

Migration in Vietnam

A review of information on current trends and patterns, and their policy implications

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SUMMARY

In the past 10 years, Vietnam has been remarkably successful in ensuring high levels of economic growth and in reducing poverty. This goes hand in hand with important shifts in population distribution and mobility. Although Vietnam has a relatively low proportion of urban residents (23.7% of the total population of over 76 million), this increased rapidly in the 1990s.

The economic reforms or 'Renovation' (*Doi Moi*) introduced in 1986 affected migration in three main ways. In agriculture, decollectivisation and the introduction of the household contract system have released farmers from the land. In cities, the household registration system continues, but no longer limits the acquisition of essential goods and access to employment. In the emerging industrial sector, Vietnam's incorporation into the global economy has resulted in flows of foreign direct investment attracting migrant workers where such industries concentrate. Closer economic ties with other nations in the region have also expanded numbers and destinations for overseas labour migrants.

Census data say that between 1994 and 1999 nearly 4.5 million people, or 6.5% of the population over five years of age, changed their place of residence. This figure does not include short-term, unregistered movement and movement in the six months preceding the census date. Of the migrants recorded in the census, 1.6 million moved from rural to other rural areas. This movement was essentially from the poorest provinces and from the provinces with high population densities: 1.13 million people moved between urban centres, and 1.18 million people moved from rural settlements to urban centres, while over 400,000 moved in the opposite direction, from urban centres to rural areas.

Over half of all migrants were under the age of 25, and women account for a much larger proportion of migrants than in the 1980s, reflecting emerging employment opportunities for young, often unmarried women in foreign-capital industries. Migrants are the lowest proportion of the total population working in agriculture/forestry/fishery, although over 25% of all migrants are employed in this sector, reflecting the significance of rural-rural movement in Vietnam. At the other extreme, migrants are a large proportion of workers in industry and construction. This is especially the case for the mixed (state/private) and foreign sectors, where migrant workers are almost one-quarter of the labour force.

Migrants' remittances are an important part of household incomes in home areas. However, migrants to the largest cities, where infrastructure and services are under considerable pressure, face restrictions on the issuance of permanent residence permits. This limits access to social services, formal sector employment and secure housing tenure, and can exacerbate the difficulties that low-income migrants face without actually stopping their arrivals.

International migration has also increased significantly recently. Vietnam's labour export policy started in the 1980s and is marked by three waves. The first and second waves were directed primarily to eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The third wave started in 1994, with east Asia becoming the main destination for contract workers, reflecting Vietnam's increasing integration in the regional economy. Taiwan and Malaysia are currently the major destinations followed by South Korea and Japan. Overall, the number of Vietnamese overseas contract workers increased from fewer than 4,000 in 1993 to more than 46,000 in 2002, while the proportion of women in overseas labour programmes declined to just over 18% because of government restrictions on contracts for domestic work and employment in the entertainment industry.

Since 1999, overseas employment has been liberalised, and in 2002 it was estimated that 159 private labour broker agencies were operating in Vietnam. Official and unrecorded remittances are estimated to be the equivalent of about 6% of the country's total export value and comparable to the amount provided under international loans.

The opening of borders between Vietnam and Cambodia, Laos and China is linked to the growing problem of human trafficking in the region. There is limited information on the number of people trafficked, especially women and children, and on the means by which they are trafficked. In some instances, what was intended as voluntary labour or marriage migration ends up as prostitution and other forms of sex exploitation.

The paper recommends that:

- Existing information on migration in Vietnam shows that migrants are a highly heterogeneous group, with different needs and priorities and reasons for moving. Policies related to migration should be grounded in a better understanding of the conditions, needs and priorities of the specific target groups. Legal support and social services should be provided to the most needy migrants at the areas of destination.
- Special attention should be given to the contribution of migrants to their home areas. National and

provincial governments are best placed to identify the needs for support and on this basis formulate and implement appropriate initiatives, such as facilitating the sending of remittances, removing categorising regulations, providing information on local investment opportunities, and training and support to return migrants and/or their families.

- Policy interventions should take as a priority improving the well-being of migrants by ensuring their access to basic services and the protection of their rights. This is especially important for low-income migrants in urban centres, for single migrant women, for some overseas migrants and for female and child victims of trafficking.

- Migration has both benefits and costs. Increasing pressure on infrastructure and services in the largest cities cannot be ignored, but should be linked to the wider context of national development strategies. More balanced and equitable regional development through investment in infrastructure in small and intermediate urban centres and increasing non-farm employment opportunities can ease pressure on the large cities. This requires a careful assessment of local opportunities and constraints, effective access to national, regional and international markets and, most importantly, coordination with macro-economic and sectoral policies at the national level.

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Internal and international migration have significantly increased in Vietnam since economic reforms (*Doi Moi*) were officially introduced in 1986. Today, economic reasons are the main factor behind population movement, and reflect the sometimes large regional differences in incomes and employment opportunities, both spatial and sectoral. Labour mobility has also increased following the removal or relaxation of regulations and restrictions, which in the past played a major role in shaping population movement and distribution. However, some barriers remain as the explicit or unintended result of policy interventions. Whilst there are significant regional variations in the rates, directions and composition of migration in Vietnam, a better understanding of the causes and consequences of spatial mobility can contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies for balanced and equitable regional growth and poverty reduction. This study summarises and analyses what is currently known about internal and international movement in Vietnam, and its policy context, with special attention to economic migration.

Definitions and methodology

The information presented in this paper draws on secondary data sources. The most important is the recent national population and housing census, conducted in 1999 (CCSC, 1999; CCSC, 2000), covering all 61 provinces in Vietnam. The absence of national survey data on migration in Vietnam until now makes the census information both unique and valuable.

Government policy in Vietnam identifies two types of population movement: organised migration and spontaneous migration. Organised migration refers to participants in government-sponsored programmes and often includes a permanent change of residence by the core family. Spontaneous migration is recognised but not encouraged, and migrants are responsible for the costs of relocation and choice of destination.

The population and housing census defines migrants as persons who have changed their place of residence (based on their *de jure* place of usual registration) within the five years preceding the census date. The census date was 1 April 1999, and the preceding five-year period thus started on 1 April 1994. There are clearly a number of limitations with this definition. First, it does not account for previous

movements (the previous place of residence may not always be the place of origin if migrants have moved more than once). Second, migrants who do not register at the destination are not counted as residents. Third, and most important, most short-term and circular movement is not reflected in census figures: migrants who had been at their place of destination for less than six months were not counted as part of their destination's population, and absent residents who had been away for less than six months were not considered as migrants. In contrast, micro-level studies suggest that the significance of this type of movement, both in size and in household livelihood strategies, is increasing since the implementation of *Doi Moi* (Dang, 2001; Dang, Goldstein and McNally, 1997; Douglass *et al.*, 2002; Li, 1996; UNDP, 1998).

These shortcomings have important implications for policy, especially for poverty reduction, as it is often the groups with limited resources who engage in unregistered and short-term or circular movement. It is also likely that, by including short-term and unregistered migrants, the size, direction (rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban) and composition (age, gender, education, marital status) of the flows would be somewhat different from that presented by the census.

Only persons aged five years or over are considered in the census analysis. Inter-provincial migrants are defined as those whose last place of previous residence was in a different province from their province of residence at the census date. Likewise, intra-provincial migrants' last place of previous residence was in a different district (commune/ward) from their district of residence at the census date. International migrants are those whose last place of previous residence was in a different country of residence. However, information on international migration is very limited, coming mainly from government sources which provide data on the major flows of (mainly licensed) labour export and include some international statistics.

Background

Population distribution and urbanisation patterns

As of 1 April 1999, the population of Vietnam was 76,327,173 people in 16,661,366 households. Males accounted for 49% and females for 51% of the total. Average population density grew from 194 persons/km² in 1989 to 231 persons/km² in 1999, giving Vietnam one of the highest densities in the region. It ranks third in south east Asia behind

Singapore and the Philippines, and is also third among 42 countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The population is unevenly distributed. The Mekong River Delta (see General map of Vietnam, p.36) is the most heavily populated region (16.1 million people, 21% of the total population), followed by the Red River Delta (14.8 million people, 19.4% of the population), in a combined land area of less than 16% of the country's total. By contrast, the central highlands, north west and north east regions account for 45% of the total land area but only one-fifth of the total population.

Higher levels of urbanisation characterise the regions with high population densities. The Red River Delta has the highest population density of all (1,180 persons/km²). Among urban centres, Hanoi has the highest population density of 2,909 persons/km² followed by Ho Chi Minh City with 2,407 persons/km². The Mekong River Delta, the most populous region, has a fairly even population distribution, with population densities in the provinces ranging from 300 to 700 persons/km².

Unlike most south east Asian countries, Vietnam has relatively low levels of urbanisation, although preliminary analysis of the 1999 census data indicates a marked increase in the rate of urbanisation during the 1990s, with 23.7% of the population living in urban areas in 1999, up from 19.4% in 1989 (see Figure 1, p. 30). This also reflects increased mobility since *Doi Moi* started in 1986. The urban population concentrates mainly in the south east, where it accounts for 50.5% of the region's population. It is followed by the central coast (27%), central highlands (23.5%) and the Red River Delta (21%). Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong and Da Nang are the main urban centres receiving in-migrants from other provinces. The sex ratio of the urban population is virtually equal with that of the rural population (about 92 males per 100 females), suggesting a fairly equal gender balance among rural-to-urban migrants, especially in the major urban centres.

In Vietnam (MOC, 1999), the following criteria are used to define an urban centre: (1) no fewer than 4,000 inhabitants (the figure may be lower for mountain areas); (2) a majority (60% or more) of the labour force engaged in non-agricultural activities; (3) serving as general or specialised centres for facilitating the development of a specific geographical zone; (4) having certain infrastructure and public facilities; and (5) a minimum population density defined for each region (this is usually 6,000 persons/km², but can be much lower in the mountain areas). The criteria have not changed since 1990¹; it should be noted, however, that with the splitting and redrawing of the boundaries of a number of provinces in the 1990s, new provincial towns were established and given urban status. Especially in mountain provinces, the population threshold for such towns was lowered to 2,000. The reclassification of rural settlements into urban centres, together with migration and natural population growth, has contributed to Vietnam's overall increase in urbanisation.

Historical development of migration in Vietnam

Migration is by no means a new phenomenon to the Vietnamese. Control of three-fifths of the territory of present Vietnam was obtained mainly through migration. In the north, migrant communities settled along the river banks and enlarged areas of the Red River Delta. The lack of agricultural lands in north Vietnam and the central coast's unsuitability for paddy rice cultivation were the main reasons for southward migration. Like spreading oil, migrants built up new villages located only miles away from their home areas. This process was repeated again and again over time in the low-lands of historical Vietnam (Gourou, 1936). Successive feudal kingdom states encouraged migration by issuing incentives such as exemption from duty services and taxes and by granting ownership of new lands for migrant communities.

Population movement also occurred during the French colonial period (1858–1954). The availability and exploitation of low-cost, unskilled labour were a major concern of the French. Movement took four main forms: rural to urban migration of landless people; low-cost labour movement between rural villages and the colonial plantation/mining zones; international movement of labourers to other French colonies; and circular movement of agricultural workers between rural areas during the transplanting and harvesting seasons. The last category seems to have accounted for the largest volume of movement in the period of French colonial rule (Thompson, 1968).

Following Vietnam's victory over the French armies at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Vietnam was divided into two regions, resulting in the exodus of over 82,000 evacuees from the north to the south. During the same period, about 80,000 Viet Minh troops migrated from the south to the north (GRI, 1995). Overall, as many as 900,000 people are estimated to have moved from the north to the south, and 100,000 from the south to the north (Duiker, 1983; Jones, 1982; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1989). Then, during the American war (1954–75) substantial regional differentials characterised population movement. People in the north were evacuated from urban centres to the countryside to avoid bombing, while people in the south were forced to abandon their villages to move to urban centres, especially to large cities, to cut off potential contact with the northern army. The two opposite processes caused a sharp decline in urban populations in the north and inflated them in the southern provinces. Barbier *et al* (1995) reported a sharp increase, from 20% to 40%, in the proportion of the urban population in the south between 1960 and 1975.

A massive repatriation of southern people to their native villages followed reunification in 1975. At the same time, there was large-scale population movement from urban to rural areas with the establishment of new economic zones (NEZs). During the 1980s, the government's population and labour relocation policy focused on rural to rural and urban to rural migration. The land-based settlement policies since 1975 continued to be reinforced. Migration to the three major cities (Hanoi, Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City) was

¹ The definition was given in the Decision No 132-HDBT dated 5/5/1990 of the Ministers' Council on classification of urban areas and decentralisation in urban management, cited in Hoang (2002).

discouraged in order to limit their rapid population growth. Migration flows involving changes of residence to urban places, especially to the largest cities, were strictly controlled through migration policies and the household registration system (*ho khai*). Urban to rural and rural to rural migration were explicitly encouraged to avoid what was considered to be over-urbanisation and to redress the perceived imbalance in population density both between the north and the south, and between the two deltas and the frontier, mountainous areas (Dang, Goldstein and McNally, 1997).

Direct policy intervention included government-organised resettlement programmes from selected provinces in the most populous Red River Delta to less densely settled regions, chiefly to the NEZs and settlement areas in the central highlands. The difficulty in integrating migration-related objectives with the development of the NEZs, the high costs of building new social infrastructure, and the growing shortage of readily cleared lands for cultivation have all contributed to the decline in the movement. Lack of physical and social infrastructure, poor health and food insecurity continued to push people to leave these resettlement areas. As many as half the migrants to NEZs have been reported to have moved again or to have returned home soon after arrival (Desbarats, 1987). By the early 1990s, the government had recognised the shortcomings of the resettlement process. Although the policy has continued, the pace has slowed and the efforts become less successful because of financial and practical problems (Banister, 1993; Huynh, 1998). Since the mid-1990s, spontaneous movement has replaced organised migration as the major redistributive vehicle of Vietnam's population (Hardy, 2000).

The introduction of *Doi Moi* in 1986 brought a break with the past. With a market-oriented economy, especially decollectivisation and the implementation of the household contract system in agriculture,² rural labourers were no longer tied to the land and the countryside was open to national market exchanges. *Doi Moi* thus facilitated the development of a variety of migration flows. Regardless of their migrant status, people no longer had to depend on government subsidies and rationing for their daily necessities, especially in urban places. The household registration system continued, but no longer limited the acquisition of essential goods, employment and residence in urban centres.

Economic renovations have entailed increased economic opportunities and expanded migrant networks which have, in turn, greatly promoted rural labour out-migration (Dang, Goldstein and McNally, 1997; Dang, 2001). In essence, *Doi Moi* represents structural changes, shifting from a centralised planning system to a more market-oriented economy (Irvin, 1995; Beckman, Hansson and Roman, 1997). The increasing commercialisation of agriculture and the replacement of labour with capital inputs have been of major significance in releasing the rural workforce and prompting them to leave rural areas. A recent migration study documented the pro-city comments and values of rural to urban migrants, even those living in marginal conditions: 'It's better to be poor in the city

than rich in the countryside' (Dang, 1998). In Vietnam, as elsewhere, economic pressure and limited rural opportunities fuel migration to cities. Income inequality and rural-urban dual prices work to the disadvantage of rural residents and hence promote out-migration.

The onset of industrialisation in Vietnam was accompanied by increased movement of labour from rural to urban areas, with the large cities receiving the largest migration flows. It was conservatively estimated that in 1997 that over 200,000 spontaneous migrants were living in Hanoi, and 800,000 in Ho Chi Minh City (COSA, 1998). The movement of population to urban areas, particularly to major cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and their suburbs, has become one of the best examples of the government's urban subsidised investment and mirrors the booming service sector in these cities. With the greater availability of opportunities for women to stay and work in urban locations, expanding flows of female labour migration to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City have been observed (UNDP, 1998; Population Council, 1998).

The recent expansion of exports of Vietnam's labour-intensive manufactured goods, such as garments and shoes, is one of the main drivers of this movement. In part, this is associated with flows of foreign direct investment (FDI), the expansion of which is one of the most dramatic results of Vietnam's ongoing economic restructuring. By the end of 2002, 3,100 FDI projects had been licensed by the government for a commitment value of over US\$43 billion. In 2003, the value of actual FDI in-flows is expected to exceed US\$2 billion. Most of this is directed to the south, to Ho Chi Minh City (21% of commitments by value) and to the nearby provinces of Binh Duong (20%) and Dong Nai (19%) with about 10% going to Hanoi (EIU, 2003). Since 1997, due to the regional financial crisis, FDI in Vietnam has declined both in number of projects and capital.

The improved infrastructure and increased dispersal of market forces allows the incorporation of even remote areas and their populations into an opening economic system that is no longer locally confined, but which is regionally and nationally interlinked. As people become more aware of emerging economic opportunities and income generation opportunities, they try to translate their motivations into migration behaviour. Community-based social networks integrating places of origin and destination have expanded and have, in turn, influenced population mobility. The magnitude of shifts in the location of the population, especially from the countryside to the cities, has sharply increased in recent years (IOS, 1998). This results in the accelerated growth of the urban population as initially reported by the 1999 census (CCSC, 2000).

