

Vietnamese Diaspora: Host Social Integration and Cultural Identity

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Abstract

My paper based on the result from two case studies. The first is of the Vietnamese in Cabramatta NSW Australia, 2013. The second is of Vietnamese in Philadelphia, PA, U.S. early 2014. Additional, this paper based on data from a survey of awareness and attitudes from Vietnam domestic people towards Vietnamese Diaspora that were conducted. The findings showed that: 1/ Circumstances under which that an individual or one family decided to leave their homeland to another have become more diverse and complex. 2/ Social integration is one of the main factors affecting one's successful and failure. 3/ Integration process of Vietnamese Diaspora into host country is characterized by several dimensions that generally support each others: economic, legal, and social-cultural integration. 4/ Cross-generations differences in pursuing the cultural identity of Vietnam partly affected awareness and attitudes from Vietnam domestic people towards Vietnamese Diaspora. This research is sponsored by The Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture, and Society, College of Liberal Art, Temple University.

Keywords: *Vietnamese Diaspora, Social Integration, Cultural Identity.*

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of social integration of Vietnam residing abroad is discussed here in this particular context of the end of war in Vietnam in April 1975. Thousands of people left Vietnam to settle in another country for a variety of reasons, including of social integration.

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According to report of Vietnamese Diplomatic Academy³, there were about 4.5 million Vietnamese people residing abroad by the year 2012 and unevenly distributed in 103 countries and territories around the world, 98 per cent of which is concentrated in 21 countries in North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia. By 2010, nearly 1.8 million Vietnamese Americans in the United States⁴, bringing the number of Vietnamese people in the United States accounted for about half of worldwide overseas Vietnamese. According to U.S. Census Bureau 2010 SF1, There was 168 988 Vietnamese people in Northeast Region of which, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with 14 431 Vietnamese Americans (0.9 per cent), belong to 19 large cities with more 10 000 Vietnamese Americans living and working. According to report of Vietnamese Diplomatic Academy, there were 300 000 Vietnamese in Australia by 2012 and 174 246 people speak Vietnamese language in family activities⁵.

The majority of Vietnamese people residing abroad of working age, work, pay taxes and contributions; Generations, their descendants have learned in the school system at all levels. The research question here is how did the social integration impact to development opportunities (quality of life) of each individual and the community in which they live? Social integration here would like to emphasize that career development opportunities open to each individual; Arrival opportunities for a better life, have more quality... By what indicators is social community integration measured? After decades of living, learning and working, Vietnamese families have 2-3 generations living in the host countries, to what extent of their community integration? How did the process of integration into the host society affect the cultural identity of immigrants? By what indicators is cultural identity of immigrants maintained? To what extent is the need of maintaining the cultural identity of the immigrant generations? How does awareness and attitudes from Vietnam domestic people towards Vietnamese Diaspora?

The scope of the research was limited to exploring case studies of the social integration of Vietnamese immigrants on two destinations, in Philadelphia, PA, United States in 2014 and Cabramatta, Sydney, Australia in 2013. The reason of this choice is determined by their status for research. As said above, research topic is discussed here in this particular context of the war end in Vietnam that its one site was U.S. About half of worldwide overseas Vietnamese are living in U.S as refugees. Philadelphia belongs to 19 large cities with more 10 000 Vietnamese Americans living and working. Australia, as a signatory country of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of the United Nations, had become the third planned resettlement of Vietnamese refugees from 1975 to 1985.

Over three-quarters of Vietnamese-born Australian live in [New South Wales](#) (63 786 people or 39.9 per cent) and [Victoria](#) (58 878 people or 36.8 per cent)⁶. This study is important because it suggests question the relationship of social integration as an intermediate variables in decision to migration. This is a question relevant to sociologists, demographers who look at migration patterns and causes which contribute to residential moves. It will also contribute to the growing theories of social integration and social capital. On the practical note, by examining the impact of social integration and their impact on community satisfaction, the study will benefit those community organizations whose key emphases are to provide integrative mechanisms for immigrants.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Review of literature

Social integration attracted scholars' attention. They mainly focus on some aspects. *First* is methodology. The previously dominant thinking has strongly been challenged by three emerging perspectives in the late 1999s, such as rights-based citizenship, gender and empowerment, and social capital building. These new perspectives enrich their understanding by deconstructing migrants as many social groups with competing needs and facing constraints. Interdisciplinary research methodologies, such as ethnography and participatory research and convenience sample method to reach less-accessible migrants, have been experimented with in order to engage and empower the migrants. ([Sam Wong](#) 2007)

