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Research Article

The cultural adaption and integration of diasporas: A qualitative study of the Vietnamese community in Australia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to explore the national identity that Vietnamese diasporas have conserved and developed within the Australian multicultural society. This research conducted a qualitative study whose data were collected through 7 in-depth interviews with 1 male officer living in Western Australia, 1 male officer living in South Australia, 1 female officer living in New South Wales, 1 female overseas student living in Victoria, 1 female officer living in Victoria for less 1 year, and 2 female officers living in Victoria for between 1 and 5 years. The data were analysed using content analysis themes development. Data were collected between February 2022 and March 2022. Three themes that emerged from the data were language barrier, cultural differences, and ideological differences. The cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas from other occupations interpreted into several positive outcomes, including spreading the Vietnamese cultural image. However, a number of unfavorable outcomes are also indicated in the data such as ideological conflicts. Through purpose-sampling technique, this article also discuss about the experience within the early Vietnamese community in Australian multicultural society in relation to the acculturation strategy of Vietnamese diasporas. Increasingly, the Vietnamese comprises of various origin, professional training, and regional culture. The findings make an effort to inform the policy-maker and administrator in community focus on the growing reality of mobility in the population of North Vietnamese overseas students and professionals. Since data was collected from the early Vietnamese diasporas as well as from the current Vietnamese diasporas, this article looks forward to providing a different viewpoint from previous studies which largely focused on the cultural adaption and integration of only one-way process (the early Vietnamese diasporas or the current Vietnamese diasporas).

Keywords: *Diasporas; Identity; Multiculturalism; Vietnamese-Australians*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last four decades, the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas in Australia has been investigated as a growing phenomenon. Vietnamese community has experienced such phenomenon whereby the increasing of incoming, far growing the number of oversea students and professionals moving away from Vietnam. Vietnamese diasporas who move from a multicultural society to another multicultural society carry different types in the lifestyle. These include Vietnamese refugees, Vietnamese overseas students, Vietnamese immigrant professionals. For the purpose of this research study, the term "Vietnamese diasporas in Australia" is used to refer to a Vietnamese refugee who have completed education in Vietnam and later migrated to Australia since April 30 1975 or a

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Vietnamese overseas student/professional who have studied in Australia and later get work in Australia. Vietnamese diasporas in Australia is a well-known community in the global literature. There are various reasons leading to this phenomenon, including the success in overcoming the socio-economic crisis in Vietnam before Doi Moi (Renovation), growing comprehensive and strategic partnership of Vietnam, increasing academic connections between scholars in Vietnam and developed countries, and the complexity of Vietnamese community's structure. Apart from the challenges that the current and the early Vietnamese diasporas in Australia have been facing, Australia is also tackling the emerging social conflicts that the rising population of immigrants in Australia, therefore, the need for maintaining the harmony between the early Vietnamese refugees and the current Vietnamese overseas students and professionals, and other immigrant communities in Australia is continuously encouraged. Moreover, the number of Vietnamese overseas students and professionals is continuously increasing, thus is an issue that must be addressed for the changes in structure of Vietnamese community in Australia. Efforts were done to decrease the differences, conflicts between the early Vietnamese refugees and the current Vietnamese overseas students, professionals. These measures included the organizing Tet Cong dong (Community Vietnamese lunar new year), virtualizing the TV shows of Vietnamese Television, establishing the courses teaching Vietnamese for children those who are the 2nd, 3rd generation Vietnamese-Australians. Despite the efforts, this was not enough to tackle the issue. Another solution was to improve the connections between Vietnamese in Vietnam and Australia, and the increasing gifts were transferred by Vietnamese diasporas in Australia. In Australia, there are around hundred thousands Vietnamese refugees and their decendants who have negative attitude with the current Vietnamese government, and have conflicts with the current Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in Australia. In line with these barriers, various literature have interpreted such challenges during the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas. There are significant evidences that provide the importance of the effort to maintain harmony between these communities in a multicultural society. Those evidence also can find the decline of measures to move away from the current Vietnamese government, from the current Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in Australia. It also find the the development of measures to maintain and spread the cultural image of Vietnamese cultural identity. Thus, this article makes an effort to study the complex of these viewpoint in order to explain the development of cultural adaption and integration of the Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in relations to the early Vietnamese refugees and their children.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To Duy Hop defines a community as a group of people that has their own values, norms, relations, roles and is organised as a collective group where people own and obey to shared regulars. This implies that to consider as a community, their own shared values, norms, regulars, that everyone accept and practice, is necessary. Thus, the members' values, norms, and regulars must be preserved when they maintain and develop their community. Furthermore, according to To Duy Hop, a community is structured by the complex of four

