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**Abstract**

**The Dilemma of Development in Vietnam:  
Experience from the Northern Mountains Region**

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Under globalisation, livelihood has become increasingly multidimensional, with an increased rearrangement of tactics using various capitals (natural, physical, human, financial, social, and cultural) in different locations. To maximise access to these capitals and reduce chronic poverty, poor people in developing countries tend to diversify their economic activities and interact more with their rich fellows. For the montagnards in the Northern Mountain Region of Vietnam (NMR), the transformations in the traditional agricultural and trading patterns over the last century have led to a greater contact with lowland lifestyles and values. The intricate interactions of tribal economies with the world outside are considered as linkages across space reflected in the flows of people, goods, services, money, and ideas between urban and mountainous areas. Depending on the context and ability, these processes will produce losers and winners. In this paper, I use livelihood analysis to construct the development process in the NMR over the last 121 years, based on ethnographic data collected during 2003-2005 and many other sources. This paper shows how the development in Vietnam, and particularly the NMR, is structured and changed under the centripetal and centrifugal forces of national and transnational integration and globalisation.