

**Abstract**

**Tendencies toward the Globalization of Households:  
A Perspective on Social Consequences in Vietnam**

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The socio-economic reforms introduced in Vietnam since the mid-1980s have brought about unprecedented transformations toward a more diversified and open society. Dramatic changes in social norms, attitudes and behaviour regarding household formation and family relations are among the most noticeable. However, the impact of globalization on family structures and the household economy of Vietnam are never reported. The paper aims to fill this gap by inquiring into the unresearched area of global householding to achieve a tentative understanding of the issue. It is hoped that the paper will pave ways for a systematic research and policy initiatives in this area.

There are changes caused by the demographic transition that has been taking place in Vietnam over the past decades. Rapid population growth due to high fertility in the past, reduction in family size, and persisting preference for children of both sexes make Vietnamese households reconsider their strategies in response to the changing environment. Transnational migration has been sought as a significant solution for households to survive and improve their status mobility. Based on secondary data and available evidence, we analyze the current household strategies and scrutinize the household perspectives of overseas labour deployment, marriage to foreigners and migrant remittances. These are increasingly significant aspects and can have important implications for changing livelihood, income and welfare of today's households in Vietnam.

It is helpful to distinguish between perception and reality in examining the social consequences of these processes. The study shows that the pressure on labour emigration is very strong despite the very high costs and risks involved. The quest for remittances becomes a major cause of overseas labour migration and increasing multi-locational livelihoods. In an effort to fuel growth and fight poverty at home places, the contribution of migrant remittances is significant. In addition, the increasing practice of foreign marriage indicates the growing desire for economic upward mobility and also reflects a major shift in social perceptions about household formation and status-making. Although migrant motivations for overseas deployment and mail-order marriage may be different, the problems are exacerbated by the lack of effective policies and transnational cooperation, especially in the conditions of the rapidly expanding human trafficking and smuggling within and from the Asian region. The consequences for households and for the society at large are far-reaching, but least known. The paper concludes with suggestions for policy implication and research initiatives with regard to the increasing tendencies toward the globalization of Vietnamese households.