There are definitions of concept of social integration. Social integration is examined as the harmonious and coherent processing of the structures of a social system (Elif Kısar Koramaz 2013). This concept is examined more closely as a general sociological concept when integration is explained as a concept may be defined as the stability of relations among parts within a system-like whole (Wolfgang Bosswick *et al.* 2006). Authors explained that integration of immigrants into a host society should be understood as a special case of social integration. Other has suggested that social integration should be conceptualized as structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration and identifiable integration. (Heckmann *et al.* 2003). Additionally, a quantitative study was conducted to measure the degree of similarity between native-born and foreign-born adults in the United States. Authors introduced the Index of Immigrant Assimilation which is based on a series of economic, cultural, and civic factors. These sets of factors can be examined in isolation to produce three component indices. The economic index compares the labor force, educational attainment, and home ownership patterns of the foreign- and native-born.

The cultural index focuses on English-speaking ability, marriage, and childbearing patterns. The civic index examines naturalization rates and compares the military service patterns of the foreign- and native-born. Authors said that the assimilation index reveals great diversity in the experiences of individuals and immigrant groups. (Jacob L. Vigdor 2008).

Second is the element impacting to social integration. With the view of social integration as an indicator of life satisfaction, investigations of the influence of the economic, social, and cultural variables on life satisfaction were conducted in Asia and Europe. Researchers set a unifying theoretical framework for all three domains by defining life satisfaction as a function of aspirations and expectations which in turn are affected by micro-level and macro-level variables. Its results showed that, on the micro-level, economic capital is a resource for the actor. On the macro-level, societal economic capital improves the opportunity structure for the individual under certain conditions. Thus, economic capital on both levels positively affects the perceived chances of fulfilling aspirations. As long as the expectations remain unchanged life satisfaction will increase. Social and cultural capital partially followed the same logic (Wolfgang J. 2009). Social media is examined in the role of supporting knowledge integration from a social capital perspective. The empirical results provide general support for that social media have the potential to facilitate the formation of employees' social capital indicated by social networking, trust and shared language. These mediating variables will in turn positively affect knowledge integration (Xiongfei Cao *et al.* 2013).

Third is the impact of immigration on host countries. Almost results from researches focus on three aspects: demography, social-economic and culture.

Regarding on demography, immigration is one of the few forces stemming the City of Philadelphia's precipitous population loss. They are Puerto Rican migrants, Mexican immigrants, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees,...(Daniel Amsterdam 2007). The result from a research of the growth and characteristics of the foreign born in the Philadelphia metropolitan area between 1970 and 2006, found that, metropolitan Philadelphia has a diverse mix of immigrants and refugees in which from Asia (39 per cent). The 10 largest source countries are India, Mexico, China, Vietnam, Korea, Italy, Ukraine, Philippines, Jamaica, and Germany. Nearly 75 per cent of greater Philadelphia's labor force growth since 2000 is attributable to immigrants. Immigrants' contributions to the labor force are considerably higher in this period than in the 1990s, when just 36 per cent of the growth was due to immigrants. In the past 15 years, however, immigration is emerging again as a prominent feature of life in the region. The varied immigrant groups—high-skilled professionals, refugees, and laborers from a diverse set of origin countries—bring both opportunities and challenges for policy makers, service providers, and communities throughout greater Philadelphia (Audrey Singer, *et al.* 2008).

War in Vietnam ended in April 1975. Australia, as a signatory country of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of the United Nations, had become the third planned resettlement of refugees Vietnamese from 1975 to 1985. Over three-quarters of Vietnamese-born Australian live in [New South Wales](#) (63 786 people or 39.9 per cent) and [Victoria](#) (58 878 people or 36.8 per cent). In [Melbourne](#), the suburbs of [Richmond](#), [Footscray](#), [Springvale](#), [Sunshine](#) and [St Albans](#) have a significant proportion of Vietnamese-Australians. In [Sydney](#), they are concentrated in [Bankstown](#), [Cabramatta](#), [Canley Vale](#) and [Fairfield](#).