As the decline of fertility in both rural and urban areas of Vietnam consolidates, migration is likely to account for most of the differential growth rates between rural and urban places and between regions, as well as for changes in the composition of the population in given areas. The importance of migration as a component of population change is shown by the magnitude of the population flows involved. The 1999 census estimated that, between 1994 and 1999, 4.35

2 In April 1988, the Politburo of the Communist Party adopted Resolution 10, which redistributed cooperative land to households, gave them contracts to produce a specified quota of crops and allowed them to sell any surplus.

million people moved, totalling almost 6% of the 1999 population. Yet this estimate encompassed only a portion of the total volume of population mobility, as it excluded temporary migration and seasonal moves. Spontaneous settlement from the north and central coast to the south and central highlands began developing in the early 1980s. This situation points to a pressing need for attention to be paid to migration and urbanisation as key factors in population dynamics and national development strategies.

Migration and the livelihoods of poor people

In the 1980s, Vietnam was one of the poorest countries in the world; economic growth was stagnant and the production of rice, the main staple, was not sufficient to feed its growing population. Since the late 1980s, however, the impact of Doi Moi on economic growth and poverty has been spectacular: per capita economic growth was 6–7% per year between 1990 and 1997, and Vietnam became the world's second largest exporter of rice. The first Vietnam living standard survey (VLSS), conducted in 1993, indicated that 58% of the population was living in poverty, while the second VLSS in 1998 showed a dramatic fall to 37% over the five-year period (World Bank, 1999). If the government's poverty line is used, the decline is even greater.³ Poverty reduction is a consequence of economic growth under liberalisation, but also, and importantly, of the foundations laid by the socialist state (land reform, education, health, employment security, etc). During the 1990s, disparities between and within rural settlements and, especially, between rural and urban settlements have increased. The highest levels of rural income inequality are in the central highlands, while increasing levels of landlessness and poverty in the Mekong River Delta are linked to commercialisation in agriculture (Douglass *et al.*, 2002).

Poverty in Vietnam is largely a rural phenomenon; 90% of the poor live in rural areas. The incidence of poverty there is 45%, compared with 10–15% in urban centres. This is not to say that poverty in urban centres can be neglected: indeed, as many urban poor are also migrants, and since migration to urban centres is set to remain high, there are clear links between rural and urban poverty. The main characteristics of the poor (both rural and urban) have been documented as: relatively low educational qualifications; relatively large numbers of children, and limited access to land and social and physical infrastructure. Lacking a stable source of income and landlessness are the main causes of rural poverty (World Bank, 1999). Migration is often not an available option for the poorest groups as they lack the financial and social resources it requires. However, the poorest can benefit indirectly through the opportunities for work and income brought about by returned migrants and their remittances. However, migration for this group can be the result of displacement by development projects or natural disasters, loss of land through debt, or personal failure. If the opportunity arises, temporary migration to other rural areas to work as wage labour is an increasingly common strategy to increase household incomes.

Migration in Vietnam is largely understood to be linked to high under- and unemployment in rural areas, where one-fifth of the population is considered to be surplus labour. This, in turn, relates to the difficulty in increasing incomes from farming, as switching to cash crop production is limited by the need for collateral for credit and, in many instances, by the lack of good and stable markets. With frequent fluctuations and prolonged depressions in the prices of agricultural commodities associated with greater global integration, it is increasingly difficult for the rural poor to make a living from small farms. Policies attempting to encourage rural non-farm employment, especially agricultural processing, are also not very successful, because of the low growth of the rural private sector. Not surprisingly, migration (especially to the cities) is a life aspiration for the overwhelming majority of rural people, especially the young (Li, 1996). Indeed, despite often living in crowded conditions and working long hours, migrants can hope to earn much higher incomes than on their farm or in rural employment. On average, urban incomes in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are five to seven times the income of farming labourers in rural areas (UNDP, 1998). Migrants from the north are also likely to earn more by moving to the southern provinces.

It is important, however, to understand the strategies of households in response to economic opportunities and government policies. Decisions to migrate may not simply reflect the migrant's goals or needs, but the household decision to maximise family incomes or minimise risks. Rural families often allocate their labour assets over dispersed locations to reduce risk. Through migration, family members pool and share their incomes. In this way, the flow of remittances is not a random by-product of individual migration, but an integral part of the family's survival strategy. Strong ties with family, extended kin and friends often underpin migrant networks. At the same time, in Vietnam, family ties and the kinship system are important institutions of social exchange and a lifelong source of dependence, assistance and obligations; as such, they play a key role in migration, and in the contribution of migration to livelihoods (Dang, 1998).

Government ministries and departments responsible for migration

Different government ministries and departments are responsible for different aspects of population movement, although none is designated a focal agency for migration affairs, unlike other social issues in Vietnam such as population, health, AIDS and family (see Figure 1a, p. 29). The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is responsible for the development of NEZs. Due to this mandate, MARD is in charge of rural-ward movement, mostly organised migration. In recent years, recognising the growing significance of spontaneous movement, MARD has started taking into consideration the flows of spontaneous migrants in its policies.

The Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is directly responsible for employment and vocational training. With primary responsibility for

³ The Vietnamese 'old' poverty line was expressed in rice-equivalent income; ie a food poverty line. By this measure the government wants to eradicate hunger by 2010. The 'new' Vietnamese poverty line is 150,000 dong/month/capita in urban areas, and 100,000 and 80,000 in rural lowland and rural remote areas respectively. By these criteria, poverty in Vietnam stood at 17% at the beginning of 2001, and the government plans to reduce this to 5% by 2010. The World Bank poverty line is based on expenditure (derived from VLSS data) instead of income (SRV, 2001).

alleviating poverty, MOLISA collaborates with MARD in labour and population relocation programmes. The Department for Employment Policy and the Department for Social Protection are the ministry's two major units working on issues that cover some migrant groups. In addition, the Department for Management of Foreign Employed Labour Forces (DAFELF) under MOLISA has been assigned by the government to supervise contract workers and manage the export labour industry. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) has facilitated the provision of loans to households living in poor communes who wish to work as limited-term export labourers.

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) is responsible for the registration of temporary migrants and directly manages the household registration system (*ho khau*), but mainly for permanent and official migrants. Spontaneous and undocumented migrants are often not included. In its function to maintain national security, the MPS, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), is responsible for immigration. Recently, the MPS has started investigating human trafficking and smuggling cases in cooperation with the Border Guard Command (BGC). The Ministry of Construction (MOC) is responsible for rural and urban planning and infrastructure development which have indirect impacts on population movement.

The Committee for Population, Family and Children Affairs is another government agency to be mentioned. Although not directly involved in migration, the committee has been concerned about the effects of migration on maintaining population targets in destination areas. Recently, it has also become engaged in combating child trafficking, together with other government ministries and international organisations.

In parallel with line ministries, People's Committees at different levels operate and supervise the civil society from a territorial perspective. They also issue their own policies, decisions and regulations regarding population and migration. In addition to government agencies, mass and political organisations such as the women's union, the youth union, the peasant union and the labour federation are also mobilised and participate in the daily work of the government in several domains at local level.

Internal migration

Scale and directions of internal migration

According to the 1999 census, 2.9% of the 69 million persons over five years of age in 1999 lived in a different province in 1994. Inter-provincial migrants who moved within the 1984–89 period accounted for 2% of people aged five and over (CCSC, 1991). Overall, during the five years preceding the 1999 census, nearly 4.5 million persons changed their place of residence (rural commune or urban ward) in Vietnam. These people constituted 6.5% of the total population aged five and over. Among these migrants, 55% moved within a province, and 45% moved across provincial boundaries within Vietnam.

The majority of those who had migrated between provinces also moved between regions. This predominantly involved long distances and is associated with changes in work place, income and work status. More than two-thirds (67%) of the migrants who crossed provincial boundaries also crossed regional boundaries. Table 2 (p. 23) and Maps 1–3 (pp. 32–34) show the levels of in, out and net-migration for all regions and provinces in Vietnam. Seventeen out of 61 provinces experienced net gains in population through migration. Both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City attracted large numbers of migrants from other provinces and regions. Ho Chi Minh City was the largest gainer of inter-provincial migration, indicating its higher levels of economic opportunity. The net gain was 410,553 persons and the net-migration rate 8.15%, the highest in the country (the figures for Hanoi, the second highest, were 114,617 persons and 4.29%, respectively). In addition, it was estimated from the census data that the floating population (1994–99) was as high as 1.2 million. Da Nang gained migrants while Hai Phong lost population through migration. Almost all provinces in north east regions experienced a substantial net loss of population due to migration. In the north west, Lai Chau and Son La provinces showed positive net migration rates, possibly due to the relocation of certain ethnic groups coming from other provinces.

Not surprisingly, provinces with the most intensive population pressure on resources in the Red River Delta and those with low incomes in the central region had the highest rates of net out-migration. The most striking cases were in the north's Red River Delta provinces of Hai Duong, Thai Binh, Ha Nam and Nam Dinh, and the north central coastal provinces of Thanh Hoa, Nghe An and Ha Tinh. One of these provinces, Thanh Hoa, is the single largest source of inter-provincial migrants in Vietnam. These areas sent a considerable number of migrants to other provinces, mainly the major cities and the rural areas of the central highlands. The concentration of in-migration to provinces in the central highlands and stretching down to the south east region can be clearly seen in Map 1 (p. 32), in contrast with the high levels of out-migration from most of the central coastal provinces, one of the country's poorest regions (see Map 2, p. 33). Overall, major cities (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City), the south east region and the provinces of the central highlands attracted the most inter-provincial migrants (see Map 4, p. 35). They accounted for nearly half (48%) of all recent migrants of Vietnam recorded in the 1994–99 interval.

The 1999 census data allow the measurement of migration streams between rural and urban places. Migrants are classified into four streams (see Table 3, p. 24). Note that the figures contain both intra-provincial and inter-provincial migration, excluding those who migrated from outside the country.⁴ Of the 4.35 million persons who had moved during the census interval (1994–99), about 1.6 million moved from rural to rural areas. In comparison, 1.2 million migrated from rural to urban places, but this stream was by no means unidirectional since about 422,000 individuals also migrated from urban to rural areas.

⁴ These figures represent only a portion of the total volume of population mobility, since they undercount temporary migration and short-term moves.

About one quarter of all five-year migration took place between urban places. Indeed, the number of urban-to-urban migrants is almost as large as that of rural-to-urban migration (1.13 and 1.18 millions people respectively). The 1993 VLSS showed that approximately 40% of urbanward migrants moved from other urban centres (Mundle and Arkadie, 1996). However, the 3% sample census data for 1999 could not provide the details of migrants' previous place of residence besides its urban or rural status.

Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai and Dak Lak are major destinations of migration. This movement is likely to be motivated by the combination of overpopulation, limited land and lack of non-farming jobs in the countryside, and better employment, income opportunities and higher educational facilities in the urban centres, especially the two largest cities (Dang, 1999). Policies promoting industrial production have attracted spontaneous migrants from the north to the economically growing areas in the south. Available evidence indicates that the performance of spontaneous migrants has proved to be more successful than predicted by government planners (Doan and Trinh, 1999). Moreover, the development of transportation, telecommunications and mass media across provinces has facilitated spatial mobility and enhanced social contacts between rural and urban areas.

Migration during the 1990s was mainly spontaneous and often temporary or circular. Proverbs such as *dat lanh chim dau* (where the land is lush, birds will alight) and *mot chon doi que* (one destination, two homes) have encouraged people to move. Indeed, seasonal migration is an old phenomenon in northern Vietnam (Gourou, 1936).⁵ Spontaneous settlement increasingly takes place in all provinces. In 1996, the government officially reported that spontaneous economic migration to all provinces nation-wide has risen with almost 212,000 households comprising over one million people. Of these, 7,400 households migrated to northern provinces, 97,000 to the south east region, 70,000 moved to the central highlands and 37,000 households migrated to southern provinces (COSA, 1998).⁶

During the interval 1994–99, inter-provincial migration took place in three major directions: north to north, south to south, and north to south. Migration from the south to the north was not significant. This reflects the 'pull' effect of the more economically developed southern areas of Vietnam (including the central highlands) as well as disparities in natural endowments in favour of the south.

Migrant selectivity and differentials

In assessing the determinants of internal migration, a distinction should be made between macro-socio-economic factors and the specific mechanisms (wage and unemployment differentials, etc) through which structural factors operate. This is an important distinction since it highlights the role that policies play as the underlying determinants of shifts in population distribution and mobility. In Vietnam, macro processes of economic development and social change have exerted a large influence on patterns of internal

migration. Increases in agricultural productivity and mechanisation, the introduction of cash crops, the relaxation of the *ho khau* system, and income differentials are all structural factors conducive to migration.

Economic factors such as incomes and employment opportunities have more of an effect than non-economic factors in determining current migration in Vietnam. The decision to migrate appears to reflect income differentials rather than background variables (such as age, sex, marital status). Although other non-economic factors such as cultural differences, education, religion, family and marriage also contribute, their influence in migration decision-making does not appear to be as strong as economic factors (Dang, 2001).

Attention now turns to demographic and social differentials as revealed by the 1999 census data. Although the migration selectivity obtained from the census may be somewhat different from that of temporary and unregistered migrants, basic characteristics are likely to remain broadly similar. In most countries, internal migrants are preponderantly young adults, and Vietnam is no exception. Over half of all migrants (52%) were under 25 years old, and only 10.5% were aged 45 years and older, compared with 48% and 20% respectively for the non-migrant population. Although migrants are mostly concentrated in the young age group 20–24, the patterns show a very highly selective trend of young migrants ages 20–22 in the rural-to-urban stream (see Figure 2, p. 30). While the age distributions of the rural-rural and urban-urban streams show a skewed bell shape, similar to that of the rural-urban stream, the age profile of the urban-rural migration has different characteristics: the proportion of migrants is virtually equal for all age groups, suggesting that the relocation to suburban and peri-urban areas classed as rural may prevail.

Figure 3 (p. 31) shows the age-specific migration rates for inter-provincial migration of the population five years and over by age and sex. During the five years preceding the 1999 census, migration rates at ages 20–24 were the highest of all age groups, and more so for women than for men. Among young persons, those aged 10–14 were the least likely to move. Migration rates at ages 20–24 were about twice as high as in other age groups (though they declined steadily thereafter).

Figure 4 (p. 31) shows the sex ratio by age groups for different migration forms of both the 1989 and 1999 censuses. The figure shows the trend of gender selectivity of internal migration in Vietnam as found by the two censuses. The high line for inter-provincial migration indicates the predominance of male migrants in the 1984–89 interval. This pattern changed substantially for the 1994–99 interval as a result of the recent increase of female migrants in long distance inter-provincial moves. As for intra-provincial migration, the sex ratios also declined for all age groups over the 10-year period between the two censuses. The results, again, reflect the increasing trend of female mobility relative to males during the 1990s.

Both the formation of a family and the dissolution of a marriage by separation, divorce, or death are likely to result in migration of some type. Although the

⁵ In this paper, seasonal migration also includes temporary migration.

⁶ In the south eastern province of Binh Duong, it was reported that 24,442 spontaneous migrants had moved into the province looking for jobs during the period 1990–97 (COSA, 1998).

census does not provide information on the marital status of migrants at the time of migration, considerable insights can be gained from knowledge of their marital status at the date of the census (Table 4, p. 24). Migrants and non-migrants differ with respect to marital status. Although relatively more married persons than single persons were recent migrants, the latter are more likely to move over greater distances. The proportion of inter-provincial migrants is considerably higher among single persons as compared with the ever married. The proportion is almost equal between currently single males and females who moved between provinces (4.9% and 4.7% respectively). As for intra-provincial migrants, data in Table 4 show a relatively higher proportion of the currently married women (5.1%) than single women (3.7%) undertaking inter-provincial migration. These differences suggest that being married is associated with shorter distance migration, probably because a considerable part of the movement is related to the relocation to new places in order to marry.

Although the widowed, divorced, and separated comprise a very small share of the Vietnamese population, the pattern of their movement was distinctive. Widowed persons, both male and female, had among the lowest migration rate, probably because on average they tend to be older. In contrast, the proportions of divorced/separated migrants were found to be greater. This is true for both inter-provincial and intra-provincial movements. Divorced males experienced the highest rate of intra-provincial migration (5.3%), with the dissolution of the marriage being the likely cause for many of these moves. These patterns may also suggest that when divorces occur, the more usual practice is for the men to move to a new location.

Education is often considered to be an important predictor of migration. Increasing labour market returns to educational skills have been a key element of conventional human capital models of migration. The effects of education as a determinant of migration can be viewed from two perspectives. On the one hand, people move to pursue education. On the other, more education, and especially higher education, may stimulate relocation through wider contact with outside communities, greater perception of new economic opportunities, and possession of more information about alternative places of destination. In many cases, both dimensions may interact.

Table 5 (p. 35) presents the percentage distributions of educational attainment by migration status. In general, women showed the same patterns as men in the relationship between migration and education. Migration rates were very low among people with little or no education. As levels of education increase, the proportion of migrants, both inter-provincial and intra-provincial, rose. Completed secondary school marks a threshold in migration patterns. Almost one in every five persons with a secondary school education migrated in the five years before the census. For persons with university/college or higher level of education, migration was even more prevalent. The mean number of years of schooling was highest for inter-provincial migrants (8.2 years)

compared with that of intra-provincial migrants (7.8 years) and non-migrants (5.9 years) (data not shown). Differentials in migration by education appear to be somewhat greater for intra-provincial than for inter-provincial migration, suggesting that much of the migration in search of educational opportunities occurs outside provinces. Rather than return to places of origin, after graduation students tend to stay and find jobs in urban centres, especially the two largest cities. This helps explain the relatively young age selectivity in the rural-urban and urban-urban streams.

