional forms.

At the same time, the persistence of cultural practices across dispersed social networks further illustrates the emergence of translocal forms of community life. Ritual participation, kinship obligations, digital communication, and periodic return migration allow migrants to remain connected to their communities of origin despite geographical separation. Community transformation therefore involves

both change and continuity, as ethnic minority populations adapt traditional forms of belonging to increasingly mobile social environments.

These developments suggest that ethnic minority communities in contemporary Vietnam should not be understood through static or territorially bounded frameworks. Instead, they increasingly function through flexible systems of mobility, communication, and translocal participation shaped by broader processes of globalization and economic modernization. While the specific trajectories of transformation vary across ethnic groups and local contexts, the overall trend points toward the reconfiguration rather than the disappearance of community life under conditions of mobility and social change.

### **5.3. Contribution of the Study**

This article contributes to the growing scholarship on migration and social transformation in Vietnam in several important ways. First, the study expands migration anthropology in the Vietnamese context by conceptualizing migration not only as economic mobility but also as a broader process of community restructuring and cultural transformation. While many migration studies in Vietnam focus primarily on labor markets, poverty reduction, or demographic change, this article emphasizes the social and symbolic dimensions of mobility among ethnic minority populations.

Second, the article contributes to connecting migration studies with the anthropology of community. Earlier studies often conceptualized communities as territorially stable and socially cohesive units. In contrast, this study demonstrates that migration increasingly produces translocal and multilocal forms of belonging shaped by labor mobility, communication technologies, and networked social relations. Community therefore becomes increasingly flexible, fragmented, and mediated under conditions of mobility and globalization.

Third, the study contributes to broader discussions of ethnic minority transformation in Vietnam. Existing scholarship frequently emphasizes development policy, poverty reduction, tourism, or cultural preservation. This article instead highlights how migration simultaneously reshapes livelihood systems, communal authority, ritual participation, and cultural identity within ethnic minority societies. Migration therefore emerges as a central mechanism of social transformation in upland Vietnam.

Fourth, the article contributes to debates on mobility and belonging by demonstrating that migration does not simply destroy traditional communities. Instead, migration contributes to the emergence of new forms of translocal community organization maintained through remittances, digital communication, periodic return migration, and symbolic attachment. These findings support broader theoretical arguments concerning the reconfiguration of community under conditions of globalization and mobility [17].

Finally, the study contributes to reinterpretations of ethnic minority communities in contemporary Southeast Asia. Rather than viewing upland communities as isolated or culturally static, the article demonstrates that ethnic minority populations actively negotiate economic modernization, mobility, and cultural transformation through flexible and adaptive forms of social organization.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

### **6.1. Summary of the Argument**

This article has examined the relationship between internal migration and the transformation of community life among ethnic minority populations in contemporary Vietnam. The analysis argued that internal migration should not be understood merely as population movement or labor redistribution. Instead, migration increasingly functions as a major force of social restructuring that reshapes communal organization, cultural practices, authority systems, and forms of belonging within upland communities.

Earlier forms of community organization among ethnic minority groups were strongly associated with stable territorial settlement, kinship cohesion, collective rituals, and customary authority structures [6,30]. However, labor migration, market integration, industrialization, and communication technologies increasingly transform these localized social systems. Community therefore becomes more flexible, multilocal, and networked under conditions of mobility and economic modernization.

The study demonstrated that migration contributes simultaneously to livelihood diversification, changing authority structures, cultural adaptation, and translocal forms of social connection. Ethnic minority communities increasingly negotiate social transformation through adaptation rather than complete disappearance or cultural dissolution.

## **6.2. Main Findings**

The findings indicate that internal migration significantly contributes to livelihood transformation, changing communal authority, cultural restructuring, and the emergence of translocal communities among ethnic minority populations in Vietnam.

First, migration increasingly reshapes household economies and livelihood systems. Wage labor, remittance economies, and labor mobility reduce dependence on traditional subsistence agriculture and contribute to diversified and market-oriented household strategies.

Second, migration transforms community organization and traditional authority structures. Village elders and customary leadership systems increasingly coexist with labor mobility, formal education, market integration, and digital communication. Community participation therefore becomes more fragmented and flexible.

Third, migration contributes to changing cultural practices and symbolic systems. Rituals, festivals, language use, and kinship relations increasingly adapt to labor mobility and changing economic conditions through processes of selective preservation, simplification, and hybridization.

Finally, migration contributes to the emergence of translocal communities maintained through communication networks, remittances, periodic return migration, and digital interaction. Community therefore becomes increasingly multilocal and networked rather than exclusively territorially bounded.

## **6.3. Broader Implications**

The findings of this study suggest broader implications for understanding ethnic minority communities under conditions of globalization and mobility. Contemporary ethnic minority communities in Vietnam increasingly become:

- flexible,
- multilocal,
- networked,
- and highly negotiated.

Migration and mobility increasingly reorganize how communities maintain social cohesion, cultural continuity, and symbolic belonging. Community can no longer be understood solely through territorially bounded frameworks associated with stable settlement and face-to-face interaction. Instead, belonging increasingly operates through communication networks, mobility systems, and translocal social relations.

The Vietnamese case also demonstrates that modernization and migration do not necessarily eliminate ethnic identity or communal attachment. Rather, ethnic minority communities actively reinterpret and adapt communal structures, rituals, and symbolic practices within changing economic and social environments. Cultural continuity increasingly operates through adaptation and negotiation rather than rigid preservation of traditional forms.

These findings further suggest that studies of migration in Southeast Asia should move beyond purely economic interpretations and increasingly examine how mobility reshapes social organization, identity, and community within rapidly transforming societies.

#### 6.4. Directions for Future Research

Several important areas require further research. First, future studies could examine the growing relationship between digital communication and migration among ethnic minority populations. Smartphones and social media increasingly shape how migrants maintain emotional attachment, ritual participation, and social obligations across geographical distance.

Second, research on online ethnic communities and digital forms of belonging would provide important insights into how migration and communication technologies reshape community organization in contemporary Vietnam.

Third, future scholarship could further explore youth migration and generational transformation among ethnic minority populations. Younger migrants experience labor mobility, urbanization, and digital communication differently from older generations, potentially contributing to significant intergenerational changes in identity and communal participation.

Fourth, gender and migration represent another important area for future research. Male and female migrants often experience mobility differently due to labor segmentation, family expectations, and social norms within ethnic minority communities.

Finally, future studies could examine transnational ethnic identity and cross-border mobility among ethnic minority populations in Southeast Asia. Expanding regional mobility and communication networks increasingly connect local communities to broader transnational systems of migration, symbolic exchange, and cultural interaction.

Overall, continued research on migration and ethnic minority transformation remains essential because mobility increasingly shapes social organization and communal life in contemporary Vietnam. Internal migration is therefore best understood not simply as labor movement but as a broader process of social restructuring and negotiated belonging within rapidly changing global and national contexts.

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