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INTERNAL MIGRATION IN VIETNAM

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INTERNAL MIGRATION IN VIETNAM

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Internal Migration in Vietnam, 2009 -2024" is a special publication compiled based on the 2014 Mid-term Population and Housing Census; the 2019 Population and Housing Census; the 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Survey; and the 2024 Labor Force Survey. These are national large-scale sample surveys designed to collect information across various domains, including internal migration.

Based on reliable datasets, this book compiles, analyzes, and provides readers with a comprehensive overview of internal migration in Vietnam over the past 15 years. It presents the scale of nationwide migration disaggregated by region, gender, age, reasons for migration, as well as employment status and income of migrants. From these findings, the book offers several recommendations for policymakers and managers in Vietnam.

However, certain aspects such as the living and working conditions of migrants, and the factors influencing migration (both at the place of origin and destination), are not covered in this book due to data limitations.

The National Statistics Office sincerely thanks the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its financial and technical support in compiling this monograph; Dr. Nguyễn Thị Thu Phương from the Institute of Vietnam and World Economy for her contributions to the content; and the staff of the UNFPA Office in Vietnam for their valuable inputs during the drafting and completion of this book.

The General Statistics Office is pleased to present this in-depth publication on migration to readers and looks forward to receiving feedback to further improve the quality of future publication.

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CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS

CH	Central Highland
EM	Ethnic Minority
HCM City	Ho Chi Minh City
MRD	Mekong River Delta
NCCCR	North Central and Central Coastal Region
NMMR	Northern Midland and Mountainous Region
RRD	Red River Delta
SER	Southeast Region
TVE	Technical and Vocational Expertise

FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH ON INTERNAL MIGRATION IN VIET NAM, 2009-2024

1.1. Rationale for migration research

Migration is a fundamental demographic process, reflecting the movement of individuals from one territorial unit to another within a defined period of time. In the scope of this monograph, internal migration plays a crucial role in population dynamics, especially in the context of declining fertility rates in many regions of Vietnam. The concept of migration in population censuses and in this monograph is understood as a change of residence from one administrative unit at the commune level or higher, specifically counting movements from one district to another within a given period. In Vietnam, internal migration is increasingly important, shaping demographic dynamics and socio-economic development across regions. Migration has a significant impact on many aspects of social life in both places of origin (out-migration areas) and destinations (in-migration areas).

Research on migration is essential for several reasons:

- **Understanding demographic shifts:** Migration alters the structure and distribution of populations, influencing urbanization patterns, labor supply, and regional development.
- **Informing policy and planning:** Migration data helps policymakers design targeted interventions in housing, education, healthcare, and employment, especially in areas experiencing rapid in-migration or out-migration.
- **Promoting inclusive development:** By identifying disparities in access to services and opportunities among migrant groups-such as Ethnic Minorities, women, and youth-research can guide efforts to ensure equity and social protection.
- **Enhancing economic efficiency:** Migration contributes to labor market flexibility, poverty reduction, and economic restructuring. Understanding these dynamics allows for better integration of migrants into local economies.
- **Addressing social challenges:** Migration affects family structures, social cohesion, and access to welfare services. Research provides insights into how to support migrants in adapting to new environments and maintaining well-being.

In short, migration research is not only a tool for academic inquiry but also a foundation for evidence-based policy, helping societies respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges posed by population mobility.

1.2. Research objectives

The book *"Internal Migration in Vietnam, 2009 - 2024"* aims to synthesize and analyze the current situation and trends of internal migration in Vietnam from 2009 to 2024. Specifically, it seeks to:

- Analyze the scale and patterns of internal migration in Vietnam;
- Examine key demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants;
- Propose recommendations and policy suggestions related to migration and urban development in Vietnam.

1.3. Data sources and scope of study

Data Sources: The book *"Internal Migration in Viet Nam, 2009–2024"* draws on data from the 2014 Mid-term Population and Housing Survey, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Survey, and the 2024 Labor Force Survey. In addition, it references findings from the 2015 Migration Survey Report and the 2020 Monograph on Migration and Urbanization.

Except for the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the other surveys are large-scale sample surveys, ensuring representativeness and reliability of the data. The 2015 Migration Survey Report was based on the 2015 National Internal Migration Survey, a quantitative survey combined with qualitative methods designed to investigate internal migration in depth. It was conducted in 20 provinces and centrally governed cities, representing six socio-economic regions and the two major cities of Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. The 2020 Migration and Urbanization was compiled using results from the 2019 Population and Housing Census.

Scope of Research: Within the framework of this report, only data on internal migrants are compiled and analyzed, including individuals who changed their place of residence within Viet Nam's territory. It does not cover short-term movements such as tourism, family visits, medical treatment, or international migration for various purposes. All provinces and socio-economic regions mentioned in this book refer to the former provincial names and regions prior to the administrative mergers that took place in 2025.

The data and analyses are presented in three five-year periods: 2009–2014, 2014–2019, and 2019–2024, consistent with the design of the questionnaires used in the above surveys

1.4. Research methodology

A descriptive statistical approach is employed to illustrate the current status and trends of internal migration in Vietnam over the past decade. Key variables used in the analysis include age, gender, economic region, technical and vocational qualifications, employment, and income. To enhance accessibility and intuitive understanding of the findings, visual tools such as charts and graphs are incorporated throughout the report.

1.5. Key definitions

Key definitions used in this report include:

- Migrants: are individuals aged 5 years and above whose current place of usual residence and place of usual residence five years prior to the survey are not within the same administrative unit (which may be at the commune, district, or provincial level). Persons who move temporarily for purposes such as tourism, family visits, medical treatment, or short-term training-without changing their "usual place of residence"-are not counted as migrants.
- Individuals who, within the five years prior to each survey, still resided in their household but are currently abroad for various reasons within the permitted time frame are also not counted as migrants in the scope of this report. However, in cases where within those five years there was a change in commune-level administrative unit, and at the time of the survey the person is abroad for study or work within the permitted time frame, they are still considered "members of the household in Viet Nam" and are counted as internal migrants in this book.

- Intra-district migration: Individuals aged five and above who, five years prior to the survey, lived in a different commune/ward/township within the same district as their current residence.
- Inter-district migration within a province: Individuals aged five and above who, five years prior to the survey, lived in a different district within the same province.
- Inter-provincial migration: Individuals aged five and above who currently reside in Vietnam and, five years prior to the survey, lived in a different province.
- Intra-regional migration: Individuals aged five and above who, five years prior to the survey, lived in a different province within the same region as their current residence.
- Inter-regional migration: Individuals aged five and above who currently reside in Vietnam and, five years prior to the survey, lived in a different socio-economic region.
- Local residents (non-migrants): Individuals aged 5 years and above who, five years prior to the survey, were living in the same commune/ward/township as their current place of usual residence.
- Employed persons: Individuals aged 15 years and above who, during the reference period of the 2024 Labor Force Survey, engaged in any legal work for income for at least one hour, such as wage employment, household labor, or self-employment.
- Employment rate: the percentage of those aged 15 and above who are employed out of the total population aged 15 and above.
- Unemployed persons: Individuals aged 15 years and above who, during the reference period of the 2024 Labor Force Survey, did not engage in any legal work for income but had the desire to work and were available to work.
- Unemployment rate: The percentage of unemployed persons aged 15 and above among the total population aged 15 years and above.
- Economically inactive persons: Individuals aged 15 years and above who, during the reference period of the 2024 Labor Force Survey, neither worked nor had the desire to seek work, and were not available to work. This group typically includes students, persons who are ill or disabled, or those engaged solely in unpaid household work.
- Economic inactivity rate: The percentage of economically inactive persons among the total population aged 15 years and above.

CHAPTER 2

INTERNAL MIGRATION

Migration is an important driver of population growth: in key economic regions such as Southeast Region (SER) and Red River Delta (RRD), net migration plays a decisive role in maintaining and increasing population. However, in recent years these regions have tended to attract high-tech investment projects, causing net in-migration to decline sharply during the five-year period 2019–2024.

Mekong River Delta (MRD), North Central and Central Coastal Region (NCCCR), and Northern Midland and Mountainous Region (NMMR) are regions with large out-migration flows but are showing a trend of investing in infrastructure and attracting capital investment to retain local workers.

The scale of migration has decreased at all distances: inter-provincial migration, migration between districts within a province, and migration within the same district all declined significantly during the period 2019–2024, reflecting the trend of residential stabilization and population saturation in major urban areas. Among these, inter-provincial migration remains the most common form, while intra-district migration has decreased in scale but increased in proportion, reflecting the trend of short-distance moves to save costs and improve convenience, stabilizing residence within familiar areas.

Migration flows from urban to urban areas account for the highest proportion: although the number of migrants from rural areas is still slightly higher than from urban areas (51.4% compared to 48.6%), the rural-to-urban flow has slowed down, while the urban-to-urban flow continues to maintain the highest share. This reflects the trend of shifts within the urban system, linked to urbanization and the expansion of living spaces. The proportion of out-migrants from urban areas tends to increase, showing the pressure of living costs and the demand to move to regions with better living quality.

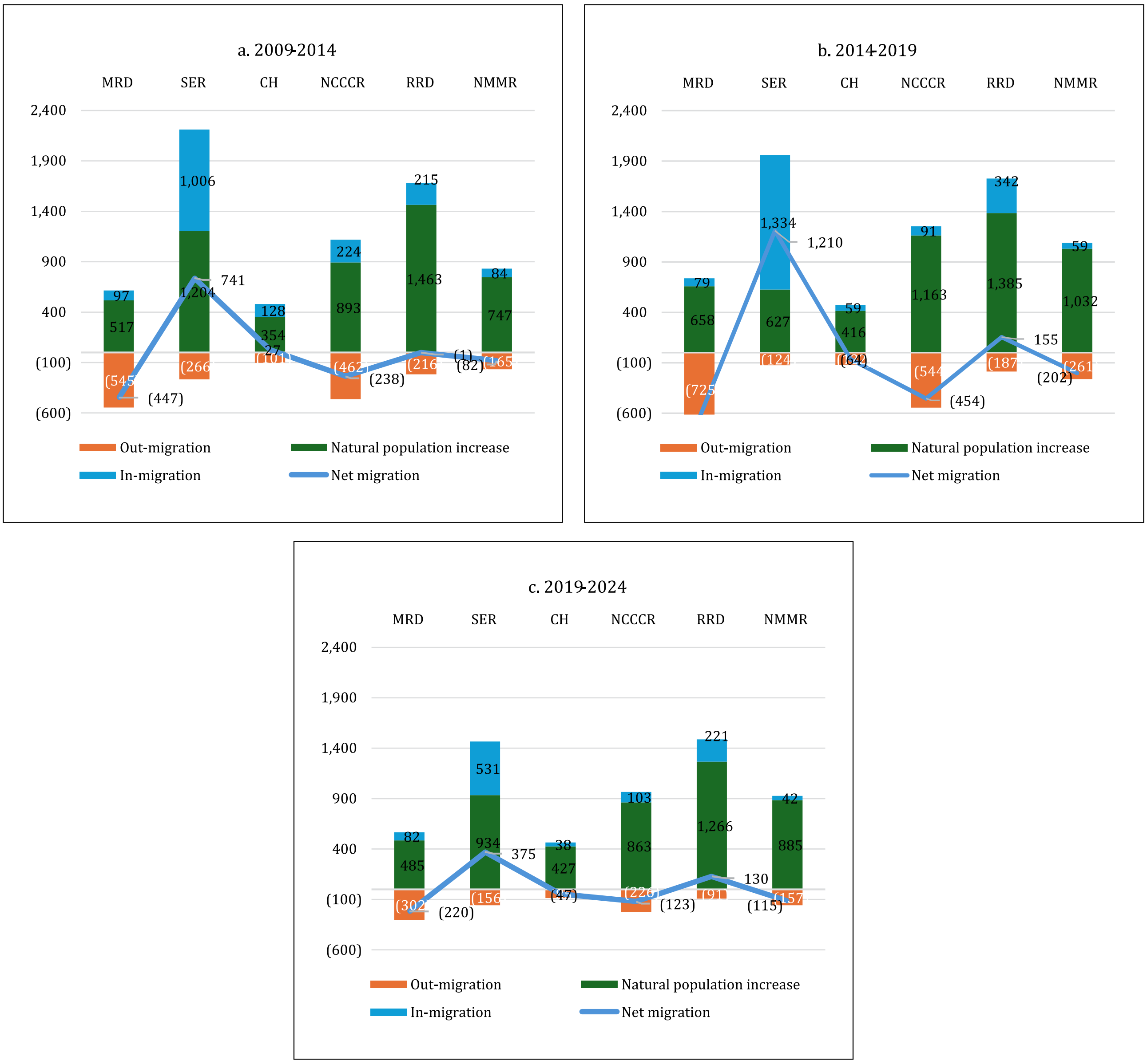
The cycle of growth – boom – redistribution of migrants: the period 2009–2014 is considered the growth phase of migration scale, while 2014–2019-with the nationwide number of migrants surging-is considered the boom phase, and the most recent five-year period 2019–2024 reflects population dispersal, redistribution, and adjustments in national urban and population development strategies.

2.1. Migration and population growth

Migration is no longer just a supplementary factor but has become a key driver of population growth in major economic regions such as SER and RRD. In contrast, regions such as MRD, NCCCR, NMMR, and CH are facing population loss due to migration, even though they maintain stable fertility levels. This trend reflects disparities in employment opportunities and quality of life between regions, leading to a "population drain" in less developed areas. The decline in immigration across most regions further indicates increasingly fierce competition for jobs and living conditions.

Population changes in a locality can be divided into three factors: (i) natural increase of the population, (ii) out-migration from the locality, and (iii) in-migration to the locality. The number of net migrants in the SER increased from 741,000 people in the period 2009–2014 to 1.2 million people in the period 2014–2019, but then dropped sharply to only 375,000 people in the period 2019–2024. Meanwhile, the RRD region began to have net migration of 155,000 people in the period 2014–2019, then decreased slightly to 130,000 people in the period 2019–2024. Nevertheless, the SER still maintains the highest net migration in the country, affirming its role as an economic center attracting migrant workers.

Figure 1. Population growth decomposition (thousands of people)

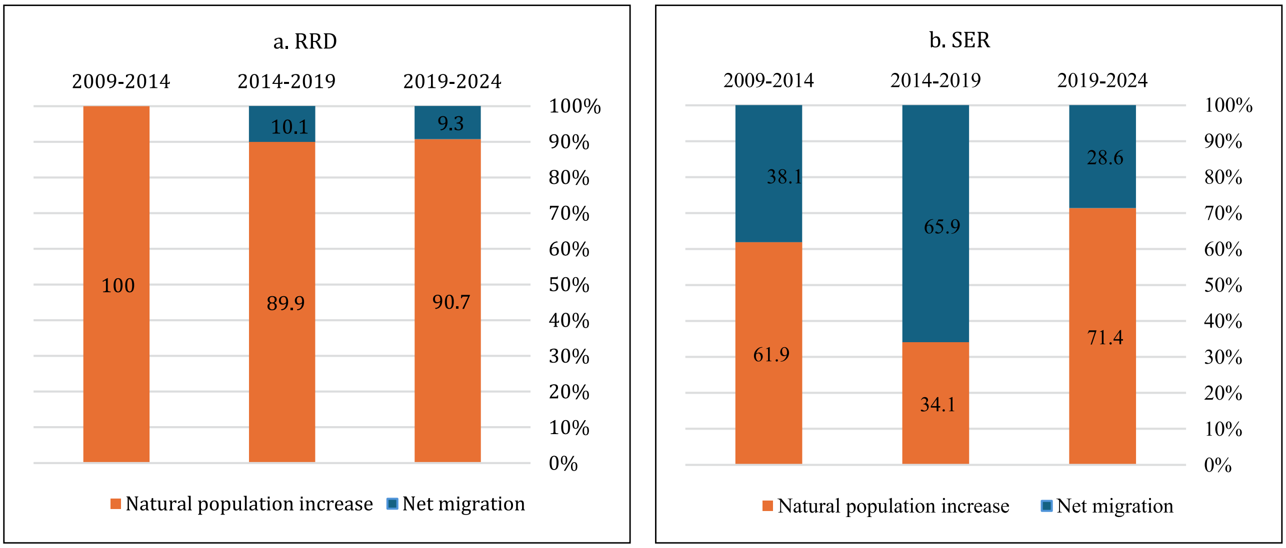


Source: Author's calculations based on the Statistical Yearbook 2024 and data from the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census by NSO.

The number of in-migrants declined across most regions, reflecting competition for employment opportunities and living standards among areas. Even SER – the region with the strongest population attraction – recorded a decrease from more than 1.3 million in-migrants during 2014–2019 to 531,000 in 2019–2024. RRD also saw a decline from nearly 342,000 in-migrants in 2014–2019 to 221,000 in 2019–2024. This indicates that developed regions tend to attract investment projects that are more technology-intensive and less labor-demanding, while other regions are striving to improve infrastructure and attract domestic and foreign investment to create jobs and retain local workers, typically regions such as MRD and NCCCR.

SER demonstrates that net migration plays an important role in population growth in highly urbanized areas, with Ho Chi Minh City (HCM City) as the core and neighboring provinces. The share of population growth in SER contributed by migration rose sharply from 38.1% (2009–2014) to 65.9% (2014–2019), but then declined to 28.6% (2019–2024). This shows that SER has been an attractive destination for people from other regions (mainly MRD), due to employment opportunities, urbanization, and strong economic development. The decline in migration contribution in SER reflects population saturation and a shift toward attracting investment projects with higher technological content and lower labor demand. Meanwhile, in RRD, population growth has been driven primarily by natural increase, accounting for nearly all growth in 2009–2014, and slightly decreasing to 89.9% and 90.7% in the two subsequent periods. This reflects the stable demographic characteristics and limited migration-driven changes in RRD.

Figure 2. Population growth decomposition (%)



Source: Author's calculations based on the Statistical Yearbook 2024 and data from the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, and the 2019 Population and Housing Census, by NSO.

2.2. Migration by distance

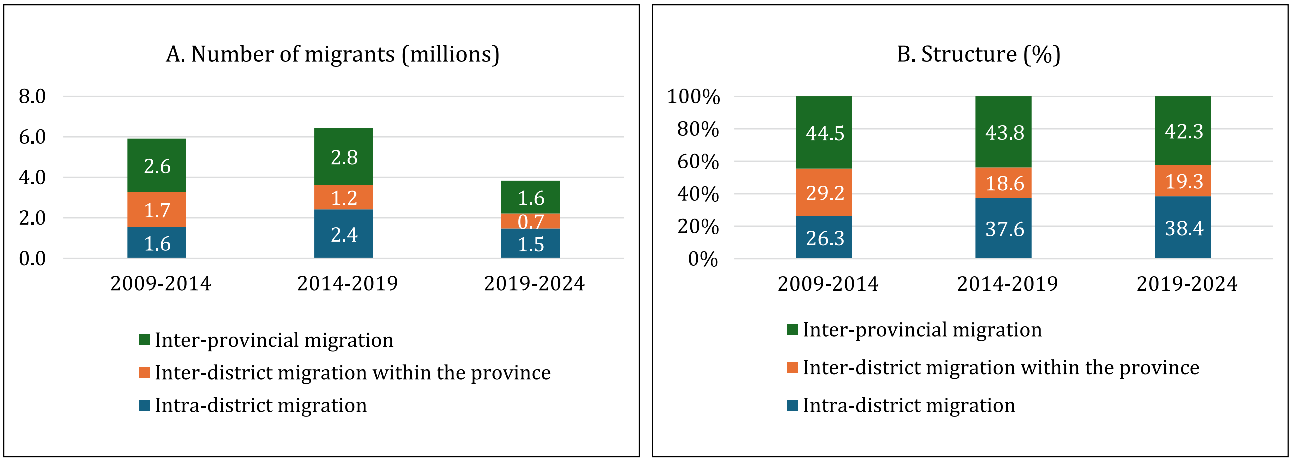
The period 2019–2024 marks a significant shift in migration behavior: people tend to prioritize short-distance moves and stabilizing their place of residence, while long-distance migration still plays an important role but is increasingly constrained by costs and differences in living conditions. Migration volumes at all distances declined, reflecting population stabilization, saturation in major urban areas, and the changing impacts of intra-regional infrastructure development policies.

Intra-district migration increased sharply from 1.6 million (2009–2014) to 2.4 million (2014–2019), before declining to 1.5 million (2019–2024). This flow reflects a trend of short-distance movement, stabilization of residence, and reduction of costs and risks. Inter-district migration within provinces declined significantly, dropping to 19.3% in 2019–2024, making it the least common type of migration. Out-of-province migration maintained the highest share (>42%) throughout the period, although the number decreased from 2.8 million (2014–2019) to 1.6 million (2019–2024), reflecting the demand for better employment, education, or living conditions.

Inter-regional migration declined in both number and proportion: from 1.8 million (2009–2014) to 1.0 million (2019–2024). This may be due to developed regions such as SER and RRD reaching saturation and tending to attract high-tech investment projects that require less labor, while regions with high out-migration are striving to improve infrastructure, attract investment projects, and retain local workers.

The scale of migration in Vietnam has undergone significant changes in terms of distance, reflecting shifts in people's behavior and needs. The period 2019–2024 shows a sharp decline in migration volumes across all flows. In terms of structure, out-of-province migration has consistently accounted for the highest share, though it decreased from 44.5% in 2009–2014 to 42.3% in 2019–2024. Meanwhile, intra-district migration showed the opposite trend, rising from 26.3% (2009–2014) to 38.4% (2019–2024), only 4 percentage points lower than out-of-province migration. This reflects a growing preference for short-distance moves to seek job opportunities or change residence within familiar areas, stabilizing settlement and reducing migration costs.

Figure 3. Migration by distance



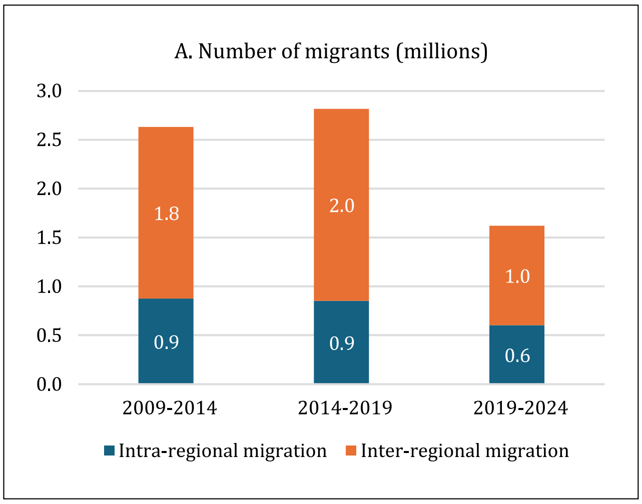
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

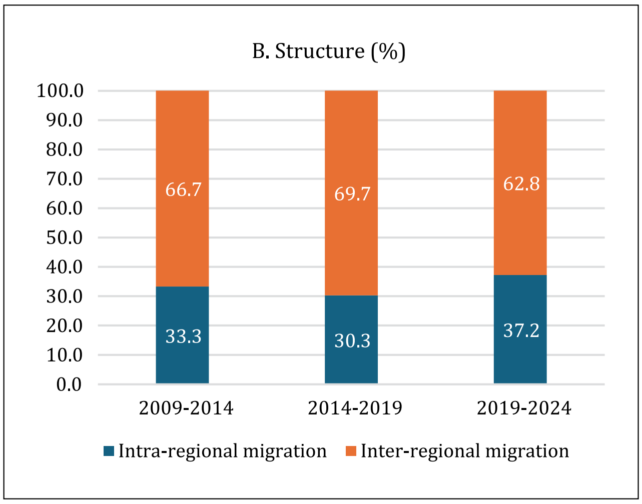
Inter-district migration within a province declined steadily from 1.7 million people in the period 2009–2014 to 0.7 million people in the period 2019–2024, indicating a significant drop in medium-distance migration demand. This may suggest that **people increasingly prefer more stable residential choices within their province or opt for longer-distance migration in search of new opportunities.** Structurally, the share of inter-district migration within a province dropped sharply from 29.2% in the period 2009–2014 to 18.6% in the period 2014–2019, then slightly rose to 19.3% in the period 2019–2024. This was the least common migration type during the period 2019–2024.

Inter-provincial migration maintained the highest volume in the period 2014–2019 with 2.8 million people, before declining to 1.6 million people in the period 2019–2024. It remained the most prevalent migration type throughout the period, consistently accounting for over 42% of total migration, indicating that long-distance relocation beyond familiar regions continues to be the top priority for many individuals seeking new environments with different cultures, languages, and living conditions. **The stable share reflects the resilience of inter-provincial migration flows, especially between provinces with strong economic linkages.**

Inter-regional migration also declined significantly from 1.8 million people in the period 2009–2014 to 1.0 million people in the period 2019–2024, reflecting a contraction in cross-regional migration flows. **This decline may be due to population saturation in developed regions such as SER, while other regions have yet to become attractive enough to generate new migration flows.** Although inter-regional migration still accounted for a substantial share-consistently above 62% of total inter-provincial migration-it dropped from 66.7% in the period 2009-2014 to 62.8% in the period 2019–2024. The decrease in cross-regional migration also reflects the growing pressure of relocating to areas with different living conditions or higher migration costs.

Figure 4. Regional migration





Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

2.3. Rural-urban migration

The total scale of out-migration has declined sharply in recent years, from 6.4 million people in 2014–2019 to 3.8 million in 2019–2024, particularly among rural populations. This reflects population stabilization and the effectiveness of regional development policies such as the New Rural Development Program, infrastructure improvements, and the creation of local employment opportunities.

Although rural areas remain the main source of out-migration, accounting for more than 50% of total out-migrants, their share has gradually decreased from 55.5% in 2009–2014 to 54% and 51.4% in subsequent periods. In contrast, the proportion of out-migrants from urban areas has shown an upward trend.

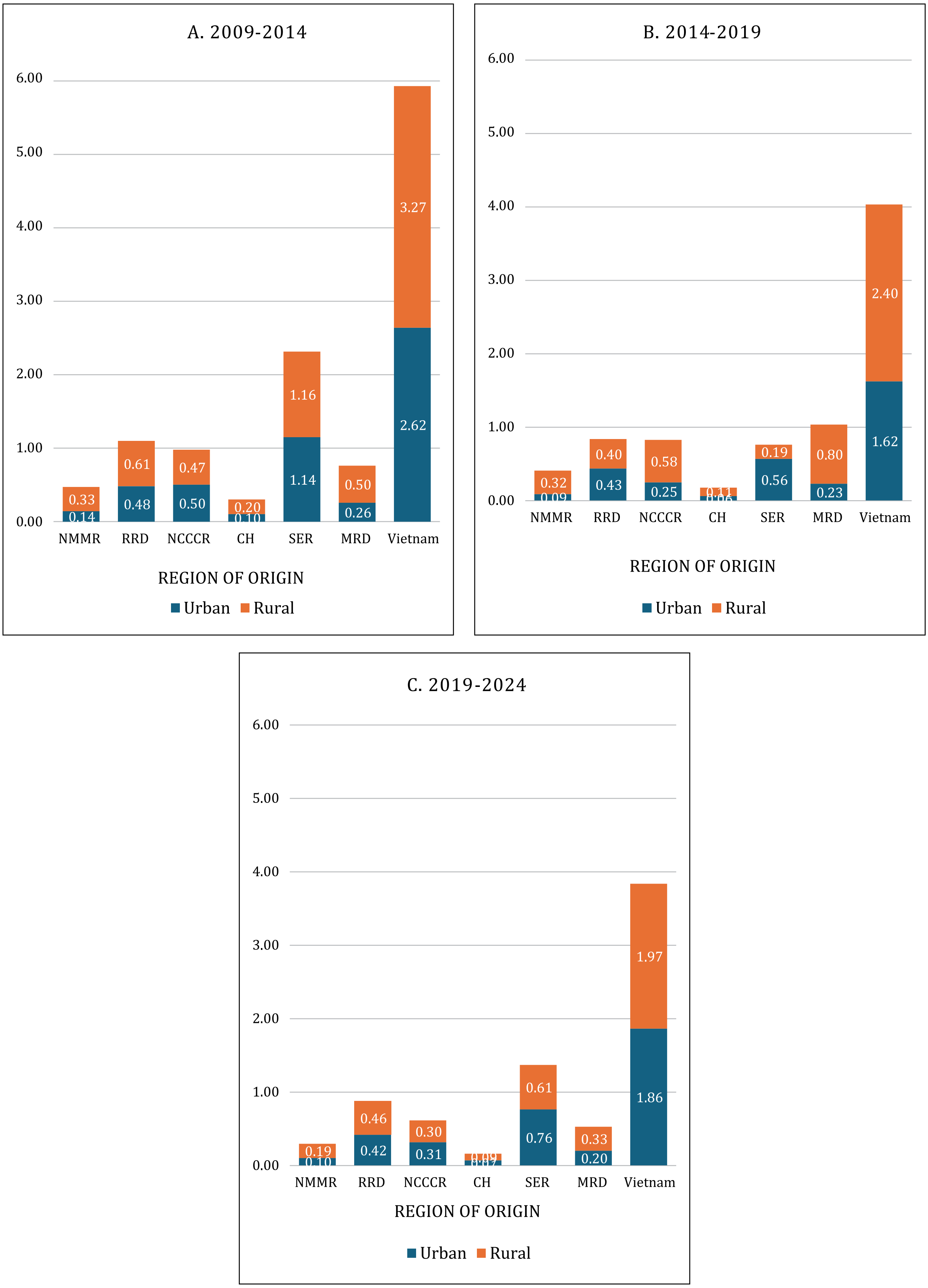
Migration to urban areas has remained the dominant flow, accounting for over 60% of destinations-specifically, 57.8% in 2009–2014, rising to 64% in subsequent periods. Among these, intra-urban migration (between cities) is the largest flow (nearly 80%), showing that most migrants from urban areas choose other urban areas as their destination; meanwhile, rural-to-urban migration accounts for about 51%.

The total number of migrants declined sharply during 2019–2024, particularly from rural areas, indicating a trend toward population stabilization and adjustments in regional development strategies. Over more than a decade, Vietnam's population structure has shifted markedly between urban and rural areas. The share of the population living in urban areas rose rapidly, from below 35% in the early 2010s to nearly 40% by 2019, and continued to approach 45% by 2024. Conversely, the rural population declined both in proportion and in absolute numbers, reflecting a strong urbanization trend. This change not only highlights the appeal of major economic and service centers but also demonstrates the nationwide redistribution of labor resources. The increasingly evident urbanization trend provides a foundation for explaining why urban-to-urban migration has become the most common form of migration in recent years. Intra-urban migration (between cities) has emerged as the largest migration flow nationwide, reflecting the growing prevalence of shifts within the urban system, closely tied to urbanization and the expansion of living spaces.