Cultural factors can also play a role in migrant selectivity. The 1999 census collected information on ethnic groups which represented 14% of the total population. Migration data show that ethnic minorities comprise 4.03% of total recorded movement (data not shown). While Hoa and Khmer groups had higher representation in local, intra-provincial migration, H'mong and Dao groups were more likely to engage in longer distance inter-provincial movement. Almost all provinces in the north eastern regions experienced a substantial net loss of population due to migration. In the northern uplands, where a bulk of ethnic groups reside, the census data show negative net migration rates, possibly due to the relocation of certain groups moving to other provinces in the period 1994–99. A recent in-depth study reports significant inflows of H'mong and Dao migrating from Cao Bang and other north eastern provinces to Lai Chau and Dak Lak during the 1990s (Do, 2000).

Migrants' occupations and sectors of employment

As with other characteristics, work status and occupation were measured at the time of the census but not at the time of migration. Since some people may have moved to change jobs or to take up a new occupation, census data are of limited value in analysing the links between migration and labour market activity. Nonetheless, they show a selective pattern of migration by work status and occupation (the data are also useful in describing the type of employment that migrants enter).

The results in general seem to indicate that those who migrate are not the 'dregs of society' or the vast pool of unemployed labour. Compared with non-migrants, the percentage of unemployed migrants looking for work is only slightly higher, although overall they are a minimal part of the total number of unemployed (Table 7, p.26). A comparatively large proportion of students were also migrants (8.9%). Not surprisingly, invalid persons were least mobile in both forms of movement (3.2%). The overall patterns of work status differ for migrant men and women, and the higher proportions of migrant women among house workers and the unemployed, compared to their male counterparts, suggest that migrant women face relative disadvantages in destination labour markets, with the exclusion of the foreign-capital industrial sector.

Concerning occupation by migration status, migrants are the lowest proportion of the total

population working in agriculture/forestry/fishery. However, over 25% of migrants are employed in this sector, reflecting the significance of rural-rural (and, albeit less so, of urban-rural) movement in Vietnam. At the other extreme, migrants comprise a large proportion of the total number of workers in the industrial and construction sector. Of these workers, 15.9% were classified as five-year migrants, with over one-half of these having moved between provinces. This was greater than for commerce and service workers of whom 12.3% were migrants, mainly moving within provincial boundaries. As the economy develops, a shift from agricultural to other occupations, especially industrial and service occupations, will fuel migration in Vietnam (Table 8, p.27). The reasons for occupational differentials are many. Farmers and low-class workers have less information about destinations and job availability elsewhere, while the perceptions and social contacts of educated and skilled workers are much broader. With better education and higher skills, they are more likely to change their occupations after the first move and make themselves more specialised in a profession.

Predictably, the proportion of migrant workers in the industry/construction sector is especially high for inter-provincial female migrants at 10.5% compared with 7.8% for males, pointing to the high level of movement of young female workers to industrial zones in the 1990s. Both males and females working in the areas of science/education/health and national defence/security experienced the highest proportion of intra-provincial movement. The results suggest that migration reduced gender differences in occupational status in Vietnam by increasing women's participation in traditionally male occupations.

To shed further light on the economic activity of the population and on the new characteristics of the multi-sector economy, the 1999 census also collected information on the sector of work. Six economic sectors were defined: state, collective, capitalist, private, mixed and foreign. Table 9 (p. 28) presents the percentage distribution of the work sector by migration status of the economically active population. The results indicate that a majority of the total labour force worked in the private sector (22.3 million or 61% of those 13 years of age and over). The figure is high as it also includes those working in the household economy (such as micro enterprises). The government sector accounted for a moderate share of workers (9.6%) with about one-third of the share contributed by the collective sector (27%). Foreign-capital based economic sectors constituted smaller proportions of the workforce.

Migration status varies by economic sector. Particularly outstanding is the very high percentage of workers in mixed and foreign sectors who are inter-provincial migrants (over 24% each). This reflects the response of migrants to opportunities for work in the industrial zones and foreign-capital based businesses. These have attracted a large number of labourers, especially women. The differences are accentuated when comparisons across economic sectors are made between intra-provincial and inter-provincial migrants.

The proportion of inter-provincial migrants currently working in the foreign-capital based sector exceeded those of intra-provincial migrants. The latter were likely to be represented in the government sector, suggesting the popularity of local moves by government employees.

Impacts of migration on home communities

It is often argued that migration removes excess labour that cannot be absorbed in agriculture, and that out-migration may help reduce pressure on the land. The resultant reductions in land-labour pressure may increase labour productivity that should eventually translate into improved rural incomes. In the context of rural Vietnam, at least as long as the rural population continues to grow in size, out-migration is more likely to remove a section of unemployed and/or underemployed labour without actually producing changes strong enough to affect rural wage rates. Indeed, the rural wage rate is falling to unacceptably low levels, especially for female labour. We have found no studies investigating whether rural wage rates have stopped falling or have risen as a result of labour out-migration. This is a hypothesis which deserves to be empirically verified.

The movement of labour to large cities and urban centres contributes significantly to social mobility as many young and single migrants who would have been unable to improve their socio-economic standing in their places of origin go on to do so in the rapidly expanding urban centres (Dang, 1998). This is particularly true for educated migrants many of whom are university/college students. Most of this group experience some sort of upward mobility, particularly in terms of income and jobs. However, in some cases, the age structure of home communities has been distorted by the exit of those of prime working age, skilled, educated and younger adults, leaving a high proportion of uneducated workers, children and the elderly. Moreover, the future of Vietnam may see a widening of the gap between poor and better off households. Poor households have fewer resources and connections and less voice, and are less likely to benefit from the positive impacts of reforms while being more vulnerable to the negative ones. While freedom of movement may be one opportunity for poor households to increase their assets, or at least to avoid getting poorer (World Bank and DFID, 1999), the impact of migration on inequality in sending areas requires further exploration.

Many migrants are influenced by the safety net and access to information on employment opportunities provided by friends and relatives in destinations. The probability of becoming a migrant appears to increase directly in response to the number of household members who have already migrated. Increased access to urban lifestyles through return-migrants may influence the value system of rural communities, for example with rural couples having fewer children. Since fertility levels are much lower in urban localities, rural-urban migrants have also lowered their fertility in adapting to the urban setting. Dang, Goldstein and McNally (1997) found that migrants to four urban and industrial centres (Hanoi, Da Nang, Buon Ma Thuot and Thu Dau Mot) are more likely to use contraceptives

and to have smaller families than rural non-migrants with the same level of education, controlling for age and marital status. This is also due to better access to contraceptive services in urban centres than in the countryside. Indeed, many migrants adopt family planning after moving to urban areas.

Circular migration may also increase the links between sending and destination areas, especially between rural and urban areas. These links include flows of money, information and consumer goods. Return migrants who have acquired capital, skills and networks in their destinations may thus be able to contribute to the diversification of the economic base in their home areas, for example by starting new and much-needed activities such as rural non-farm enterprises. However, migration may also increase dependence on remittances, erode markets for locally-produced goods and drain off the most productive labour. There is a dearth of information on the impact of migration on sending areas, but this is an issue which certainly deserves to be better understood, given its potentially significant contribution to balanced regional development (Tacoli, 2002).

Remittances

In Vietnam, large-scale data on migrants' remittances are severely limited and hence hamper our understanding of the role of migration in reducing poverty. Nevertheless, remittances sent to family members and relatives by rural out-migrants are an important aspect of the migration process. Remittances also reflect a long Vietnamese tradition of strong family support and play a significant role in the livelihoods of households. Evidence indicates that remittances by migrants form an important source of income for many rural households. According to the 1993 VLSS, about 23.1% of households received remittances during the 12 months before the survey, and remittances account for 38% of their expenditure (Le and Nguyen, 1999). A survey by the Institute of Sociology (1998) shows that without participation in the cash economy, rural families do not have enough income to survive and/or to cover expenses for education and illness.

Rural-urban migration is a form of poverty reduction (Skeldon, 1997). Since in most rural areas the opportunities for agricultural diversification and for non-farm employment are limited, remittances are often an important component of household incomes, often pooled with farming incomes in kind or in cash. Findings from the IOS survey showed migrant remittances accounted for 60–70% total cash incomes of rural households. Seasonal migrants earned less, on average, than permanent migrants (434,000 dong and 647,000 dong respectively in 1997). There are smaller differences between males and females in the percentage remitting, but large differences in the amount remitted. As women migrate nearly as much as men, they often play a key role in migration decisions. Migration often provides women with employment opportunities and thereby increases their ability to improve the living standards of the family at home. The IOS study shows that migrant women tend

to remit much larger amounts of money than their male counterparts, as is often the case in many parts of the world (IOS, 1998; Tacoli, 1999).

While remittances to family members in rural areas are a widespread phenomenon, truly productive investments of savings are less common. Remittances from out-migrants may be used either for consumption or for investment in productive assets. Among the poorer sections of society, however, a larger proportion of remittances is likely to be spent on consumption rather than on investment. In many cases, the size of earnings of rural migrants is not large enough to allow a considerable amount to be remitted. Nevertheless, cash remittances have a profound effect on households' incomes and can help repay debts, cover schooling costs for children and illness of relatives left behind. Cash remittances can reduce the need for farmers to sell their paddy rice as a source of income and ensure food security for rural families and the community.

The costs of internal migration and key problems of migrants

The emotional and physical stresses for the individual migrant are balanced by aspirations to economic security and upward mobility for her/his children and her/himself. Overall, rural migrants have shown great adaptability in destinations, either rural or urban. No matter how low on the economic ladder migrants are at the place of destination, they usually perceive that they have enhanced their income levels by moving. However, migrants (especially rural-urban) incur a number of costs, both direct and indirect. Moreover, these costs are likely to vary depending on location and on their skills and income levels.

In the past, migration flows involving changes of residence to urban places, especially to the largest cities, were strictly controlled through migration policies and the household registration system (*ho khau*). This system is similar to the Chinese model of *hokou* which aimed at controlling population mobility, especially spontaneous inflows of rural residents. State jobs, and the family reunion migration they occasioned, became the main route to urban life. In practice, this system did not abolish spontaneous migration. It just made it more expensive.

Today, household registration procedures certainly no longer affect every aspect of people's lives. But, as survey data and media reports suggest that rural-urban migration has fuelled the jump in levels of urbanisation (Dang, 2001; UNDP, 1998), the fear of masses of rural poor flooding into the cities has resulted in a number of policy suggestions for measures to control migration. In Hanoi, undocumented migrant workers are required to acquire a three-month temporary work permit at the cost of 50,000 dong, renewable for the same amount, in addition to a letter of reference from the authority of the place of origin, identity card, etc. In Ho Chi Minh City, where in-migration increases pressures on already overloaded public services and infrastructure, migrant workers without permanent residence registration must meet minimum skills and their employers are expected to contribute 5% of wages to

⁷ People's Committee of Hanoi, 'Temporary regulation on restoring the order and managing migrant workers coming to Hanoi in search of jobs', attached to Decision No 3189, August 26 1995; People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City 'Proposal on management of migrants in Ho Chi Minh City', September 24 1998; both cited in Nguyen (2002).

the city's welfare funds.⁷ Although these intended restrictions have not generally been implemented, perhaps because of the recognition that increased rural-urban migration is in part a response to national macro-economic strategies, concern over migration patterns remain. The result is a hybrid system operating in internal contradiction, since explicit barriers to movement were effectively abolished by Vietnam's Constitution and Labour Code which asserts the legal right of individuals to choose freely their place of residence and work (Nguyen, 2002).

A key interface is the issuance of temporary residence for rural-based migrants. This is reflected in the statistics: by 1994, of those who had moved to Ho Chi Minh City after 1989, 62% were accepted as 'long term temporary residents' based on an extendable three or six month stay. Of 202,100 in-migrants to Ho Chi Minh City in 1990–94, only 26.6% had obtained a permanent residence permit (compared with 44% of the 178,000 arriving in 1986–90 and 64% of 125,800 in-migrants in the early 1980s). Although temporary residence can be extended by either three or six months, it creates barriers and limits migrants' access to social services at destinations. This is especially the case for the poorest groups of migrants, who are explicitly discouraged from moving to the large cities. Qualitative research in Ho Chi Minh City found that, without permanent registration, migrants are unlikely to gain access to formal sector jobs and are likely to remain confined in the unskilled, low-paid and low-security informal sector. They are not eligible for the services provided under the Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction programme, which includes low-interest loans, free health care and exemptions from school fees. Because they live in informal, low-income settlements, they are also often unable to access secure land and housing tenure or to connect to electricity, water and sewerage (SCUK, 1999).

With increased global economic integration and expansion of exports of Vietnam's labour-intensive products (eg garments, shoes, seafood), the major winners have been women workers, particularly those migrating from rural areas, while male employment has not expanded. This has provided a route out of farming for a young cohort of women with few options in the countryside. However, as indicated by a study of the garment industry, workers in this sector, even in the state-owned enterprises, are required to put in average working hours that cannot be sustained without considerable costs to their health. Doubts have been raised as to whether the intensity of work in these industries is sustainable in the longer term for the women concerned (John and Richard, 2002).

With regard to rural-rural migrants, as 'free' arable land is becoming scarcer, households in transition from one location to another may be especially vulnerable. The participatory poverty assessment (PPA) in Lao Cai showed that one of the major sources of household vulnerability in the northern mountain region stems from the fact that so many households have moved location in recent years, primarily as a result of pressure on land resources. Some households are able to settle quickly in new situations. Others, however, go through

an extended period of transition and insecurity during which they may have to move twice or even three times. This is often associated with not having access to sufficient land to begin establishing a s economic base in the new location (MRDP, 1999).

Implicit barriers to mobility still exist, and increase the costs of migration. However, they are likely to be higher for unskilled, low-income migrants than for white-collar, skilled ones. They also tend to be higher in large cities with infrastructure and services already under pressure (Nguyen, 2002). Ironically, these are also the places where economic growth is concentrated, and which therefore attract most migrants, for example, Ho Chi Minh City. At the same time, the search for a 'rational distribution of the productive force' remains a major feature of Vietnamese migration policy today. The most recent approach has been oriented to population and labour redistribution (see Nguyen, 2000; NCPFP, 2001). Since limited resources, rural poverty, labour surplus and expanding migrant networks lead to further out-migration, we may expect to observe increasing rural-urban migration in the future. Improving the spatial distribution of public investment in infrastructure to promote small and intermediate urban centres can provide migrants with destinations which are economically attractive and which can be more easily managed. This would also help reduce the overload on larger cities' public services and infrastructure. However, to achieve these objectives, it is essential that national macro-economic strategies explicitly and implicitly address the need to reduce spatial and social disparities in economic growth.

Implications for change and prospects of internal migration

The emphasis on urban industrial growth in policy formulation and implementation continues to expedite urbanward flows of migrants. Much of labour out-migration in recent years has been from areas characterised by very poor conditions (eg the north central and central coast regions). Extremely low incomes, correlated with scarcity of resources, continue to push labour away from these pockets of poverty. In the long term, policy makers should take a more integrated approach to the planning of industrial zones in which employment opportunities, incomes and services to attract and retain people, market circumstances, and infrastructures must be considered together. This, of course, requires much more financial resources and careful planning than it would appear exists in many regions in Vietnam.

Many policies aim to promote FDI in the market economy of Vietnam (Dang and Meyer, 1999). The 'growth poles' and pro-industrialisation policies and export-industrial zone development have limited impacts on patterns of population movement. The problem appears to be rooted in the implementation of such policies. Left to their own devices, foreign entrepreneurs normally locate factories and industrial plants close to cities in order to have ready access to markets, skilled labour, utilities and services. The government has set up industrial zones and export-

processing areas where incentives are extended to investors in the form of special tax, infrastructure, exemptions from certain regulations, services, etc. Examples are the export processing zones of Tan Tao, Tan Thuan and Binh Chanh near Ho Chi Minh City, where young and usually unmarried migrant female workers are employed in the food processing and textile, garment and shoe manufacturing industries. In several provinces, industrial zones have been set up, but in many instances, despite heavy subsidies, they have not been successful. Many have been left vacant after opening, partly as a consequence of the financial crisis affecting the region since the late 1990s. These zones, even when successful, do not employ large numbers of workers. Government reports have pointed out the lack of skilled workers for export-processing zones while a massive number of unskilled labourers are still surplus (COSA, 1999).

At present, rural-to-urban and rural-to-rural migration is determined by the interaction of both policy intervention and market forces. Population growth and surplus labour in rural areas, shortages of land in settled rural communities, modernisation of agricultural production and, perhaps most importantly, changing perceptions of rural and urban life, are important factors of migration. Unfortunately, government interventions often have little control over many of these factors and where they do have some impact, policies and programmes are often introduced without any particular regard to population distribution, migration and settlement process itself. Therefore, when specific policies of labour and population relocation are implemented that seek to influence the pattern of population distribution, they are often not effective. The broad dynamics of market forces and socio-economic change are far more powerful than resettlement policies.