Regarding on the social - economic and cultural impacts, immigrants and their children are the future of the American workforce. Their integration into the US labor force — or lack thereof — is a key component of any long-term strategy to maximize the productive potential of the current and future US workforce. (Michael Fix, ed. 2007). Immigration to Philadelphia has dramatically altered the region's economic, cultural and political life. Many Southeast Asian refugees resettled in Philadelphia in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The government agencies in charge of finding homes for them tended to find open housing in borderland areas, where the combination of gentrification and job loss had already pushed lower income residents out. Vietnamese, Cambodian and other Southeast Asian refugees in Philadelphia most often found themselves wedged between struggling African American communities and significantly wealthier neighborhoods. Settled in West Philadelphia, in North Philadelphia's Olney and Logan sections, and in South Philadelphia, refugees had to struggle to make an already difficult cultural adjustment amidst existing black-white racial animosity and economic tension. The consequences of life in these borderlands were harsh (Ella Somekawa 1995). A small group of Hmong refugees who resettled in Philadelphia faced so much adversity that they fled the city, mostly for established Hmong settlements in Minnesota and Wisconsin (Marc Kaufman 1984). Today, Philadelphia remains a "low immigrant city," but its complex, immigrant mixture has been one of the only forces stanching the city's loss of population in recent years, a development that local politicians have begun to notice and to nurture (Linda Harris 2000).

Studying of the family economies of Vietnamese refugees in Philadelphia from ethnographic perspective, the result showed that refugee households that were more diverse in terms of age and gender were better able to adapt to new economic demands. This research explained "success story" of Vietnamese refugees in the United States, emphasizes the importance of household structure and family ideology to immigrant adaptation (Kibria, Nazli 1994). Vietnamese American economic contribution got positive attitudes toward immigration from Philadelphians (Pew Center for Civic Journalism 2000).

Experiences of the Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean immigrants in Philadelphia explores the formation of their ethnic identity and provides detailed information about the institutions, social practices, and gender and class dynamics of all three communities. It's emphasized of the fluidity of ethnic identities and they are constructed and constantly reconstructed following changing political and class-based interests and through interactions with forces external to the ethnic community itself (Jae-Hyp Lee 1998). Immigrants were assessed contributions in restructuring of the U.S. Economy and reshaping ethnic and racial relations in Philadelphia (Judith Goode *et al.* 1994; Goode *et al.* 1994). In the late 1970s and 1980s, Vietnamese refugees were resettled in the neighborhood. On Washington Avenue today, Pho soup and barbeque restaurants, Buddhist apothecaries, supermarkets, karaoke bars, travel, and medical offices cluster in dense shopping centers that make up the commercial heart as a new Asia-town.

A study about Asian nationalities found that, Vietnamese American has the highest unemployment, lowest income, and least education among these groups (John R. *et al.* 2010). Otherwise, the result research of Manhattan Institute showed that Vietnamese American was one of immigrant groups with the highest integration index. Majority of Vietnamese American are political refugee, so then, their political integration index is highest, cultural and economic integration index as of other immigrant groups. Immigrants from Vietnam, Cuba, and the Philippines enjoy some of the highest rates of assimilation. (Jacob L. Vigdor 2008)

In short, migration-related issues have attracted attention of scholars for a long time. The definitions of related concepts were offered in which measurement social integration is focused. Perspectives on integration of immigrants became theme of books. Research findings focused on social integration of immigrant and social-economic impacts of immigrants on host countries. Metropolitan areas are home of immigrants. Most of these researches, however, used quantitative research methods. As we knew, there are limitations on how actual behavior can be inferred from survey data on subjective perception. So, to gain completely picture about social integration of immigrants, information from qualitative methods should be used in our study to complement to results from survey data.

2.2. Terminology

The term of social integration in this study is based on viewpoints of Elif Kısar Koramaz (2013) and Wolfgang B. and F. Heckmann (2006). Social integration is the harmonious and coherent processing of the structures of a social system. It refers to the degree to which people are integrated to the systems of a social structure. Social integration is examined as the stability of relations among parts within a system-like whole.

Processes of integration and the resulting degree of interconnectedness or quality of relations within the whole include: i) The process of relating single elements to one another and, out of these, forming a new structure; ii) Adding single elements or partial structures to an existing structure, to form an interconnected whole; iii) Maintaining or improving relations within a system or structure. Integration of immigrants into a host society should be understood as a special case of social integration, to which the concepts of placement, acculturation, interaction and identification can be applied. (Wolfgang B. *et al.* 2006). Processes of social integration be conceptualized as structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration and identifiable integration (Heckmann and Schnapper 2003).