From 2014–2024, the overall scale of out-migration declined, especially from rural areas, showing population stabilization and the effectiveness of regional development policies such as the New Rural Development Program, infrastructure improvements, and local job creation. During 2009–2014, the country recorded 5.9 million out-migrants, including 3.3 million from rural areas and 2.6 million from urban areas. By 2014–2019, the total number of migrants increased to 6.4 million, with 3.5 million from rural areas. In 2019–2024, the total number of migrants fell to 3.8 million, of which nearly 2 million were from rural areas.

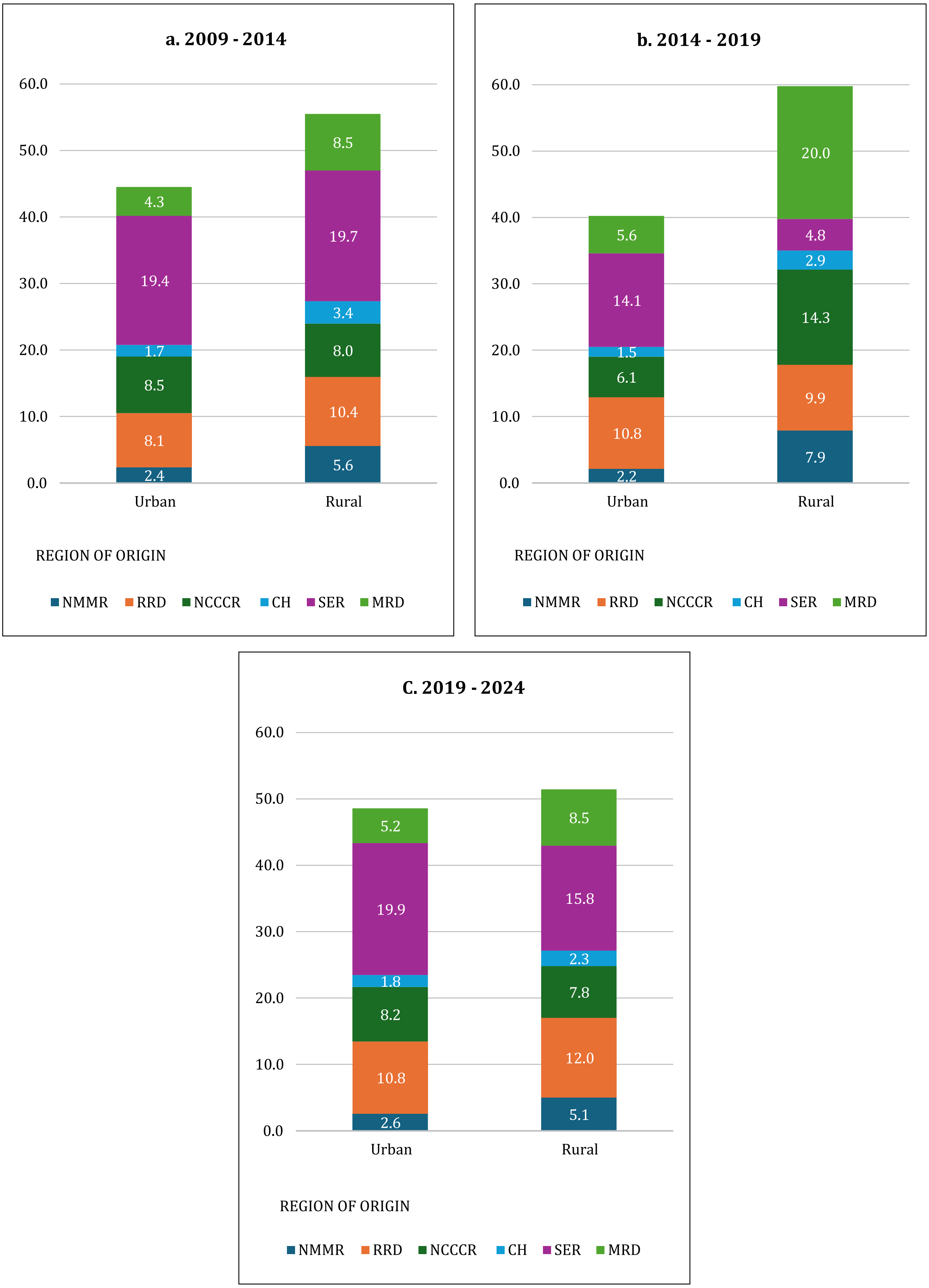
Although rural areas remain the main source of out-migration, their share has steadily declined from 55.5% in 2009–2014 to 51.4% in 2019–2024. Conversely, the share of out-migration from urban areas has increased from 44.5% in 2009–2014 to 48.6% in 2019–2024.

Figure 5. Number of migrants by rural and urban areas in the regions of origin (millions)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

Figure 6. Structure of migration by rural and ubran areas in the regions of origin (%)



Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period. Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NS

Migration to urban areas remains the dominant flow, accounting for 50–60% of migration destinations, specifically 57.8% in the period 2009–2014, rising to 65.8% in 2014–2019, and then slightly decreasing to 63.9% in 2019–2024. Among these, intra-urban migration (between cities) was the largest flow in the two periods 2009–2014 and 2019–2024, showing the dominant trend of movement within the urban system. Urban-to-urban migration showed signs of declining in scale, from 1.8 million (2009–2014) down to 1.2 million (2014–2019), then rising again to 1.4 million (2019–2024). The share of this flow increased from 31.2% (2009–2014) to 37.5% (2019–2024), reflecting the development of satellite cities and population dispersal from central cities.

Rural-to-urban migration is the second most important flow, with its share peaking at 35.7% (2014–2019) before falling to 26.4% (2019–2024), along with a continuous decline in scale from 1.6 million migrants (2009–2014), down to 1.4 million (2014–2019), and then 1 million (2019–2024). The urbanization process has been adjusted, causing rural-to-urban migration to decline continuously, with the rate of decline in 2014–2019 lower compared to other migration flows.

Rural-to-rural migration accounted for 25% in 2019–2024, ranking third, with its scale decreasing across periods. Meanwhile, urban-to-rural migration remained the lowest, with a share of just over 11%. The trend of moving from urban to rural areas occurred on a small scale.

The trend of immigration to SER and RRD plays a major role in the overall national picture due to the impact of urbanization and population dispersal in HCM City, Bình Dương, Đồng Nai, Hà Nội, and satellite cities, considered the two economic locomotives of the country. As the largest immigration region, SER has a dominant urban-to-urban migration flow. In 2009–2014, as many as 0.9 million people immigrated to SER from urban-to-urban migration (accounting for 51% of the national urban-to-urban migration flow). Although it dropped sharply in 2014–2019 to 0.6 million (33.6% of the national urban-to-urban migration flow), this flow recovered to 0.8 million in 2019–2024 (46.3% of the national urban-to-urban migration flow), showing the strong development of satellite cities such as Biên Hòa, Thủ Dầu Một, and Bà Rịa. At the same time, SER also played a leading role in the national rural-to-urban immigration flow, with 0.4 million in 2009–2014 (49% of the national rural-to-urban migration flow) and 0.2 million in 2019–2024 (40.5% of the national rural-to-urban migration flow). The other two flows—especially urban-to-rural—only fluctuated around 0.2 million, reflecting the small-scale trend of moving from urban to rural areas.

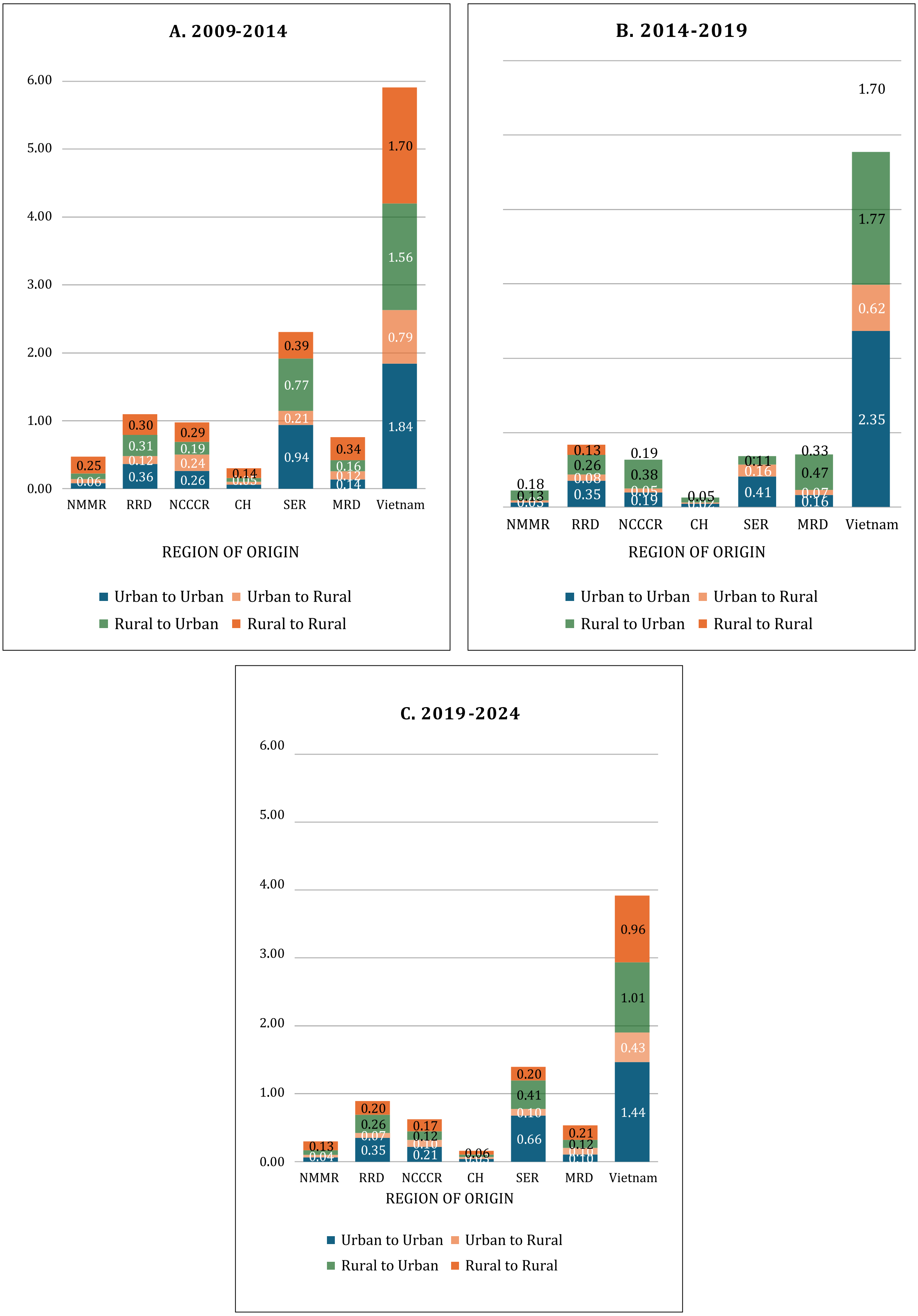
Although the overall scale of rural-to-urban migration to RRD is much smaller than to SER, these are still the two dominant immigration regions in each urban–rural migration flow nationwide. In 2009–2014, considering each migration flow, SER accounted for 43.6% of urban immigration, 51.1% of urban-to-urban migration, 35.4% of rural immigration, and 49.1% of rural-to-urban migration. This picture showed a similar trend in 2019–2024, though with slightly reduced shares: SER accounted for 40.9% of urban immigration, 46.3% of urban-to-urban migration, 30.7% of rural immigration, and 40.5% of rural-to-urban migration. The gradual decline of these shares in SER indicates adjustments in migration flows possibly due to urbanization pressures and regional development policies. Meanwhile, RRD accounted for 18.3% of urban immigration, 19.8% of urban-to-urban migration, 18.7% of rural immigration, and 19.9% of rural-to-urban migration in 2009–2014. In 2019–2024, these shares in RRD rose slightly to 22.3% of urban immigration, 24.3% of urban-to-urban migration, 23.3% of rural immigration, and 25.9% of rural-to-urban migration.

Differences in immigration flows appear in MRD and NMMR, where rural-to-rural migration accounts for the highest share within the region, but only at a small scale compared to the national total. In MRD, 0.5 million people migrated via rural-to-rural flows in 2009–2014, rising to 0.8 million in 2014–2019, then dropping to 0.3 million in 2019–2024. In MRD, rural-to-rural immigration was the largest flow, accounting for 66.2% in 2009–2014 and still remaining high at 61.9% in 2019–2024. The scale of this flow reached 0.5 million in 2009–2014 and 0.3 million in 2019–2024. Meanwhile, immigration in these regions from rural-to-urban—although the second largest flow nationwide—only fluctuated between 0.3 and 0.5 million across periods. Intra-urban and urban-to-rural flows remained low, showing the agricultural livelihood characteristics and immigration trends of the region.

NCCCR is the only region with a relatively balanced distribution of immigration flows. In 2019–2024, immigration to NCCCR from urban-to-urban and rural-to-rural flows both reached 0.3 million, while rural-to-urban immigration decreased to 0.2 million. Immigration to NCCCR from urban-to-rural flows remained low. CH is the region with the smallest immigration scale but has notable stability in its internal structure. In rural-to-urban or urban-to-urban flows, immigration shares to this region only maintained contributions of 3–4% in the national migration total

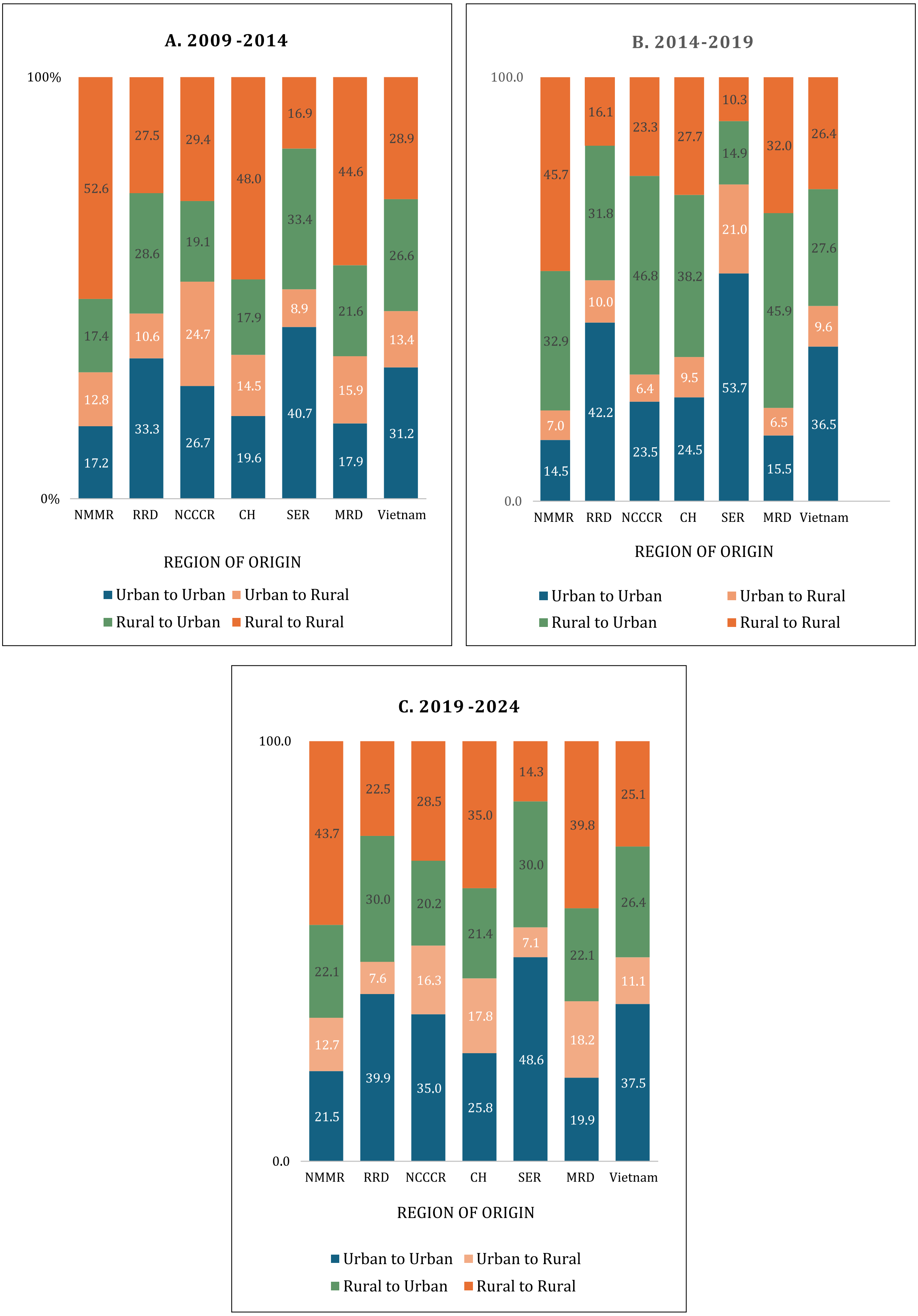
CH has the smallest in-migration scale nationwide but shows notable stability in its internal structure. In rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban flows, the shares of in-migration to CH remained at only 3–4% of the national total.

Figure 7. Number of migrants by rural and ubran areas in the regions of origin (millions)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

Figure 8. Structure of migration by rural and ubran areas (%)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

2.4. Migration by province

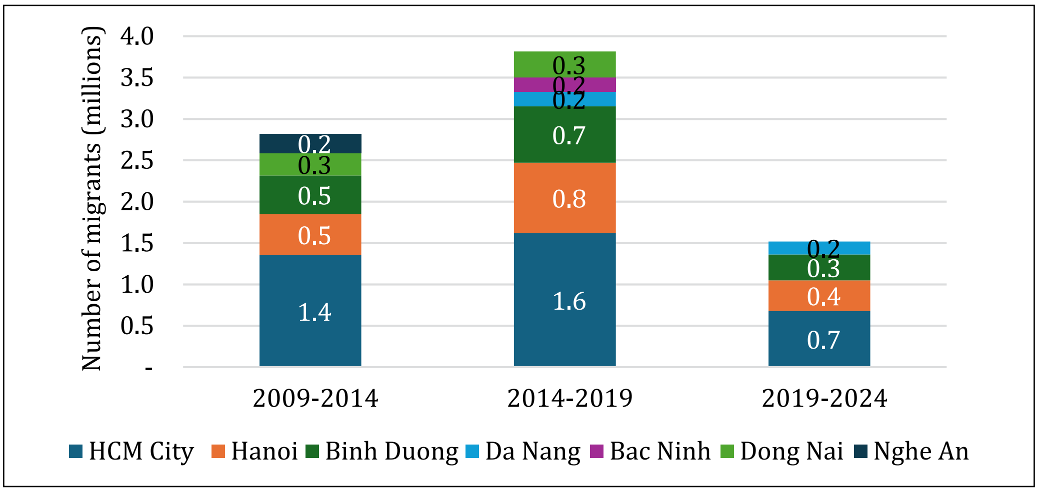
High concentration in major urban centers: six provinces/cities-HCM City, Hà Nội, Bình Dương, Đà Nẵng, Bắc Ninh, and Đồng Nai-attracted more than 51% of the total migrants nationwide during 2019–2024. These urban areas play a leading role in the population mobility process. Provincial migration flows reveal short-term migration trends to Bắc Ninh in the northern economic region, connections between the highlands and the coastal city of Đà Nẵng, and the spillover effects of industrial development from HCM City to neighboring provinces.

a. Migration share and scale

Throughout the period 2014–2024, migration in Vietnam showed a strong tendency to concentrate in several large provinces and cities, especially centrally governed urban areas and developed industrial hubs. **Just six provinces - HCM City, Hanoi, Binh Duong, Da Nang, Bac Ninh, and Dong Nai - attracted over 51% of total national migrants in the period 2019–2024, highlighting the high level of concentration and the leading role of these urban regions in driving population mobility.**

The total scale of migration into Vietnam's largest provinces and cities rose sharply during 2014–2019, then declined steeply in 2019–2024, clearly reflecting the cycle of growth, adjustment, and redistribution of population in the process of urbanization. In 2009–2014, nearly 3 million people migrated into major urban centers such as HCM City, Hanoi, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Da Nang, and Nghe An, accounting for more than 50% of the national total. This was the period when central cities were in rapid growth, strongly attracting labor from rural areas and smaller provinces. By 2014–2019, migration into major cities surged to 3.8 million, equivalent to 59% of the national total (with Bac Ninh rising to replace Nghe An among the leading destinations). HCM City led with 1.6 million migrants, Hanoi increased to 0.85 million, and Binh Duong reached 0.7 million, highlighting the strong pull of the Southern key economic region and the Capital region. This was the peak phase of urbanization, industrialization, and urban infrastructure expansion. However, in 2019–2024, the total scale of migration into major cities fell sharply to only about 1.8 million, accounting for just over 51% of the national total. HCM City dropped to 0.7 million, Hanoi to 0.4 million, and Binh Duong to 0.3 million. This decline reflects the adjustment phase of urbanization, as large cities began to face infrastructure pressures, high living costs, and population dispersal policies. At the same time, second-tier cities such as Da Nang and Bac Ninh increased their shares, showing a clear trend of population shifts toward satellite and regional-level cities.

Figure 9. The top group of provinces with over 0.2 million in-migrants



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

In addition to the six largest provinces and cities, several other localities - including Can Tho, Long An, Hai Phong, Thanh Hoa, and Nghe An - recorded migration shares above 2% in at least one year. However, their overall scale remained significantly smaller. This highlights a clear divergence in population attraction capacity across regions, with central urban areas continuing to be the primary destinations, despite an emerging trend of adjustment and dispersion toward surrounding areas.

b. Migration flows

HCM City, the leading urban hub in the South, remains the top destination for migrants nationwide, with diverse inflows from NCCCR (Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Phu Yen, Binh Dinh), CH (Dak Lak, Lam Dong), and especially MRD provinces such as Dong Thap, Long An, Tien Giang, and An Giang.

Hanoi is the primary destination for migrants from RRD, with Nam Dinh, Hai Duong, Thai Binh, and Hung Yen being the largest source provinces. NCCCR also contributes significantly, particularly Thanh Hoa and Nghe An. A smaller share of migrants comes from NMMR, including Phu Tho, Vinh Phuc, and Thai Nguyen.

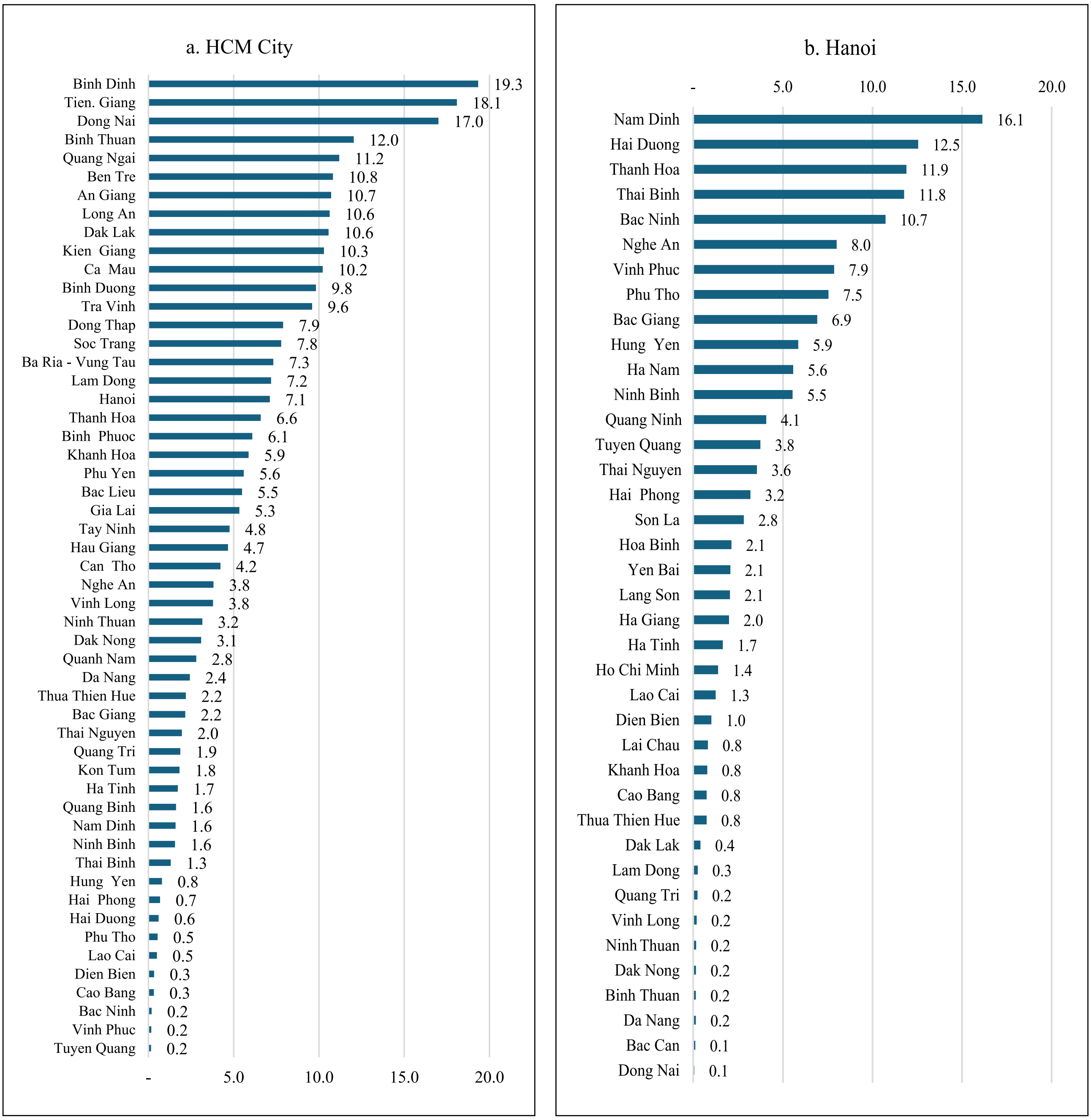
Bac Ninh, serving as an industrial satellite city of Hanoi, attracts strong migration from Hai Duong and Bac Giang in RRD and the Northeast. Hung Yen and Thai Binh are also major sources, reflecting short-term labor mobility within the northern economic zone.

Da Nang, the central coastal urban center, draws migrants mainly from NCCCR provinces such as Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, along with Thua Thien Hue. A portion of migrants also comes from CH, including Kon Tum and Gia Lai, indicating regional linkages between the highlands and coastal cities.

Binh Duong is a prominent destination for workers from MRD, especially Dong Thap, Long An, and Tien Giang. CH also contributes significantly, with Dak Lak and Gia Lai as key source provinces. NCCCR provinces like Thanh Hoa and Nghe An show a growing trend of migration to Binh Duong in search of employment opportunities.

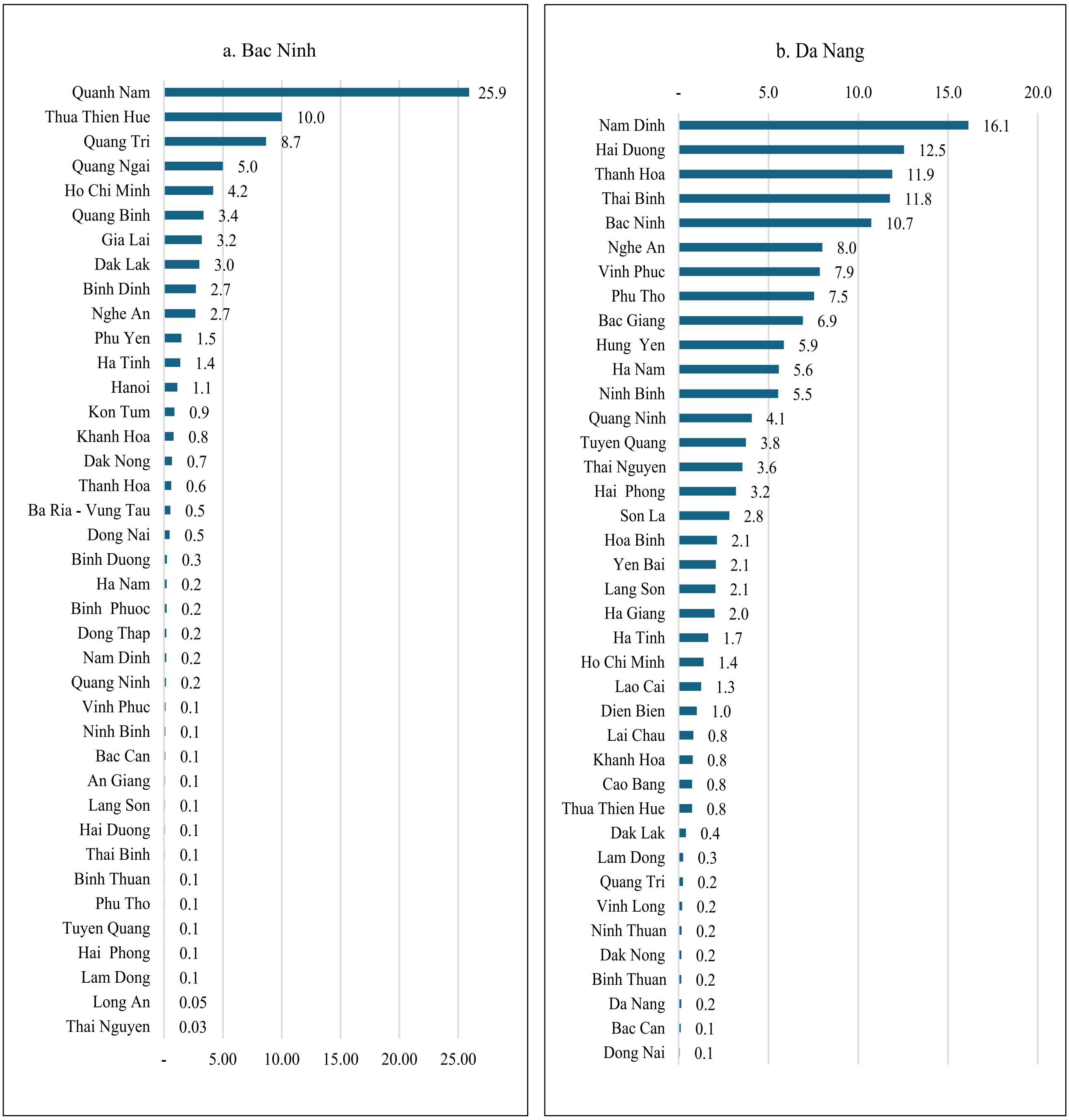
Dong Nai receives migrants from multiple regions, most notably from NCCCR such as Binh Dinh and Phu Yen, and CH including Dak Nong and Gia Lai. Migration from MRD is also present, particularly from Long An and Ben Tre, reflecting the industrial spillover from HCM City to neighboring provinces.