Looking ahead to the future, internal migration is a key aspect of population change that continues to be associated with rapid economic growth and modernisation in Vietnam. As a driving force of population change, unequal development and land shortage will result in a large-scale redistribution of the population. The government should consider policy measures that seek to work alongside market forces. The elimination of urban subsidies that serve as indirect incentives for rural-urban migration would be useful. Overcoming the separation of rural from urban planning will become an important factor for delivering rural and urban development in a manner that can benefit rural regions and the development of small and intermediate urban centres. Finally, effective policies to promote non-farm employment in small and intermediate urban centres would contribute to reducing the pressure felt by the rural population to migrate, by providing local income-generating opportunities.

International migration

International migration is a major social reality of our time. Approximately 130 million people live outside their countries of origin. Among them are immigrants who have resettled in the receiving countries, workers

who have migrated temporarily to earn a living and refugees/asylum seekers who have been driven away from their homeland. International migration is a complex and inevitable global phenomenon, but lack of data has hindered policy options aiming to optimise the interrelationship between migration and sustainable development. This is also true for Vietnam. International migration has always been a function of the changing political, economic and social context in which it takes place. In the 1990s, growing labour market imbalances, as well as widening disparities in economic growth and development between countries and regions, combined with sweeping changes in global political systems and economic recession, contributed to the intensification of migration pressures (UNDP, 1998). Socio-economic disparities between more developed and less developed countries, in addition to advanced communication networks, have nourished the 'push-pull' dynamic of international migration. In this context, a growing number of sending countries have adopted explicit policies to promote the export of migrant workers. Labour migration may serve the interests of both sending and receiving countries, though sometimes in opposing or contradicting ways.

Types and flows of international migration

There are four major groups of emigrants from Vietnam. The first consists of labour migrants working as contract workers in host nations; the second includes documented permanent migrants and asylum seekers; the third comprises people temporarily overseas but who seek employment and/or extensions of their stay while the fourth is made up of those who use unauthorised means to gain entry to a foreign country or who overstay their foreign visas. This final group may include former labour migrants and asylum-seekers who belong to the first two groups, as well as women and children trafficked across borders to other countries.

Vietnam entered the international and Asian labour markets fairly late. When neighboring countries such as South Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia were achieving high economic growth in the 1980s, Vietnam was suffering severe unemployment and low growth. The pressure to export labour was recognised and national policies were adjusted. International labour emigration from Vietnam is extensively shaped and directed by the government and, until the 1990s, destinations were primarily socialist countries in eastern Europe, though this has changed in recent years.

Vietnam's experience in overseas employment began in the early 1980s, when the government embarked on sending a small number of technical workers to eastern Europe to acquire skills and to fulfil its obligations to the former Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation (COMECON) under bilateral agreements. However, the process has been far from smooth and out-flows of Vietnamese migrant workers to overseas labour markets may be characterised as three waves, largely depending upon the conditions in receiving nations. In the early 1980s, the movement

of Vietnamese workers to the former Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia marked the first wave of labour exports. Placement in other eastern European countries was negligible. However, social conflicts between Vietnamese and native workers led to an abrupt decrease in the out-flow and a temporary halt of overseas employment.

Until 1999, Vietnam exported medical, educational and agricultural specialists to Libya, Iraq and Algeria. Between 1980 and 1990, around 7,200 specialists were sent to these countries. During the second wave in the late 1980s, thousands of workers were sent to former socialist countries in eastern Europe, generally based on bilateral agreements. They included East Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. The year 1989 marked the highest number (167,503 persons) of Vietnamese workers sent to eastern European countries, of whom 45% were female. Over the period 1981 to 1990, official reports indicate that a total of 217,183 Vietnamese were employed as contract workers in countries of the former socialist bloc in eastern Europe. What is particularly noteworthy is that almost half or 92,000 (42%) were female (MOLISA, 1995).

Social and political changes in the bloc resulted in amendments to bilateral agreements and a sudden halt of the admittance of guest workers. Extensive unemployment, negative attitudes and repatriation of Vietnamese contract workers took place. By the end of 1991, a large majority (approximately 80%) of workers had gone home before their labour contracts ended,⁸ with 169,570 returning home from eastern Europe. Thus, by the early 1990s labour agreements between Vietnam and former eastern bloc countries were no longer viable. But several workers who returned to Vietnam soon went out again, particularly to Germany where attractive income and immigration opportunities existed.

In an effort to find other markets to continue its labour export policy, the Vietnamese government signed agreements with countries in the Middle East and Asia. The third wave started in 1994 when labour migrants from Vietnam were sent to Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Korea. Migration to other Asia Pacific economies began. Since then, east Asia has become one of the major destinations for Vietnam's contract workers. Rapid economic growth and declining fertility led to considerable demand for migrant workers in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. While demand was initially created by labour shortages, increasingly foreign workers were recruited to fill jobs that were shunned by local labour forces and to reduce production costs, as foreign workers were paid lower wages than domestic workers. The Vietnamese government's target destinations for labour migrants have become South Korea and Japan. These two labour importers bring in unskilled and semi-skilled workers under trainee programmes. This pattern differs markedly from labour migration to the east European bloc as most Vietnamese migrant workers to east Asia are contract labourers, which means they cannot take their families with them and must return home at the end of their contract.

The gross out-flow of workers to east Asia has

been increasing and, by the end of 1994, 14,305 Vietnamese workers were in Japan. Most were classed as trainees (as receiving on-the-job training). By the same year, 20,493 Vietnamese were working in the Republic of Korea; by the end of 1997 this figure had risen to 22,325 (MOLISA, 2000). Almost all were male, working in fishing vessels. Low wages, mistreatment and hazardous working conditions have been widely reported, especially by fishing workers in Korea and factory workers, often women, in American Samoa (The Guardian, March 1 2003). The lack of job safety, health hazards, the language barrier, discrimination and restrictions on geographical movement are the most serious problems reported by migrant workers. 'Trainee' status is also used in the Republic of Korea to justify the huge wage differential between Korean and guest workers' wages. Trainees are neither recognised nor protected under Korean labour laws as the arrangement is often a contract between a South Korean employer and a Vietnamese labour-recruitment agency, rather than with the individual migrant worker.

By the end of 2001, a total of 12,200 workers had been sent to Taiwan, though the unofficial number is estimated to be nearer 15,000. The majority are female, working as care-givers, textile and garment workers, and domestic helpers. They encounter alienation away from their families, language problems, the pressure of family demands, dependency on employers and poor working conditions and vulnerable to trafficking. Nevertheless, the export of labour migrants to Taiwan continues to be promoted.

As of July 2000, a total of 118,756 labour migrants from Vietnam were working in over 40 nations (MOLISA, 2000). Even in 1997, in the midst of the Asian financial crisis, approximately 18,000 workers were sent overseas (Table 10, p.28). Female migrants accounted for about 20% of the Vietnamese overseas workforce. The number of migrant workers has increased over time from less than 4,000 in 1993 to 12,000 in 1996 and 22,000 in 1999. Over 46,000 labourers migrated to work overseas in 2002 (Cam, 2003). It is expected that for each year between 2001 and 2005, about 50,000–100,000 workers will be recruited to work abroad (Pham, 2000). In 2003, the targeted number of exported workers is 50,000. Taiwan and Malaysia are currently the major destinations.⁹ Labour emigration from Vietnam will probably scale up in the coming years as trade links between Vietnam and other ASEAN nations are fully developed.

Overall, in the 1990s, Vietnamese women featured far less in number in overseas labour programmes (18.2%) than in Indonesia (63.1%), Sri Lanka (47.6%) or the Philippines (59.6%). This can be attributed to official restrictions on contracts for female workers to go overseas as domestic helpers, housemaids or 'entertainers'. Several labour export agencies in Vietnam are exploring new markets such as Latin America and South Africa, with the expectation that these economies will be able to receive a substantial number of workers for the years to come.

Asylum seekers, refugees and permanent settlers

⁸ At the same time, approximately 16,000 skilled and unskilled workers went to Iraq. Most of them were repatriated under assistance from IOM before the outbreak of the 1991 Gulf War.

⁹ During the first quarter of the year, over 15,000 labourers were sent to work abroad. However, the SARS epidemic has had a serious effect on the reception of Vietnamese workers in Malaysia and Taiwan. Vietnamese labour imports by these two countries stopped as of April 2003, affecting Vietnamese labour export agencies and waiting labourers.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that between 1975 and 1995 a total of 839,230 Vietnam-born people arrived in countries of first asylum in east and south east Asia. To this figure must be added those who went directly to countries in other regions, but the exact figure is unknown.¹⁰ Of the above total, 754,840 were offered resettlement, mainly in the US (55%), Australia (15%), Canada (14%), France (4%), Britain (3%) and Germany (2%) (UNHCR, 1996). Asylum seekers included all age groups, but those of working age with skills and small families were most readily accepted for resettlement. The remainder languished in camps in Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and elsewhere for many years until the camps were finally cleared out in the late 1990s. It was reported that 214,555 refugees were hosted in Hong Kong, 160,000 in Thailand, and 436,000 resettled in other high-income countries (AMC, 2000). The last refugee camp in Hong Kong was shut down in 2000. The closing-down of refugee camps in Asia in 1995 reduced the number of 'boat people' and limited unauthorised border-crossing. The repatriation of all remaining camp residents who were not selected for resettlement then began.

An outflow of permanent migrants took place in two major phases after 1975. The first occurred in the aftermath of the end of the American war and involved boat people from south Vietnam who typically landed in countries of first asylum in east and south east Asia but who sought permanent resettlement elsewhere. This wave peaked in 1978 when hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese were estimated to have fled the country. The second wave came in 1989 after Vietnam and the US restored diplomatic relations. This involved emigrants who obtained approval for resettlement through orderly departure programmes (ODPs), around the period 1990–92, which coincided with a time of considerable social change and renovation in Vietnam. Many Vietnamese, including children of former US servicemen, went to North America. Soon after the 1975–80 surge in undocumented emigration, receiving countries as well as those of first asylum started finding ways of encouraging potential asylum seekers to remain in Vietnam and apply for resettlement through official channels. By the end of 1995, the number of people resettled overseas through these programmes was reported as over 600,000 (UNHCR, 1996). Again, the largest numbers went to the US (440,000), Canada (61,000), Australia (47,000), France (23,000) and Germany (12,000). These figures are underestimates as they do not include resettlers directly assisted by their own relatives overseas.

Short-term departures and undocumented migrants

It is not possible to obtain official data concerning the number of people departing on short-term visas for purposes such as overseas study, family visit or tourism. Over the past five years, short-term visits have increased, many related to study, especially to Europe, Canada, Japan and Singapore. The largest proportion of undocumented migrants consists of those who have overstayed their residence or work permit, although

it also includes people who illegally entered other countries by circumventing immigration procedures. It has been reported that thousands of Vietnamese have tried to overstay in Russia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Canada and Australia without valid visas (MOLISA, 1995). Many of them were formerly short-term labour migrants, trainees, visitors or students. They gained employment although their work was not originally cited or approved as the main purpose of the visit. Others have married residents of the host country and have therefore qualified for permanent entry. Some workers break their contracts once in the destination country and change occupation, usually for higher wages. It is estimated that 5,500 Vietnamese workers in the Republic of Korea (29% of the total) and 1,500 workers in Japan (23% of the total) have broken their original work contracts (Nguyen, 2002). The current number of overseas students is estimated at over 20,000. After graduation, many of them stay in destination countries and become undocumented migrants by overstaying their visa and/or moving from study to work.

Trafficked women and children

The opening of the borders between Vietnam and southern China, Cambodia and Laos also gave thousands of people opportunities for short-term and often undocumented visits to neighbouring countries. The recent and increasing problem of trafficking in women and children has been reported in the Mekong sub-region (Caouette, 1998). As with many of its neighbours, human trafficking is a growing problem in Vietnam (Kelly and Le, 1999; Dang, 2003). The opening up of borders and improved transportation routes have facilitated economic exchange as well as exposed once-remote areas to the outside world. Consequently, there has been a disruption of traditional ways of life and social control, making local people more vulnerable to trafficking. The drastic changes that have taken place as the country has opened up to the market economy and trade are seen as the main factors in increased trafficking in recent years.

Although trafficking in women and children has become a growing problem in Vietnam, relatively little is known about it. The limited information available fails to give a number of those trafficked and the means by which they are trafficked (Derks, 1999). The thrust has been on trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation, internal as well as international. There are three known trafficking routes: the first is from northern Vietnam to China, mainly for marriage; the second is from southern Vietnam to Cambodia and to other countries (for example Thailand, Macau or Australia), either directly or through Cambodia, mainly for sex work. The third concerns women from several south western provinces, forced by their family to marry Taiwanese men.¹¹ Almost all of these marriages are organised by agents (including mail-order-bride agencies) and intermediaries, a bulk of whom are female themselves. Many Vietnamese brides are married under conditions similar to those of trafficking (MRSC, 2002). Unfortunately, very little research has

¹⁰ Estimates can be much higher. Zohberg, Suhrke and Aguayo (1989) give a figure of 1.1 million leavers between 1975 and 1986 alone.

¹¹ Increasing numbers of Vietnamese women are being found living (often illegally) in Taiwan after being deserted by or having escaped from their 'husbands'. Estimates indicate that by the end of 1996 about 5,000 Vietnamese 'brides' were living in Taiwan (Derks, 1999). Up to 2001, the total number of Vietnamese women who had married Taiwanese men reached 60,000 (MRSC, 2002).

been done on this kind of movement.

Nonetheless, as reported by the police from provinces and towns in Vietnam, between 1991 and 2001, 2,269 cases were discovered and 3,787 traffickers were arrested. Of these, 1,818 cases were brought to court with 3,118 offenders charged with trafficking women; and 451 other cases with 672 offenders were charged with trafficking in children.¹² The Border Guard Command reported receiving 7,918 trafficked women returning from China during the years 1996–2000 (Nguyen, 1997). Provincial police report approximately 10,000 women missing. Between 1991 and mid-1997, 3,058 people involved in human trafficking rings were arrested in Vietnam.

Despite a dearth of information and data, it is recognised that trafficking in women and children across borders is rapidly increasing, especially for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. New sources and destinations of trafficking are widely reported; more sophisticated mechanisms are found to be used by traffickers. In a great variety of ways, Vietnamese women and children have been trafficked to many countries and territories such as North America, Japan, France, Taiwan, Macao, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Due to the nature of their work, sex workers and 'entertainers' are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. More children are falling victim of trafficking as the demand for child prostitution increases, due to such factors as the spread of HIV/Aids. More and more young women and girls have been deceived, brought, sold and trafficked across borders to serve as sex workers. In Vietnam, as in many other parts of the world, this is an increasingly pressing issue that urgently needs to be addressed at both national and international levels.

Reasons for the increase in international migration

The overwhelming motives for international migration from Vietnam are economic. Despite high growth rates in the 1990s and remarkable achievements in poverty reduction, together with the growth of the private sector and its capacity for job creation, unemployment has risen in Vietnam every year. The country currently has a pool of about 9 million openly unemployed workers – around 17% of the total working-age population – partly as a result of massive job shedding by the state sector. Structural changes are exacerbating the situation. Agricultural modernisation has significantly reduced the sector's capacity to absorb labour, leading to rural to urban migration. Many foreign investors have ended up competing with local industries, causing serious dislocations in the labour market. Further, as a result of the Asian economic crisis, about 92,000 workers in the state sector, representing 8% of wage earners, lost their jobs in 1998. The demobilisation of soldiers has added to unemployment. Overall, it is estimated that up to 25 million people – 60% of the total workforce – are either unemployed or underemployed (World Bank, 1999).

While the problem of rural labour surplus is widely acknowledged, under- and unemployment also affects

urban populations. The unemployment rate in urban areas increased from 5.3% in 1995 to 6.9% in 1998 and 7.4% in 1999 (GSO, 2000). In some major cities, the rate is even higher. For example, in 1998 it was 9.1% in Hanoi, 6.8 in Ho Chi Minh City, 6.3% in Da Nang, and 8.4% in Hai Phong (MOLISA, 1999).¹³ Each year 1.1 million (net) people are added to the labour force, inevitably making unemployment more serious, especially in the countryside. The increasing commercialisation of agriculture and the replacement of labour with capital inputs have been of major significance in releasing rural labourers and prompting them to migrate. As the domestic excess supply of labour gets larger, the number of people interested in working overseas increases considerably (Dang, 2001).

A key 'demand-pull' factor underlying emigration pressures from Vietnam has been the wide gap between Vietnam's wage/income levels and international levels. Average wages in Vietnam are only about one-twentieth of those in the Republic of Korea or Taiwan, and about 2% of those in the US or Germany. In this context, the Vietnamese government has followed the lead of other Asian countries in actively promoting overseas migration with the double aim to ease domestic under- and unemployment, and to increase the inflow of remittances, as discussed in the next section.

Impacts on the national economy and on home communities

Although the prime reason stated in national policies for seeking out overseas labour markets is the need to create a skilled labour force, it is also acknowledged as a means of easing domestic unemployment and earning hard currency. Remittances from overseas are important for the national economy. In 1999, official remittances from people of Vietnamese origin living abroad were US\$1.2 billion (Migration News, March 2000). This does not include the amount of remittances, both in kind and cash, sent directly by migrants to their families. This amount is estimated to be equivalent to about 6% of the country's total export value and comparable to the amount offered by international loans.¹⁴ In an effort to encourage more ethnic Vietnamese living abroad to remit and invest in the country, the government announced in February 2000 that it would begin to dismantle the two-tiered pricing system which offers lower prices to Vietnamese than to foreigners for travel and many other services (Migration News, March 2000).