Working definition of social integration here is that, *social integration* is the stability of relations among parts within a system-like whole. Processes of social integration of immigrants are conceptualized as: structural integration, cultural integration, social integration. Social integration is reflected through processes: Awareness and ability of approaching to diversity (be trained career, go to school to obtain better education,... all make people to be proficiency in English; Acceptance of the laws of the society and adoption of a common set of values of the society,...); Redistribution of social and economic resources (employment, income, socio-economic status,...); Representatives of political voice; Personal security,....

Concept of identity may be defined as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group. Identity may be distinguished from identification; the former is a label, whereas the latter refers to the classifying act itself. Identity is thus best construed as being both relational and contextual, while the act of identification is best viewed as inherently process. Cultural identity is the [identity](#) of a group or [culture](#) or of an [individual](#) as far as one is influenced by one's belonging to a group or culture. (Rummens, J. 1993). Upon these definitions of social integration and identity, topics for conversation, narrative and participate observation were built for this study.

2.3. Theoretical perspective

There are three main perspectives on social integration in the social sciences. From cultural perspective, assimilation theory has dominated much of the sociological thinking for most of the XX century. It said that, this approach builds upon three central features. *First*, diverse ethnic groups come to share a common culture through a natural process along which they have the same access to socio-economic opportunities as natives of the host country. *Second*, this process consists of the gradual disappearance of original cultural and behavioral patterns in favor of new ones. *Third*, once host cultural and behavioral patterns practiced, the process moves inevitably and irreversibly toward complete assimilation.

Hence, diverse immigrant groups are expected to “melt” into the mainstream culture through an inter-generational process of cultural, social, and economic integration (Gordon 1964). Otherwise, multiculturalism perspective views multicultural societies as composed of a heterogeneous collection of ethnic and racial minority groups, as well as of a dominant majority group. This view has been used to study social integration of immigrants in the context of the American society. It's argued that immigrants actively shape their own identities rather than posing as passive subjects in front of the forces of assimilation. Some aspects of the cultural characteristics of immigrants may be preserved in a state of un-easy co-existence with the cultural characteristics of the host country (Glazer and Moynihan 1970 and Handlin 1973)

The structural perspective emphasizes how differences in socio-economic opportunities relate to differences in social integration of ethnic minority groups. Unequal access to wealth, jobs, housing, education, power, and privilege are seen as structural constraints that affect the ability of immigrants and ethnic minorities to socially integrate. This leads to persistent ethnic disparities in levels of income, educational attainment, and occupational achievement of immigrants (Blau *et al.* 1967; Portes *et al.* 1989). Consequently, the benefits of integration depend largely on what stratum of society absorbs the new immigrants. These three perspectives provide different views of the same phenomenon – social integration. The opinions expressed in three cultural perspectives will be used on the analysis of levels of social integration of immigrants; Comparing levels and dimensions of social integration of Vietnamese American to the host country.

In the 1990s, with increasing democratization, right-based approach and capabilities approach are adopted largely by the World Bank's agencies and researchers (Van Dam *et al.* 1992. Sen 1992; Toranzo 2006). Right-based approach on social integration emphasized enhancement the capacities of immigrants so that they can access the resources of the host country. The term 'empowerment' is used to measure changes of immigrants after social integration to host country. Empowerment is viewed as both a process and an outcome by many researchers. The actual degree of empowerment depends on the extent can guide the measurement and monitoring of empowerment processes and outcomes. Empowerment means to enhance the capacity of an individual or group to make purposive choices and to transform of the actor's agency and the nature of the opportunity structure (Ruth Alsop, *et al.* 2007).

In this case of studying social integration of immigrants to the host country, all element of the framework are used to build topics for conversation, narrative, observations, analyzing their narrative; review the results of the matching process between the opportunity structure and resources of individual immigrants. The policy that how to has helped them enhance their capacity.

We hope that, the information obtained from the qualitative research will contribute to better clarify the quantitative research results, give us a complete picture of the social integration of Vietnamese immigrants into the host country.