Figure 10. Sources of migrants to the most populous destination provinces in the period of 2019-2024: Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (thousands of people)



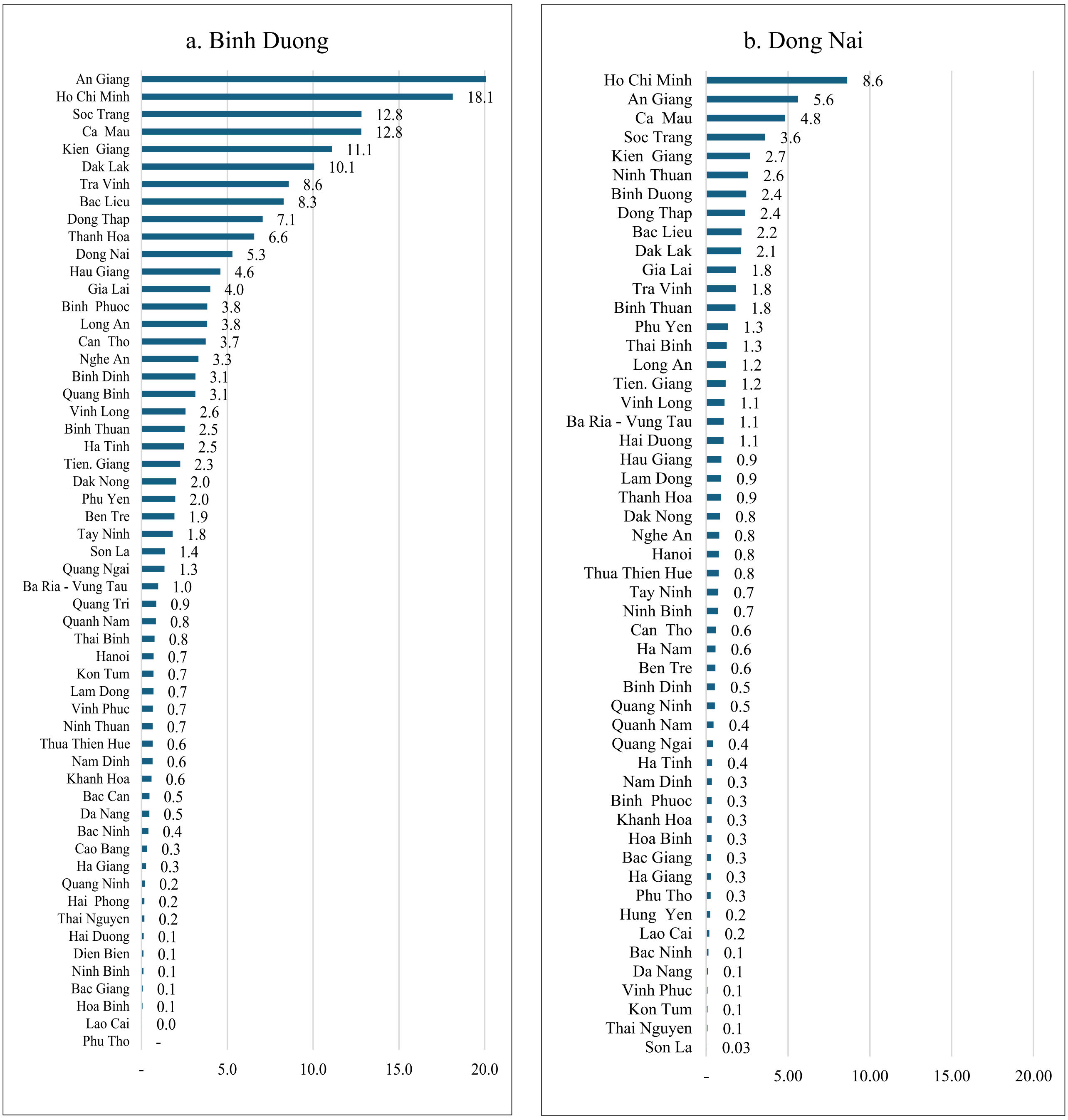
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Survey, NSO.

Figure 11. Sources of migrants to the most populous destination provinces in the period of 2019-2024: Bac Ninh and Da Nang (thousands of people)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Survey, NSO.

Figure 12. Sources of migrants to the most populous destination provinces in the period of 2019-2024: Binh Duong and Dong Nai (thousands of people)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Survey, NSO.

2.5 Migration by region

The migration landscape during 2009-2024 shows that intra-regional migration accounts for the largest share across all regions, reflecting a trend of short-distance movement within familiar areas, facilitated by transportation networks and the spread of urbanization. SER and RRD are the two regions with the highest scale of intra-regional migration nationwide in recent years. Population distribution is gradually becoming more balanced, with the largest migration flows still directed toward SER, followed by RRD. Other economic regions are also playing an increasingly important role in receiving migration flows.

a. Intra-regional migration

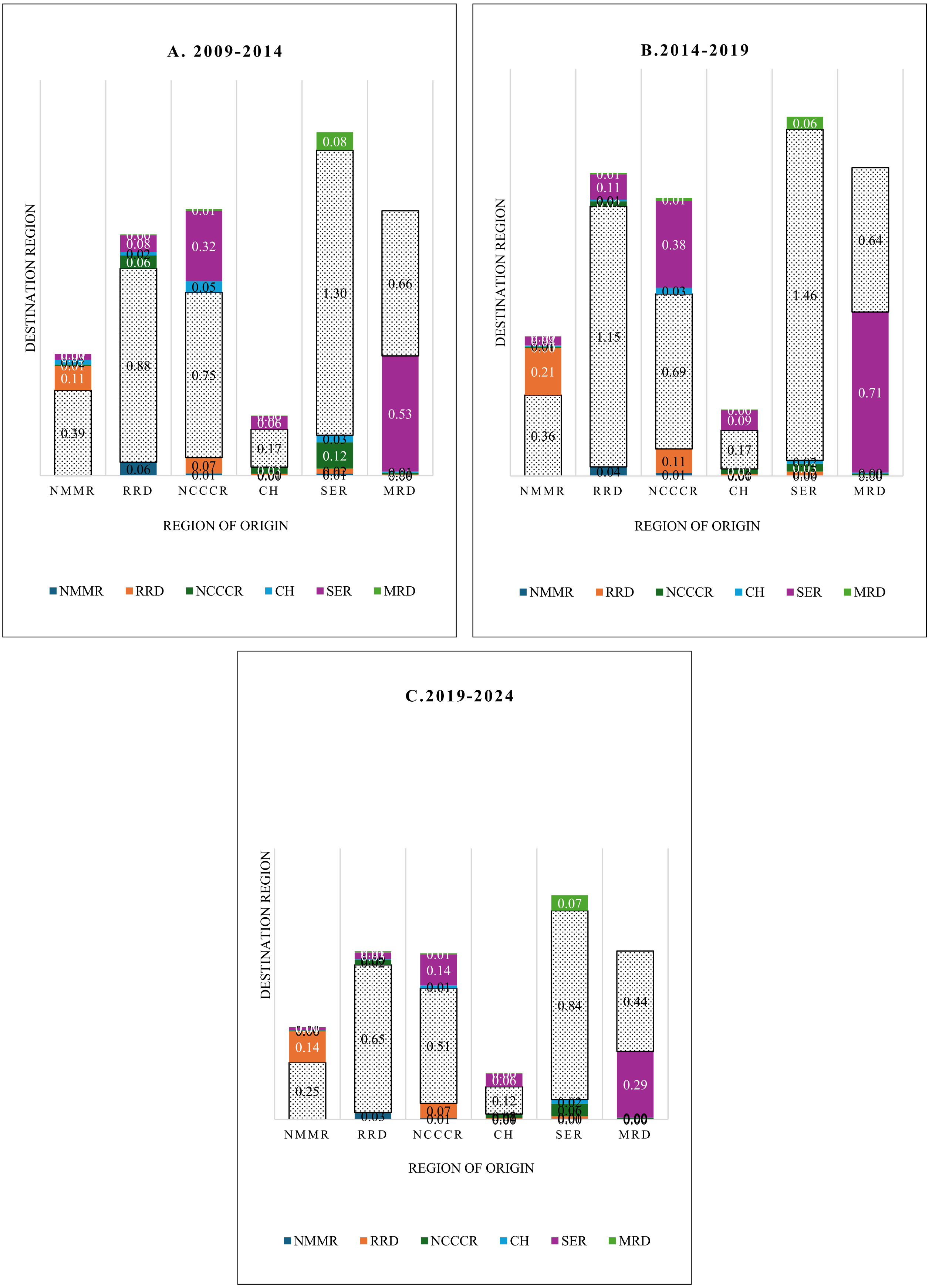
Considering the distribution of the total number of migrants by economic region, intra-regional migration-movement of residence between provinces within the same region-accounts for the largest share in all regions. This shows that urban space is expanding in regions with good transportation networks, facilitating mobility. In all three periods, SER is the region with the highest scale of intra-regional migration nationwide, with strong flows between HCM City, Bình Dương, Đồng Nai, and Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu. The scale of intra-regional migration in SER was the highest in the country, with 1.3 million intra-regional migrants in 2009–2014, rising to 1.5 million in 2014–2019, but then dropping sharply to 0.8 million in 2019–2024. In terms of share within total out-migration, SER had the highest intra-regional migration share nationwide, accounting for about 83% of the region's total migrants in 2009–2014 and rising to 92% in 2014–2019. By 2019–2024, intra-regional migration still accounted for 84% of SER's out-migration.

However, the highest intra-regional migration share nationwide was in RRD during 2019–2024. The intra-regional share of RRD was also very high across all three periods, maintaining a gradual increase: 80% in 2009–2014, rising to 86% in 2014–2019, and continuing to increase slightly to 87.8% in 2019–2024. The intra-regional scale of RRD was 0.9 million in 2009–2014, rising sharply to 1.15 million in 2014–2019, but then dropping to 0.65 million in 2019–2024. The high intra-regional migration rate reflects economic development, infrastructure, investment attraction, and stable job creation within the region.

NCCCR, MRD, and NMMR are regions with lower intra-regional migration scales compared to RRD: 510,000, 444,000, and 253,000 people respectively in 2019–2024. However, the intra-regional migration rates of these regions have all shown a clear upward trend in the past five years, reflecting economic and social development, investment attraction, and better job creation for local residents.

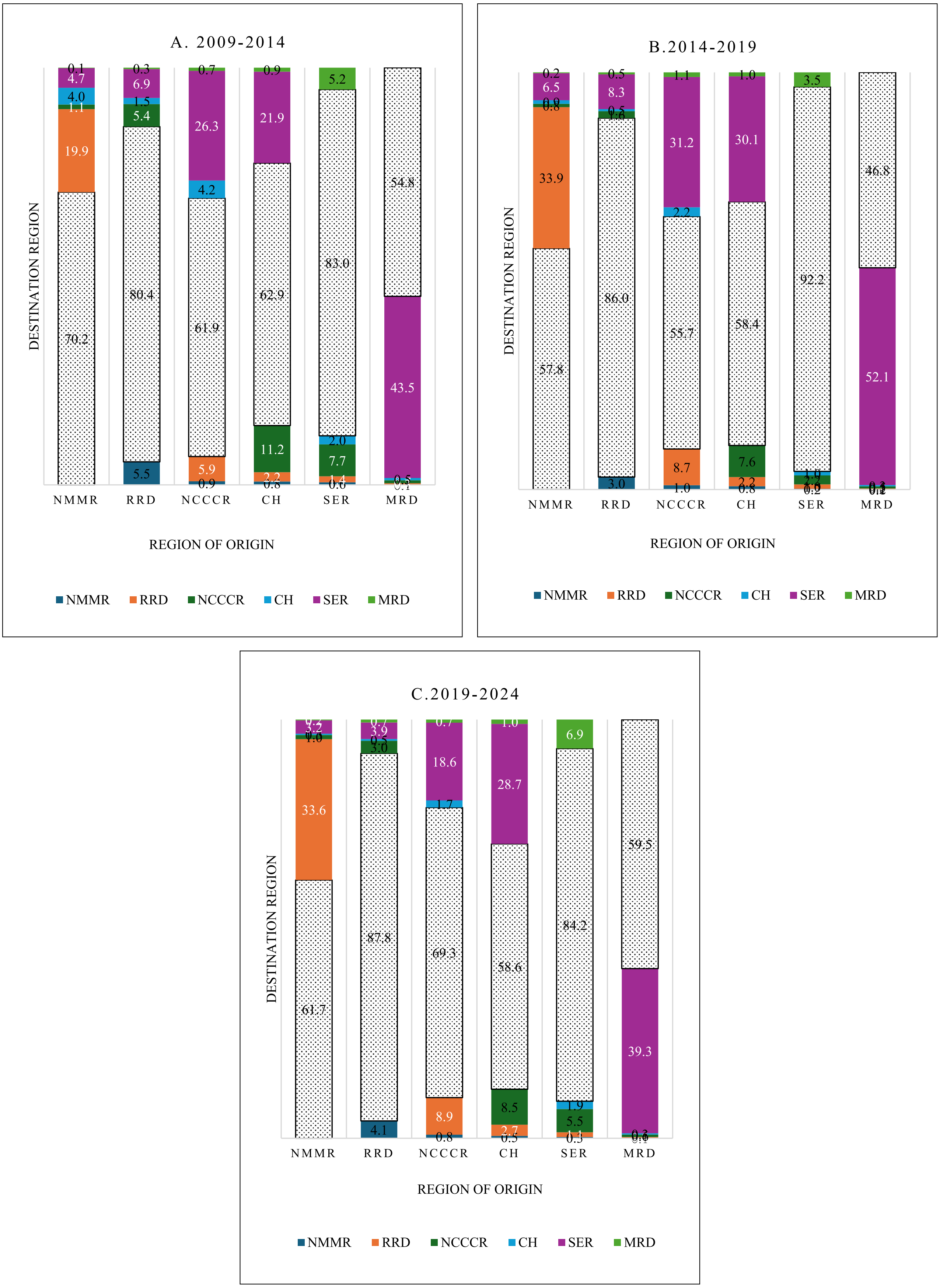
CH is the region with the lowest population scale nationwide, and therefore the overall migration scale and intra-regional migration scale are also the lowest, with 172,000 in 2014–2019 dropping to 121,000 in 2019–2024. However, the intra-regional migration share in CH has remained almost unchanged at around 58.5%.

Figure 13. Number of migrants by intra and inter-regional migration (millions of people)



Note: Intra-regional migration is represented by uncolored cells with small dots, while inter-regional migration is represented by filled colored cells. Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

Figure 14. Structure of intra and inter-regional migration (%)



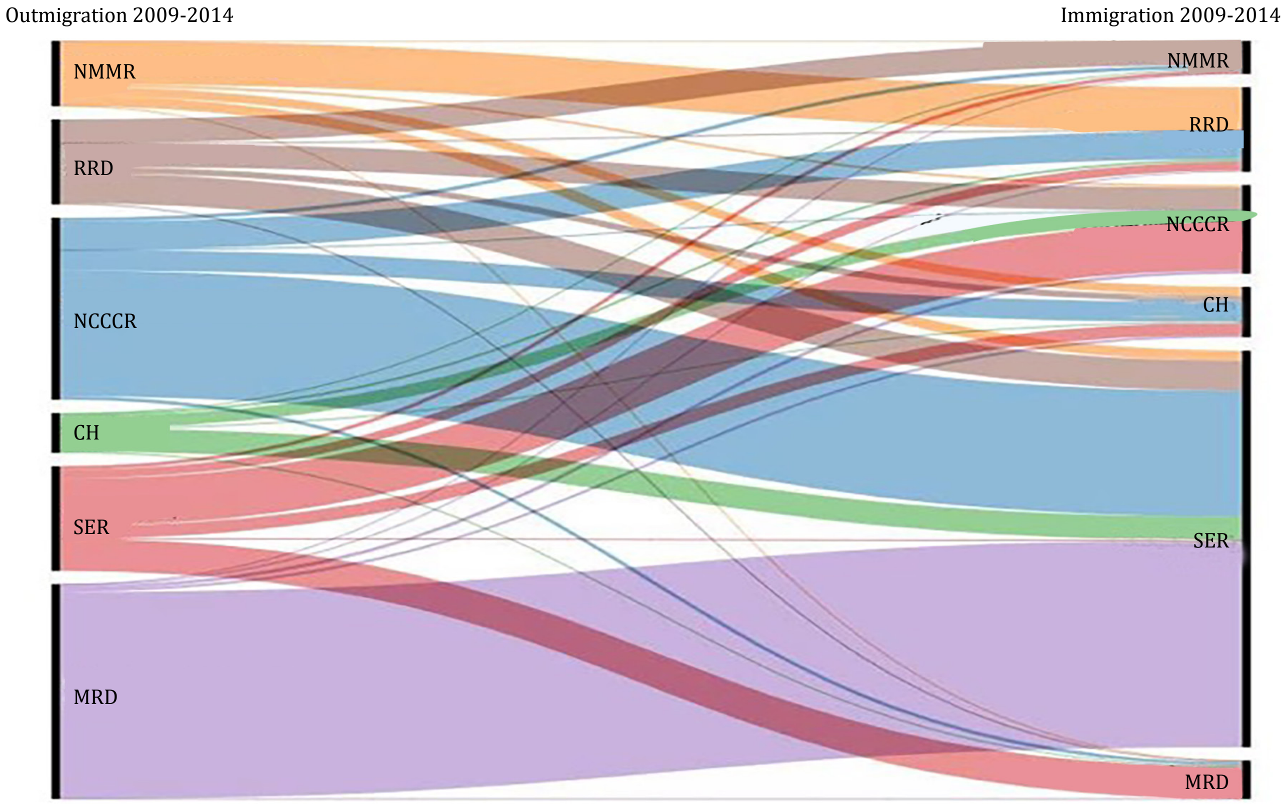
Note: Intra-regional migration is represented by uncolored cells with small dots, while inter-regional migration is represented by filled colored cells. Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

b. Inter-regional migration

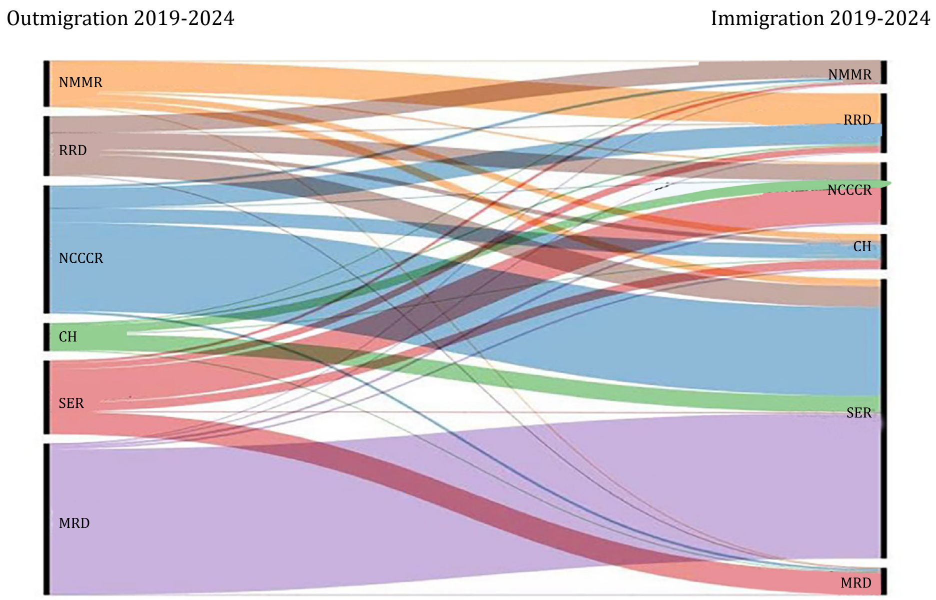
The period 2019–2024 marked the end of a decade of significant fluctuations in migration trends among socio-economic regions in Vietnam, with clear changes in both scale and direction. Compared to 2009–2014, overall migration flows tended to decline, reflecting population stabilization and adjustments in regional development.

Figure 15. Inter-regional migration flows

a. 2009-2014



b. 2019-2024



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO

During 2019–2024, with key economic areas such as HCM City, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai, SER remained the largest destination, attracting population inflows from other regions, particularly the largest inflow from MRD with 293,000 people and from NCCCR with nearly 137,000 people. Inter-regional in-migration to SER peaked at more than 1.3 million in 2014–2019, but then declined to 531,000 in 2019–2024.

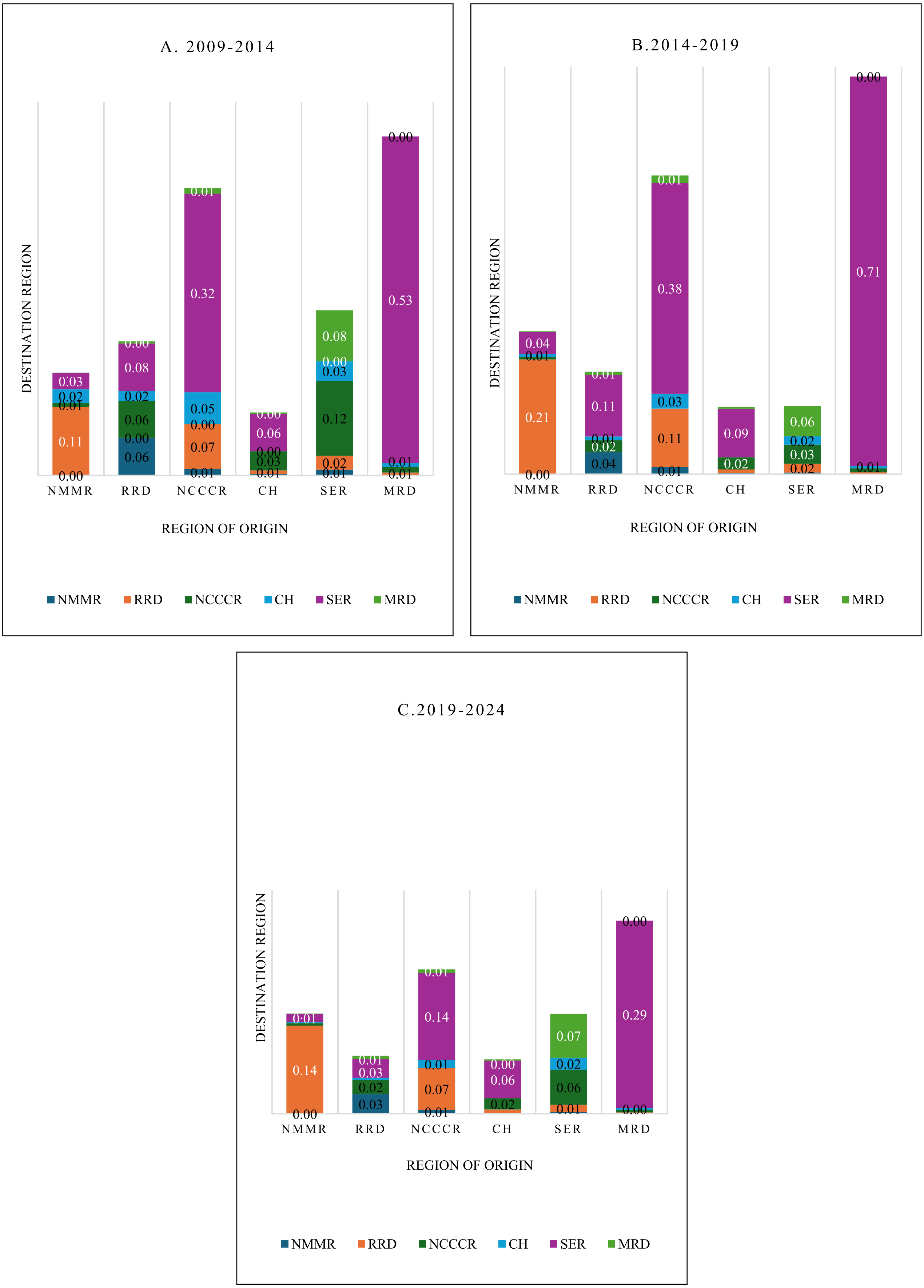
Meanwhile, RRD maintained its dual role as both a source and destination region, with in-migration slightly higher than out-migration. The main inflow to RRD came from NMMR (accounting for about 51–62% of in-migration to RRD across the periods), with the scale rising from 110,000 (2009–2014) to 209,000 (2014–2019), then declining to 137,000 (2019–2024). The second largest inflow to RRD was from NCCCR (around 30% of in-migration to RRD), increasing from 72,000 (2009–2014) to 107,000 (2014–2019), then decreasing to 65,000 (2019–2024). This reflects the fact that intra-regional migration in other regions also increased, as people tended to move within their own regions to seek employment and better living conditions rather than migrating to other regions.

In contrast, MRD continued to be the largest inter-regional out-migration area, with flows mainly directed toward SER (97%), and only about 3% to other regions. However, the flow from MRD to SER decreased by more than half compared to 2014–2019, reflecting changes in migration behavior. The number of people leaving MRD for SER was 525,000 (2009–2014), rising to 710,000 (2014–2019), then falling to 293,000 (2019–2024). Climate change impacts such as salinity intrusion, water shortages, lack of jobs, and inadequate infrastructure are challenges driving this trend.

The second largest out-migration scale in 2019–2024 was from less developed areas, including NCCCR (226,000 people) and NMMR (157,000 people). These regions have experienced continuous population loss, though the number of out-migrants has gradually declined. NMMR has been a stable source region, with inter-regional migration flows fluctuating around 200,000 across the periods. The share of out-migration from NMMR to RRD accounted for 66.7% in 2009–2014, rising to 80% in 2014–2019, and 87.8% in 2019–2024. In-migration to NMMR remained very low.

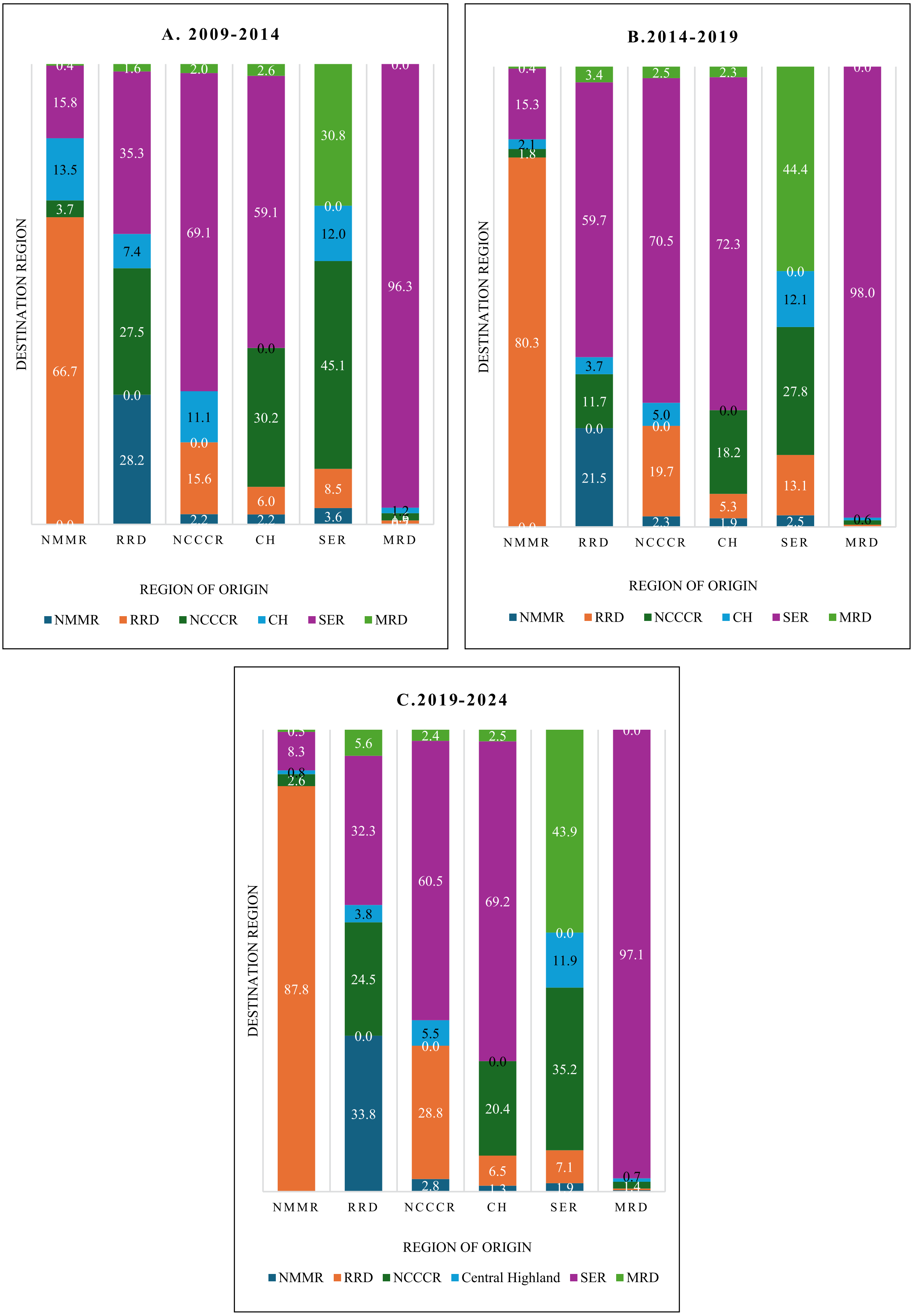
CH had the smallest number of migrants nationwide, with more than 122,000 in 2014–2019, declining to 85,000 in 2019–2024. The main reason is the region's small population size.