Remittances from international labour migrants have played an important economic and social role. Successful migration can provide adequate incomes to prevent the migrant's family from falling into poverty, and even raise its living standards. It is obvious that family incomes in rural areas are significantly improved by migrant remittances. Remittances sent home by migrant workers are increasingly crucial for rural society, although there are questions about their lasting impact. Remittances are often used to improve the living standards of migrants' families, and are used for consumer goods, better housing and education of children, rather than for immediate needs. Remittances

12 Cited from a paper presented by Colonel Cao Ngoc Oanh, Vice Director-General of the General Department of Police, Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam at the National Seminar on 'People-elected Deputies with Policies and Legislation for Prevention of Violence against Women', organised by the National Assembly's Committee for Social Affairs in Hanoi on February 1–2 2002.

13 Detailed data also show that unemployment rates vary slightly by sex. The unemployment rate of the working-age population was 7.1% for males and 6.6% in 1998 for females (MOLISA, 1999).

14 Comparable figures (in 1989–91) were 12% for the Philippines, 4% for Thailand, 1% for Indonesia (Athukorala, 1993).

and savings from international labour migration also help others in the community because of spending on housing construction, labour, goods and services. However, income disparities have also increased with overseas remittances to the home community. In many localities, important differences in new housing and facilities can be observed among families, but the effects of international migration on the distribution of wealth and social polarisation have not yet been studied.

The immediate cause of labour export is the income that migrants could earn and save for the family. The income differentials between Vietnam and other countries have strongly facilitated labour migration. But many farmers, especially those of low status and incomes, have little contacts, information on destinations and qualifications, hence they may not be able to migrate. Those families and individuals living in poverty cannot afford the costs of international migration, which include fees for recruitment, skills and language training, passports, visa and travel. The cost of becoming an overseas labour migrant may have led the family into debt. Moreover, migrant workers are much better educated than the population at place of origin, as one of the selection criteria is the requirement to complete lower secondary school, which is a relatively high level of education in rural society. In addition, labour must belong to the most productive ages of 25–35, posing a real threat of a 'brain drain' for the home country.

The demographic impact with regard to age structure of international migration on the community of origin is likely to be similar to that of internal migration: the exodus of those in the prime reproductive and economic cohorts tends to leave behind an increased proportion of older persons. In general, the movement of labour to overseas destinations has dramatic effects on the life of those left behind. Migration is considered to be economically justified, but also creates heavy emotional stress, and many relationships are torn apart. When a married woman or man migrates, s/he may be leaving behind their spouse and children. The separation of spouses and family members clearly has an impact on the welfare of the family, although not always and necessarily a destructive one. Moreover, returning migrants are more inclined to speak about their successes and gains than about the problems and obstacles they had to face. This facilitates the outflow of migrants from the same community.

Government policy and prospects of international migration

Vietnam's market transition and closer ties with foreign countries have heightened emigration. The increasing openness has accelerated the inflow of foreign capital and opened up greater opportunities for Vietnam to export labour internationally. From the sending country's perspectives, the 'pull' factor of income differentials and the 'push' factor of excess labour supply interact to induce emigration. The prospect of overseas experience and better income opportunities stimulate people to emigrate, regardless of the costs. Many believe that the hardship will be more than compensated by the gains through emigration.

In the 1990s, the government introduced a series of policies to institutionalise and regulate labour export. Starting in 1992, state-owned companies with operating licences were permitted to send workers to other countries, based on bilateral labour contracts. In 1998, further measures were taken to expand and diversify labour export, when the Central Communist Executive Committee enacted Directive No. 41CT/TW. Reflecting changes in international and domestic labour markets, in 1999 the government approved a new policy on overseas employment (Decree No.152/1999/ND-CP) which specifies procedures and mechanisms to facilitate overseas employment of workers from the state and non-state/private sectors. It also enables local labour export agencies and placement agencies to expand to meet the needs of their foreign partners more effectively. Individual workers can accept employment overseas if they are offered jobs. Private enterprises can now send their workers abroad if they have contracts with a foreign company. The guidelines related to the above decree were set by MOLISA, and workers are now required to take language, culture and vocational training before going overseas. This is a very important element of the effort to increase Vietnamese workers' quality and competitiveness in international labour markets.

Since the 1999 decree, 159 labour placement companies and other sector-specific agencies have been operating in Vietnam (Migration News, January 2003). Of these, a majority are state-owned and administered. A small number of non-state owned agencies have been licensed to export workers. In principle, agencies must inform workers clearly of expected working and living conditions, the responsibilities they must fulfil, and the laws and culture that they will encounter. However, there are a number of concerns with placement agencies that charge high fees. Some workers become deeply indebted as they must borrow from private money lenders in order to pay recruiting agents. Agencies often lack responsibility in informing workers about the real situation in receiving countries. Labour migrants going to the Middle East, to Taiwan or Korea are not aware of the laws and cultures in these countries and often lack access to information on legal channels and protective mechanisms. As a result, they can become vulnerable to arrest and deportation. Placement companies and recruitment agents devote little attention to labour issues, making it very difficult for migrant workers to avoid exploitative working conditions. In this regard, the media should play a key role in awareness-raising and disseminating information for potential migrants who seek overseas employment.

Networks of connections between previously emigrated family and friends overseas and people left behind in Vietnam have greatly facilitated emigration. The incentive to migrate abroad, whether permanently or for a short period, is heightened further by the temporary visit of expatriate Vietnamese (*Viet Kieu*). An estimated 3 million Vietnamese are living in more than 100 countries. Their visits have increased domestic residents' familiarity with foreign ways of life, thereby lessening the fear and uncertainty of going abroad.

Many *Viet Kieu* have visited home to look for a spouse. The recent decree of the government calling for favourable policies for all non-resident Vietnamese citizens will probably facilitate the return of *Viet Kieu* for investment and nation-building.¹⁵ It allows *Viet Kieu* to return home without entry visas, opening up legal channels for reintegration in Vietnamese society. It is likely that such investment already occurs, although it is often registered as FDI from the country of residence of *Viet Kieu* investors.¹⁶

Although emigration represents a pressure vent for Vietnam's excess labour supply, it has imposed a substantial cost on the country in terms of lost talent and human resources.¹⁷ In addition, a small but increasing number of technical emigrants leave the country, taking with them experiences, skills and talents developed domestically (Dang, 2002). It will be important to make conditions as attractive as possible for the return of professionals, skilled labourers, trainees and students who leave the country on a medium or short-term basis. This would contribute significantly to Vietnam's human resources development.

Hard-working and exploitative conditions have been reported by labour migrants working in fishing vessels (eg Korea, Taiwan), in Middle Eastern countries and, more recently, in factories in the Pacific islands. The relatively low adaptability of Vietnamese students in certain countries may lead to deeper cultural alienation for those studying abroad. But there is little information directly related to the problems faced by migrant workers and students. Vietnam should prepare for international action through bilateral discussions and dialogue with labour-receiving countries. As many of the issues are common among several nations, a greater framework of regional cooperation is necessary to deal with exploitative labour practices, by specifying minimum procedures, labour codes, standards, benefits and rights. Much can also be learnt from other countries in the region, such as the Philippines, which have greater experience of dealing with the problems of overseas migration.

Recommended next steps

Summary of key findings

Studies of population movement in Vietnam, especially international migration, have been limited by the relative lack of data. Since migration and socio-economic growth interact, this paper has approached the subject from two perspectives: how development variables affect migration and shape population distribution; and how, in turn, population shifts impact on economic growth and social change, both at the national level and in places of origin.

An important factor influencing migration is the policy context. Population distribution has long been a concern of the Vietnamese government which has expressed dissatisfaction with the unequal distribution between manpower and national resources (Tran, 1991; Nguyen, 1998). Recognising the spatial problems of regional disparities, the government's rural resettlement policy was designed to create optimal geographical

balance in the distribution of population and resources, and to restrict migration into the major cities. Direct policy interventions have included the relocation of populations in rural settlement areas, mainly to the central highlands. However, these measures have been far from successful in achieving their goals. Internal and international migration in Vietnam have significantly increased since the official implementation of *Doi Moi*. In part, this is related to the removal or relaxation of past regulations and restrictions, which has resulted in spontaneous movement overtaking organised movement in terms of the number of people involved and also, in the NEZs, in terms of migrants' success in improving their livelihoods at destination. Transformations in agricultural production systems have also contributed to the creation of surplus labour in the rural areas, while the growth of manufacturing and service industries, in many cases linked to the on-going incorporation of Vietnam into the global economy, have increased opportunities in urban centres and peri-urban areas. But with new opportunities, new inequalities have emerged, with some regions receiving more investment than others, and with income differences increasing between households within the same areas. All these factors contribute to population movement and largely determine its different characteristics.

The current importance of migration as a component of population change in Vietnam is attested to by the magnitude of the population flows involved. As indicated by the census data, 4.5 million people (6.5% of the total population aged five and over) moved residence in the period 1994–99. Migrants arriving in the cities of Vietnam moved, for the most part, by themselves, relying on migrant networks. The expansion of these informal networks and recruitment channels helps to lower migration costs and ease restrictions on urban entry. During the 1990s, rural-rural migration was still significant, and usually depended on many of the same economic factors leading to rural-urban migration. Rural populations migrate to seek better incomes. However, rural destinations generally offer fewer social services, cash earnings and educational opportunities – the 'bright lights' that usually attract migrants. As in many other parts of the world, rural-rural movement is more likely to be undertaken by low-income, low-skilled groups.

Recent research findings show that the constraints on migration are associated more with non-economic factors while the motives for migration are more associated with economic factors (Dang, Goldstein and McNally, 1997). In Vietnam, contemporary migrants choose to migrate where economic opportunities and incomes are higher or where lands are available. The observed flows of migration are consistent with the location of economic opportunities, income levels and growth patterns. The south east and central highlands were the only two regions with net in-migration during the 1990s. Indeed, the levels of migration are highest for the two regions, together with Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. The two regions have experienced higher rates of expansion of market opportunities, economic diversification, jobs and services than any

15 The Prime Ministerial Decree No. 210/1999/QĐ-TTg took effect from November 12 1999.

16 In 2002, in Ha Nam province, out of seven approved FDI projects, only one was active and benefited from investment by a German-based *Viet Kieu* (Hoang, 2002).

17 In recent years a number of international NGOs in Vietnam have promoted fellowship programmes and overseas study information aimed at attracting a number of young students to study overseas. Many of these students have tried to stay on and work in their host countries.

other in Vietnam.

Focusing on voluntary and economic movement, the present study examined the selectivity of internal and international migration. The results indicate that in Vietnam labour migration is highly selective of educated and skilled young adults. This subset of the labour force is most prone to migrate, internally as well as overseas. Migration requires a minimum of resources that are not available to the uneducated and very poor. One of the major findings of this study is that migration takes place in response to a wide range of factors which affect different people in different ways. Better-educated workers proved not only to be the most mobile but also to migrate to urban places and overseas where economic opportunities and labour market returns are more available. Another significant transformation that has emerged in the period 1994–99 is the increase in the number of female migrants. This is related to industrial employment opportunities linked to FDI and located mainly in and around Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. This emergence follows patterns already established in other countries in the region.

Migration can generate substantial benefits not only for migrants themselves but also for areas of origin and home communities. There is considerable evidence in Vietnam that migrant remittances form an important source of income for many rural households. While remittances sent by internal migrants are often modest and used mainly for the immediate needs of those left behind, international remittances are much more substantial and may help to purchase consumer goods or to invest in agricultural modernisation. When large enough, such investments can be an important impetus for rural economic growth. However, the loss of large numbers of the most innovative and experienced workers at the most productive period of their lives can have detrimental impacts on sending areas. Some rural families now consist only of children and the elderly, supported financially by relatives in the cities. The recent attempt by provincial authorities to attract professionals and graduates to work in their provinces is indicative of the impoverishment effect that long-term out-migration has had on some local economies.

There is a strong pressure for overseas migration in the rural segment of the population. However, risks are often involved in the process of recruitment, selection and in the working conditions of migrants. Access to regulated channels for overseas employment is limited and relatively ineffective, especially for the poor. It is in this context that human trafficking takes place. Increasing numbers of women (and children) are now falling prey to trafficking because of lack of access to information and to official channels. With limited information, many rely on arrangements offered by agents, often through illegal channels. They may also experience deceptive and abusive brokerage practices. Once in the destination country, they may find themselves in difficult situations that they did not expect or bargain for. These migrants are vulnerable to exploitation with little means to protect themselves.

While spontaneous migration is now largely scaled-up in Vietnam and accepted as an essential component of the market economy, movement to the

two largest cities is an on-going cause for concern since infrastructure and service provision is already under much pressure. Policies which aim to discourage in-migration, especially of unskilled, low-income groups, can, however, exacerbate the difficulties they face without actually stopping their arrival. These migrants often find accommodation only in squatter settlements, where they are under permanent threat of eviction and lack basic infrastructure and services. Lack of permanent registration also makes it difficult to find stable employment and to benefit from programmes targeting the urban poor.

Recommendations

In policies and regulations regarding migration, migrants have generally been seen as a homogeneous population with uniform needs, goals and abilities, whereas the reality is that they are composed of people with heterogeneous characteristics. Government policy interventions have been designed without taking account of whether they are in harmony with individual goals. Consequently, macro policies aimed at creating socially optimal distribution between population and resources may not be in alignment or may even conflict with migrants' needs. In most cases, the results of direct policy interventions to affect migration and redistribute population have been quite limited.

Our first recommendation is, therefore, that policies related to migration should be grounded in a better understanding of the conditions, needs and priorities of the specific migrant group targeted. One size does not fit all. In practical terms, this is likely to involve closer coordination and cooperation between the large number of ministries, departments and other institutions currently responsible for one or other aspect of migration. In terms of improving existing knowledge on migration in Vietnam, greater attention should be given to longitudinal studies, retrospective and prospective. A national survey on migration has been conducted in other countries in the region (eg Thailand) but not in Vietnam due, possibly, to the lack of funding and policy interests. Such a survey, covering different types of population mobility, would offer a unique opportunity because it can provide detailed information and variables not covered by the census data, including the influence of household factors such as income and asset ownership on migration decisions.¹⁸ There is also a strong need to collect information on movement to and from urban locations by size to allow a more meaningful assessment of urban growth and trends of urbanward migration over time.

Migration should be seen as a movement of labour to places where it can gain the highest returns. Migration to urban areas and overseas often generates some benefits for home areas in terms of the inflow of remittances and their investment in raising incomes. These positive benefits should not be overlooked while attempting to formulate population and migration policies, so that the resulting process of population redistribution leads to better living standards for all. The government should support the initiatives of migrants, whether temporary or permanent, to promote

¹⁸ The VLSS only covered the formal/official population, and hence excluded temporary and unregistered population in the study sites. This creates a flaw in the data for understanding migration.

development and reduce poverty, since economic development is both the objective and the determinant of Vietnam's resettlement and migration policies.

Our second recommendation is that special attention be given to the contribution of migrants to home areas, that national and provincial governments identify the needs for support and, on this basis, formulate and implement appropriate initiatives (for example facilitate the sending of remittances, remove categorising regulations, provide information on local investment possibilities, provide training and support to return migrants and/or their families, etc. In this respect, much can be learned from the experiences of other countries in the region). This should be supported by additional research on the consequences of migration, especially for the poor and non-migrants, which should aim to answer some of the questions that remain unanswered in this paper, including: Have the returns to labour increased or decreased after migration? Has the productivity of land changed? Has population pressure been really eased? How have remittances been used in the home areas? Have overseas remittances raised per capita income? How can remittances contribute to local equitable growth in areas of origin?

Labour migration, both internal and international, has expanded rapidly in Vietnam over the 1990s. People migrate in search of the better opportunities they perceive to exist in urban centres and overseas. It is reasonable to assume that the numbers involved will continue to increase. As previous experience in Vietnam (and in other countries) has shown, it is very difficult to control migration without limiting individuals' rights to reside and seek jobs freely, as enshrined in the constitution.

Our third recommendation is, therefore, that policies take as their priority to improve the well-being of migrants, by ensuring their effective access to basic social services and the protection of their rights. This is especially important for low-income migrants in urban centres, for single migrant women (who often face difficulties and discrimination in destination areas), for some overseas labour migrants and for victims of trafficking. Many efforts are already under way. For example, in its recently approved Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), the government of Vietnam has determined that the implementation of national urban development strategies and other economic growth and social equity strategies should benefit the poor with no distinction between local (indigenous) and immigrant poor people (SRV, 2002). However, more concrete policy measures are needed to realise this commitment. With regard to international movement, we would like to recommend that Vietnam's diplomatic representatives in receiving countries monitor the working and living conditions of Vietnamese overseas workers and protect trafficked victims; and that the government develops bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with the governments of Cambodia, China and Laos that regulate and protect Vietnamese citizens' rights and safety.