2.4. Data and Method

For the purpose of this study, the scope of the research is limited to exploring case studies of the immigrants. Migration is a sensitive issue. There were some scientists did not collect the true information from immigrants. So, one of most my interest is that how can we contact subjective research and get their trust. Social integration of immigrants is a sensitive issue too. To access true information and voluntary participation to research, we made acquainted, creating the familiar to subjective research. The first is of the Vietnamese in Cabramatta, NSW Australia on September 2013. The second is of Vietnamese in Philadelphia, PA. US on between of January and February 2014. With introduction of my relatives and friends, some Vietnamese families invited us being in their homes for days. We told them study's aims and confirmed ethical principles in research. We have become their friend and gained their trust. We connected 22 people of eighteen years and older. There are 11 people belong to three families including from one to three generations. Beyond day-to-day talking and daily participatory observations we regarded as listener with respect and as participatory observers. All helped me gather crucial and sensitive information from their stories and behavior. I respect their thinking and feelings. Noting was adopted instead of recording.

Participants were recruited at various resources. Snowball sampling was generally conducted to reflect immigrant's diverse social circumstances. The process of finding research participants was similar in both locations. They were informed of the aims of the research and their consent was obtained prior to the conversation taking place. Table 1 below shows socio-demographic characteristics of participants in survey.

Table 1: Selected characteristics of research participants quoted in the paper

Sample Coded	Gender	Age group	Marital Status	Previously status settled before	Labor market status now	Settle status
1	Female	Over 56	Divorce- Spouse country of residency	Student	Primary school teacher	Family Reunions
2	Male	Over 56	Marriage- Spouse citizenship	University Teacher	Professor of University	Guarantor
3	Male	Over 56	Marriage- Spouse citizenship	Pupil	Driver	Boat people
4	Female	Over 56	Widow- Spouse citizenship	Peasant	Housewife	"Engagé in Nouvelle-Calédonie , Vanuatu . She moved to Sydney to live
5	Female	36 - 55	Single		Nurses retired	The second generation-Niaouli at Nouvelle Calédonie. She's at her mother's house in Sydney
6	Male	36 – 55	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Student	Professor/ researcher	Settled after graduated
7	Female	Over 56	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Primary school Teacher	Tailor	Boat people
8	Male	Over 56	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Engineer	Protector in primary school	Family Reunions
9	Female	40 – 55	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Teacher of Russian/ Interpreter	Housewife	Family Reunions
10	Female	40 – 55	Marriage-Asians Spouse	accounting	Self-employee	- The second generation-Niaouli at Nouvelle Caledonie -Return Vietnam 1960 - Legal emigrating to Australia in 1980
11	Female	Over 56	Widow- Spouse country of residency	Doctor	Employee at McDonald Restaurant	Family Reunions
12	Female	Over 56	Widow- Spouse citizenship	Housewife/ Small trader	Employee full-time → Barber	Humanitarian Offensive (HO) - refugee
13	Female	26 – 39	Marriage- Spouse citizenship	student	- Bank staff. - IT Engineer - Stay at home Mom	HO - refugee
14	Female	26 – 39	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	pupil	Employee full-time/ Engineer	HO - refugee
15	Male	26 – 39	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Baby	IT engineer	Boat people
16	Male	26 – 39	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Baby	IT engineer	Boat people
17	Male	Over 56	Single	Priest	Priest → Professor	Freely settled
18	Male	18 – 25	Single	pupil	Student	Legal emigrating
19	Female	18 - 25	Single	pupil	Student	HO - refugee
20	Female	26-39	Single	pupil	PhD. Director of NGOs	Boat people
21	Female	40 - 55	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	student	Unemployed	Boat people
22	Male	40-55	Marriage-Spouse citizenship	Primary teacher	Employee	Humanitarian reasons

- *All names of participants have been coded.*
- *Source: own elaboration*

After being informed of the purpose of the study, narratives shared by voluntary research participants ranging from one hour to two and a half hours, were conducted of which some repeatedly and the same topics schedule was built. Listening respectfully their narratives and conversations, sometimes supplemented with creative techniques which were tailored to enhance exploration of research problems and questions. Field work consisted of 22 research participants, half of which were carried out in Philadelphia, PA, U.S. and the other half in Australia (Cabramatta, Sydney). The research participants were convenient selected. Topics of narratives, conversation and participatory observations were composed in view of the main research questions as said above. Case studies using mainly qualitative data and additional quantitative data brought the study of the dynamics and depth of analysis. Quantitative data will be relied on available literatures. Qualitative information will be collected from narratives, conversation and participatory observation.