Figure 16. Number of inter-regional migrants (millions)



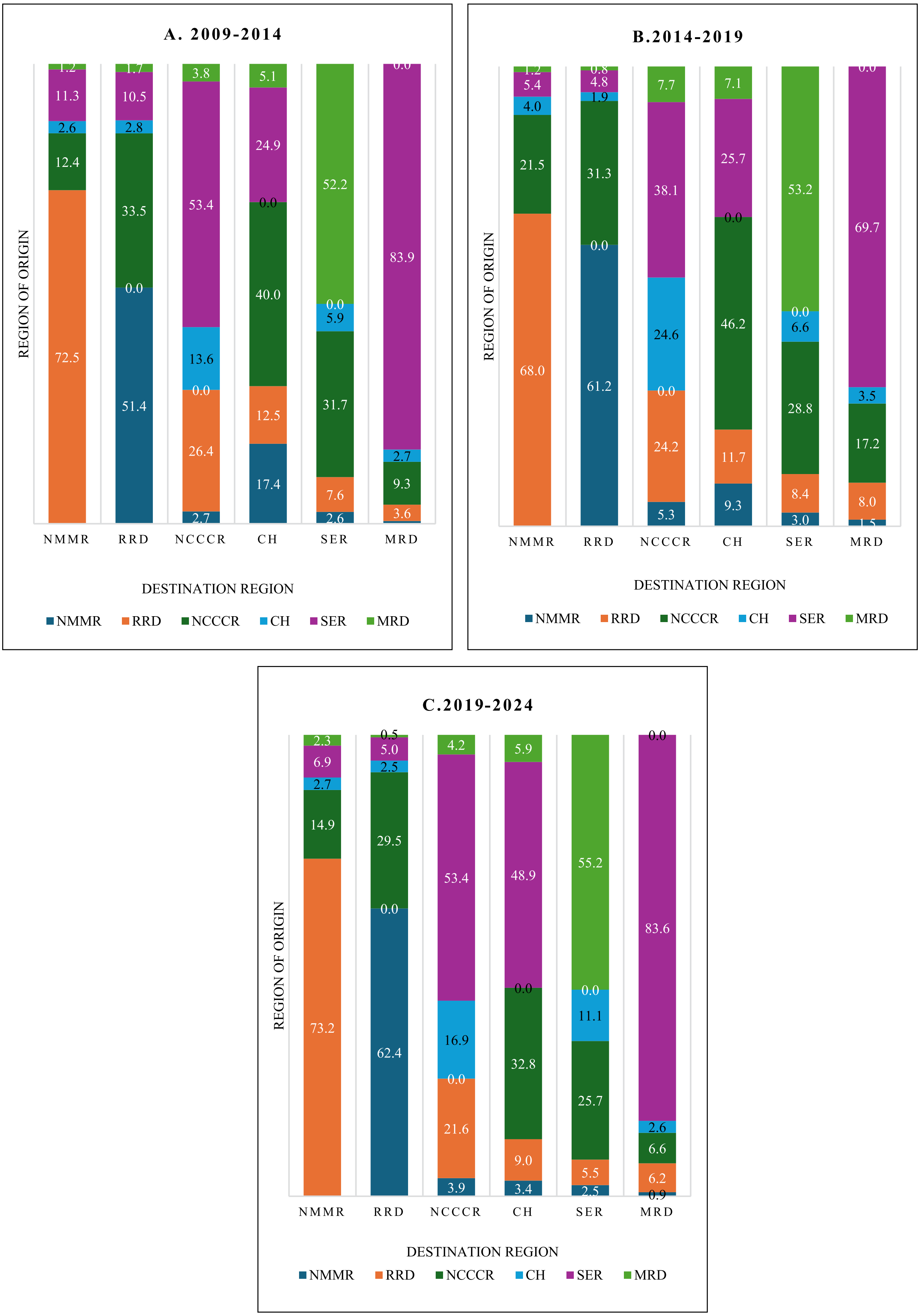
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

Figure 17. Structure of inter-regional migration in the regions of origin (%)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

Figure 18. Structure of inter-regional migration in the destination regions (%)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, the 2019 Population and Housing Census, NSO.

CHAPTER 3

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MIGRANTS DURING 2009-2024

Shifts in age and gender structure of migration:

- Migration patterns are shifting from younger age groups toward middle-aged cohorts, and from a female-dominant trend toward a more gender-balanced dynamic. This change may stem from various factors: a more stable labor market, more effective local retention policies, and increasing migration driven by family, health, or resettlement reasons.
- Migration remains concentrated among young working-age groups (20–34), especially those aged 20–24, who tend to move between major urban centers for employment and education.
- The share of middle-aged migrants (35–44) has increased significantly, associated with resettlement needs, family care responsibilities, and career transitions.
- Children and the older persons still account for a small proportion of migrants, but their share is gradually rising, reflecting an expansion in the age range participating in migration.
- Women continue to dominate labor migration, though the gender gap is narrowing, indicating a trend toward more balanced gender participation.

Ethnic and marital status differentiation:

- The share of ethnic minority (EM) groups in migration is increasing, despite a decline in national scale; migration mainly occurs within rural areas or from rural to urban regions.
- EM women are increasingly participating in migration, often driven by marriage, employment, or family-related reasons.
- Married individuals account for the highest share of migrants, but their proportion drops significantly in long-distance flows; intra-district migration has risen markedly.
- Unmarried individuals are the only migrant group with a rising share, especially among men, reflecting a trend of short-distance, proactive migration in search of new opportunities.

Limited technical and vocational expertise:

- Migrant workers without technical and vocational expertise (TVE) still represent the largest share, but this is declining sharply.
- Migrants with university-level education or higher are increasing, nearly double the rate of local residents, indicating a trend of high-quality labor migration.
- The share of those migrants with primary-level training is rising rapidly, reflecting the expansion of short-term vocational programs.
- Employment remains the most common reason for migration, across all skill levels and marital statuse.

Employment instability and income pressure among migrants:

- Migrants have higher employment rates than local residents, especially among men; female migrants also show higher employment rates compared to local women.
- The unemployment rate among migrants is more than six times higher than that of local residents, reflecting the volatility of the migrant labor market.

- Migrants earn higher incomes, particularly women, which helps narrow the gender gap but also highlights the pressure migrants face in securing jobs and maintaining income levels.

Challenges faced by migrants

Age and gender-related migration pressures:

- Middle-aged and older migrants require appropriate support services during relocation.
- Young migrants face high living costs and intense job competition in urban areas.
- Female migrants still encounter barriers in accessing high-quality employment.
- Young men are vulnerable in unstable labor markets.

Opportunity gaps across population groups:

- EM groups have limited access to key economic regions.
- Migration for education and employment is lower among EM compared to Kinh, reflecting disparities in education and career opportunities.

Barriers to household-based migration:

- Household migration faces challenges in terms of cost and housing stability.
- Single migrants are more vulnerable if lacking support networks at destination areas.

Disadvantages in migrant labor skills and employment:

- Migrant workers with basic skills are easily replaceable and poorly protected.
- The share of migrants with intermediate-level TVE is declining, making it harder to compete in long-distance migration flows.
- Migrant employment is unstable and highly sensitive to economic fluctuations.
- Although migrant incomes are relatively high, they often come with heavy workloads, limited insurance, and time pressure.

3.1. Age profile

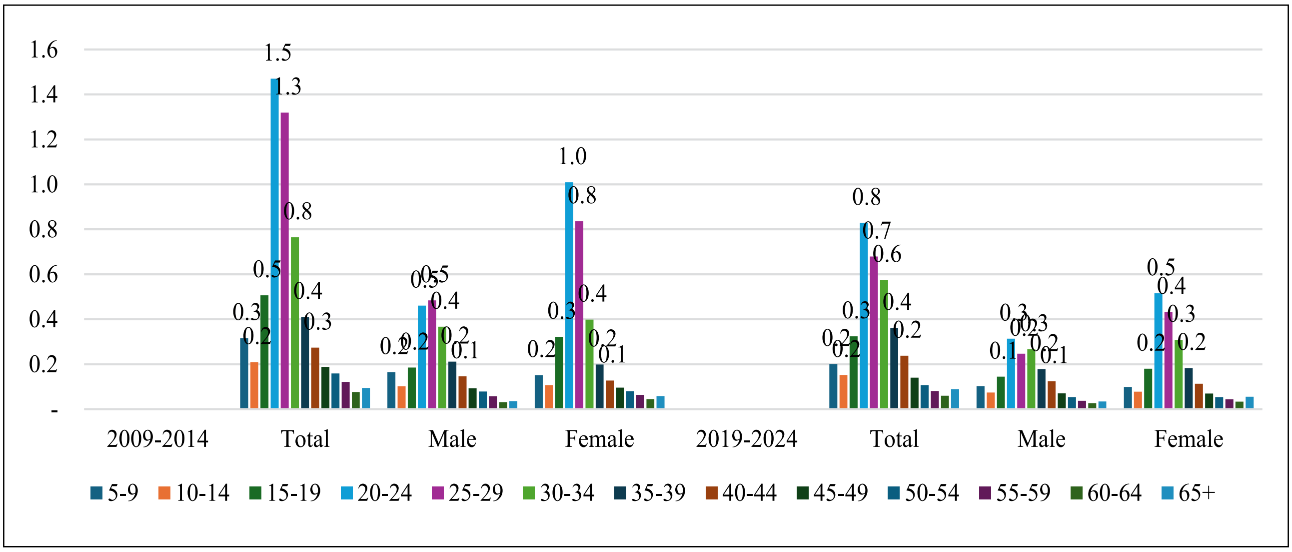
Migration is concentrated among the young working-age population: the 20–34 age group accounts for the largest share of total migrants. However, from 2009–2014 to 2019–2024, the scale of migration in this group declined sharply. Urban-to-urban migration is the most common form among young people, reflecting the trend of moving between major urban centers to seek employment and education opportunities. Intra-district migration increased significantly, while inter-provincial migration among the 20–24 age group declined sharply. This reflects a preference for short-distance moves within familiar areas, more effective local economic development, the growth of district-level urban centers, and the high costs associated with long-distance migration.

a. Age and gender

Migration in Vietnam is primarily concentrated among young working-age groups and has shown a marked decline across all age categories, particularly among those aged 20 to 34. During 2009–2014, out of a total of 5.9 million migrants, the 20–24 age group accounted for the largest share with nearly 1.5 million people, followed by the 25–29 age group with 1.3 million, and the 30–34 age group with nearly 0.8 million. This is the age range with high demand for education, employment, and entrepreneurship, reflecting economic motivation as the main driver of migration.

By 2019–2024, the total number of migrants had decreased to about 3.8 million, with the 20–24 age group reduced to only 0.8 million (nearly half compared to 2009–2014), the 25–29 age group down to 0.7 million, and the 30–34 age group down to just 0.6 million. This decline may reflect the slowing pace of urbanization, more evenly distributed employment opportunities across regions, or the effectiveness of socio-economic development policies at the local level in attracting and retaining populations.

Figure 19. Number of migrants by age and gender (millions)



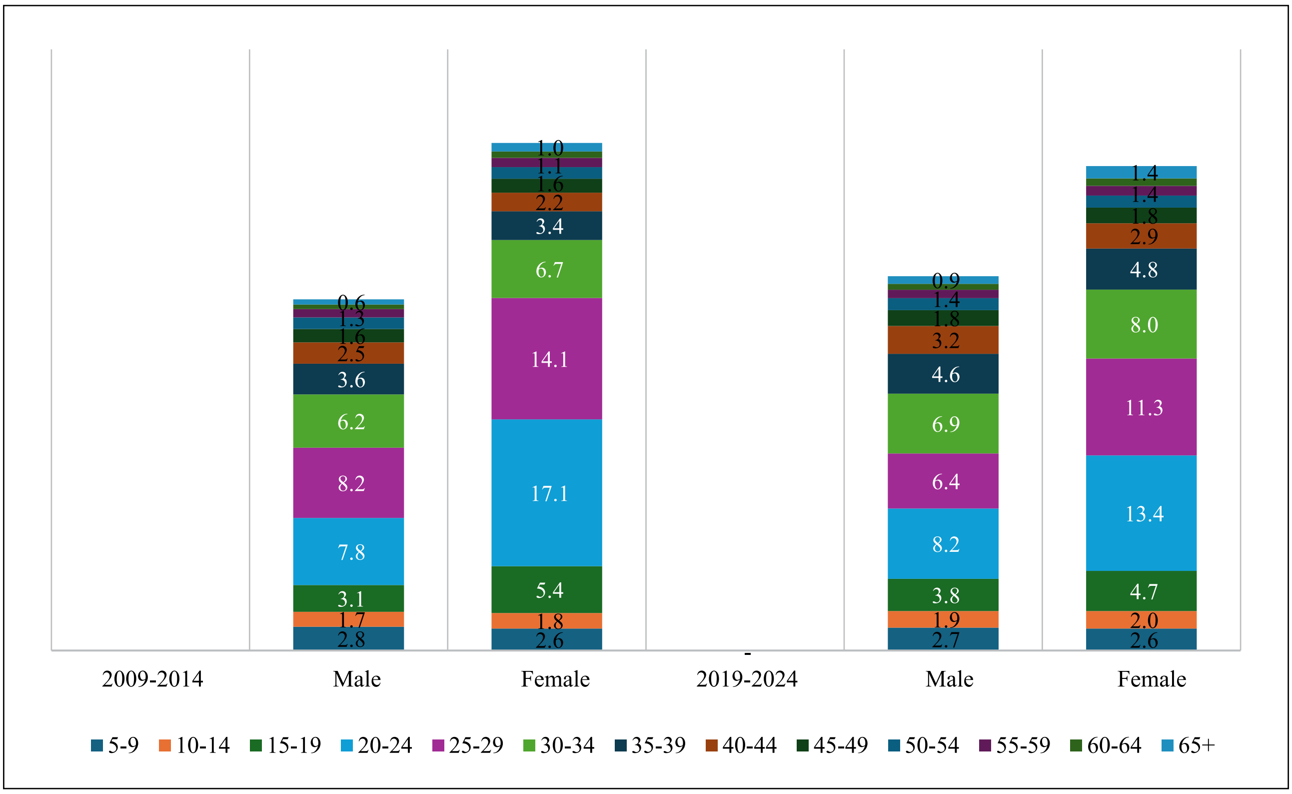
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO

Female migrants continue to dominate labor migration, but their share is gradually narrowing compared to males. In the period 2009–2014, women significantly outnumbered men in the 20–29 age group, with a gap of 6–9 percentage points. By 2019–2024, this gap had reduced to 5–7 points, indicating a more balanced gender trend. Notably, in the 30–34 age group, the female share increased from 6.7% to 8.0%, while the male share rose from 6.2% to 6.9%, reflecting a shift in migration age toward middle adulthood.

Some age groups saw an increase in share despite declining migration volume, signaling a restructuring in the migrant population. For example, the 35–39 age group maintained a stable migration volume of 0.4 million in both periods, but its share rose from 3.6% (male) and 3.4% (female) in 2009–2014 to 4.6% and 4.8% in 2019–2024. Similarly, the 40–44 age group saw its share increase from 2.5% to 3.2% among males and from 2.2% to 2.9% among females, despite a slight decline in volume. This suggests growing participation of middle-aged individuals in migration, likely driven by resettlement, career transitions, or family caregiving.

Migration among children and the older persons remains low but shows a slight upward trend. The 5–9 age group declined in volume from 0.3 million to 0.2 million, with the male share dropping slightly from 2.8% to 2.7%, and the female share remaining steady at 2.6%. Notably, the 65+ age group saw its share rise from 0.6% to 0.9% among males and from 1.0% to 1.4% among females, although the total volume stayed around 0.1 million. This reflects a trend of older-person migration accompanying children or returning to rural areas after retirement.

Figure 20. Structure of migration by age and gender (%)



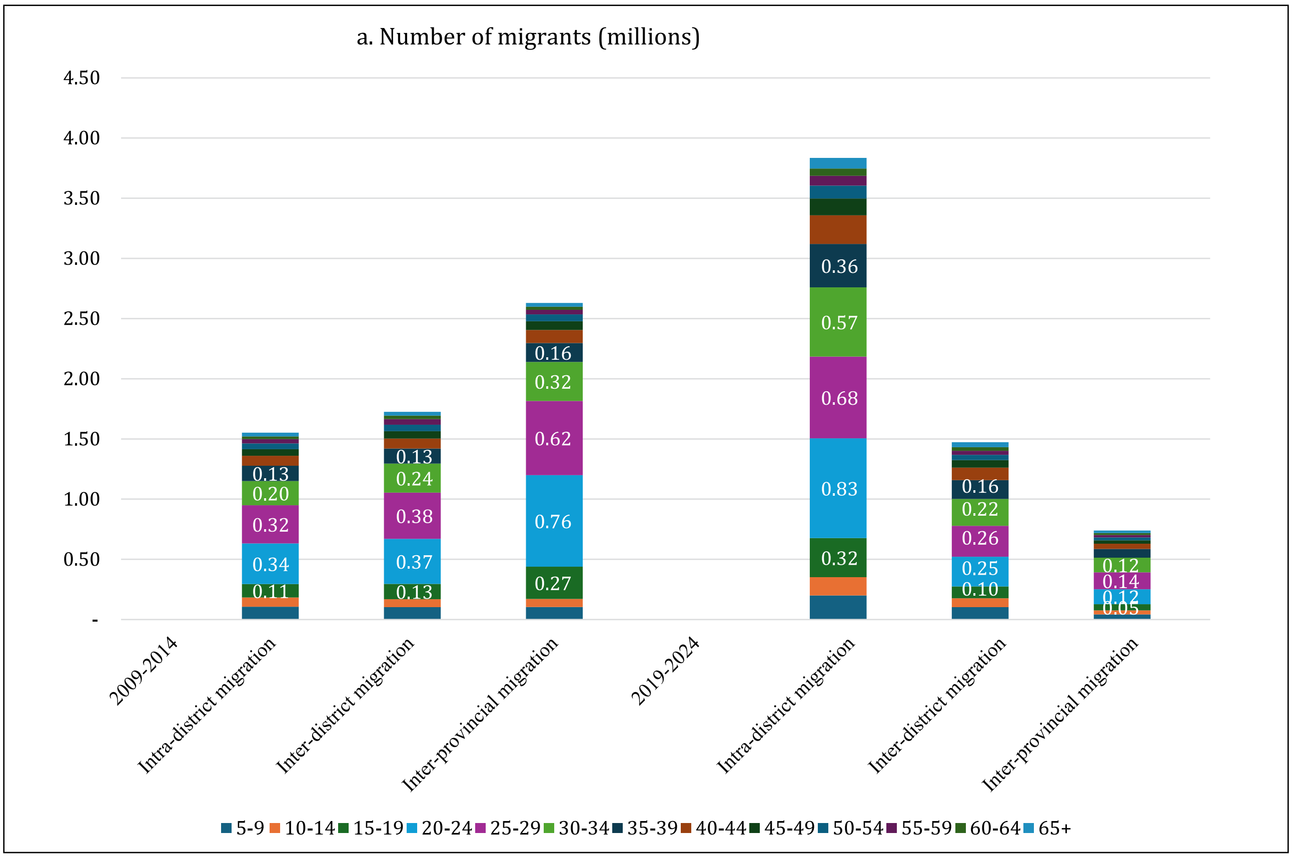
Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

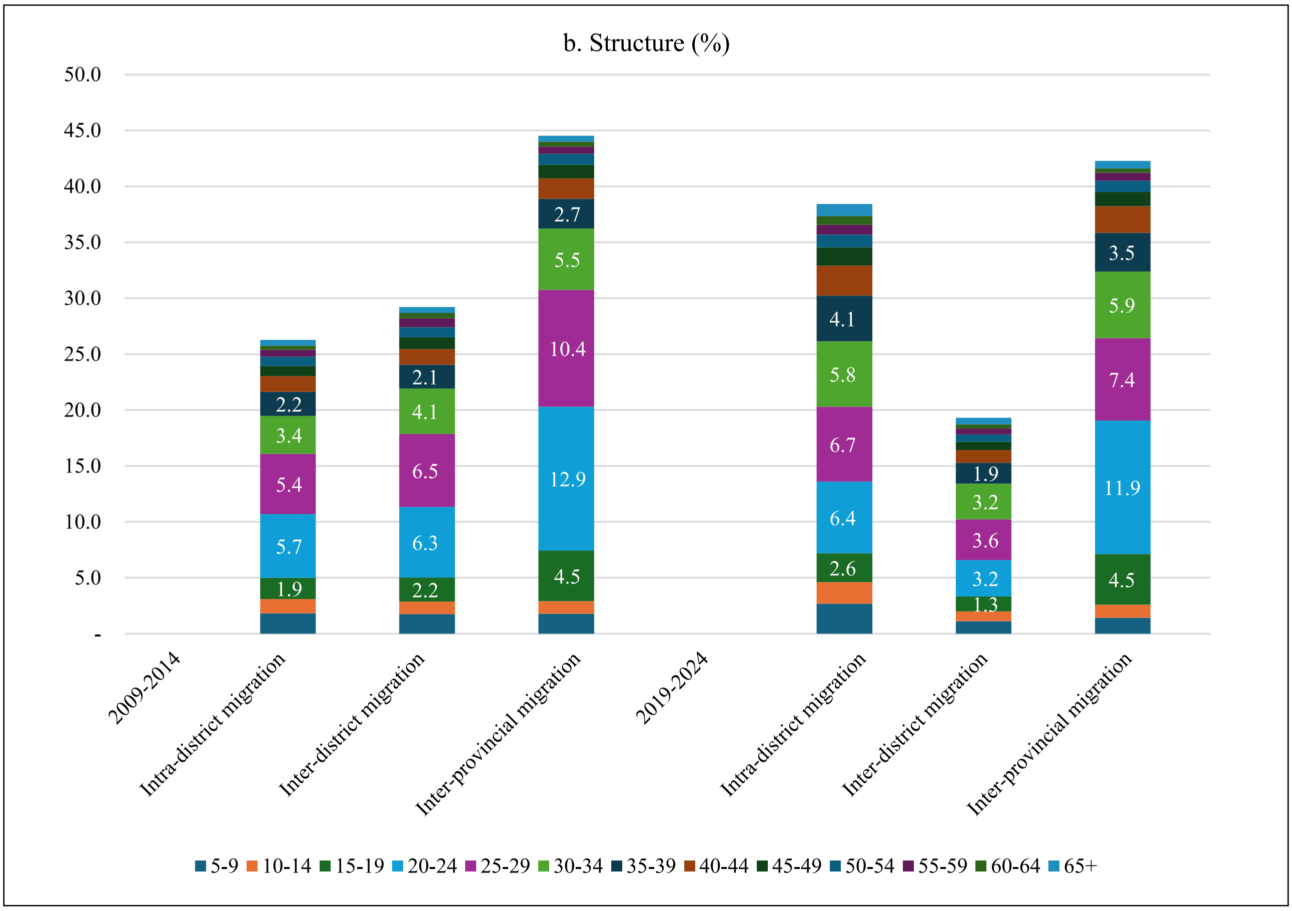
b. Age and migration distance

Inter-provincial migration has the largest scale and share compared to the other two forms of migration-within-district and inter-district within a province. Among the 20–24 and 25–29 age groups, inter-provincial migration was the largest, though it followed the overall declining trend. During 2009–2014, inter-provincial migration of these two age groups reached nearly 1.4 million people, falling to 1.2 million in 2014–2019 and 0.7 million in 2019–2024. In terms of share, it declined from 23.3% in 2009–2014 to 19.3% in the two subsequent periods.

Within-district migration among these age groups shows a contrasting pattern. Although the absolute number of migrants declined in 2019–2024 compared to 2009–2014, the share increased. The scale of within-district migration for these age groups was 0.7 million in 2009–2014, dropping to 0.5 million in 2019–2024, but the share rose from 11.1% to 13.1% over the same periods. This once again confirms that young people increasingly choose 'short-distance migration' to seek employment opportunities and for other reasons.

Figure 21. Migration by age and gender





Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

c. Age and migration region

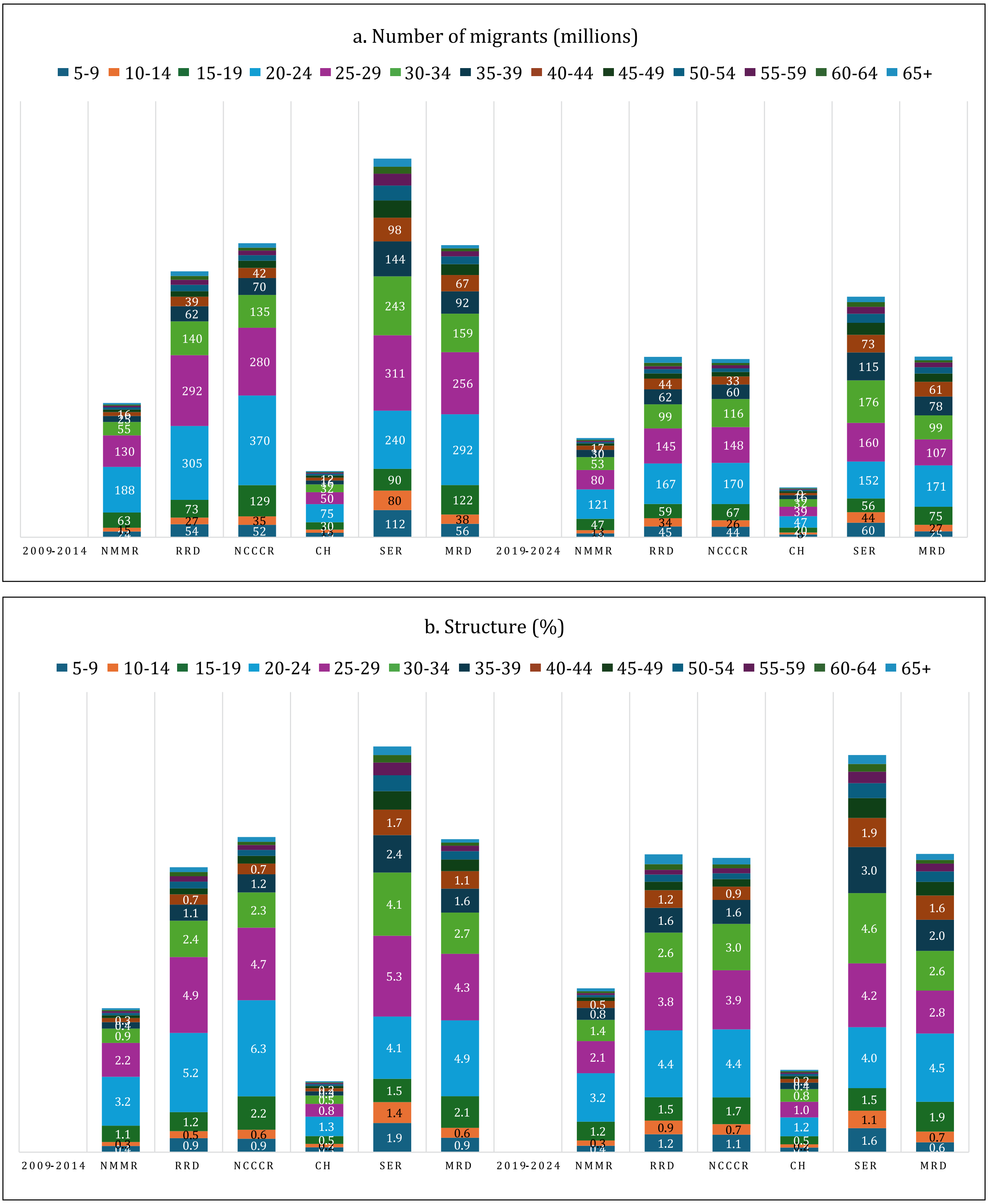
Age group 20–24 remains the largest migrant cohort across all economic regions, though volume dropped sharply by 2024. In 2009–2014, this group led migration with 370,000 people in NCCCR, 305,000 in RRD, and 292,000 in MRD. By 2019–2024, figures fell to 170,000, 167,000, and 171,000 respectively, reflecting a decline of 40–54%. Despite being the main migrant force, this downward trend signals a shift in youth migration behavior.

NCCCR is the region with the largest decline in migration among young working-age groups. For the 20–24 age group, migration in this region fell from 370,000 people in 2009–2014 to 170,000 in 2019–2024 (a decrease of 200,000, equivalent to more than 54%). The structural share also dropped from 6.3% to 4.4%. This represents the sharpest decline, indicating a significant reduction in the supply of young labor from this region.

Migration share among middle-aged groups (30–39) shows an upward trend in several regions, especially SER and RRD. In SER, share of age group 30–34 rose from 4.1% to 4.6%, and 35–39 from 2.4% to 3.0%. In RRD, 30–34 increased from 2.4% to 2.6%, and 35–39 from 1.1% to 1.6%. This reflects growing participation of middle-aged individuals in migration, possibly due to resettlement, career shifts, or family reasons.

Migration among older adults (65+) slightly increased in both volume and share, particularly in RRD and MRD. In RRD, volume rose from 19,000 to 25,000, with share increasing from 0.3% to 0.6%. In MRD, volume grew from 13,000 to 15,000 and share from 0.2% to 0.4%. Though modest in scale, this growth indicates a trend of older-person migration following children or relocating to rural areas after retirement.

Figure 22. Migration by age and region



Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

d. Age and rural-urban migration flows

Inter-urban migration (urban-to-urban flows) is the most common form of migration among young working-age groups, with both scale and share increasing significantly. For the 20–24 age group, inter-urban migration is the dominant flow, with both absolute numbers and proportions rising clearly. During 2009–2014, this age group recorded 0.3 million inter-urban migrants, accounting for 5.0%. By 2019–2024, although the absolute number declined slightly, the share rose to 6.3%. This represents the highest proportional increase among all types of migration in this age group, reflecting the trend of movement between major urban centers where employment, education, and services are concentrated.

Rural-to-urban migration among the age group 20–24 shows a slight decline both in scale and in share, indicating that urbanization is slowing down. In the period 2009–2014, there were 0.49 million people migrating from rural to urban areas in this age group, accounting for 8.2%. By the period 2019–2024, the scale decreased to 0.29 million people, with the share dropping to 7.7%. Similarly, the age group 25–29 decreased from 0.34 million to 0.17 million, with the share falling from 5.8% to 4.4%. This decline shows that the urbanization process is slowing down, or opportunities in rural areas are improving, or that the pressure of living costs in urban areas has increased.