Finally, it is important to recognise that migration has both benefits and costs. Increasing pressure on infrastructure and services in the largest cities are problems that cannot be ignored. At the same time,

we recommend that they are linked to the wider context of national development strategies. Government policies can support more balanced and equitable regional development through public investment in infrastructure in small towns and intermediate urban centres. For a long-term and sustainable reduction of regional disparities, the government also needs to create opportunities for investment in the agricultural sector and the rural economy. These measures have the potential to increase access to non-farm employment opportunities to the populations of the rural regions, while at the same time easing pressure on the already overloaded infrastructure and services in the large cities. However, this also requires a careful assessment of local opportunities and constraints, effective access to national and international markets and, most importantly, coordination with macro-economic and sectoral policies at the national level. More studies to assess the impact of social and economic development policies that may lead to population redistribution, and resettlement policies that can enhance development are very much needed and should be encouraged in Vietnam.

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ANNEX 1: TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 1: POPULATION, AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION, 1999

Region	Population size (person)	Population (%)	Density (person/km ²)	Area (km ²)
Red River Delta	14,799,691	19.4	1180	12,542
Northeast	10,860,804	14.2	162	67,042
Northwest	2,226,372	2.9	62	35,909
North Central	10,007,669	13.1	196	51,060
Central Coast	6,528,081	8.6	195	33,477
Central Highlands	3,061,901	4.0	67	45,700
Southeast	12,707,950	16.7	285	44,589
Mekong Delta	16,130,675	21.1	408	39,536
Whole country	76,323,173	100.0	231	330,403

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 2: INTER-PROVINCIAL MIGRATION RATE BY MAJOR CITIES, PROVINCES AND REGION: 1994-99

Province	In-migrants			Out-migrants			Net-migration rate (%)		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Ha Noi	80266	76078	156344	25278	16449	41727	41.14	44.65	42.89
Hai Phong	7184	8110	15294	16456	13045	29501	-11.24	-5.82	-8.49
Ha Tay	13756	9540	23296	25556	24827	50383	-10.15	-12.49	-11.35
Hai Duong	6613	4366	10979	37011	37189	74200	-38.13	-38.50	-38.32
Hung Yen	7434	5305	12739	14182	13444	27626	-13.08	-14.73	-13.93
Ha Nam	3829	2525	6354	13792	17140	30932	-25.93	-35.87	-31.05
Nam Dinh	6372	3976	10348	33412	31006	64418	-29.43	-27.88	-28.63
Thai Binh	9874	4704	14578	29738	26267	56005	-23.28	-23.12	-23.20
Ninh Binh	4389	2845	7234	16678	14629	31307	-28.40	-26.11	-27.23
Red River Delta	139717	117449	257166	212103	193996	406099	-10.02	-10.11	-10.06
Ha Giang	5815	5254	11069	3115	2388	5503	9.05	9.42	9.24
Cao Bang	2629	1739	4368	5546	5544	11090	-12.17	-15.16	-13.70
Lao Cai	5732	6170	11902	6390	5928	12318	-2.22	0.81	-0.70
Bac Can	4944	3192	8136	3660	3839	7499	9.34	-4.70	2.31
Lang Son	2316	2452	4768	7857	6583	14440	-15.85	-11.63	-13.73
Tuyen Quang	2613	3601	6214	6279	6475	12754	-10.98	-8.42	-9.69
Yen Bai	4899	3938	8837	5125	5406	10531	-0.67	-4.31	-2.49
Thai Nguyen	4512	4530	9042	14673	12213	26886	-19.50	-14.64	-17.06
Phu Tho	4891	4293	9184	13802	11060	24862	-14.39	-10.54	-12.43
Vinh Phuc	11238	7273	18511	18007	15997	34004	-12.72	-15.58	-14.19
Bac Giang	4371	4369	8740	14513	11635	26148	-13.75	-9.63	-11.67
Bac Ninh	4474	4472	8946	21967	16262	38229	-38.27	-24.35	-31.11
Quang Ninh	11005	10853	21858	14953	11339	26292	-7.70	-0.99	-4.41
Northeast	69439	62136	131575	135887	114669	250556	-12.36	-9.58	-10.96
Lai Chau	5362	5145	10507	2596	2107	4703	9.30	10.43	9.86
Son La	4054	3683	7737	2901	2057	4958	2.61	3.70	3.15
Hoa Binh	3781	3219	7000	9543	8997	18540	-15.32	-15.14	-15.23
North West	13197	12047	25244	15040	13161	28201	-1.65	-1.00	-1.33
Thanh Hoa	9248	3743	12991	55443	52035	107478	-27.26	-27.24	-27.25
Nghe An	6178	3877	10055	36321	35557	71878	-21.42	-21.83	-21.63
Ha Tinh	4575	3743	8318	25707	34605	60312	-33.94	-47.75	-40.97
Quang Binh	3342	1723	5065	15252	17454	32706	-30.35	-39.19	-34.82
Quang Tri	2751	2582	5333	8753	11191	19944	-21.28	-29.56	-25.48
Thua Thien – Hue	11088	10741	21829	18530	22627	41157	-14.44	-22.44	-18.49
North Central Coast	37182	26409	63591	160006	173469	333475	-24.99	-28.88	-26.97
Da Nang	21465	23067	44532	11743	8097	19840	28.95	42.99	36.09
Quang Nam	6869	5459	12328	21960	26337	48297	-22.73	-29.47	-26.21
Quang Ngai	4177	3480	7657	19034	23675	42709	-25.62	-33.11	-29.46
Binh Dinh	4783	9614	14397	20206	19996	40202	-21.75	-13.81	-17.66
Phu Yen	6926	5670	12596	6774	9480	16254	0.39	-9.59	-4.65
Khanh Hoa	10350	9614	19964	11612	8912	20524	-2.47	1.35	-0.54
South Central Coast	54570	56904	111474	91329	96497	187826	-11.53	-11.86	-11.70
Kon Tum	9244	7990	17234	4243	3914	8157	31.64	26.13	28.90
Gia Lai	39742	34339	74081	7404	5458	12862	65.89	60.02	62.99
Dac Lac	81577	75579	157156	15845	13140	28985	72.82	71.47	72.15
Central Highlands	130563	117908	248471	27492	22512	50004	66.44	63.14	64.81
TP Ho Chi Minh	228670	260257	488927	44256	34118	78374	76.07	86.55	81.50
Lam Dong	42144	42260	84404	14485	13858	28343	55.04	57.53	56.27
Ninh Thuan	2884	3104	5988	5665	6751	12416	-11.16	-14.24	-12.72
Binh Phuoc	36109	31043	67152	7337	7075	14412	86.38	74.77	80.69
Tay Ninh	4815	5570	10385	11600	8946	20546	-14.31	-6.87	-10.53
Binh Duong	29731	34624	64355	11849	11179	23028	51.62	63.36	57.68
Dong Nai	56763	73157	129920	42462	42237	84699	14.40	31.03	22.73
Binh Thuan	9033	9011	18044	13618	16581	30199	-8.78	-14.43	-11.61
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	26997	25431	52428	14840	13848	28688	30.37	28.94	29.65
Southeast	437146	484457	921603	166112	154593	320705	43.40	51.02	47.27
Long An	23757	23208	46965	16607	23463	40070	11.17	-0.38	5.28
Dong Thap	6180	7629	13809	27056	31986	59042	-27.20	-30.54	-28.90
An Giang	8560	11286	19846	18311	19059	37370	-9.67	-7.47	-8.55
Tien Giang	5802	6665	12467	17346	25864	43210	-14.85	-23.19	-19.15
Vinh Long	4489	5174	9663	14564	16900	31464	-20.55	-22.54	-21.57
Ben Tre	5842	5889	11731	19975	26571	46546	-22.53	-30.89	-26.84
Kien Giang	17551	18003	35554	12414	14826	27240	6.97	4.19	5.56
Can Tho	22442	20531	42973	18671	25260	43931	4.24	-5.13	-0.53
Tra Vinh	5057	4615	9672	9355	9932	19287	-8.93	-10.98	-9.96
Soc Trang	4141	4985	9126	12520	10910	23430	-14.65	-9.84	-12.19
Bac Lieu	4236	4042	8278	12156	12272	24428	-21.97	-21.90	-21.93
Ca Mau	11362	10834	22196	13227	13124	26351	-3.38	-4.04	-3.71
Mekong River Delta	119419	122861	242280	192202	230167	422369	-9.21	-13.04	-11.16

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TYPE OF MIGRATION BY SEX

Type of migration	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Population aged 5+						
Non-migrant	31614357	93.84	32878954	93.18	64493311	93.50
Intra-provincial	1075499	3.19	1404911	3.98	2480410	3.60
Inter-provincial	1001234	2.97	1000175	2.83	2001409	2.90
Total population	33691090	100.00	35284040	100.00	68975130	100.00
Migrants						
Rural-rural	711745	35.3	897279	38.5	1609024	37.0
Rural-urban	552544	27.4	629745	27.0	1182289	27.2
Urban-rural	218859	10.8	203092	8.7	421951	9.7
Urban-urban	535274	26.5	602468	25.8	1137742	26.1
Total migrants	2018422	100.0	2332584	100.0	4351006	100.0

Note: Population ages 5 and over only

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRATION STATUS BY SEX AND MARITAL STATUS

Marital status	Migrant status							
	Non-migrant		Intra-provincial migrant		Inter-provincial migrant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	24396646	93.3	882424	3.4	871672	3.3	26150742	100.0
Single	8742121	91.7	320766	3.4	467977	4.9	9530864	100.0
Married	15028601	94.1	546244	3.4	390928	2.4	15965773	100.0
Widowed	453965	97.1	7019	1.5	6431	1.4	467415	100.0
Divorced	83849	91.6	4855	5.3	2797	3.1	91501	100.0
Separated	78643	92.8	2889	3.4	3217	3.8	84749	100.0
Don't know	9467	90.7	651	6.2	322	3.1	10440	100.0
Female	26145157	92.5	1228814	4.3	887379	3.1	28261350	100.0
Single	7781491	91.5	316080	3.7	403542	4.7	8501113	100.0
Married	15041829	92.3	829492	5.1	428242	2.6	16299563	100.0
Widowed	2841806	96.6	59811	2.0	40210	1.4	2941827	100.0
Divorced	268435	92.2	13790	4.7	9014	3.1	291239	100.0
Separated	199865	92.9	9346	4.3	5860	2.7	215071	100.0
Don't know	11731	93.6	295	2.4	511	4.1	12537	100.0
All	50541805	92.9	2111236	3.9	1759051	3.2	54412092	100.0
Single	16523612	91.6	636846	3.5	871519	4.8	18031977	100.0
Married	30070430	93.2	1375736	4.3	819170	2.5	32265336	100.0
Widowed	3295772	96.7	66829	2.0	46641	1.4	3409242	100.0
Divorced	352284	92.0	18645	4.9	11811	3.1	382740	100.0
Separated	278509	92.9	12234	4.1	9077	3.0	299820	100.0
Don't know	21198	92.3	946	4.1	833	3.6	22977	100.0

Note: Population ages 13 and over only

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANT STATUS BY SEX AND EDUCATION

Education	Migrant status							
	Non-migrant		Intra-provincial migrant		Inter-provincial migrant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	20211256	93.2	747354	3.4	732630	3.4	21691240	100.0
Never attended	1255214	96.2	28223	2.2	20841	1.6	1304278	100.0
<low primary	3983720	95.9	98997	2.4	70575	1.7	4153292	100.0
<upper primary	9507783	95.3	226684	2.3	244377	2.4	9978844	100.0
<secondary	2272178	92.1	104047	4.2	91581	3.7	2467806	100.0
Secondary	2560729	84.9	199251	6.6	256963	8.5	3016943	100.0
College/univer.	614128	82.1	86718	11.6	47409	6.3	748255	100.0
Higher	16702	80.1	3292	15.8	852	4.1	20846	100.0
Don't know	802	82.2	142	14.5	32	3.3	976	100.0
Female	21723931	92.8	995467	4.3	700432	3.0	23419830	100.0
Never attended	2998535	96.7	59961	1.9	43233	1.4	3101729	100.0
<low primary	5377291	95.3	158875	2.8	105176	1.9	5641342	100.0
<upper primary	9147150	93.8	334788	3.4	265354	2.7	9747292	100.0
<secondary	1670465	90.6	107400	5.8	65770	3.6	1843635	100.0
Secondary	2095304	82.3	257693	10.1	192134	7.5	2545131	100.0
College/univer.	429167	80.6	75257	14.1	28282	5.3	532706	100.0
Higher	4948	77.2	1355	21.1	109	1.7	6412	100.0
Don't know	1071	67.7	138	8.7	374	23.6	1583	100.0
All	41935188	93.0	1742821	3.9	1433062	3.2	45111071	100.0
Never attended	4253749	96.5	88184	2.0	64073	1.5	4406006	100.0
<low primary	9361011	95.6	257872	2.6	175752	1.8	9794635	100.0
<upper primary	18654933	94.6	561472	2.8	509732	2.6	19726137	100.0
<secondary	3942644	91.4	211447	4.9	157351	3.6	4311442	100.0
Secondary	4656033	83.7	456944	8.2	449097	8.1	5562074	100.0
College/univer.	1043295	81.4	161976	12.6	75690	5.9	1280961	100.0
Higher	21650	79.4	4646	17.0	961	3.5	27257	100.0
Don't know	1873	73.2	280	10.9	406	15.9	2559	100.0

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 6: CHANGES IN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION: 1989-2019

Region	1989	1999	2009	2019
Red River Delta	20.7	19.4	18.9	18.4
Northeast	13.0	14.2	14.7	14.9
Northwest	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1
North Central	13.7	13.1	14.1	14.4
Central Coast	8.8	8.6	8.9	8.9
Central Highlands	3.0	4.0	2.9	3.0
Southeast	15.3	16.7	14.7	14.4
Mekong Delta	22.7	21.1	22.8	22.9

Sources: Censuses 1989, 1999 and GSO (1999)

TABLE 7: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STATUS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS BY SEX AND MIGRANT STATUS

Main activities in the last 12 months	Migrant status							
	Non-migrant		Intra-provincial migrant		Inter-provincial migrant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	24396647	93.29	882424	3.37	871672	3.33	26150743	100.00
Working	17501249	93.34	641245	3.42	607753	3.24	18750247	100.00
Housework	211065	96.12	3934	1.79	4584	2.09	219583	100.00
Student	3625443	91.49	149895	3.78	187530	4.73	3962868	100.00
Invalid	767010	96.88	13690	1.73	10990	1.39	791690	100.00
Unempl., demand work	832283	91.74	37414	4.12	37502	4.13	907199	100.00
Unempl., no demand for work	1455118	96.09	36093	2.38	23194	1.53	1514405	100.00
Don't know	4479	94.27	153	3.22	119	2.50	4751	100.00
Female	26145158	92.51	1228812	4.35	887378	3.14	28261348	100.00
Working	16372820	92.81	750805	4.26	517808	2.94	17641433	100.00
Housework	3501807	90.46	224121	5.79	145246	3.75	3871174	100.00
Studying	2886660	90.58	154889	4.86	145270	4.56	3186819	100.00
Invalid	841914	96.67	16264	1.87	12749	1.46	870927	100.00
Unempl., demand for work	619400	89.23	39328	5.67	35463	5.11	694191	100.00
Unempl., no demand for work	1918145	96.28	43244	2.17	30787	1.55	1992176	100.00
Don't know	4412	95.33	161	3.48	55	1.19	4628	100.00
All	50541803	92.89	2111236	3.88	1759051	3.23	54412090	100.00
Working	33874068	93.08	1392050	3.83	1125561	3.09	36391679	100.00
Housework	3712872	90.76	228055	5.57	149830	3.66	4090757	100.00
Studying	6512103	91.08	304784	4.26	332800	4.65	7149687	100.00
Invalid	1608923	96.77	29954	1.80	23740	1.43	1662617	100.00
Unempl., demand for work	1451683	90.65	76742	4.79	72965	4.56	1601390	100.00
Unempl., no demand for work	3373263	96.20	79337	2.26	53981	1.54	3506581	100.00
Don't know	8891	94.80	314	3.35	174	1.86	9379	100.00

Note: Population ages 13 and over only
Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MAIN OCCUPATION IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS BY SEX AND MIGRATION STATUS

Main occupation in the last 12 months	Migrant status							
	Non-migrant		Intra-provincial migrant		Inter-provincial migrant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	24396647	93.3	882423	3.4	871672	3.3	26150742	100.0
Student, unemployed housework	6895398	93.2	241178	3.3	263919	3.6	7400495	100.0
Agriculture/forestry/fishery	12420215	96.4	214157	1.7	252679	2.0	12887051	100.0
Industry/construction	2266000	85.9	165168	6.3	205886	7.8	2637054	100.0
Commerce/services	2064260	87.3	182708	7.7	116546	4.9	2363514	100.0
Health/education/science/art	460399	87.0	48753	9.2	20348	3.8	529500	100.0
National defense/security	290375	87.2	30459	9.1	12294	3.7	333128	100.0
Female	26145158	92.5	1228813	4.4	887379	3.1	28261350	100.0
Student, unemployed housework	9772338	92.0	478008	4.5	369570	3.5	10619916	100.0
Agriculture/forestry/fishery	11969166	95.9	317210	2.5	194152	1.6	12480528	100.0
Industry/construction	1444809	81.4	143590	8.1	185738	10.5	1774137	100.0
Commerce/services	2116666	88.1	180281	7.5	105603	4.4	2402550	100.0
Health/education/science/art	752035	86.0	94684	10.8	28158	3.2	874877	100.0
National defense/security	90144	82.4	15040	13.8	4158	3.8	109342	100.0
All	50541804	92.9	2111236	3.9	1759050	3.2	54412090	100.0
Student, unemployed housework	16667736	92.5	719186	4.0	633489	3.5	18020411	100.0
Agriculture/forestry/fishery	24389380	96.1	531368	2.1	446831	1.8	25367579	100.0
Industry/construction	3710809	84.1	308758	7.0	391623	8.9	4411190	100.0
Commerce/services	4180926	87.7	362989	7.6	222149	4.7	4766064	100.0
Health/education/science/art	1212434	86.3	143437	10.2	48506	3.5	1404377	100.0
National defense/security	380519	86.0	45498	10.3	16452	3.7	442469	100.0