3. Results

3.1. *Who is Vietnamese Diaspora*

The circumstances under which that an individual or one family decided to leave their homeland to another was varied (see table 1). Before 1975, the Vietnamese diaspora were students, merchants, intellectuals... As in the U.S. they are spouses or children of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam or are students, merchants settled in the U.S., an estimated 15 000 people⁷. When war in Vietnam ended in April of 1975, many Vietnamese were studying and working abroad staying employed, did not return to Viet Nam for many reasons. Some Vietnamese girls married foreigners. After getting married they were allowed to settle in the country of their husbands.

I was a abroad student in 1974 in Perth, Western Australia. I then moved to Sydney. 30-4-1975 war in Vietnam ended, I remain in Australia to work, then I guaranteed for the whole family to settle here (Narrator 6. M. Australia). We are together in Vietnam. He is an Australian expert, working at media agency. After getting married, I was allowed to come to Australia with him. (Narrator 1. F. Australia)

The Republic of Vietnam Government collapsed, ending the War in Vietnam, the first wave of refugees started in the spring of 1975, including about 125 000 people who mostly intellectual family. They were the U.S. government shipped by air to the bases in the Philippines and Guam, and then move to the refugee centers throughout the United States. These refugees, initially did not receive public acclaim of the United States, an opinion poll in 1975 found that only 36 per cent of Americans approved of the Vietnamese immigration.

I was a priest. The war ended I with 20 more people in my family evacuated to the U.S. immediately. It was a very hard time. We were given only \$ 300 per person. Nothing else was for us. We had to take care of our own life. (Narrator 17. M. Philadelphia)

However, President Gerald Ford and other officials to support refugees in a powerful way through the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act in 1975, which allowed them to immigration United States in a special position.

In 1976 started the second wave of Vietnamese refugees for the mid-1980s. Approximately two million people became refugees, crossing the small narrow boat, extremely dangerous facing sudden wind waves of the South China Sea. They are called 'boat people - thuyen nhan'. They usually were in the refugee camps in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong or the Philippines, almost waiting for resettlement in a third country as Norway, Australia....

.....Before going to Australia I was teacher at a primary school. My husband was a teacher of Russian at Foreign Languages University Hanoi. We arrived in Australia by crossing the sea road... (Narrator 7. F. Australia)

My husband and his family fled to the United States since childhood by boat. (Narrator 13. F. Maryland. U.S.)

At that time, I was too young I obeyed my mother gone but did not know where to go. It was terrible, I could not have imagined... (Narrator 3. M. Australia)

I myself was organizer to cross the border by boat for my all family. The first two were defeated and had to return to Vietnam. The third time passed to the Philippines. It was until in the middle of the sea I feel the meaning of the phrase 'dark as night 30th'. Big waves, the boat constantly flip side and flip side to the other, there were times when the boat was upright waves, people were thrust toward the end of the boat, then pushed back again...all nights so as. It was terrible. (Narrator 21. F. Australia)

The U.S. Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 reduce the limit immigration, while the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam accepted Orderly Departure Program (ODP) proposed by the United States, under the control of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This program allows people to leave Vietnam legally for family reunions and other humanitarian reasons. Between 1981 and 2000, the United States receives 531 310 refugees from Vietnam⁸.

My husband moved from North to South Vietnam in 1954. He was Army Colonel of Vietnam Republic. The war ended in 1975, he had had to study in concentration camp for 5 years. He crossed the border by boat 2 times and failed; I was small trader, raising 3 children. 1993 my family emigrated to the U.S. as a HOs - refugee. (Narrator 12. F. Maryland. U.S.)

3.2. Social Integration

3.2.1. Structural Integration. According to Survey of Bookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program conducted 2008, Philadelphia has resettled nearly 33 000 refugees, primarily from 10 countries (1983 – 2004) including Vietnam with 7 140 – 21.6 per cent of total people. What are the migrants? What are social-economic characteristics of immigrants in Philadelphia?