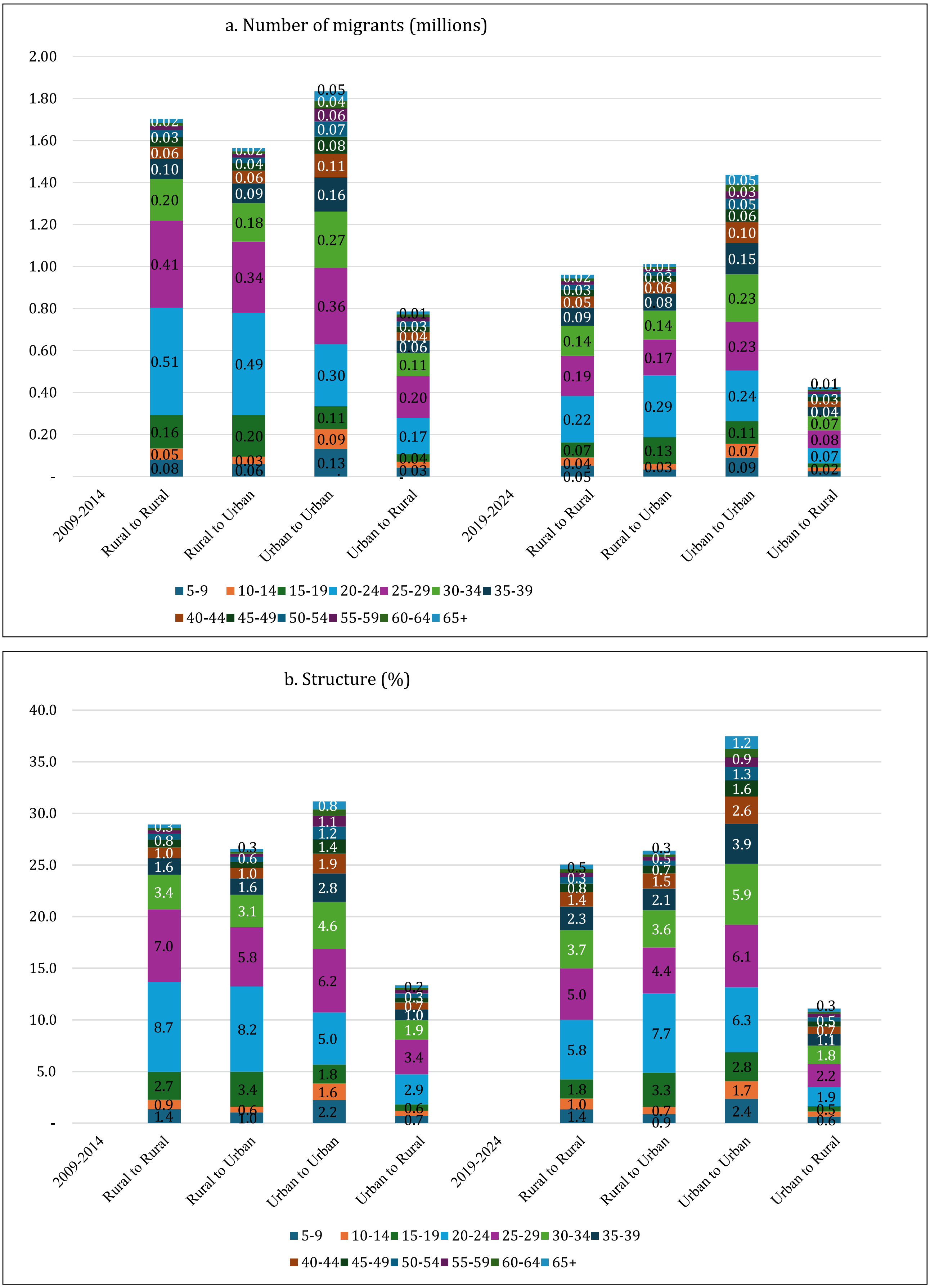
Urban-to-rural migration among the age group 20–24 has declined both in scale and in share. The scale of urban-to-rural migration in this age group decreased from 171,000 people in the period 2009–2014 to 70,000 people in the period 2019–2024, while the share also dropped correspondingly from 2.9% to 1.9%.

However, the age group 15–19 shows a clear shift from rural-to-urban migration to urban-to-urban migration, reflecting changes in study and work behavior. In the period 2009–2014, this age group had 0.20 million people migrating from rural to urban areas, accounting for 3.4%, while urban-to-urban migration was only 0.11 million people, accounting for 1.8%. By the period 2019–2024, rural-to-urban migration decreased to 0.13 million (share of 3.3%), while urban-to-urban migration remained at 0.11 million (share of 2.8%). This change shows that young people are increasingly accessing urban areas earlier, possibly for study or part-time work.

Rural–rural migration remains stable among middle-aged groups, reflecting a trend of intra-regional resettlement. Among age group 30–34, rural–rural migration volume slightly declined from 0.20 million to 0.14 million, but the share increased from 3.4% to 3.7%. Age group 35–39 also saw its share rise from 1.6% to 2.3%, despite a slight drop in volume from 0.10 million to 0.09 million. This suggests that middle-aged individuals tend to relocate within familiar rural areas, possibly for housing, land, or family reasons.

Urban–rural migration, though small in scale, shows a slight increase in share among older age groups, reflecting a trend of return migration after retirement. Among those aged 65+, urban–rural migration volume remained at 0.01 million, but the share increased from 0.2% to 0.3%. Similarly, age group 60–64 saw its share rise from 0.2% to 0.2% (stable), indicating that some older persons choose to return to rural areas after working in cities.

Figure 23. Migration by age and rural-urban areas



Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

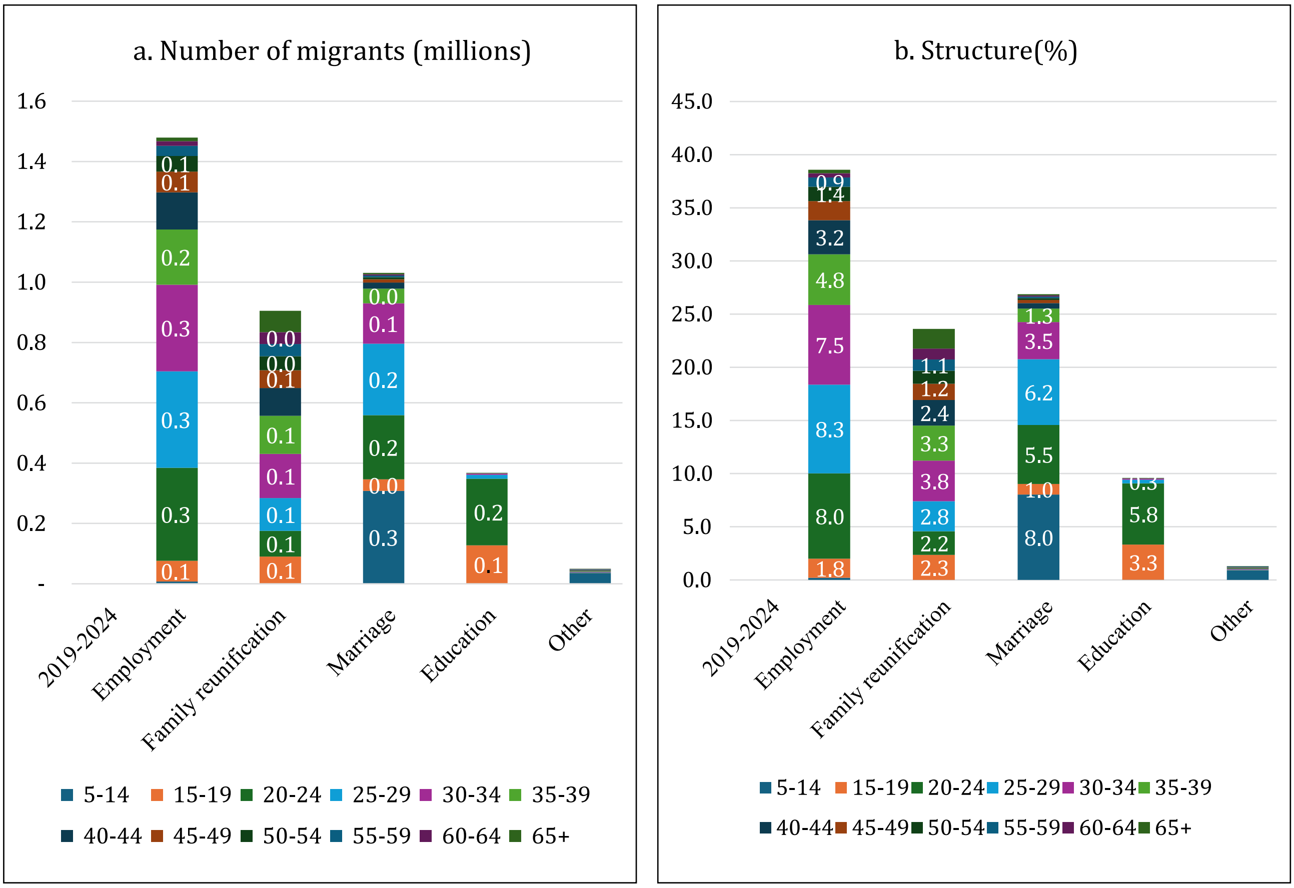
e. Age and reasons for migration

Employment is the most common reason for migration among young working-age groups, particularly those aged 20 to 34. During 2019–2024, the 25–29 age group had the highest share of employment-related migration, reaching 8.3%, equivalent to 320,000 people. The 20–24 age group ranked second with 8.0% (308,000 people), while the 30–34 and 35–39 age groups accounted for 7.5% and 4.8%, respectively. These are the age groups with the largest scale of employment-related migration, clearly reflecting the demand for mobility to seek career opportunities in the early stages of working life.

Marriage-related migration accounted for the highest shares among the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups, though the absolute numbers were concentrated in adulthood. The highest share was in the 20–24 age group, with 237,000 people representing 6.2% of all migrants. The 15–19 age group recorded 213,000 (5.6%), while the 25–29 age group had 134,000 (3.5%). This indicates that marriage is an important reason for migration in adulthood, particularly among women.

Family-related migration occurred across many age groups, with the highest shares among young children aged 5–14 and adults aged 25–34. Meanwhile, education-related migration was characteristic of younger age groups, especially those aged 15–19 and 20–24. These two groups alone accounted for more than 86% of all education-related migration during 2019–2024.

Figure 24. Migration by age and reasons for migration



Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

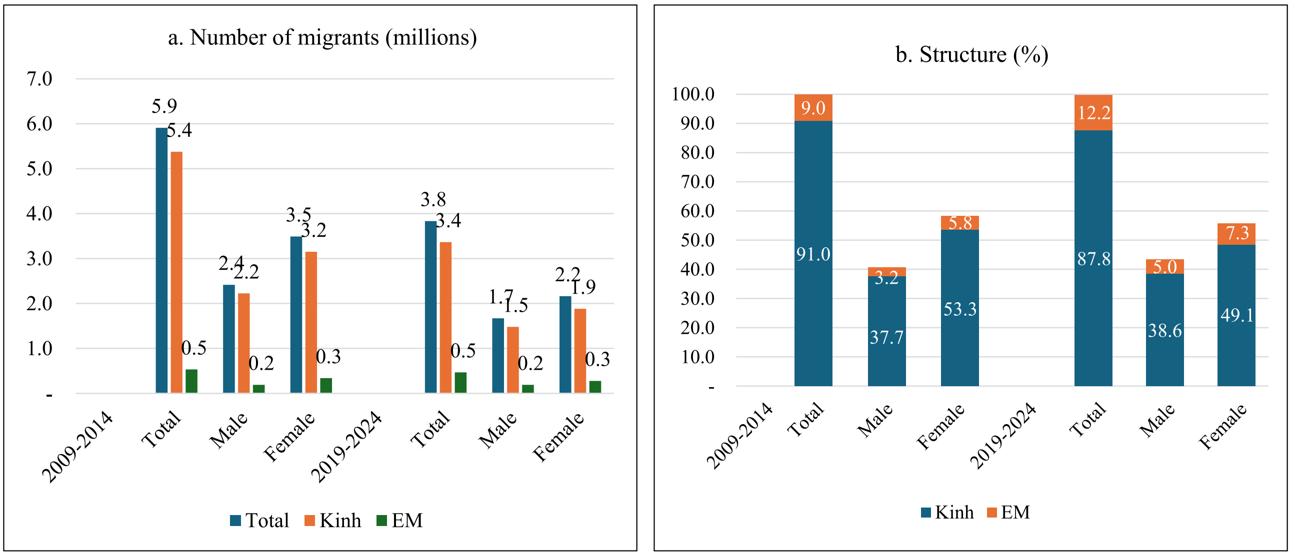
3.2. Ethnicity profile

Although the total number of migrants nationwide declined sharply from 2009–2014 to 2019–2024, the number of ethnic minority (EM) migrants decreased only slightly, from 533 thousand in 2009–2014 to 469 thousand. This raised the share of EM migrants in total migration from 9.0% to 12.2%, reflecting the stable mobility needs of this group to access new opportunities or resettle. EM migrants are increasingly moving to coastal and industrial areas, primarily migrating within rural regions or from rural to urban areas. The proportion of female EM migrants rose from 5.8% in 2009–2014 to 7.3% of total migrants, showing that ethnic minority women are increasingly participating in migration flows for reasons such as employment, marriage, or family reunification.

a. Ethnicity and gender

While the overall scale of migration declined sharply, the number of EM migrants decreased only slightly, leading to a significant rise in their share. During 2009–2014, the total number of migrants was 5.9 million, of which EMs accounted for 0.5 million (9.0%). By 2019–2024, the total migration scale fell to 3.8 million, yet EM migrants still numbered nearly 0.5 million, raising their share to 12.2%. This indicates that while migration among the Kinh group declined substantially, EMs maintained their level of mobility, reflecting continued needs to access new opportunities or resettle in other regions.

Figure 25. Migration by ethnicity and gender



Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

Female migration accounts for a higher share than male migration, especially within the EM group. In 2019–2024, females made up 2.2 million migrants, including 0.3 million EM - equivalent to 7.3% of total migrants. Meanwhile, males accounted for 1.7 million migrants, with 0.2 million EM, representing 5.0%. Compared to 2009-2014, the share of female EM migrants increased from 5.8% to 7.3%, indicating a rising trend of EM women participating in migration, possibly for reasons related to marriage, employment, or family reunification.

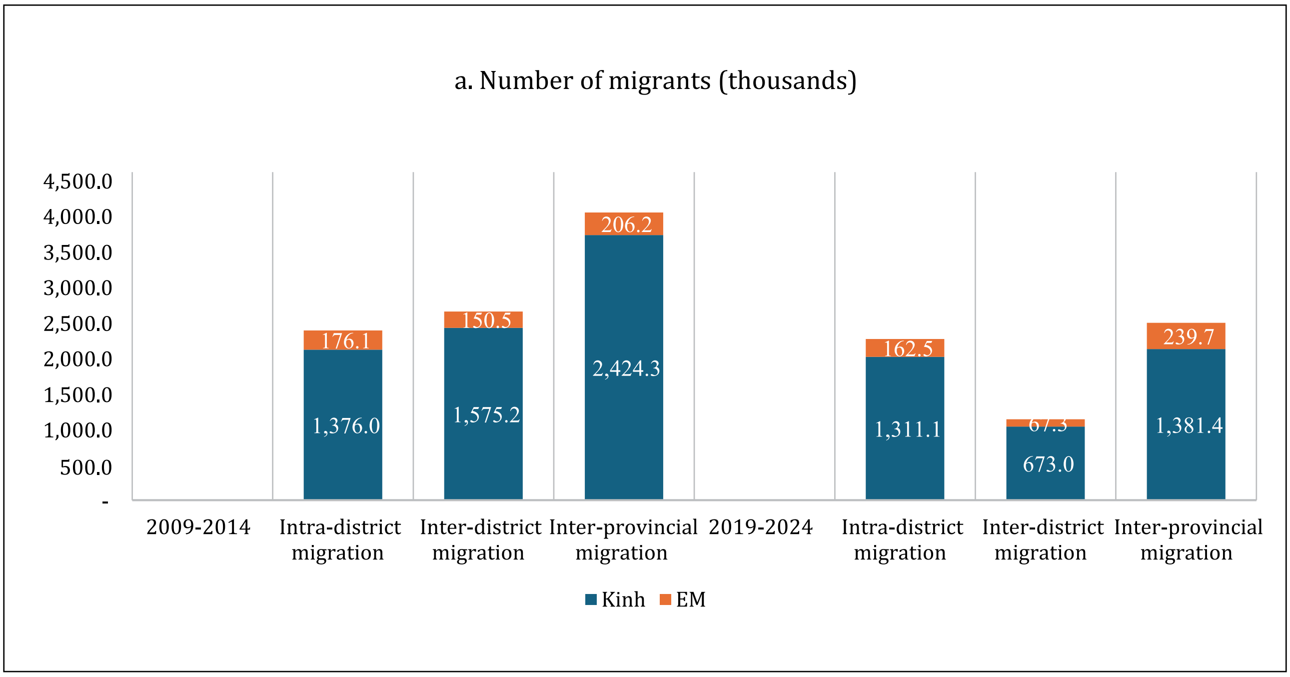
b. Ethnicity and migration distance

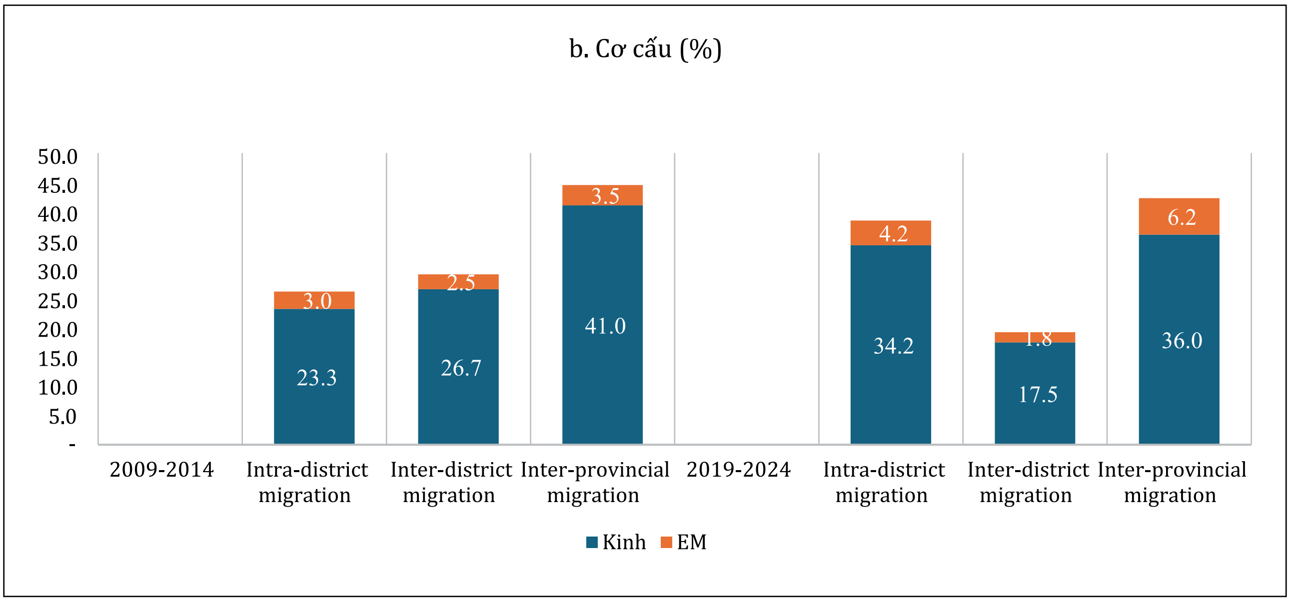
Although the total number of migrants declined sharply, within-district migration decreased only slightly and its share tended to rise for both the Kinh and EM groups. During 2009–2014, the Kinh had nearly 1.4 million within-district migrants, falling to 1.3 million in 2019–2024. However, the share increased from 23.3% to 34.1%. For EMs, within-district migration declined from 176,000 to 162,000, while the share rose from 3% to 4.2%. This reflects the trend toward short-distance mobility within familiar localities, possibly driven by housing, land, or intra-regional job changes.

Inter-provincial migration declined sharply among the Kinh but increased in share among EMs, highlighting differentiated migration behavior. The Kinh had nearly 1.4 million inter-provincial migrants in 2019–2024, a decrease of more than 1 million compared to 2009–2014, with the share dropping from 41% to 36%. In contrast, EMs saw both scale and share of inter-provincial migration rise significantly, from 206,200 to nearly 240,000, with the share increasing from 3.5% to 6.2%. This shows that long-distance inter-provincial migration declined much more sharply among the Kinh than among EMs.

Inter-district migration within provinces also followed the overall downward trend for both groups. In 2009–2014, the Kinh had nearly 1.6 million inter-district migrants, accounting for 26.7% of total migration. By 2019–2024, this number fell to only 673,000, with the share dropping sharply to 17.5%. Meanwhile, EMs also experienced declines in intra-provincial migration: from 150,500 in 2009–2014 to 67,300 in 2019–2024, with the share decreasing from 2.5% to 1.8%.

Figure 26. Migration by ethnicity and migration distance





Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

c. Ethnicity, gender and migration region

NMMR is the main residential region of EMs, yet migration scale declined for both groups. During 2009–2014, EMs in this region recorded 254,300 migrants, falling to 208,000 in 2019–2024. However, their share rose slightly from 4.3% to 5.4%, as the decline was slower compared to the Kinh group (which decreased from 300,000 to 202,000 migrants, with the share rising from 5.1% to 5.3%). This is the region where EMs account for the highest share of national migration, and also the region with the highest proportion of EM population.

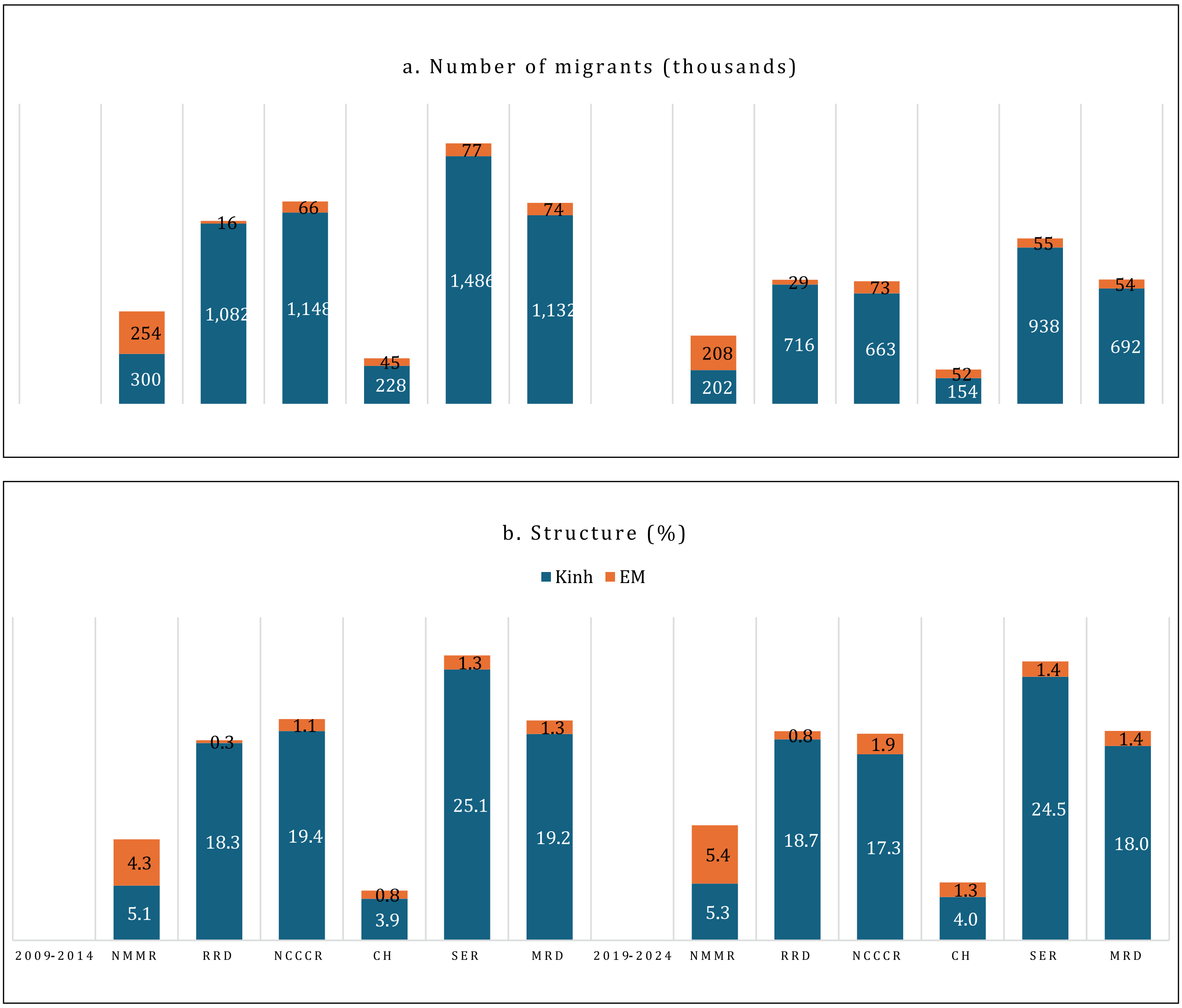
SER is the largest destination for Kinh migrants, though migration scale declined sharply for both Kinh and EM groups. Kinh migration to this region dropped from nearly 1.5 million in 2009–2014 to 938,000 in 2019–2024, with the share decreasing slightly from 25.1% to 24.5%. EM migration to this region also fell from 77,000 to 55,000, though their share increased from 1.3% to 1.4%. Despite the decline in scale, SER remains the primary migration hub for the Kinh, thanks to its economic position and strong urbanization.

MRD and NCCCR experienced sharp declines in Kinh migration, while EM migration remained relatively stable. In MRD, EM migrants decreased slightly from 74,000 to 54,000 — a much smaller drop than among Kinh, resulting in a slight increase in EM share from 1.3% to 1.4%. Kinh migrants in MRD fell from 1,132,000 to 692,000, with share dropping from 19.2% to 18.0%. In NCCCR, Kinh migrants declined from 1,148,000 to 663,000, with share falling from 19.4% to 17.3%, while EM migrants increased slightly from 66,000 to 73,000, raising their share from 1.1% to 1.9%. This suggests EM populations are maintaining or expanding migration into coastal regions.

CH shows stable migration among EM, while Kinh migration declined significantly. Kinh migrants dropped from 228,000 to 154,000, with share decreasing from 3.9% to 4.0%. EM migrants rose slightly from 45,000 to 52,000, with share increasing from 0.8% to 1.3%. This region reflects clear intra-regional movement among EM, possibly related to land, agriculture, or resettlement programs.

RRD is a migration region dominated by Kinh, with EM migration remaining minimal. In 2009–2014, Kinh migrants in RRD totaled 1,082,000, decreasing to 716,000 in 2019–2024, with share remaining stable around 18%. EM migrants increased from 16,000 to 29,000, with share rising from 0.3% to 0.8%. Although still small in scale, this growth suggests EM populations are beginning to migrate into highly urbanized areas with greater access to education and employment.

Figure 27. Migration by ethnicity and region

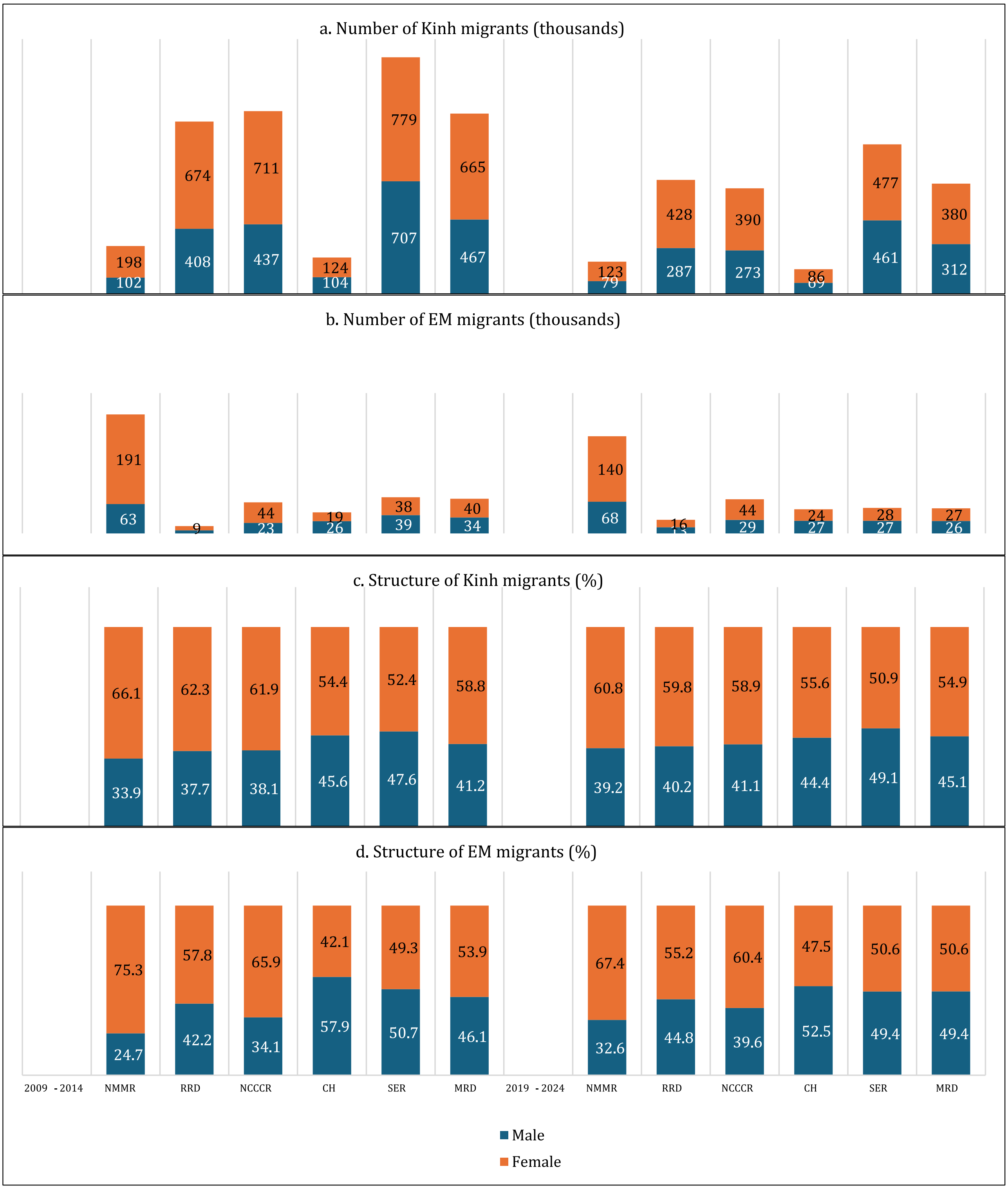


Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

Gender structure in migration among the Kinh group is becoming more balanced, with male share increasing noticeably across most regions. In 2009–2014, females dominated Kinh migration in regions such as NMMR (66.1%), RRD (62.3%), and NCCCR (61.9%). However, by 2019–2024, female share declined to 60.8%, 59.8%, and 58.9% respectively, while male share rose accordingly. Notably, in MRD, male migration share increased from 41.2% to 45.1%. This shift occurred as male migration volume declined less sharply than that of females.