Note: Population ages 13 and over only

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SECTOR OF WORK BY SEX AND MIGRATION STATUS

Work sector	Non-migrant		Intra-provincial migrant		Inter-provincial migrant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	17501248	93.3	641245	3.4	607753	3.2	18750246	100.0
Government	1576787	85.2	176736	9.5	97205	5.3	1850728	100.0
Collective	4392501	98.6	28722	.6	32696	.7	4453919	100.0
Capital	123084	79.9	14278	9.3	16749	10.9	154111	100.0
Private	11243578	93.3	398174	3.3	415361	3.4	12057113	100.0
Mixed	108464	66.0	17770	10.8	38146	23.2	164380	100.0
Foreign	41037	77.0	5176	9.7	7112	13.3	53325	100.0
Don't know	15797	94.8	389	2.3	484	2.9	16670	100.0
Female	16372820	92.8	750804	4.3	517808	2.9	17641432	100.0
Government	1397340	84.6	181227	11.0	73706	4.5	1652273	100.0
Collective	5188427	97.5	106188	2.0	28415	.5	5323030	100.0
Capital	80815	76.5	12205	11.6	12593	11.9	105613	100.0
Private	9496687	92.9	407827	4.0	316257	3.1	10220771	100.0
Mixed	112430	62.7	19808	11.0	47207	26.3	179445	100.0
Foreign	75153	54.8	22779	16.6	39242	28.6	137174	100.0
Don't know	21968	95.0	770	3.3	388	1.7	23126	100.0
All	33874069	93.1	1392050	3.8	1125561	3.1	36391680	100.0
Government	2974127	84.9	357963	10.2	170910	4.9	3503000	100.0
Collective	9580929	98.0	134911	1.4	61111	.6	9776951	100.0
Capital	203899	78.5	26483	10.2	29342	11.3	259724	100.0
Private	20740265	93.1	806001	3.6	731618	3.3	22277884	100.0
Mixed	220893	64.2	37578	10.9	85353	24.8	343824	100.0
Foreign	116191	61.0	27955	14.7	46354	24.3	190500	100.0
Don't know	37765	94.9	1159	2.9	873	2.2	39797	100.0

Note: Population ages 13 and over only

Source: Population and Housing Census 1999

TABLE 10: VIETNAM'S LABOR MIGRANTS BY SEX: 1992-2000

Year	(Unit: person)		
	Total	Female	% Female
1992	816	101	12.4
1993	3,976	538	13.5
1994	9,234	986	10.7
1995	9,593	1,723	18.0
1996	12,661	2,065	16.3
1997	18,469	1,977	10.7
1998	12,197	1,447	11.9
1999	21,810	3,499	16.0
2000	30,000	4,500	15.0
Total	118,756	16,836	14.2

Note: The number of labor migrants are cumulative

Source: MOLISA (2000)

TABLE 11: VIETNAM'S LABOR MIGRANTS TO SELECTED COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION: 1991-99

Destination	(Unit: person)		
	Total	Female	% Female
Japan	9,757	4,117	42.2
South Korea	36,107	8,007	22.2
Taiwan	6,615	3,468	52.4
Singapore	487	3	0.6
Arab	712	234	32.9
Kuwait	2,527	21	0.8
Libya	9670	0	0
Eastern Europe*	4,460	1,305	29.3

Note: * includes Former USSR, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, and Slovakia.

Source: MOLISA (2000)

ANNEX 2: FIGURES AND MAPS

Figure 1A: Vietnam's Organizational Chart of Administrative Structure with regard to Migration.

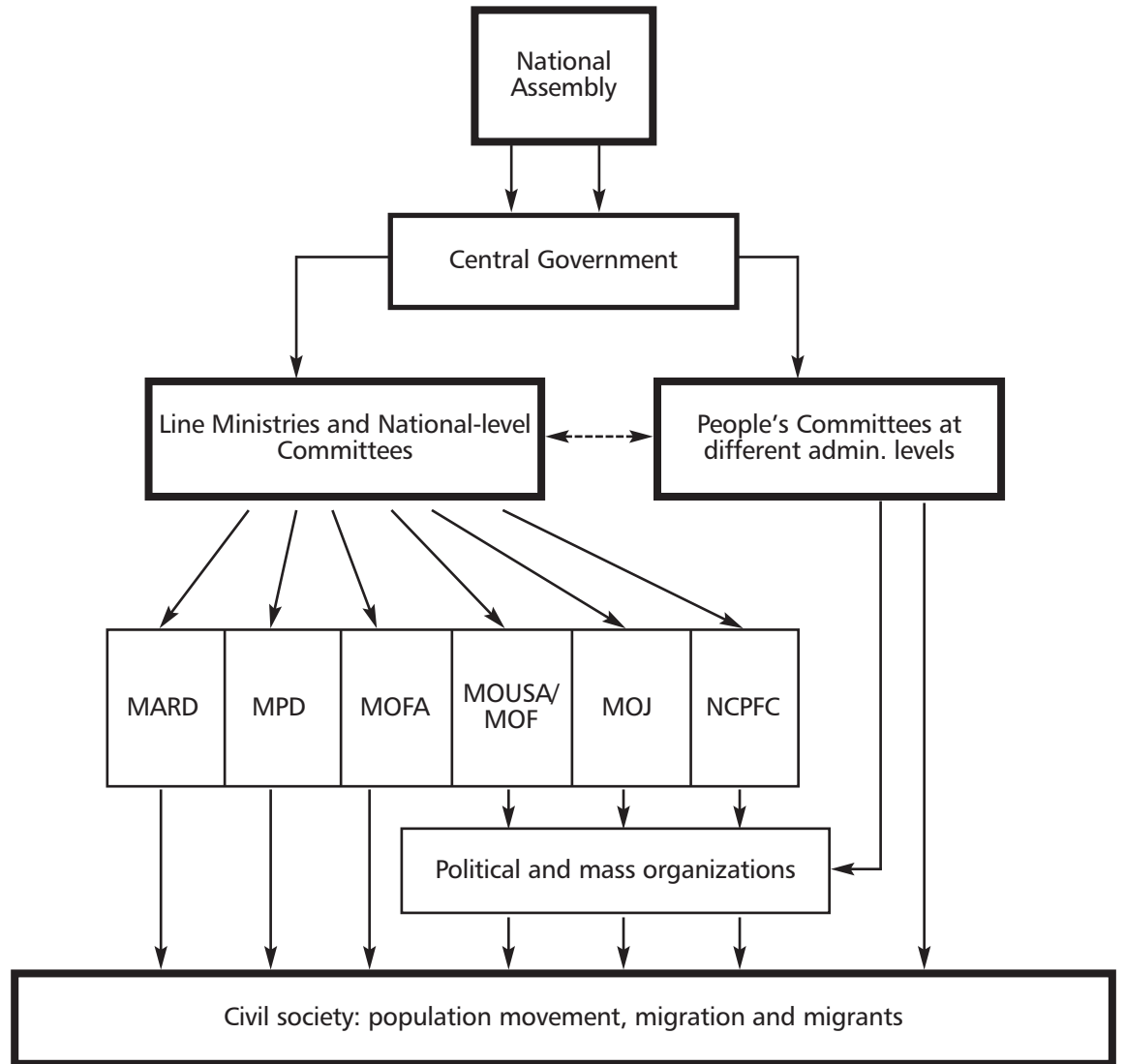


Figure 1. Trends of urbanization in Vietnam: 1960-200

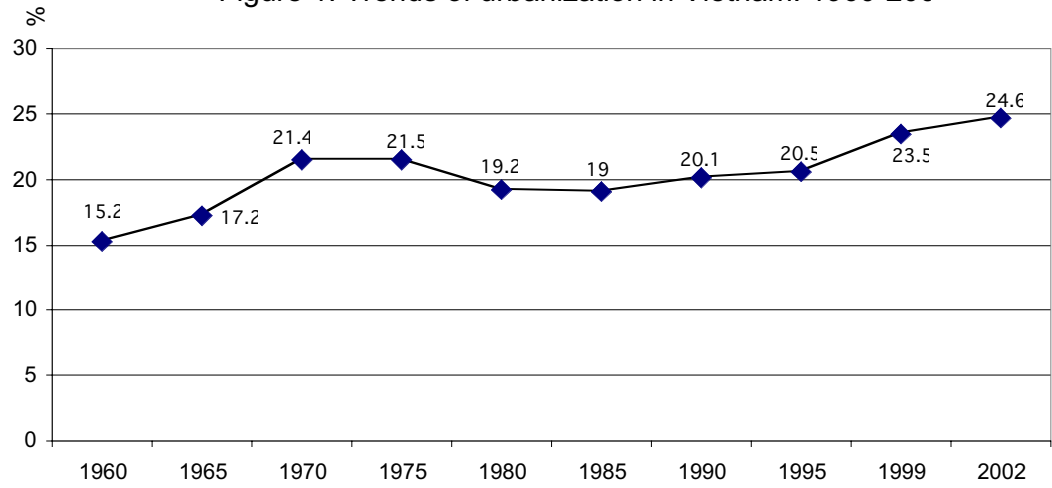


Figure 2. Age Specific Migration Rate of Migration Stream, 1994-99

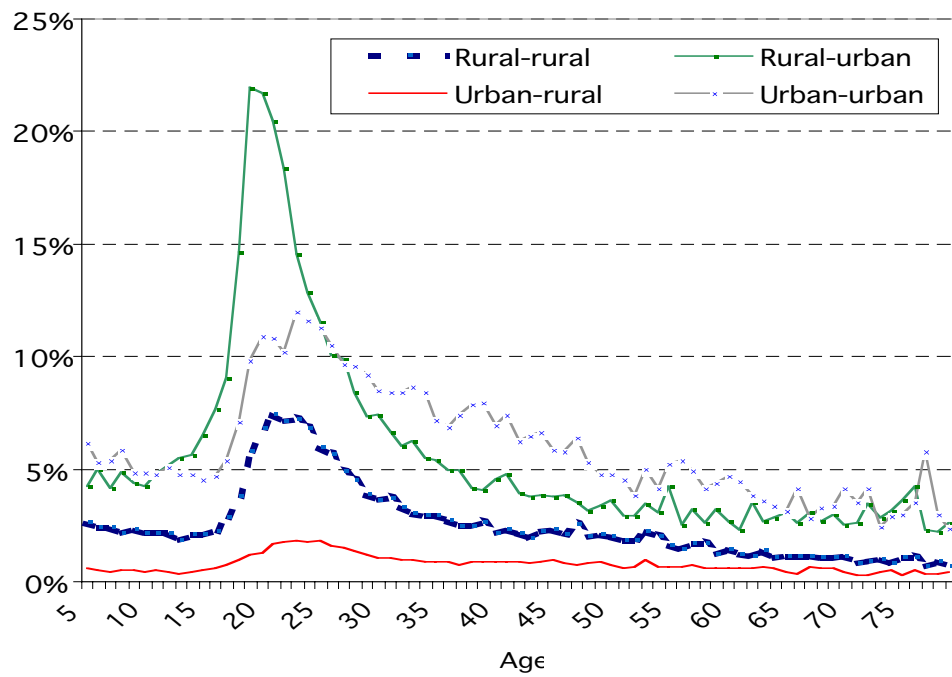


Figure 3. Age Specific Migration Rate of Migration Stream, 1994-99

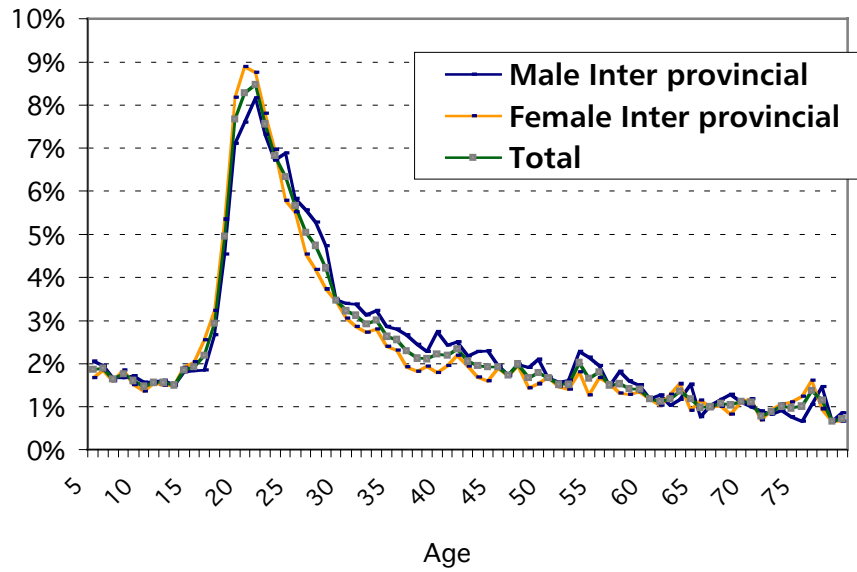
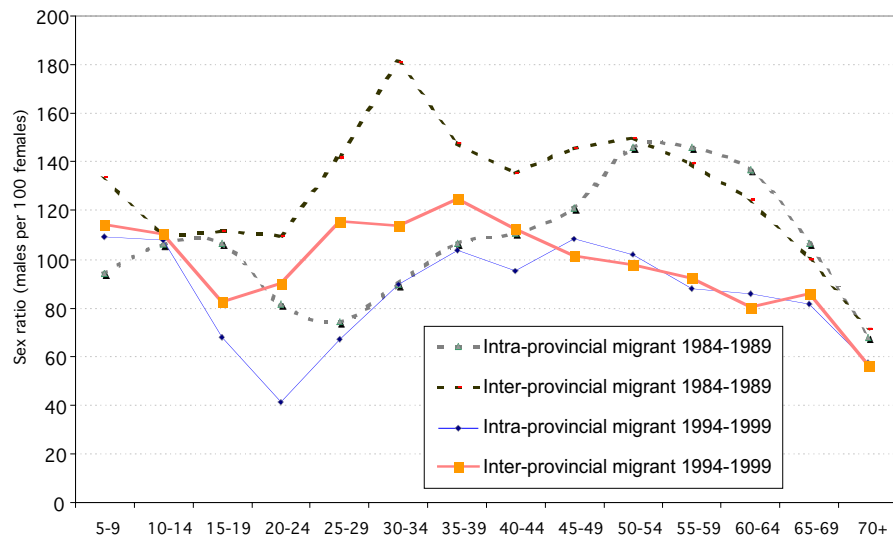


Figure 4. Sex Ratio by Age and Migration Types: 1984-89 and 1994-99



Map 1: Inter-provincial in-migration rate: Vietnam, 1994–1999

list of provinces

I. Red River Delta

1. Ha Noi
2. Hai Phong
3. Ha Tay
4. Hai Duong
5. Hung Yen
6. Ha Nam
7. Nam Dinh
8. Thai Binh
9. Ninh Binh

II. Northeast

10. Ha Giang
11. Cao Bang
12. Lao Cai
13. Bac Kan
14. Lang Son
15. Tuyen Quang
16. Yen Bai
17. Thai Nguyen
18. Phu Tho
19. Vinh Phuc
20. Bac Giang
21. Bac Ninh
22. Quang Ninh

