

# **The Thinking and System of Land and Customary Law in Highlander's Communities of Vietnamese Central Highlands**

—The Rivalry between Ideology of Modern Nation and Belief Created in Local Communities—

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Research Area: Socialist Republic of Vietnam

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## **Background and objectives of your research (300 words)**

The main object of my study is to investigate how belief of land and law created in a local community has changed and been practiced among local people through the historical process of the rivalry between it and ideology of modern nation by understanding the thinking and system of land and customary law in Highlander's Community of Central Highlands, which has been the most political periphery in Vietnam.

Generally, it has been said that the traditional culture of highlander in Central Highlands such as Slash and Burn or customary law ruling land use and ceremony has been disappeared by the experience of French colonialism, Vietnam War, and Communism economy. But rather, I think that Highlander's communities has been on the political periphery of Vietnam, and thus maintained, reorganized, and strengthened their local beliefs of land and law against the imperfect organization of nation state in Vietnam, because of delay of arrangements for modern laws caused by the repeated changes of government, anarchy under war, and mistakes of Communism policies.

After the nation state of Kinh people who are lowlanders was for the first time established in 1954, settlers such as laborers of coffee plantations mainly consisted of Kinh people has been rapidly increasing in rich Central Highlands. So most highlanders has experienced collapse of their communities or land grab, and so some people has been converted to Christianity. However, I speculate that even if highlander's communities has been influenced by social changes, their invisible spiritual culture still now rules their belief of land and law.

**Pictures(three pictures)**



A community house of ethnic Katu in Hong Ha Village.



Landscape in ethnic Muong's village.



We can see Pictures of Korean stars at a villager's house.