Meanwhile, among EM groups, females still account for a high share of migration, though the trend is gradually decreasing - especially in NMMR. In 2009–2014, females made up 75.3% of EM migrants in this region - the highest nationwide. By 2019–2024, female share dropped to 67.4%, while male share rose from 24.7% to 32.6%. This increase reflects a changing role for EM men, who are increasingly participating in migration flows for employment or resettlement, particularly in NMMR.

Figure 28. Migration by ethnicity and gender



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

d. Ethnicity and rural-urban migration flows

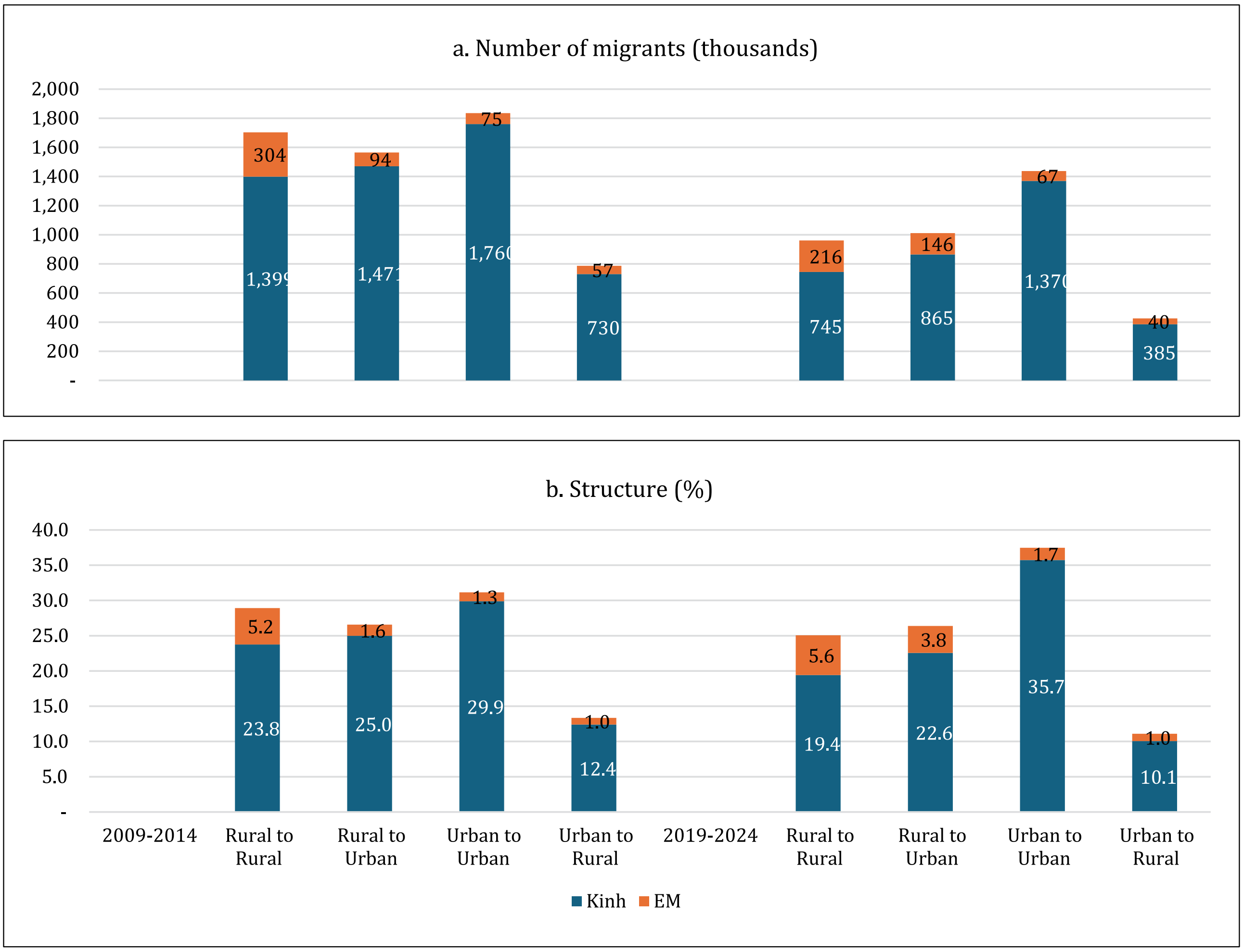
Migration among EM populations in mountainous areas primarily occurs within rural zones or from rural to urban areas, reflecting residential patterns and the need to access new opportunities. During 2019–2024, EM recorded 216,000 rural–rural migrants and 146,000 rural–urban migrants - the two largest flows for this group, accounting for 5.6% and 3.8% respectively. In contrast, urban–urban migration accounted for only 1.7%, and urban–rural just 1.0%. This indicates that most EM populations still reside in mountainous and rural areas, where socio-economic conditions remain limited, and migration serves as a pathway to employment, education, or resettlement.

Urban–urban migration is the dominant flow among the Kinh group, with a sharp increase in share during 2014–2024. In 2009–2014, the Kinh had 1,760,000 urban–urban migrants, accounting for 29.9% of total migration. By 2019–2024, the volume declined to 1,370,000, but the share rose to 35.7% - the highest increase among all migration flows for the Kinh. This reflects a growing trend of intra-urban mobility, linked to urbanization and job transitions within the urban system.

Rural–rural migration saw the steepest decline among the Kinh group but remained stable among EM due to residential characteristics. Kinh rural–rural migration dropped from 1,399,000 in 2009–2014 to 745,000 in 2019–2024, with share falling from 23.8% to 19.4%. Meanwhile, EM rural–rural migration declined slightly from 304,000 to 216,000, but its share increased from 5.2% to 5.6%. This reflects the predominantly rural residence of EM populations, where intra-regional migration continues regularly to adapt to production conditions, land use, and family life.

Urban–rural migration declined in both groups, but EM share remained stable due to return migration patterns. Kinh urban–to–rural migration decreased from 730,000 in 2009–2014 to 385,000 in 2019–2024, with share dropping from 12.4% to 10.1%. EM urban–rural migration fell from 57,000 to 40,000, but its share remained unchanged at 1.0%. This is the most stable flow in terms of share, reflecting return migration or relocation to hometowns after working in urban areas - a trend especially common among EM populations with strong cultural and social ties to their local communities.

Figure 29. Migration by ethnicity and rural-urban flows



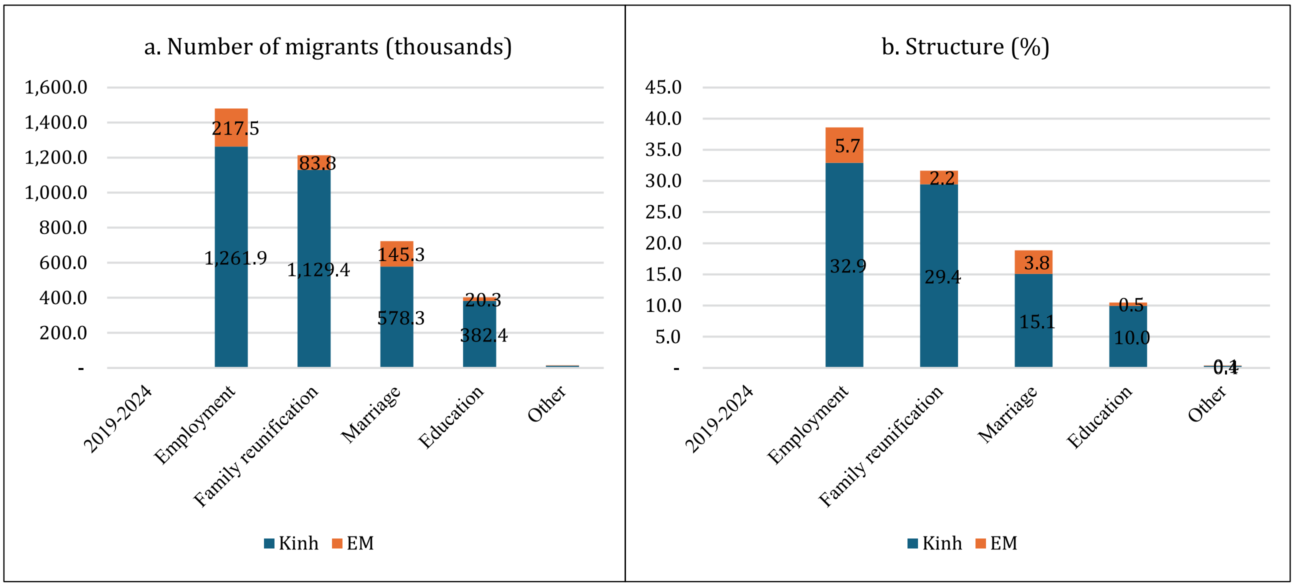
Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

e. Ethnicity and reasons for migration

Migration for employment is the most common reason among both Kinh and EM groups, though participation among Kinh is significantly higher in both volume and share. During 2019–2024, the Kinh group recorded 1.26 million employment-related migrants, accounting for 32.91% of total migration. In contrast, EM had only 217,500 migrants for the same reason, representing 5.67%. This is the leading migration driver for both groups, reflecting the demand for relocation to seek job opportunities — especially among Kinh, who have broader access to the labor market.

Family-related migration ranks second for both groups, highlighting the role of household factors in migration decisions. The Kinh group had 1.13 million migrants moving with family, accounting for 29.45% of total migration. EM recorded 83,820 migrants for the same reason, representing 2.19%. Although the volume is lower, this share indicates that EM populations still tend to migrate as households, particularly in cases of resettlement, relocation, or following family members.

Figure 30. Migration by ethnicity and reasons for migration



Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

Marriage is the leading reason for migration among EM populations. During 2019–2024, EM recorded 145,280 marriage-related migrants, accounting for 3.79% — higher than migration for family or education. In contrast, the Kinh group had 578,320 migrants for marriage, representing 15.08%. While this ranks third among Kinh migration reasons, it is the highest for EM, highlighting the role of marriage in shaping migration flows within ethnic communities.

Education-related migration is concentrated among the Kinh, with very limited participation from EM. The Kinh group had 382,420 migrants for education, accounting for 9.97% of total migration. Meanwhile, EM recorded only 20,300, representing just 0.53%. This disparity reflects differences in access to education between the two groups, especially in mountainous regions where EM populations predominantly reside.

Migration for other reasons accounts for a very small share in both groups, indicating that causes beyond employment, family, marriage, and education are less common. The Kinh group had 13,460 migrants for other reasons (0.35%), while EM had 2,560 (0.07%). These cases typically involve special circumstances such as land reallocation, natural disasters, or unspecified personal reasons.

3.3. Marital status

During 2019–2024, as many as 718,300 married individuals migrated for employment (20.6%), and even more striking is the clear upward trend among unmarried migrants. This is the only migration reason with a strong increase across both groups, reflecting the demand for mobility to seek jobs during working age. In the same period, 713,900 married individuals migrated for marriage (20.5%), underscoring the stable and distinctive nature of marriage-related migration, which often occurs after settling down.

a. Marital status and gender

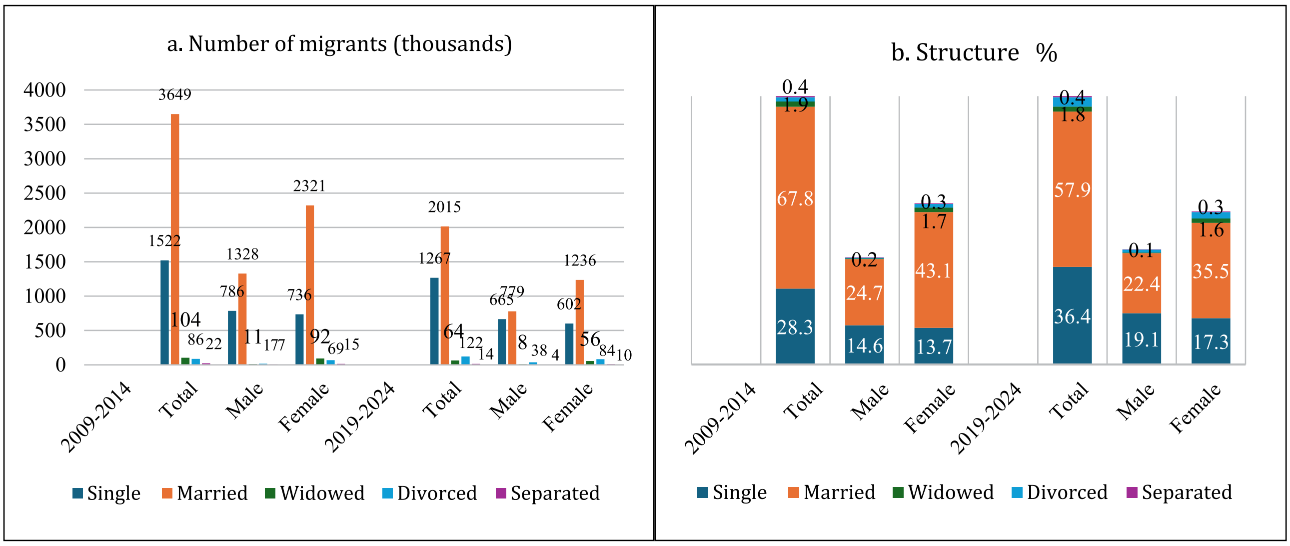
Questions on marital status are asked only of individuals aged 15 and above; therefore, the number of migrants classified by marital status is lower compared to other characteristics.

Married migrants constituted the largest migration group in 2019–2024, although their numbers declined sharply compared to 2009–2014. In 2009–2014, as many as 3.6 million migrants were married, accounting for 67.8% of the total migrant population. Of these, women made up 2.3 million (43.1%) and men 1.3 million (24.7%). By 2019–2024, this figure had fallen to 2.015 million, with the share dropping to 57.9%. Women continued to dominate this flow, numbering 1.2 million (35.5%), while men decreased to 779,000 (22.4%). Despite the decline, married migrants remained the largest group in the migration structure.

Unmarried migrants were the fastest-growing group in terms of share during 2014–2024, particularly among men. In 2009–2014, 1.5 million unmarried migrants accounted for 28.3% of the total, including 784,000 men (14.6%) and 734,000 women (13.7%). By 2019–2024, the total number of unmarried migrants was 1.3 million, but their share rose sharply to 36.4%. Within this flow, men accounted for 665,000 (19.1%) and women 602,000 (17.3%). This was the only group with a clear increase in share for both genders, reflecting the growing tendency of young singles to migrate for education, employment, or to start a new life, as well as the trend toward later marriage in the past decade.

Other marital statuses such as widowed, divorced, and separated accounted for only very small shares of the migrant population in 2019–2024. Specifically, widowed migrants represented 1.8%, divorced 3.5%, and separated 0.4%, with all groups numbering fewer than 130,000 people. These categories did not generate significant changes in national migration trends.

Figure 31. Migration by marital status and gender



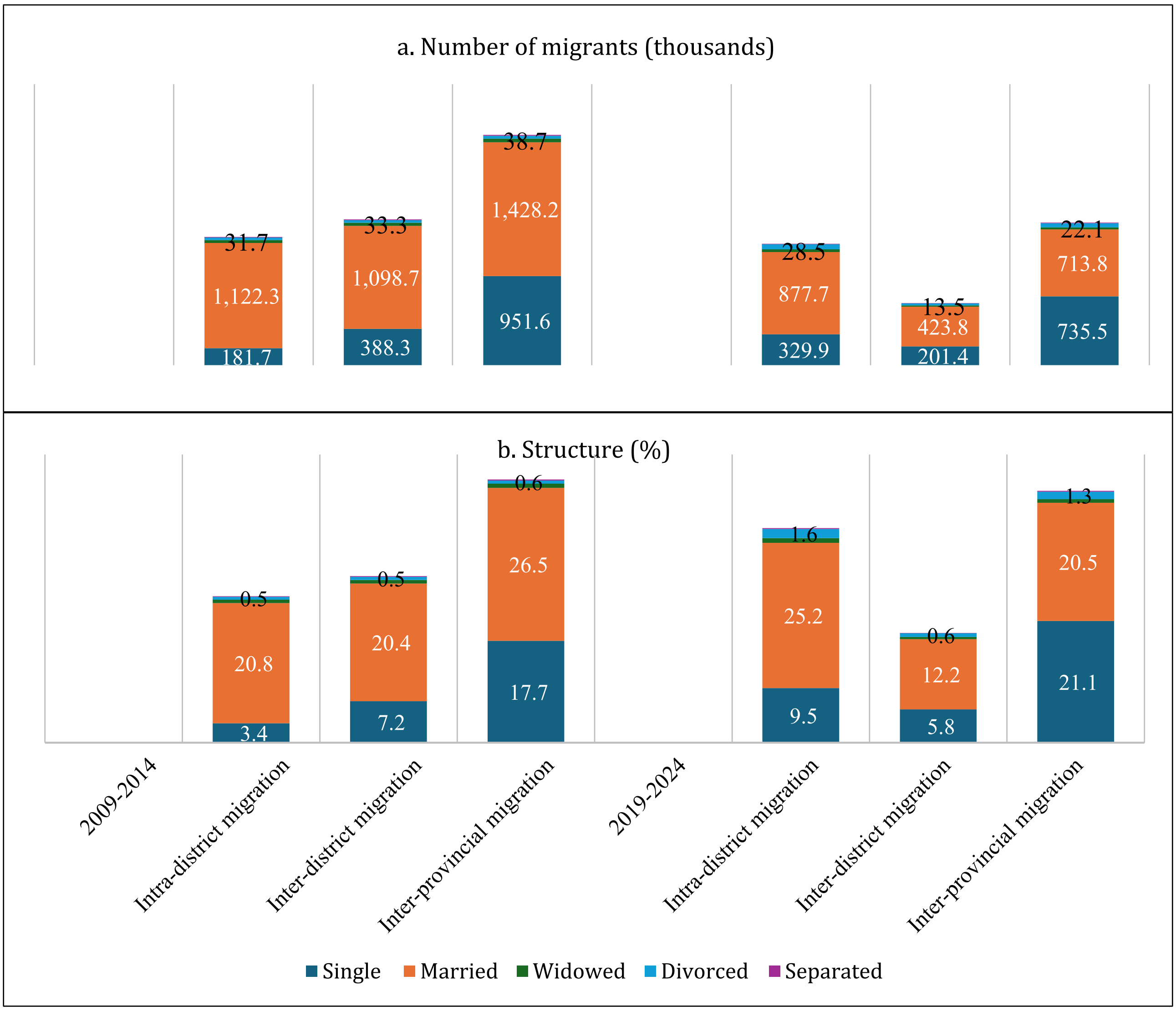
Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

b. Marital and migration distance

In terms of migration distance, married migrants continued to account for the highest share across all flows, though their scale declined markedly compared to 2009–2014. The reduction in the number of married migrants reflects the decline of household-based migration, particularly in long-distance flows. In inter-provincial migration, the married group fell from 1.4 million in 2009–2014 to 713,800 in 2019–2024, with the share dropping from 26.5% to 20.5%. Similarly, inter-district migration within provinces decreased from 1.1 million to 423,800, with the share declining from 20.4% to 12.2%. By contrast, within-district migration showed only a slight reduction, with married migrants still forming the largest group (877,700), and their share rising from 20.8% to 25.2%.

Unmarried individuals showed a strong upward trend in intra-district migration. In this flow, their volume increased from 181,700 to 329,900, with the share rising from 3.4% to 9.5%. Although inter-district migration within provinces declined in volume (from 388,300 to 201,400), the share remained relatively high at 5.8%. These figures indicate that young single individuals are increasingly initiating short-distance migration, especially to rapidly urbanizing areas.

Figure 32. Migration by marital status and migration distance



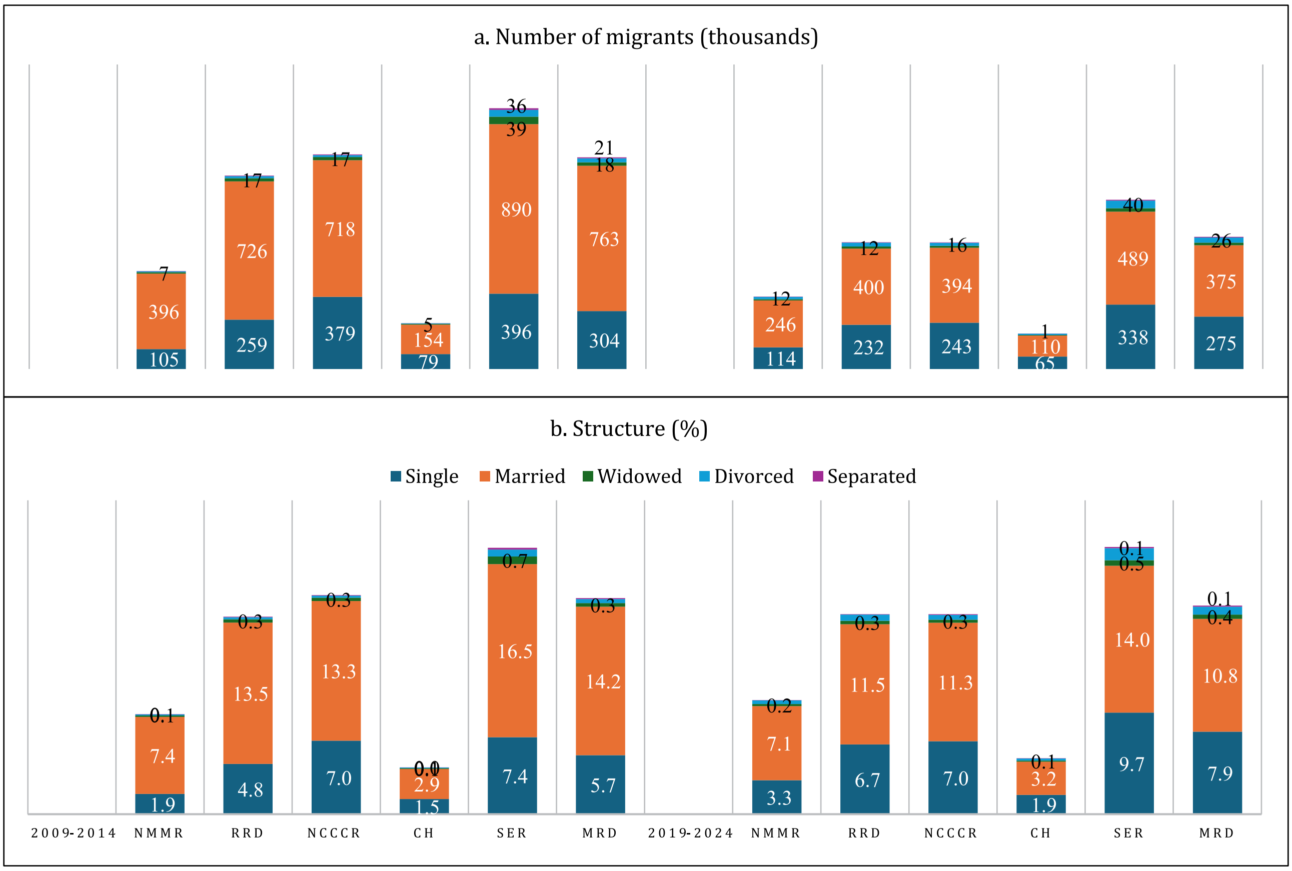
Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

c. Marital and migration region

Married individuals remained the dominant migrant group across all regions, though their volume declined sharply during 2014–2024. In 2009–2014, married migrants had the highest numbers in SER (890,000), MRD (763,000), and RRD (726,000). By 2019–2024, these figures dropped significantly: to 489,000 in SER, 375,000 in MRD, and 400,000 in RRD. Their share also declined accordingly — for example, in RRD from 13.5% to 11.5%. This reduction reflects a broader decline in household-based migration among married individuals, especially in key economic regions.

Unmarried migrants are the only group with a consistent increase in share across most regions, particularly in SER and MRD. In SER, the number of unmarried migrants declined from 396,000 in 2009–2014 to 338,000 in 2019–2024, yet their share rose from 7.4% to 9.7%. In MRD, the scale decreased slightly from 304,000 to 275,000, but the share increased from 5.7% to 7.9%. In NMMR, the share rose from 1.9% to 3.3%. These figures indicate that young single individuals are increasingly proactive in migrating, especially in regions with rapid urbanization or significant labor market shifts.

Figure 33. Migration by marital status and region



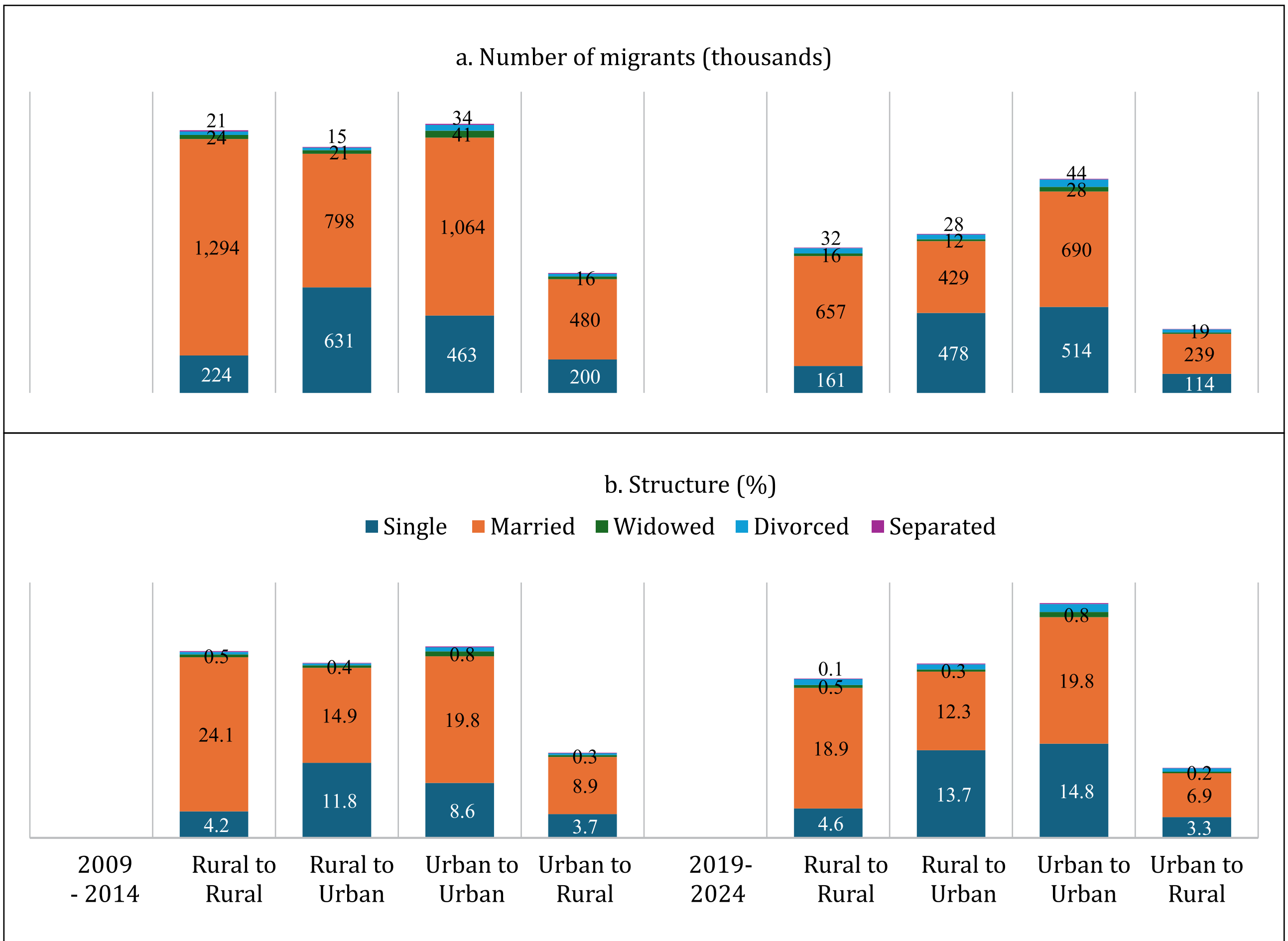
Note: Out of the overall 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

d. Marital and rural-urban migration flows

Married migrants continued to account for the highest share across all migration flows, though their scale declined sharply over time. In 2009–2014, this group numbered 1.3 million in rural–rural migration, 798,000 in rural–urban migration, and 1.1 million in urban–urban migration. By 2019–2024, these figures had fallen to 657,000, 429,000, and 690,000, respectively. The share of married migrants also declined significantly in rural–urban flows (from 14.9% to 12.3%) and rural–rural flows (from 24.1% to 18.9%). Only urban–urban migration maintained its share at 19.8%, indicating that this is the sole flow in which married migrants have continued to play a dominant role.

Unmarried individuals are the only group with increasing share across all migration flows, especially in urban–urban and rural–urban migration. In 2009–2014, unmarried migrants accounted for 631,000 in rural–urban flows (11.8%) and 463,000 in urban–urban flows (8.6%). By 2019–2024, these numbers decrease to 478,000 and increase to 514,000 respectively, with shares increasing to 13.7% and 14.8%. In rural–rural migration, although the volume declined from 224,000 to 161,000, the share still rose slightly from 4.2% to 4.6%. These figures highlight the growing presence of young single individuals in migration flows, particularly along urbanizing corridors.