III. Northwest

23. Lai Chau
24. Son La
25. Hoa Binh

IV. North Central

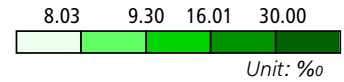
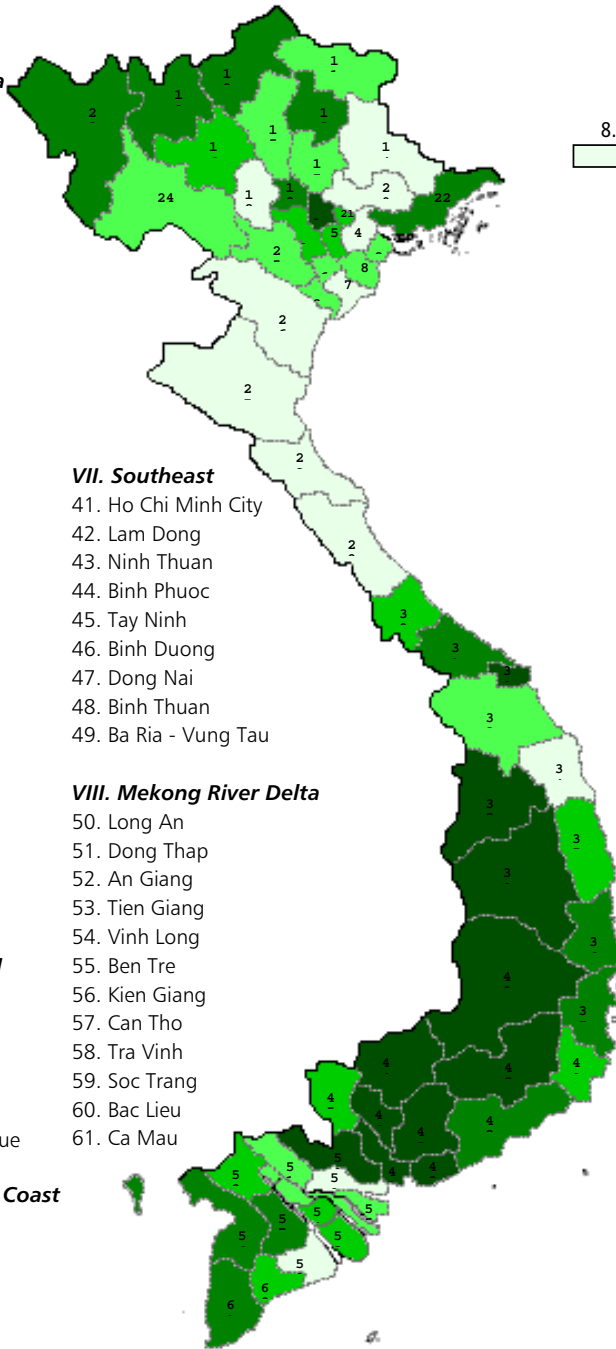
26. Thanh Hoa
27. Nghe An
28. Ha Tinh
29. Quang Binh
30. Quang Tri
31. Thua Thien - Hue

V. South Central Coast

32. Da Nang
33. Quang Nam
34. Quang Ngai
35. Binh Dinh
36. Phu Yen
37. Khanh Hoa

VI. Central Highlands

38. Kon Tum
39. Gia Lai
40. Dak Lak



VII. Southeast

41. Ho Chi Minh City
42. Lam Dong
43. Ninh Thuan
44. Binh Phuoc
45. Tay Ninh
46. Binh Duong
47. Dong Nai
48. Binh Thuan
49. Ba Ria - Vung Tau

VIII. Mekong River Delta

50. Long An
51. Dong Thap
52. An Giang
53. Tien Giang
54. Vinh Long
55. Ben Tre
56. Kien Giang
57. Can Tho
58. Tra Vinh
59. Soc Trang
60. Bac Lieu
61. Ca Mau

Q. TRƯỜNG SA
KH. HOÀNG SA
KH. TRƯỜNG SA
KH. PHU QUANG

Map 2: Inter-provincial out-migration rate: Vietnam, 1994–1999

list of provinces

I. Red River Delta

1. Ha Noi
2. Hai Phong
3. Ha Tay
4. Hai Duong
5. Hung Yen
6. Ha Nam
7. Nam Dinh
8. Thai Binh
9. Ninh Binh

II. Northeast

10. Ha Giang
11. Cao Bang
12. Lao Cai
13. Bac Kan
14. Lang Son
15. Tuyen Quang
16. Yen Bai
17. Thai Nguyen
18. Phu Tho
19. Vinh Phuc
20. Bac Giang
21. Bac Ninh
22. Quang Ninh

III. Northwest

23. Lai Chau
24. Son La
25. Hoa Binh

IV. North Central

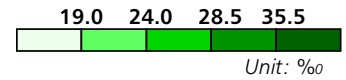
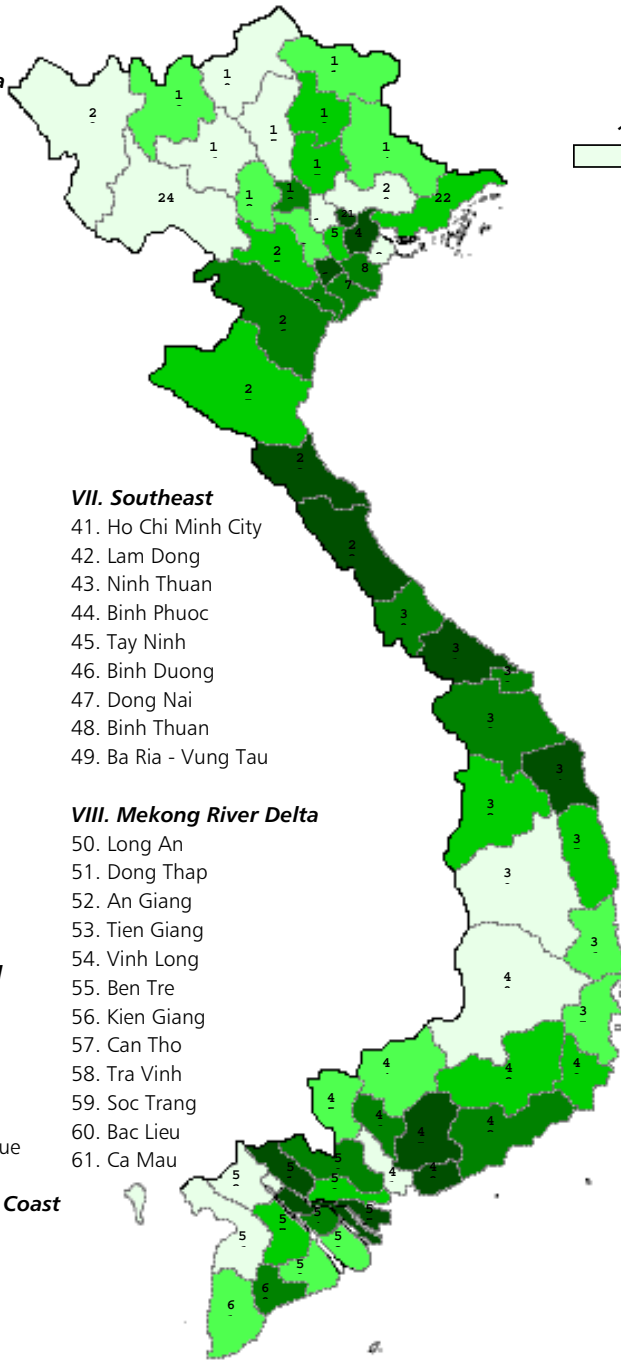
26. Thanh Hoa
27. Nghe An
28. Ha Tinh
29. Quang Binh
30. Quang Tri
31. Thua Thien - Hue

V. South Central Coast

32. Da Nang
33. Quang Nam
34. Quang Ngai
35. Binh Dinh
36. Phu Yen
37. Khanh Hoa

VI. Central Highlands

38. Kon Tum
39. Gia Lai
40. Dak Lak

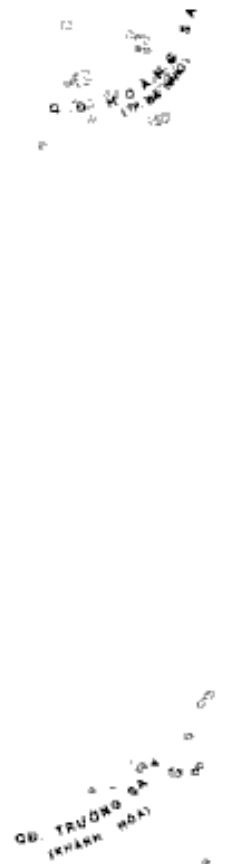


VII. Southeast

41. Ho Chi Minh City
42. Lam Dong
43. Ninh Thuan
44. Binh Phuoc
45. Tay Ninh
46. Binh Duong
47. Dong Nai
48. Binh Thuan
49. Ba Ria - Vung Tau

VIII. Mekong River Delta

50. Long An
51. Dong Thap
52. An Giang
53. Tien Giang
54. Vinh Long
55. Ben Tre
56. Kien Giang
57. Can Tho
58. Tra Vinh
59. Soc Trang
60. Bac Lieu
61. Ca Mau



Map 3: Inter-provincial net-migration rate: Vietnam, 1994–1999

list of provinces

I. Red River Delta

1. Ha Noi
2. Hai Phong
3. Ha Tay
4. Hai Duong
5. Hung Yen
6. Ha Nam
7. Nam Dinh
8. Thai Binh
9. Ninh Binh

II. Northeast

10. Ha Giang
11. Cao Bang
12. Lao Cai
13. Bac Kan
14. Lang Son
15. Tuyen Quang
16. Yen Bai
17. Thai Nguyen
18. Phu Tho
19. Vinh Phuc
20. Bac Giang
21. Bac Ninh
22. Quang Ninh

III. Northwest

23. Lai Chau
24. Son La
25. Hoa Binh

IV. North Central

26. Thanh Hoa
27. Nghe An
28. Ha Tinh
29. Quang Binh
30. Quang Tri
31. Thua Thien - Hue

V. South Central Coast

32. Da Nang
33. Quang Nam
34. Quang Ngai
35. Binh Dinh
36. Phu Yen
37. Khanh Hoa

VI. Central Highlands

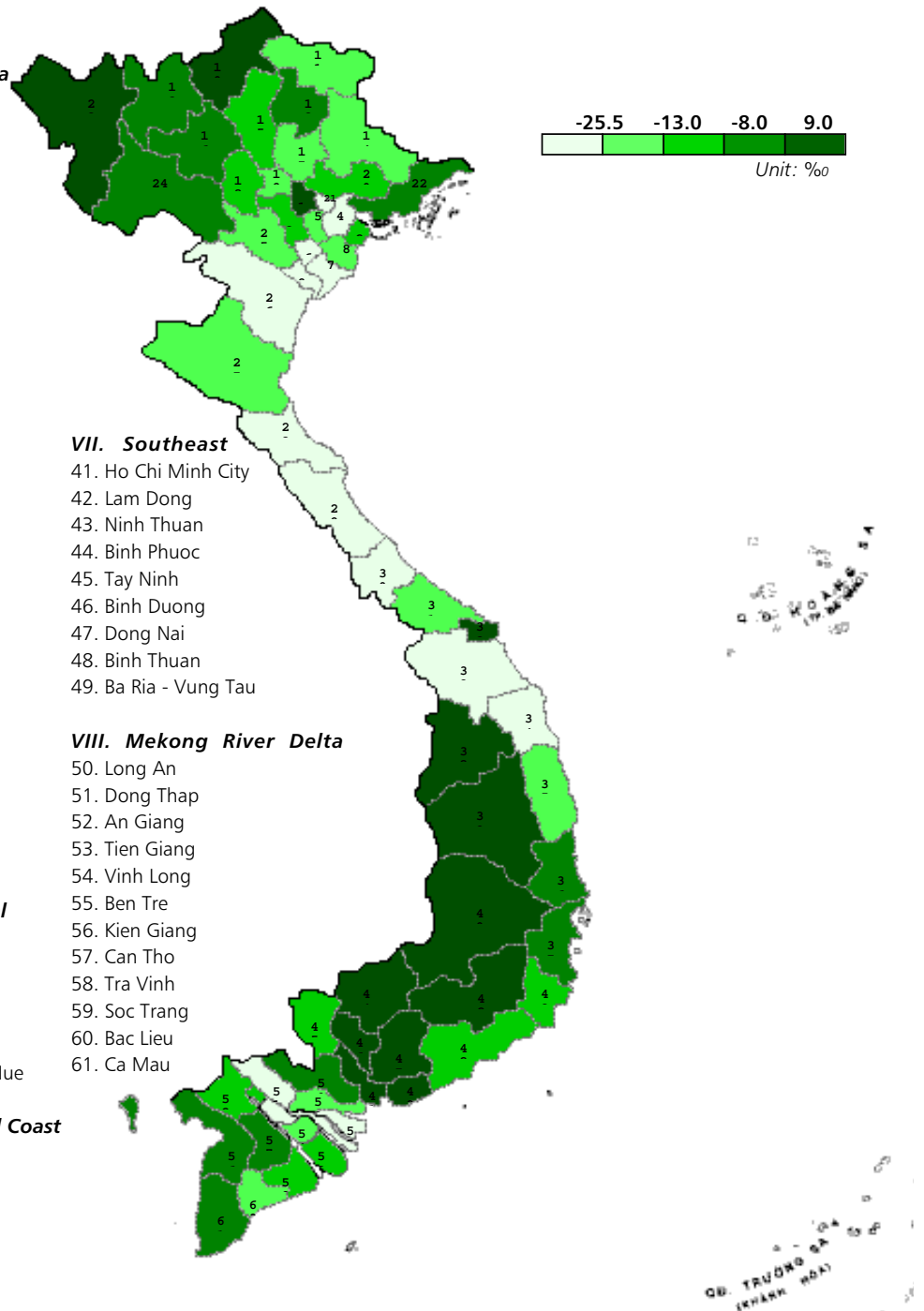
38. Kon Tum
39. Gia Lai
40. Dak Lak

VII. Southeast

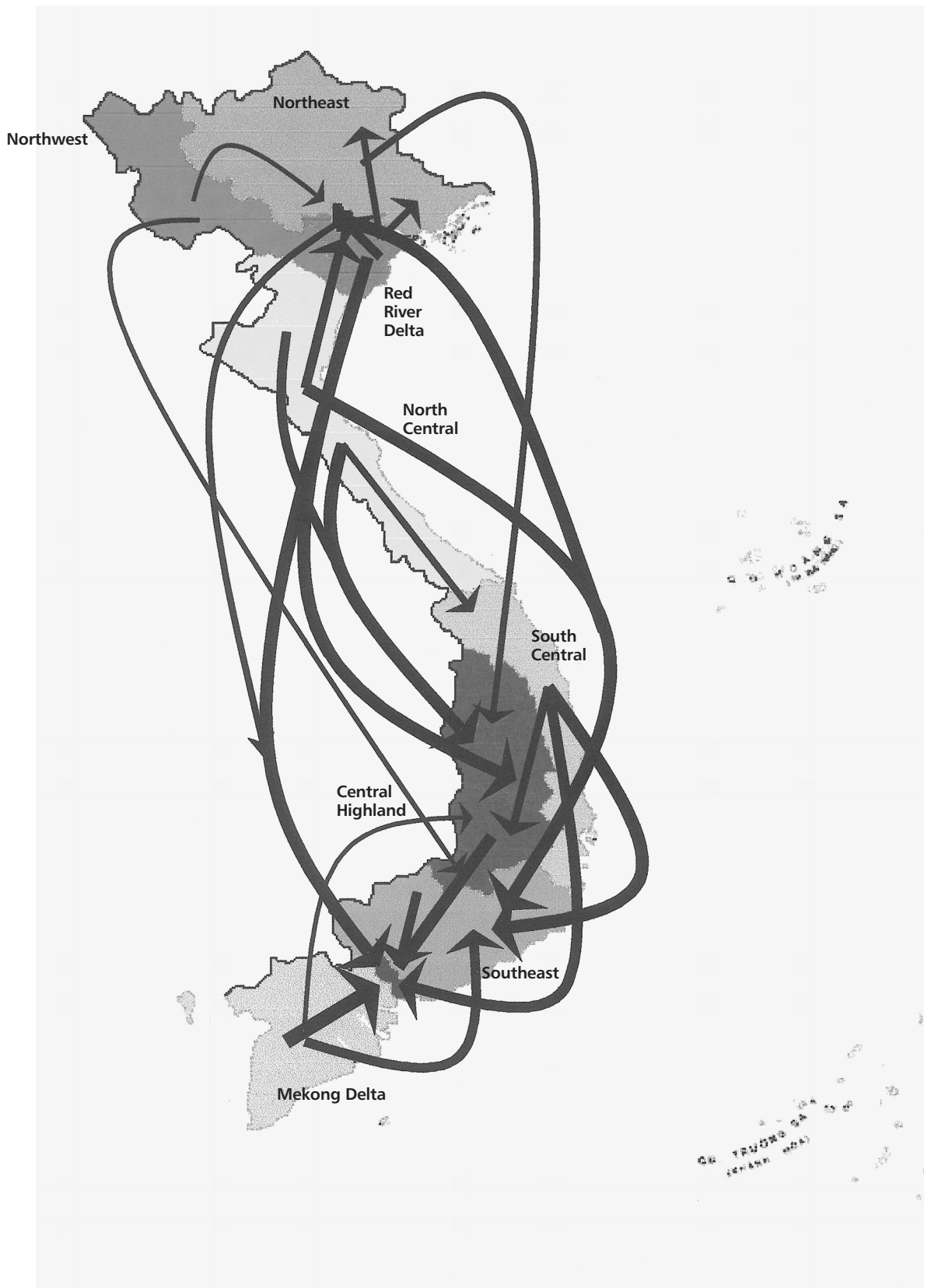
41. Ho Chi Minh City
42. Lam Dong
43. Ninh Thuan
44. Binh Phuoc
45. Tay Ninh
46. Binh Duong
47. Dong Nai
48. Binh Thuan
49. Ba Ria - Vung Tau

VIII. Mekong River Delta

50. Long An
51. Dong Thap
52. An Giang
53. Tien Giang
54. Vinh Long
55. Ben Tre
56. Kien Giang
57. Can Tho
58. Tra Vinh
59. Soc Trang
60. Bac Lieu
61. Ca Mau



Map 4: Major inter-regional migration flows: Vietnam, 1994–1999



General map of Vietnam, showing geographic regions





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The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit is an inter-disciplinary research institution based at the University of Dhaka. It specialises in refugee, migration and displacement related issues, conducting research and organising consultations with policy makers, academics, researchers, civil society activists, professional groups and civil servants to influence public opinion and policy decisions.

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