factors, including residential area, occupation, ethnic/nation, and ethnical/national psychology/personality. It can be explained that the community of Vietnamese refugees who migrated to Australia in the period of April 30, 1975 - 1990s has their own residential area, occupation, and psychology different from the Vietnamese overseas students and professionals who migrated to Australia after 1990s respectively. On the other hand, MSJ Keys Young Planners Pty Ltd, Bui Huy Khoat, and Le Thi Khanh Ha explained the success of cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese refugees' children on the basis of family education as a socio-cultural capital. In the context of social and ideological conflicts between Vietnamese refugees and Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in Australia, the works of MSJ Keys Young Planners Pty Ltd, Bui Huy Khoat, and Le Thi Khanh Ha imply that the children who already have family members in Australia according to the Family Union visas, although do not influenced by the experience within the war, still perhap have negative sense toward the current Vietnamese government because of their family education. Meanwhile, the crucial viewpoint of Hawthorne, Hugo is that the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas in Australia not only be influenced by family education but also affected by the cultural and ethnical policies of both the Australian and Vietnamese governments. They describe the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas as a two-way process. On the one hand, the children of the early Vietnamese refugees are affected by their family education which aim at maturing the hatress to the current Vietnam government and maturing the motivation to reach the new heigh in their social status, to become the members of multicultural middle-class (MMC) in Australia. On the other hand, they also are affected by the communication to Vietnamese Television's shows, and the current Vietnamese overseas students and professionals as well. It is clear that these two-way communication, which improves the experience on the contemporary Vietnam, is affected mostly by the cultural and ethnical policies of both Vietnamese and Australian government. It gives more opportunities to reducing the gap, and conflicts between the children of the early Vietnamese refugees and the current Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in Australia. In the context of Vietnamese diasporas in Australia, Tran Thi Thanh Giang, Gardner, Coughlan imply that, according to the habitus theory of Bourdieu, each group of people has its own characteristics depending on their age, their gender, their qualifications, and their homeland culture. Thus, there is no longer the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas in the whole world, there are only the cultural adaption and integration of the communities of Vietnamese refugees, Vietnamese refugees' children, Vietnamese overseas students and professionals. However, their argument is not enough. Although the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas in Australia has been studied for a four-decade time, a few studies focus on the cultural adaption and integration of the current Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in Australia in relation to the early Vietnamese refugees and their children. Most studies only included the research on Vietnamese refugees or Vietnamese overseas students and professionals. Nevertheless, only one side of the coin was investigated since the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in relation to Vietnamese refugees' children were not included in their studies. This article look forward to providing a unique contribution to the literature regarding the phenomenon. It embraces the

cultural integration of Vietnamese overseas students and professionals in relation to Vietnamese refugees and their children, whereby their adaption and integration as well as that of Vietnamese overseas students and professionals and Vietnamese refugees are studied. Last but not least, this article hopes to providing a unique viewpoint from not only previous studies but also the data was collected from the Vietnamese overseas students and professionals.

3. METHODOLOGY

This article is based on data attained from the works of Ben-Moshe, Tran Thi Thanh Giang and Nguyen Hoang Bao Nguyen, involving Vietnamese Australians aged 18+, from both the early and the current Vietnamese diasporas in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. Most studies aim to understand the origin of the success of Vietnamese Australians. Initially, this article hopes to operation a mixed-method approach. The quantitative data collected with 47 online surveys measuring the characteristics of Vietnamese diasporas in Australia. However, this perspective cannot describe their identity with only 4 responses. Thus, this study includes only a qualitative analyses based on 7 in-depth interviews with Australian overseas students and professionals in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The interviews explored the practice, knowledge, and habitus of Vietnamese overseas students and professionals while they are adapting and integrating into a multicultural society such as Australia. This article is based on the data collected through individual interviews. This was the first site that examining the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese overseas students and professionals' experience, then finalizing the data analysis in other sites, the article will expand analyses to include this data. While the sample was not fully representative, it nevertheless addressed the key aspects of the cultural adaption and integration of Vietnamese diasporas in Australia. The sample were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. The participants were selected upon the following criteria: years of experience in living in Australia, and relationship to the early Vietnamese refugees in Australia. In one gender, there were just two male officers, and in another gender there were neither male overseas student nor male officer. In addition, seven Vietnamese immigrants were not only interviewed via online survey but also observed via their discourse. Finally, a total of 7 surveys and 9 discourses were carried out through seven Vietnamese immigrants. In order to be eligible, participants also had to be granted citizenship by the government of Australia and lived within these two Australia's Vietnamese communities. Furthermore, officers and professionals were included if they had studied in Australia before having permanence resident visa. While, Vietnamese overseas students were selected on the basis that they were experiencing for their lives within a multicultural society. Guided by the research design, a sample of 7 participants were interviewed and the analysis of the data collected appeared to be adequate in view of addressing the purpose of the research. In-depth interviews were used to collect data and the schedule of the interviews were planned by the interviewees. The interviews were held during the participants' breaks and the session was taken notes. Interviews were held between March and April 2022. The researcher carried out all the interviews.