Figure 34. Migration by marital status and rural-urban flows



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

e. Marital status and reasons for migration

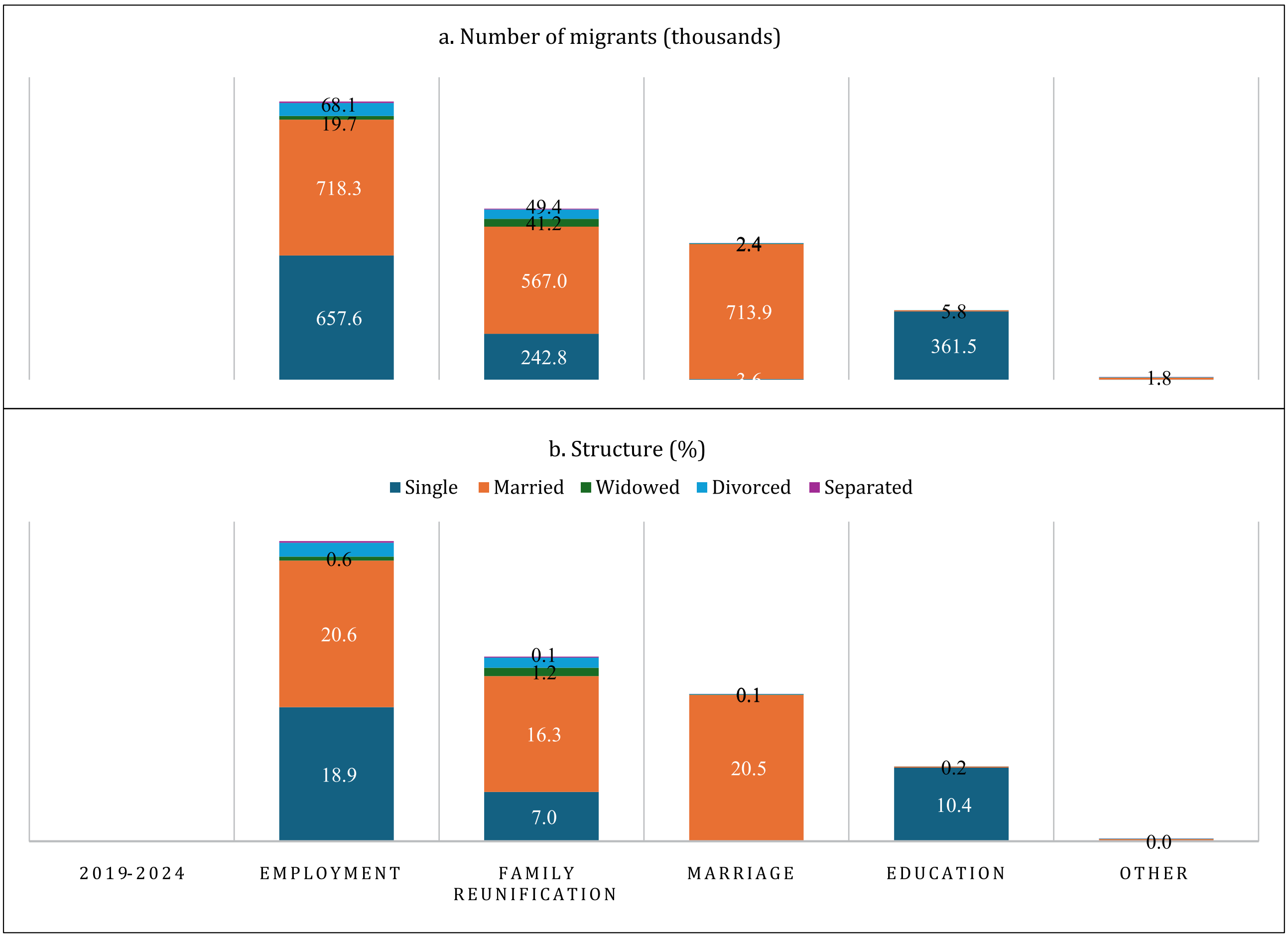
Employment is the leading reason for migration among both married and unmarried individuals, with the strongest growth across all categories. During 2019–2024, as many as 718,300 married individuals migrated for work, accounting for 20.6% of the total — the highest among all reasons. This is the only reason showing a clear increase in both groups, reflecting the growing trend of labor-related mobility, especially among working-age populations.

Family-related migration ranks second among married individuals, with a strong increase in volume but only moderate growth in share. In 2019–2024, 567,000 married individuals migrated for family reasons, representing 16.3%. This highlights the continued importance of household factors in migration decisions, particularly among those who are married.

Marriage-related migration is a distinctive reason among married individuals, with a notably high share. In 2019–2024, 713,900 married individuals migrated due to marriage, accounting for 20.5% of the total. In contrast, only 3,600 unmarried individuals migrated for this reason (0.1%), underscoring that this is a specific migration flow tied to marital status. It reflects the stable nature of marriage-driven migration.

Education-related migration is concentrated among unmarried individuals, with a sharp increase in recent years. In 2019–2024, 361,500 unmarried individuals migrated for education, accounting for 10.4%. Among married individuals, only 5,800 migrated for this reason (0.2%). This pattern is typical of young singles, reflecting their pursuit of education and skill development.

Figure 35. Migration by marital status and reasons for migration



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

3.4. Technical and vocational expertise

Migrants without technical or vocational expertise (TVE) still account for the largest share. In 2019–2024, there were 2.2 million migrants without TVE, a sharp decline compared to 3.8 million in 2009–2014. This decrease reflects the slowdown in unskilled labor migration and the changing structure of the labor force. Migrants with intermediate and college-level degrees declined in proportion, while their absolute numbers remained stable. Although these groups continue to participate in migration flows, they do not account for a large share.

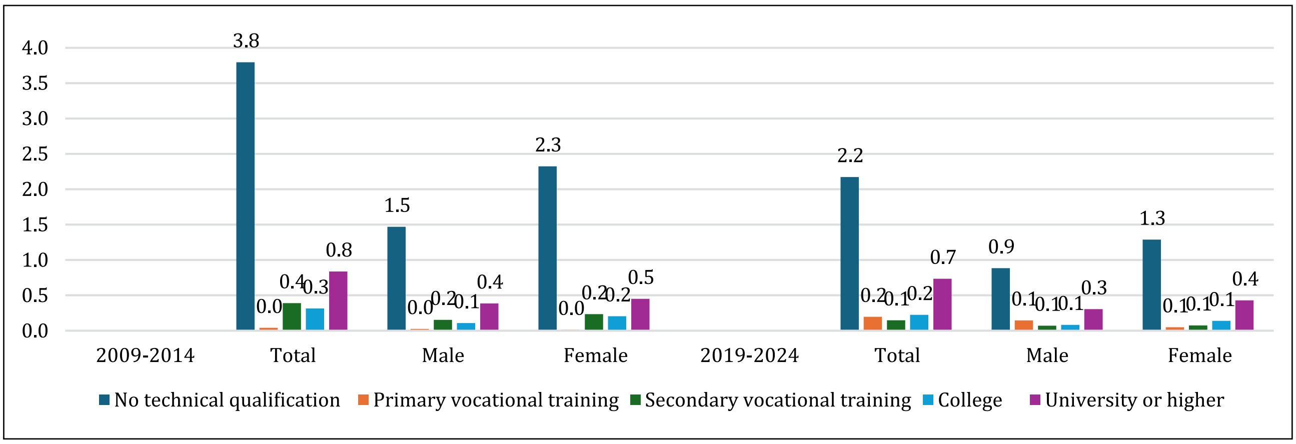
a. TVE and gender

Migrant workers without TVE still account for the largest share, though their volume has declined sharply over time. In 2009–2014, there were 3.8 million migrants without TVE, making up the majority of the total migrant population — including 1.5 million males and 2.3 million females. By 2019–2024, this number dropped to 2.2 million (0.9 million males; 1.3 million females). This decline reflects a slowdown in low-skilled labor migration and a shift in the composition of the migrant workforce.

Migrants with university qualification or higher are the only group to maintain high and stable migration volume, underscoring the growing role of high-quality labor in migration flows. In 2009–2014, there were 0.8 million migrants with university qualification or higher (0.4 million males; 0.5 million females). By 2019–2024, the number declined only slightly to 0.7 million (0.3 million males; 0.4 million females). This group experienced the smallest drop, indicating that highly educated workers continue to migrate steadily, especially in professional sectors and urban areas.

Groups with primary, secondary vocational qualification and college qualification, all had very small migration volumes and saw sharp declines, without causing significant shifts in overall migration trends. In 2009–2014, the secondary-level group had 0.4 million migrants, college-level 0.3 million, and primary-level was nearly negligible. By 2019–2024, all three groups dropped to just 0.1–0.2 million each. This decline suggests that mid-skilled workers are less likely to participate in migration flows, possibly shifting toward local employment, informal work, or self-employment.

Figure 36. Number of migrants by TVE and gender (millions)



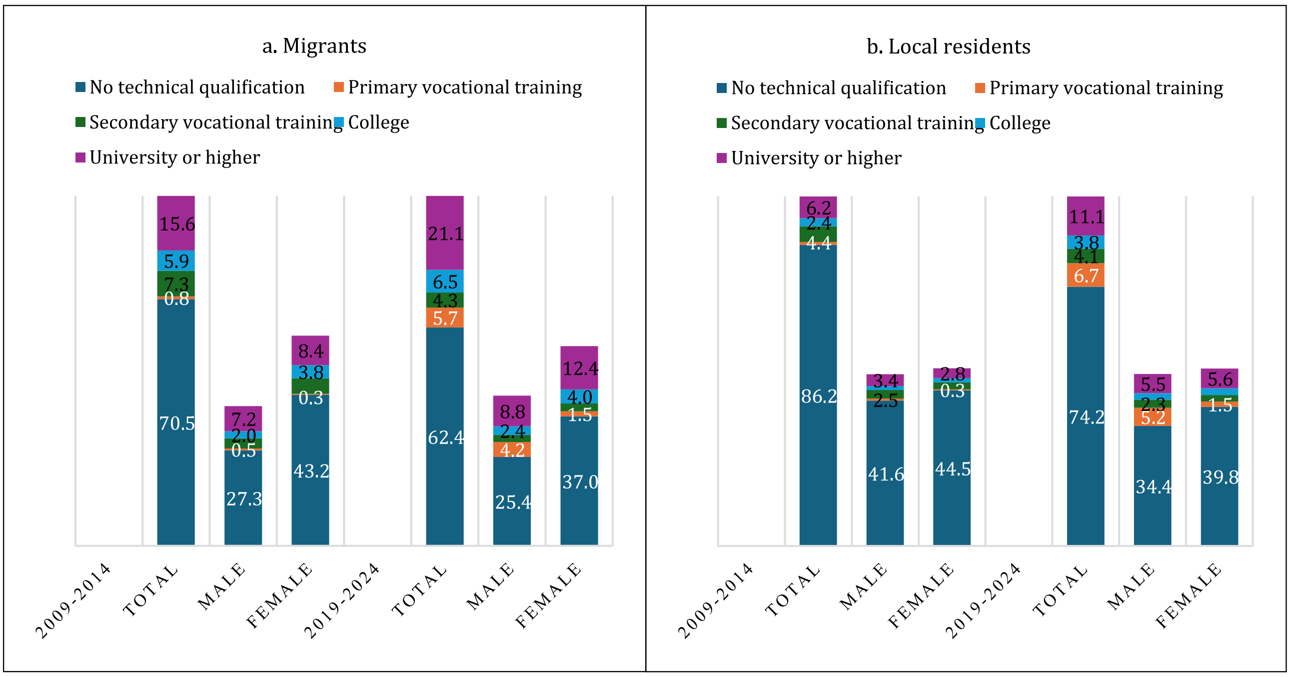
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

Migrants have a more diversified qualification profile: they include both a high proportion of low-skilled workers and a significantly higher share of highly qualified individuals compared to non-migrants. Non-migrants have a higher share of workers without TVE, reflecting the prevalence of low-skilled labor in local populations. During 2019–2024, 74.2% of non-migrants lacked TVE, compared to 62.4% among migrants. Among them, non-migrant females accounted for 39.8% and males 34.4%, both higher than migrant females (37.0%) and males (25.4%). This indicates that most local workers remain low-skilled and lack vocational training.

Migrants with university qualification or higher accounted for nearly twice the share of non-migrants, highlighting the mobility trend among high-quality labor. In 2019–2024, this group made up 21.1% of the migrant population, compared to just 11.1% among non-migrants. Specifically, migrant females accounted for 12.4% and males 8.8%, while non-migrant females were only 5.6% and males 5.5%. This is the most pronounced gap, reflecting the tendency of highly educated individuals to migrate in search of better career opportunities.

Migrants also had higher shares across primary, secondary vocational qualification, and college qualification, indicating a more diversified skill structure than non-migrants. In 2019–2024, migrants had shares of 5.7% (primary), 4.3% (secondary), and 6.5% (college), while non-migrants had 6.7%, 4.1%, and 3.8% respectively. Notably, the share of migrants with college qualification was nearly double that of non-migrants. This suggests that the migrant workforce includes not only low-skilled labor but also a significant portion with vocational training or mid-level qualifications.

Figure 37. Structure by TVE: migrants versus local residents (%)



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

b. TVE and migration distance

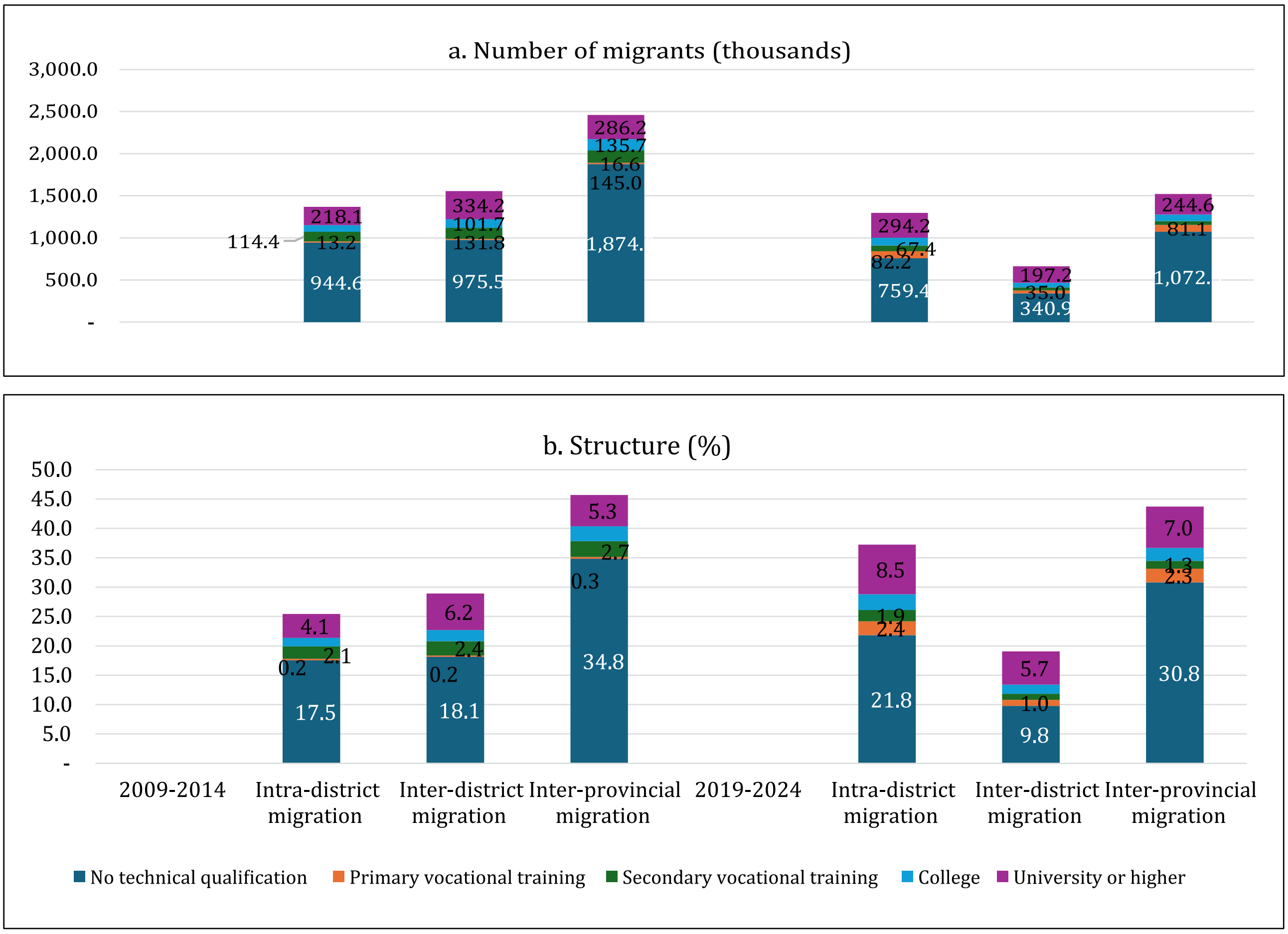
Migrant workers without TVE still account for the largest share across all migration flows, regardless of distance, though their volume has declined significantly. In 2009–2014, this group had the highest numbers in all three flows: 944,600 in intra-district migration, 975,500 in inter-district migration within provinces, and 1,874,900 in inter-provincial migration. By 2019–2024, these figures dropped to 759,400, 340,900, and 1,072,900 respectively. However, their share increased in intra-district migration (from 17.5% to 21.8%) and inter-provincial migration (30.8%), indicating that low-skilled labor remains the dominant force in both short- and long-distance migration.

Among qualified migrants, inter-provincial migration had the highest share of those with university qualification or higher, reflecting the mobility trend of high-quality labor. In 2019–2024, this group accounted for 244,600 migrants in inter-provincial flows, representing 7.0% — higher than intra-district (8.5%) and inter-district (5.7%) flows. Compared to 2009–2014, the share increased across all flows, especially in intra-district migration (from 4.1% to 8.5%). This indicates that highly educated individuals are increasingly initiating migration not only across provinces but also within districts, in pursuit of better career and educational opportunities.

Migrants with primary vocational qualification saw the strongest growth in share across all migration flows, especially in intra-district and inter-provincial migration. In 2009–2014, this group was nearly negligible, accounting for just 0.2–0.3% across flows. By 2019–2024, their share rose to 2.4% in intra-district, 1.0% in inter-district, and 2.3% in inter-provincial migration. Their volume also increased significantly: from 13,200 to 82,200 in intra-district, and from 16,600 to 81,100 in inter-provincial migration. This growth reflects the expansion of short-term training and basic vocational skills, particularly in manufacturing and service sectors.

Migrants with secondary vocational qualification and college qualification showed a declining trend in share, though their volume remained relatively stable. In 2019–2024, migrants with secondary-level training accounted for 67,400 in intra-district (1.9%), 35,800 in inter-district (1.0%), and 46,100 in inter-provincial migration (1.3%) — all lower than in 2009–2014. College-level migrants increased slightly in intra-district migration (from 78,100 to 93,400) but declined in inter-district and inter-provincial flows. Their share rose slightly in intra-district migration (from 1.5% to 2.7%) but fell in inter-district migration (from 1.9% to 1.6%). These figures suggest that mid-skilled workers continue to participate in migration but do not represent a large proportion.

Figure 38. Migration by TVE and migration distance



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

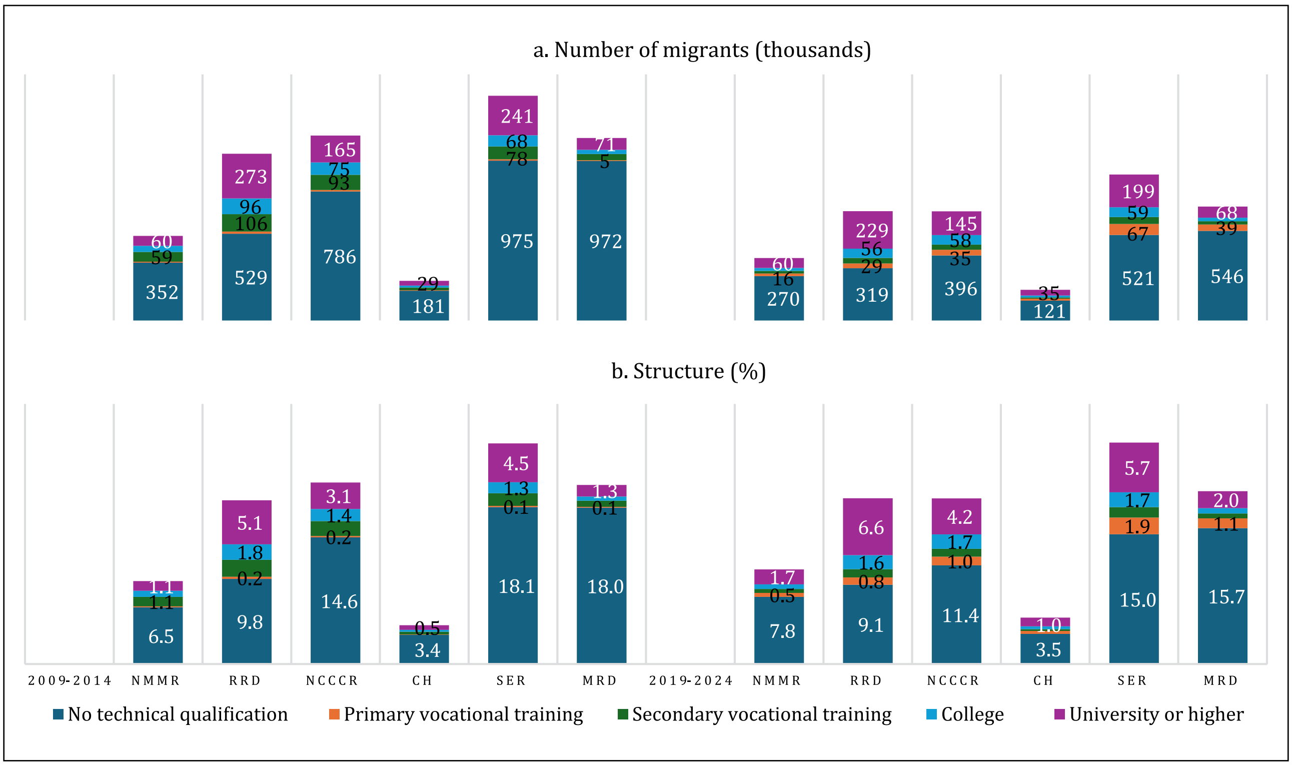
c. TVE and region

Migrant workers without TVE still account for the highest share across all regions, though their volume has declined significantly. In 2009–2014, this group had the largest numbers in every region, especially in MRD (972,000), SER (975,000), and NCCCR (786,000). By 2019–2024, these figures dropped sharply to 546,000 in MRD, 521,000 in SER, and 396,000 in NCCCR. Their share also declined in most regions — for example, in NCCCR from 14.6% to 11.4% — indicating a shift from low-skilled labor toward more qualified workers.

Among qualified migrants, those with university qualification or higher are the only group to maintain high volume and show an increase in share across all regions. In 2019–2024, this group had the highest shares in RRD (6.6%), SER (5.7%), and NCCCR (4.2%). Compared to 2009–2014, their share increased in every region — for instance, in NMMR from 1.1% to 1.7%, and in Central Highlands from 0.5% to 1.0%. Their volume remained stable or grew slightly, reflecting a trend of highly educated individuals actively migrating to seek better career opportunities.

The group of migrants with only primary-level training recorded the strongest increase in share across all regions, particularly in SER and MRD. During 2009–2014, this group was almost negligible, accounting for only 0.1–0.2% in the regions. By 2019–2024, the share rose significantly: 1.9% in SER, 1.1% in MRD, and 1.0% in NCCCR. The scale also grew sharply: from 8 thousand to 67 thousand in SER, and from 5 thousand to 39 thousand in MRD. This increase reflects the expansion of short-term vocational training and basic skills development, especially in industrial and rural areas.

Figure 39. Migration by TVE and region



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

d. TVE and rural-urban migration flows

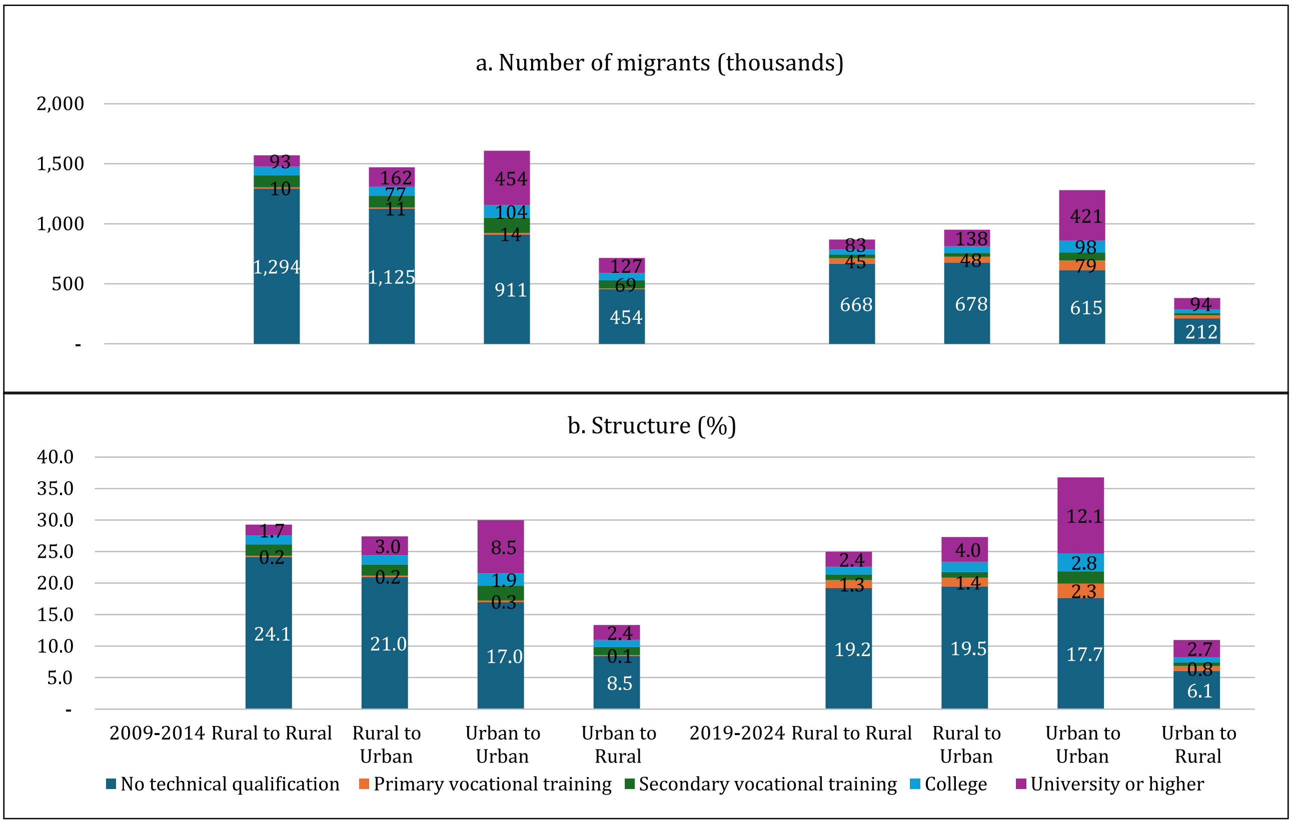
Migrant workers without TVE still account for the highest share across all migration flows, though their volume has declined significantly. In 2009–2014, this group had the largest numbers in every flow: 1,294,000 in rural–rural, 1,125,000 in rural–urban, 911,000 in urban–urban, and 454,000 in urban–rural migration. By 2019–2024, these figures dropped to 668,000, 678,000, 615,000, and 212,000 respectively. Their share also declined across all flows — for example, in urban–rural migration from 8.5% to 6.1% — reflecting a shift away from low-skilled labor migration.

Among qualified migrants, those with university qualification or higher are the only group to maintain high volume and show a clear increase in share across all rural–urban migration flows. In 2019–2024, this group had the highest share in urban–urban migration (12.1%), followed by rural–urban (4.0%), urban–rural (2.7%), and rural–rural (2.4%). Compared to 2009–2014, their share increased in all flows — for example, in urban–urban migration from 8.5% to 12.1%, and in rural–urban from 3.0% to 4.0%. Their volume remained stable or grew slightly, indicating that highly educated individuals are increasingly initiating migration, especially in urban corridors.

Migrants with primary vocational qualification saw the strongest growth in share across all flows, particularly in urban–urban and rural–urban migration. In 2009–2014, this group was nearly negligible, accounting for just 0.1–0.3% across flows. By 2019–2024, their share rose significantly: 2.3% in urban–urban, 1.4% in rural–urban, and 1.3% in rural–rural migration. Their volume also increased sharply — from 10,000 to 45,000 in rural–rural, and from 11,000 to 48,000 in rural–urban migration. This growth reflects the expansion of short-term vocational training and basic skill development, especially in industrial and service regions.

Migrants with secondary vocational qualification and college qualification showed a declining trend in volume, though their share increased slightly in some flows. In 2019–2024, migrants with secondary-level training saw a sharp drop in volume across all flows — for example, in rural–rural migration from 99,000 to 31,000, and in rural–urban from 95,000 to 32,000. Their share also declined from 1.8% to 0.9%. Migrants with college qualification maintained stable or slightly increased shares — for example, in urban–urban migration from 1.9% to 2.8%, and in rural–urban from 1.4% to 1.6%. These figures suggest that mid-skilled workers continue to participate in migration but do not represent a large proportion.

Figure 40. Migration by TVE and rural-urban flows



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

e. TVE and reasons for migration

Employment is the most common reason for migration, attracting both low-skilled workers and those with higher qualifications. During 2019–2024, as many as 952,800 migrants without TVE moved for work, accounting for 27.4% of the total - the highest among all reasons. At the same time, 274,000 migrants with university qualification or higher also relocated for employment (7.9%), showing that high-quality labor is also highly mobile in pursuit of career opportunities. Migrants with primary, secondary vocational qualification, and college qualification recorded 96,000 (2.8%), 57,300 (1.6%), and 91,700 (2.6%) respectively. Employment is the only reason with substantial volume across all qualification levels, underscoring the central role of the labor market in migration dynamics.

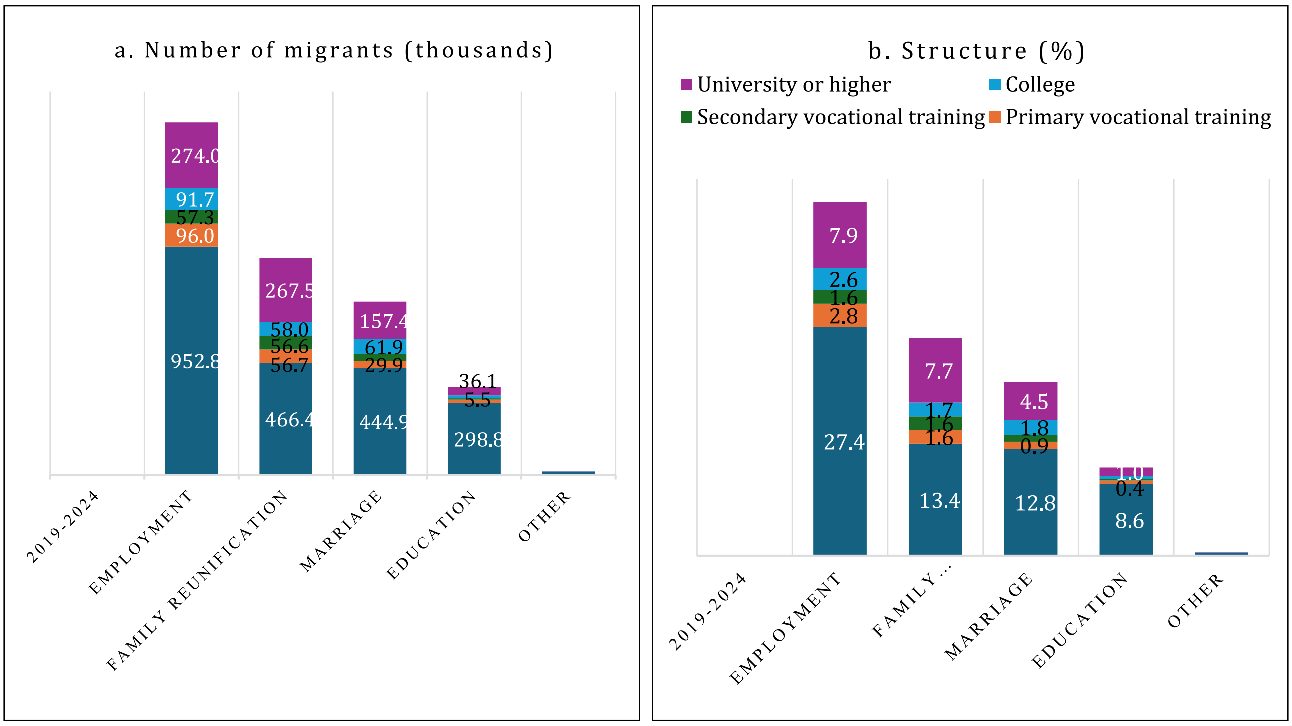
Family-related migration ranks second, with high shares among both low-skilled and highly qualified groups. There were 466,400 migrants without TVE (13.4%) and 267,500 with university qualification or higher (7.7%) who migrated for family reasons. Other groups showed relatively even shares: 56,700 with primary vocational qualification (1.6%), 56,600 with secondary vocational qualification (1.6%), and 58,000 with college qualification (1.7%). This suggests that family migration spans across qualification levels, but tends to concentrate at both ends of the spectrum - among low-skilled and highly educated workers.

Marriage-related migration mainly occurs among those without TVE, but migrants with college and university qualifications also represent a notable share. In 2019–2024, 444,900 migrants without TVE moved due to marriage, accounting for 12.8% of the total. Among those with college qualification, 61,900 migrated (1.8%), and 157,400 with university qualification or higher (4.5%). Migrants with primary and secondary vocational qualifications accounted for less than 1%. This reflects that while marriage migration is common among low-skilled workers, it is also rising among highly educated individuals, especially women.

Education-related migration is concentrated among those without TVE and those with university qualification or higher, while other groups are minimal. There were 298,800 migrants without TVE (8.6%) and 36,100 with university qualification or higher (1.0%) who migrated for education. Other groups - primary, secondary, and college qualification - each accounted for just 0.2% to 0.4%, with fewer than 15,000 migrants per group. This indicates that most education-related migrants are students without formal qualifications or those aiming to pursue higher education.

Migration for other reasons had very small volume and share, with no significant impact on the overall qualification structure. Only around 15,000 migrants moved for other reasons, including 10,400 without TVE (0.3%). All other groups had fewer than 1,200 migrants and shares below 0.1%. This is the least common reason for migration and does not substantially affect the qualification profile of the migrant population.

Figure 41. Migration by TVE and reasons for migration



Note: The structure is calculated as a share of the total 100% nationwide for each time period.
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2014 and 2024 Mid-term Population and Housing Surveys, NSO.

3.5. Employment and income

In 2024, the proportion of migrants without employment was more than six times higher than that of the local population (8.5% compared to 1.3%), highlighting the employment instability faced by migrants. The proportion of migrants with employment was also higher than that of locals, particularly among men (75.8% compared to 73.4%). This reflects the proactive attitude and strong motivation of migrants in seeking job opportunities.

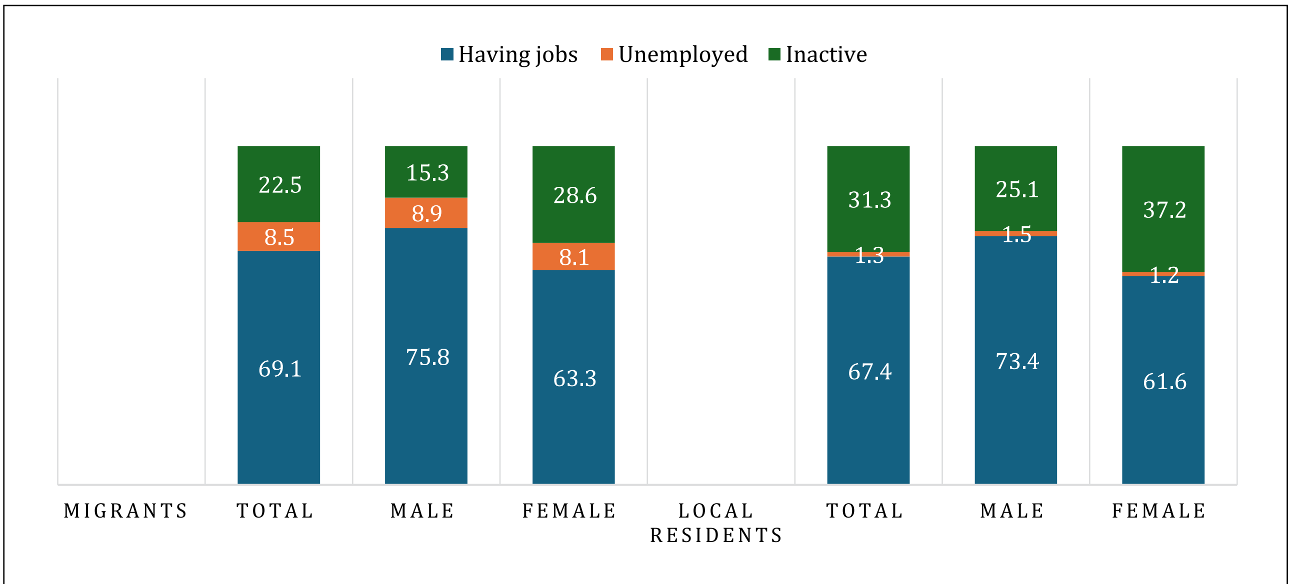
a. Employment and gender

Data from 2024 show that migrant workers have a higher employment rate than local residents, especially among men. The employment rate among migrants reached 69.1%, higher than that of locals at 67.4%. Specifically: 75.8% of male migrants were employed, compared to 73.4% of local men; among women, the employment rate of migrants was 63.3%, also higher than that of local women (61.6%). In contrast, the rate of non-participation in economic activities (including studying, housework, illness, etc.) among migrants was much lower than among locals (22.5% compared to 31.3%).

The unemployment rate among migrants was also much higher than that of locals, reflecting the instability of migrant employment. The unemployment rate of migrants was 8.5%, more than six times higher than that of locals (1.3%). Male migrants had an unemployment rate of 8.9%, female migrants 8.1%, while local men had only 1.5% and local women 1.2%. This disparity shows that migrants are more vulnerable to labor market fluctuations, face unstable employment, and are less protected by social welfare policies.

Local residents have a higher rate of non-economic activity than migrants, especially among women. The rate of non-participation in economic activities among local residents is 31.3%, higher than that of migrants (22.5%). The sharpest difference is among women: 37.2% of local women are not economically active, compared to 28.6% of migrant women. Among men, the rate is 25.1% for locals and only 15.3% for migrants. This shows that local residents, particularly women, tend to be more attached to family or not participate in the labor market, while migrants are generally a more active and engaged workforce.

Figure 42. Migration by employment and gender in 2024 (%)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Labor Force Survey, NSO.

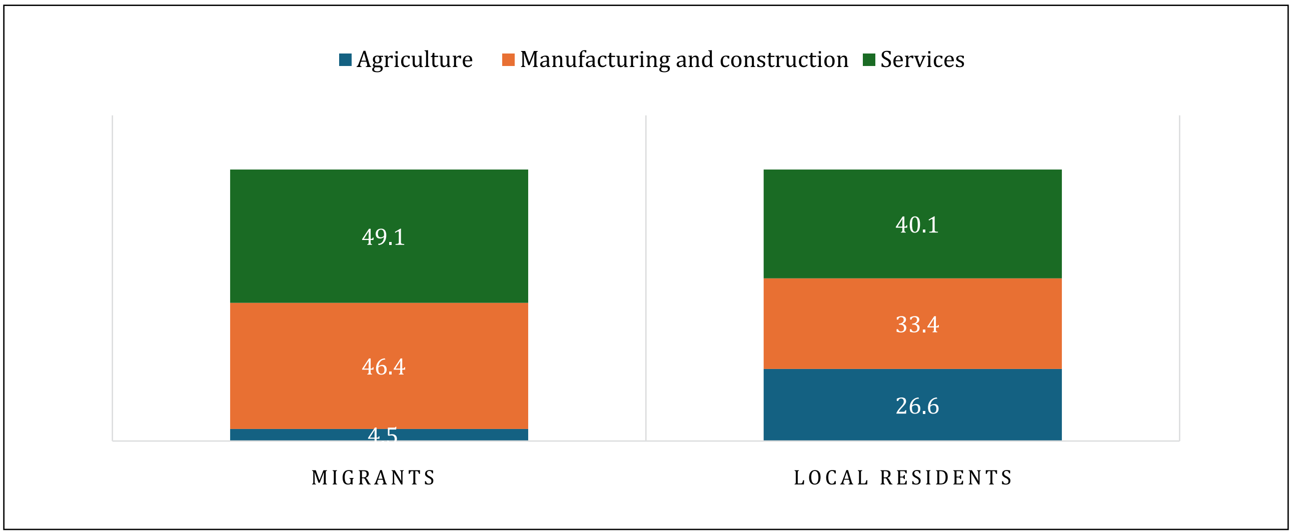
b. Sector

According to the 2024 Labor Force Survey, migrants primarily work in manufacturing and construction and services, reflecting a shift driven by urban labor demand. Among migrants, 46.4% are employed in manufacturing and construction, and 49.1% in services. In contrast, only 4.5% work in agriculture. This employment structure indicates that migrants are concentrated in urban production and service sectors, where demand for low-skilled and semi-skilled labor is high.

Non-migrants have a much higher share working in agriculture, reflecting their attachment to traditional livelihoods. As many as 26.6% of non-migrants are employed in agriculture—nearly six times the share among migrants. This suggests that non-migrants remain closely tied to land-based occupations and local livelihoods, especially in rural and peri-urban areas.

Services represent a common ground between the two groups, though migrants still hold a higher share. The service sector accounts for 49.1% of migrant employment, compared to 40.1% among non-migrants. This sector attracts both groups, but migrants dominate, reflecting a trend toward employment in retail, food services, transportation, personal care, and public services in urban areas.

Figure 43. Migration by sector in 2024 (%)



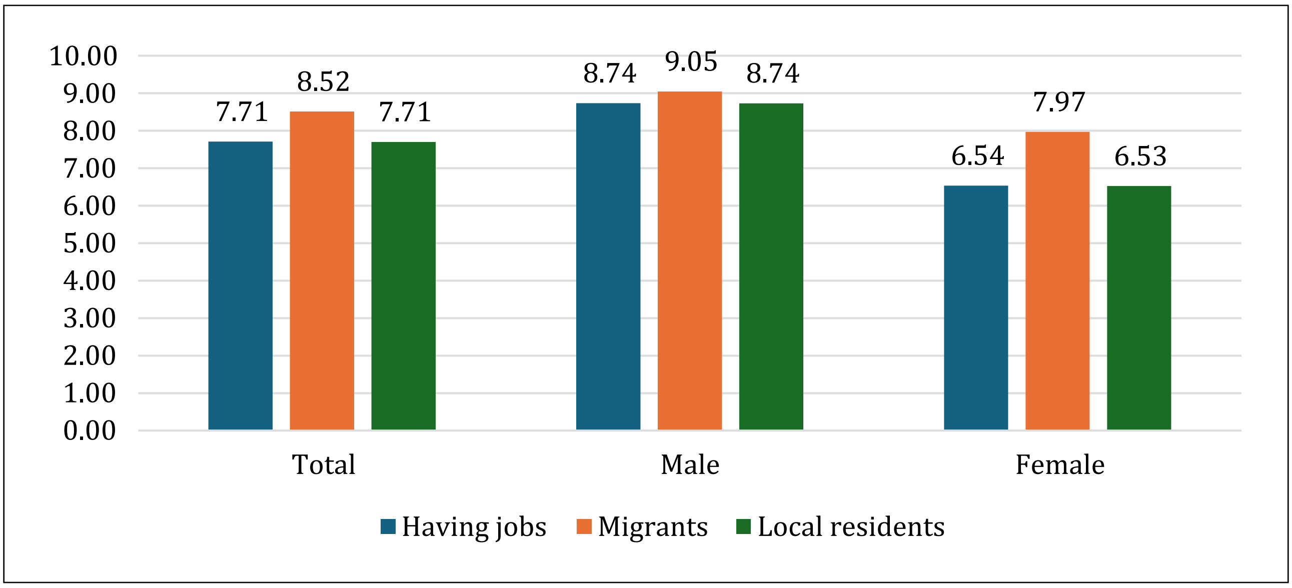
Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Labor Force Survey, NSO.

c. Income

Data from the 2024 Labor Force Survey reveals that migrant workers earn significantly higher incomes than non-migrant workers, underscoring the economic efficiency of labor mobility. In 2024, the average monthly income of non-migrant workers was 7.71 million VND-matching the overall average for all employed workers. In contrast, migrant workers earned 8.52 million VND per month, 0.81 million higher than their non-migrant counterparts. This substantial gap reflects the nature of migrant employment, which often involves physically demanding tasks and extended working hours, particularly in urban areas and industrial zones.

Although the gender income gap remains, female migrant workers are steadily closing the distance with male migrants. Among migrants, women earned an average of 7.97 million VND per month, just 1.08 million less than men (9.05 million VND). Meanwhile, non-migrant women earned only 6.53 million VND per month-2.21 million less than non-migrant men (8.74 million VND). These figures suggest that migration enables women to narrow income disparities and access better employment opportunities than they might find in their local communities.

Figure 44. Average monthly income of workers in 2024 (millions)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Labor Force Survey, NSO.

RRD is the region with the highest income levels, especially for migrant workers. In 2024, migrants in RRD earned an average of 9.59 million VND/month, higher than both non-migrants (9.12 million) and the national average for all employed workers (9.13 million). It is the only region where migrants outperform both groups, reflecting the strong economic pull of the Northern key economic zone.

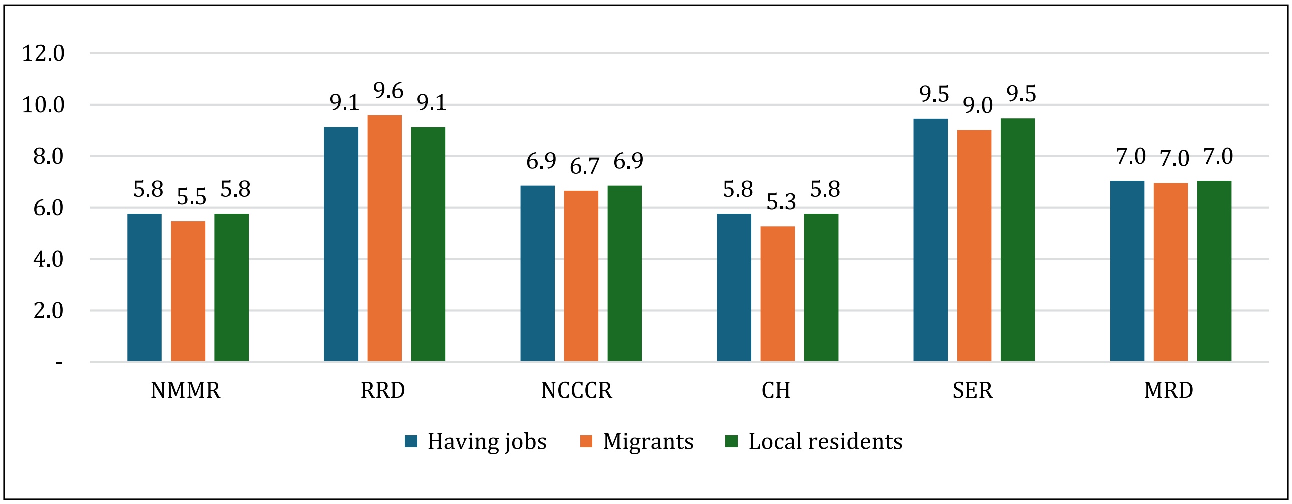
SER continues to be a high-income region, but migrant workers here earn less than non-migrants. In SER, non-migrants earned 9.47 million VND/month, compared to 9.02 million for migrants. Although both groups earn above the national average, this gap suggests that migrants in the Southern economic zone have yet to access higher-paying positions held by local workers.

CH and NMMR are the two regions with the lowest income levels, particularly for migrants. **I**n CH, migrant workers earned only 5.27 million VND/month, lower than non-migrants (5.76 million). Similarly, in NMMR, migrants earned 5.47 million, 0.29 million less than non-migrants. These are the lowest-income regions nationwide, reflecting limited job opportunities and lower job quality for migrants.

NCCCR has a mid-range income level, but migrants still earn less than non-migrants. In NCCCR, non-migrants earned 6.86 million VND/month, while migrants earned 6.66 million. Although the gap is modest, it indicates that migrants in Central Vietnam still face barriers to accessing jobs with comparable income to local workers.

MRD shows relatively stable income levels between groups, though migrant workers still earn slightly less. In MRD, non-migrants earned 7.04 million VND/month, 0.09 million higher than migrants (6.95 million). This region reflects a relatively balanced employment structure, yet migrants have not fully reached income parity.

Figure 45. Average monthly income of workers by region in 2024 (millions)



Source: Author's calculations based on the 2024 Labor Force Survey, NSO.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1. Summary of key migration patterns and changes from 2009 to 2024

Migration as a key driver of population growth

During the period 2009–2024, internal migration has become an important factor in maintaining and increasing population in key economic regions. In SER, net migration plays a decisive role in sustaining population size, while in RRD, although there is a greater balance between natural growth and migration, net migration contributes only over 9% of population growth throughout 2009–2024, yet also shows a growing dependence on immigration flows. This confirms that migration is not only a social phenomenon but has become a structural driver of regional population dynamics.

Population distribution is becoming more balanced

A positive point is that population distribution is showing signs of becoming more balanced. Some provinces in the NCCCR and the Southwest region, which in previous periods experienced significant migration, have made efforts to develop infrastructure, attract both domestic and foreign investment, create jobs, and retain population. Provinces such as Cần Thơ, Long An, Hải Phòng, Thanh Hóa, and Nghệ An have also recorded notable migration shares, although their scale remains smaller than the leading group. This presents an opportunity for these localities to become potential destinations, helping to ease the burden on major urban centers and promote more balanced regional development.

Clear cycle of growth – boom – redistribution

The entire period from 2009–2024 reveals a clear cycle in internal migration dynamics. From 2009–2014, migration scale increased significantly, with large flows into major cities, creating heavy pressure on infrastructure and services. The 2014–2019 period is considered the "boom" phase, when national migration reached its peak. By 2019–2024, processes of population dispersal and redistribution began to unfold, reflecting adjustments in national urban and population development strategies. This marks an important moment to reframe migration policies toward balance, sustainability, and adaptability to future socio-economic changes.

Less developed regions are losing population due to migration

In contrast to the key regions, areas such as MRD, NCCCR, and NMMR are facing severe population loss due to large out-migration flows. Although they still maintain stable fertility levels, these regions are unable to retain residents under the pressures of employment, income, and quality of life. The phenomenon of "population drain" here reflects the increasingly evident disparities between developed regions and those still struggling, posing an urgent need for adjustments in regional development policies.

Migration volumes declining across all distances

One of the notable changes during the period 2014–2024 is the decline in migration scale across all distances-from inter-provincial migration, to migration between districts within a province, and intra-district migration. This reflects the trend of population stabilization, saturation in major urban areas, as well as changes in infrastructure development policies and intra-regional investment allocation. Inter-provincial migration remained the highest during 2014–2019 (2.8 million), before dropping to 1.6 million in 2019–2024. This type of migration has been the most common throughout the period, maintaining a stable share above 42%, showing that people still prioritize long-distance moves to seek better job opportunities and living conditions. Intra-district migration, although declining in absolute numbers during 2019–2024, saw its share rise sharply from 26.3% (2009–2014) to 38.4% (2019–2024), only 4 percentage points lower than inter-provincial migration. This indicates that intra-district migration is becoming the most common form, reflecting the trend of short-distance moves that save costs, are more convenient for residents, and align with current socio-economic conditions. This change also highlights the increasingly important role of district-level urban centers in attracting population, while demonstrating the flexible adaptation of residents to their living environment and employment opportunities within familiar areas.

Intra-regional migration remains the largest share

The trend of intra-regional migration—movement within the same socio-economic region—has consistently accounted for the largest share of total migration flows. Socio-economic development, improved transportation infrastructure, urbanization, and public services within regions have facilitated people's preference for short-distance migration. At the same time, migration choices have become increasingly diverse: some prioritize stability and staying in place, while others remain willing to move farther to seek new opportunities. This reflects the heterogeneity of migration behavior.

SER as the largest destination, MRD as the largest source

Geographically, SER continues to be the largest destination nationwide, strongly attracting population from MRD and NCCCR thanks to its role as an industrial–service hub and its tightly connected urban network. In contrast, MRD is the largest out-migration region, with flows mainly directed toward SER, reflecting pressures of employment opportunities, living costs, and the decline of the young population. This polarization highlights the uneven nature of regional development and raises urgent demands for rebalancing population distribution and labor resources. Overall, interregional migration flows show a declining trend, indicating population stabilization and adjustments in regional development strategies after a decade of volatility. Out-migration from MRD to SER decreased by as much as 59% from the period 2014–2019 to 2019–2024.

Urban-to-urban migration is the largest flow nationwide

Migration between urban areas has become the largest flow nationwide. This trend is tied to urbanization, expanded living spaces, and job transitions within the urban system. Notably, the share of out-migration from urban areas rose again in 2019–2024, reflecting cost-of-living pressures and the desire to move to areas with better living conditions. This signals that major cities are entering a phase of adjustment, requiring spatial and service restructuring to retain residents.

Rural-to-urban migration slows down

The flow of rural-to-urban migration—once the main driver of urbanization—has slowed in recent years. This decline reflects the stagnation of the urbanization process, while also indicating that rising living costs in cities are making people more cautious before moving. On the other hand, it also suggests certain improvements in opportunities in rural areas, particularly in regions with investments in infrastructure and public services.

4.2. Demographic profile of migrants and significant developments

Shifts in Age and Gender Structure in Internal Migration

The age and gender structure of internal migrants has shown clear shifts during the period 2014–2024. Migration remains concentrated mainly among young working-age groups (20–34), especially the 20–24 group, which tends to move between major cities to seek employment, education, and access to services. However, the share of middle-aged groups (35–44) is rising rapidly, reflecting growing needs for resettlement, family care, and career transitions. This shift shows that migrants are not only young people starting their careers, but also individuals restructuring their lives in more stable stages.

Children and the older persons, though still accounting for a small share of total migrants, are showing a slight upward trend. This reflects the expansion of age groups participating in migration and raises demands for appropriate support services for these vulnerable groups. In terms of gender, women still dominate labor migration, but their share is gradually narrowing, showing a trend toward greater gender balance in migration flows. This change may stem from a more stable labor market, more effective local retention policies, and increasing migration for family, health, or resettlement reasons.

Differentiation by Ethnicity and Marital Status

Internal migration also shows clear differentiation by ethnic group and marital status. The share of ethnic minorities (EM) among migrants has increased, although their nationwide scale has not changed much. EM migrants mainly move within rural areas or from rural to urban areas, reflecting settlement characteristics and the need to access new opportunities. Notably, EM women are increasingly participating in migration flows, often for employment, marriage, or family reasons.

Regarding marital status, married individuals still account for the highest share of total migrants, but their scale has declined sharply in long-distance flows such as inter-provincial and inter-district migration. In contrast, intra-district migration has increased significantly among this group, reflecting the trend of short-distance moves to maintain family stability. Meanwhile, unmarried individuals are the only group whose share has increased, especially among men, showing a trend of actively seeking new opportunities, starting businesses, or studying in rapidly urbanizing areas. This differentiation requires policies to clearly distinguish the needs and barriers of each group to provide appropriate solutions.

Opportunity Gaps Between Population Groups

One of the biggest challenges is the disparity in opportunities between population groups, especially between EM and the Kinh majority. EM groups have limited access to key economic regions, mainly migrating within rural areas or from rural to urban areas. Their migration for education and employment is significantly lower, reflecting gaps in education, skills, and labor market connectivity. This stratification not only affects migration effectiveness but also deepens regional and ethnic disparities.

Barriers in Family-Based Migration

Family-based migration-common among married groups-is facing many barriers in terms of costs and settlement stability. Moving entire families requires substantial resources, while destination regions often lack sufficient infrastructure and public services to meet resettlement needs. In contrast, single individuals-especially young people-are more flexible in moving but are vulnerable if they lack support networks in the destination. Lack of social connections, suitable housing, and psychological support services can make integration difficult.

Weakness in Technical Skills and Labor Market Challenges

The technical skill level of migrants continues to be a weakness to note. Workers without technical skills still account for the largest share, though declining sharply. This reflects the stagnation of unskilled labor in migration flows and shows changes in workforce structure. Conversely, migrants with university degrees or higher are increasing rapidly, nearly double the rate of locals, showing the trend of high-quality labor moving to regions with better career opportunities. The share of those with basic vocational training is also rising quickly, reflecting the expansion of short-term training and basic skills, especially in manufacturing and service sectors.

Employment remains the most common reason for migration across all education levels and marital statuses, showing the central role of the labor market in migration decisions. However, differentiation by education level also leads to stratification in access to jobs, stability, and income among migrants.

Migrants' employment is unstable and easily affected by economic fluctuations, while their higher income compared to locals comes with greater risks to health, working hours, and welfare. Although migrants have higher employment rates than locals—especially men—they also face higher unemployment or underemployment. This reflects the instability of the migrant labor market, where workers often lack protection from welfare policies, labor contracts, and social insurance. Female migrants also have higher employment rates than local women, showing proactivity and adaptability, but still face challenges in accessing better-paying and better-conditioned positions.

In terms of income, migrants have higher average earnings than locals, especially among women, helping to narrow the gender gap. However, this income often comes with heavy working conditions, long hours, and limited insurance. Employment and income pressures for migrants are not only economic issues but also social concerns that need attention in human resource and welfare policy planning.

4.3. Strategic policy priorities

Development of Out-Migration Regions and Secondary Cities

Faced with population loss in less developed regions such as MRD and NCCCR, policies need to prioritize investment in infrastructure, public services, and employment opportunities in these localities. Improving living conditions and livelihood capacity will help retain residents, reduce out-migration pressure, and limit the phenomenon of "population drain." At the same time, it is necessary to promote the development of secondary cities such as Đà Nẵng, Bắc Ninh, and Cần Thơ to disperse population away from saturated centers like HCM City and Hà Nội, contributing to rebalancing the nationwide population distribution.

Support for Middle-Aged Migrants, Children, and the Older Persons

The age structure of migrants is shifting significantly, with the share of middle-aged groups, children, and the older persons increasing. Policies should develop healthcare, education, housing, and social welfare services tailored to the demographic characteristics of these groups. In particular, for migrant households, programs should be designed to support children's education, care for dependents, and facilitate access to public services at destinations. These policies not only help stabilize migrants' lives but also improve human resource quality and social cohesion in receiving regions.

Narrowing Opportunity Gaps Between Population Groups

The clear differentiation among ethnic minorities (EM), unskilled labor, and highly educated groups requires policies aimed at equity of opportunity. Education, vocational training, and labor market connections should be expanded for disadvantaged groups, especially EM women and unmarried individuals. Enhancing competitiveness and adaptability will help migrants integrate better into new socio-economic environments, while reducing risks of exclusion or lagging behind during migration.

Protecting Migrant Workers and Improving Working Conditions

Migrants have high employment rates but also face high unemployment and unstable working conditions. Policies should strengthen monitoring of workplaces, ensure insurance rights, labor contracts, and reasonable working hours. Special attention should be given to sectors with high shares of migrant workers such as industry–construction and services, where overwork, lack of protection, and unsustainable income are common. Improving working conditions will not only help migrants stabilize their lives but also enhance the socio-economic effectiveness of migration.

Strengthening Social Support for Single Migrants

Unmarried individuals-especially young men-are accounting for an increasingly large share of short-distance migration flows. Although flexible in mobility, this group is vulnerable if lacking support networks at destinations. Policies should build social support programs, community connections, and facilitate access to housing, public services, and psychological counseling to help single migrants stabilize their lives, strengthen connections, and narrow gaps.

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