4. RESULTS

The following findings have been analysed from the data collected from the data collected from 2 male officers, 3 female part-time sellers, 1 female overseas students and 1 female officers. Each group were given a code together with a number to ensure anomymity of participants. Male officers were coded as MO, the female officer was coded as FO, female part-time sellers were coded as FP while female overseas students were coded as FS. The themes which were identified by the researcher were: language barrier, cultural differences, and ideological differences.

4.1. Theme 1: Language Barrier

During the interviews, the participants were asked to describe the ability of speaking, listening, reading and writing English at home and at workplace. Vietnamese language skills are very high, with more than 25% of respondents using Vietnamese at "fluent", 25% of respondents using Vietnamese at a "relatively fluent" level, and 50% of respondents using Vietnamese at a "relatively fluent" level. respondents use Vietnamese at a "very fluent" level. The majority tend to use Vietnamese (more than English) with their mothers, fathers, siblings, Vietnamese-speaking grandparents, relatives in Vietnam, and Vietnamese friends. They speak English and Vietnamese with their English-speaking partners, children, siblings and grandparents. They tend to speak more English when working, studying and watching TV, but use English and Vietnamese equally on social media. The most important reasons for maintaining Vietnamese are: maintaining ties with relatives, maintaining Vietnamese cultural identity and building friendships. The use of language is more with parents and grandparents than with members of the student generation. Vietnamese is used more in private and ethnic settings such as family and community events than in public settings. Vietnamese language ability decreased and English ability increased over time of residence. Total length of stay in Australia and age of residence start have more influence on language retention than attitudes towards cultural retention.

4.2. Theme 2: Cultural Difference

The majority of interviewees were skilled Vietnamese immigrants who were born in South Vietnam after 1975 and were originally from northern Vietnam. Most of them immigrated to Australia when they were over 15 years old. At the same time, they have no difficulty maintaining connection with their homeland of Vietnam and integrating into modern Australian culture. However, they have typical cultural characteristics that are different from the Vietnamese refugees who immigrated to Australia in the period 1975-1995. More than 50% of the interviewees who are skilled Vietnamese immigrants answered that they can only sometimes or almost never cook enough traditional Vietnamese dishes properly. Traditional customs of the nation on holidays such as Lunar New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival. This is a much lower number than Vietnamese immigrants who were refugees in the period 1975-1995. Even so, the majority of skilled Vietnamese immigrants try to prepare pure Vietnamese meals during the day for breakfast, lunch and dinner. At the same time, Vietnam's television viewing numbers among skilled Vietnamese immigrants

are much larger than the corresponding viewing numbers among Vietnamese-refugee immigrants in the period 1975-1995. And whether eating alone or with family or friends, skilled Vietnamese immigrants always choose to cook for themselves, rather than at a restaurant. All of these cultural features confirm that the level of effort in maintaining national cultural identity in the skilled Vietnamese immigrant community is not inferior to this level of effort in Vietnamese immigrants who are Vietnamese immigrants. refugee in the period 1975-1995. These efforts are also reflected in the answers of skilled Vietnamese immigrants when asked why they choose to cook Vietnamese dishes themselves "To satisfy homesickness", "To gather Vietnamese friends". “Let's remember our homeland", or "To strengthen family affection in free time".

4.3. Theme 3: Ideological Differences

In addition, cultural differences are also reflected in the audio-visual culture of the descendants of Vietnamese refugees and skilled Vietnamese immigrants. If the descendants of Vietnamese refugees often watch Paris by night, podcasts, VOA Vietnamese, and mostly only follow current news when attending Vietnamese meetings in Australia; skilled Vietnamese immigrants often watch and listen to programs of Vietnam Television more often, such as Super Intelligence, Thank God there you are, Rap Viet. They shared that the reason was "Almost impossible, because compared to foreign academic programs, Vietnamese programs are really boring and unattractive to children. Vietnamese written it? Almost none, but if the book is translated into Vietnamese, then read the English version." Similar to reading culture, descendants of Vietnamese refugees often prefer to read Western-influenced newspapers and magazines such as BBC News, GAM 7 Marketing, VNExpress, while skilled Vietnamese immigrants are often read more than newspapers and magazines published by Vietnam, such as Tien Phong, Thanh Nien, Tuoi Tre, Lao Dong. In particular, for the respondent who is a female Vietnamese overseas student, the reason that she often chooses Vietnamese online newspapers to read is because

> "I watch it when I want to update the situation in Vietnam (eg. pandemic)"

5. DISCUSSION

In Vietnamese, the word 'go' means 'to go home'. However, when talking about Vietnam, none of the refugees used the word 'return' to describe their trips back to Vietnam, although many skilled migrants did. so. They use the saying 'travel to Vietnam'. In this sense, they have made Australia home. After settling in Australia, the Family Reunification Program initiated by the Australian government provides an opportunity for refugees to sponsor family members to resettle to Australia. As a result, many participants were dissatisfied with the Vietnamese government's way of commemorating the war, and this created a sense of alienation.

"Quang Tri Province is located in North Central Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, a border was established here to divide Vietnam into two parts - North and South. I visited this province, and felt sad that their war experiences were not recorded in the public memory

This caused a widening gap between me and Vietnam, because I felt that the South Vietnamese army was not being portrayed. description is worth remembering."

"That is terrible", "it is not fair", and "how can we stand it"

As a result, refugee participants do not feel a strong connection to Vietnam and maintain distance from their country of birth. After many years living in Australia, many of them still harbor negative feelings about the Vietnamese government. This group also took this opportunity to sponsor their relatives to settle in Australia. So their link with Vietnam is very weak. In contrast, skilled migrants come to Australia by choice and stay in Australia without their immediate family, so they maintain close links with Vietnam by accessing and using Vietnamese media. These differences can shape the different ways in which migrants share Vietnamese cultural values with the next generation. As a result, their children may be influenced by their parents' views of Vietnam. Many children from refugee backgrounds do not want to continue thinking about Vietnam's tumultuous political history. They see themselves as Vietnamese Australians and see the need to maintain ties to Vietnam as it is their parents' home country. They are less susceptible to the political loyalties or rifts that have characterized their parents' experiences. However, not all participating children had a positive perception of Vietnam. Some children from refugee backgrounds only come to Vietnam during their Asian tours as their parents did, even though they understand that Vietnam is their homeland, this group of participants is not closely linked. with Vietnam. For these people, statements like 'it's different', 'it's a completely different country' and 'it's very strange' come up when they talk about their feelings while visiting Vietnam. Studies of second-generation Vietnamese have found that refugee children are influenced by refugee experiences, so they are unlikely to have positive feelings about their parents' homeland, and their relationship between them and their distant homeland. Other recent studies have shown that although many second-generation migrants tend to return to Vietnam in search of skilled work, many children of refugee families gain background knowledge about Vietnam through studying and working related to the country wishes to strengthen links with Vietnam and tends not to be influenced by past political issues.

6. CONCLUSION

The reality has also proven that politics is a factor that has a large influence on migration and immigration in countries, after every war, change of government, regime, or there is instability or national political upheaval. immigration is more common. The profound political changes in Vietnam in 1975, the flow of immigrants from Vietnam to Australia was very large and this is considered as a milestone marking the real presence of the Vietnamese in the land of kangaroos. It is worth noting that many Vietnamese immigrants to Australia come from the South of Vietnam. As a result, their ideology tends to be more liberal and individualistic. They may have a negative view of the Communist Party and State of Vietnam and have particular insights into the brutality of the War against the United States. The majority of Vietnamese migrants new to Australia enter on student visas as permanent residents or through other visa arrangements. On this basis, it can be inferred that recent migrants have been making a significant change in the structure of the existing Vietnamese community. This study examines how these changes may affect the traditional

'victim' status of the Vietnamese diaspora. Given the painful circumstances of the Vietnamese who arrived after 1975, these experiences clearly had a great influence in shaping the nature of the diaspora. The first wave of migration can be seen as a generational cohort that laid the foundation for a migrant group and effectively predefined the type of Vietnamese diaspora. Eyerman and Turner further suggest that "the consciousness of generations, when forged by a major traumatic event such as mass war, can transcend and transcend social class barriers to create a solid, powerful force in social relations". So while any attempt to portray a Vietnamese Australian community is marred by class, regional and religious divisions, the shared experience of exile has been widely recognized. is still in existence. From 1975 to now, the development of the Vietnamese community in Australia has contributed in many ways to the socio-political context of the host country. As a result, the second generation has become an important part of Australian political, economic and cultural life. It can be said that the factors affecting the interaction with the current and new wave of Vietnamese migrants including: the stormy political climate of the late 20th century, entrenched beliefs and family upbringing, the need to learn about the homeland of our ancestors and cooperate to invest back in the poor rural areas of Vietnam.

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