More than 70 per cent of the region's immigrants have become U.S. citizens. Philadelphia's immigrants are primarily in the working ages (82 per cent vs 61 per cent for the Native born). Immigrants are more likely than U.S. born Philadelphians to have BA or higher; But also more likely to be without a high school diploma. About a third report speaking English very well; But 43 per cent do not speak English very well (23 per cent speak English only). Nearly 75 per cent of the growth in the region's workforce since 2000 can be attributed to immigrants; Philadelphia's immigrants have the same employment rate as those residents born in the United States (73 per cent). Philadelphia's immigrants work in the full range of occupations. On average, immigrant – headed households are larger than native born, have more workers, but earn less (cited from Audrey singer *et al.* 2008).

One of the biggest obstacles that the first generation immigrants had to face to access to the labor market was that it is difficult to translate their credentials to the host countries. They were unable to exercise their professions commensurate with professional qualifications that had been trained in Vietnam as shown in table 1. Additionally, they are limited English language skills, lack of legal status, or other barriers. To be able to apply for a job they had to relearn or retrain while majority no money for schooling.

It was a hard time. I had graduated from college degrees. I had to study again and I was admitted to study at University of Sydney (Narrator 1. F. Australia)

My daughter was in college in Vietnam. At first settled in America, the family was very difficult, so she had to work as waiter in a restaurant near home. A few years later, things gradually stabilized, she went to school again (Narrator 12. F. Maryland. U.S)

First time settled in the U.S., It was very difficult, no house, no job, no money... nothing. Whole family had to live in the basement of my friend's house. Life is very difficult. My husband and I had worked hard for days and always extended-work 4 hours/day. We used to come back home at 12 pm daily and rarely having dinner all together because of everyone had to work hard for survival. (Narrator 12. F. Maryland. U.S.)

Former political prisoners are often called as "HOs" and their families have arrived U.S. in a context that different from the early Vietnamese refugees. They accessed priorities in policy.

I and my husband went to school to learn English and a course of training in 3 months (Free). Then we were recruited to small factory assembling electronic product. Salary is more than \$ 4/hour (Narrator 12. F. MD.U.S)

The second generation immigrants have opportunities to access to education in all levels with some priorities from local government. They are trained and having occupation, social-economic status as shown table 1.

Thanks to the policy priorities of reduce tuition for students in the state and because of her good grades, she got scholarships yearly... My daughters got degree of colleges. The oldest got degree of information systems engineer. Youngest daughter is mechanical engineer. Now both accessed degree of masters thanks to funding from the company where they worked.... (Narrator 12. F. MD. US)

Although immigrant children have many opportunities to access the U.S. education system but the child would not be successful if he or she do not try to learn, especially without the support of their parents.

... The success rate is 50-50. There are many parents because of work pressure often to take their children to schools... It's enough. They didn't care how they learn at school. Many children in these families often become damaged, unstable career, follow his/her fiddlesticks bad (...) (Narrator 13. F. MD. U.S.)

Philadelphia's immigrants have just about the same employment rate as their native-born counterparts (73 per cent for immigrants and 72 per cent for the native born). Immigrant unemployment (4 per cent) and the proportion of the population not in the labor force (23 per cent) are also very similar to rates among the overall native-born population. (John R. Logan *et al.* 2010: Table 6). Self-employment is a traditional immigrant path to economic prosperity both because it offers a relatively easy way to enter the labor market and because of the immigrant customer base for goods and services.

We had worked for 10 years in Electronic Assembly Company, and then unemployed. I had to go to school of training barber. I studied very hard (...) Morning in classroom and practice in the afternoon immediately. I am able to cut hair for customers very fast. I do both cutting and talking with them in English... I enhanced English proficiency. I said softly, politely, so customers enjoyed witty. Many customers want me for their haircuts. Cutting wages averaging \$ 15/ which; I paid \$ 5 for the boss only, left alone \$ 10. I haircut from 15 to 20 people daily.... Being enjoyed in haircutting, they gave tips \$20, \$30, even \$50. At that time I earned much money, estimated every week thousand dollars. U.S. economic was developing fairly. My customers were of high - class, businessmen, officer in the government agencies that came to my barber shop from 2 to 3 times a week (...) now is not so (Narrator 12. F. MD. US)

Despite their similar labor force participation rates to the total native born population, immigrants remain economically disadvantaged relative to the native-born white population. Median household income among immigrant-headed households is \$50 276, while among all native-born households it is \$55 862. (John R. Logan *et al.* 2010)

What kinds of jobs do immigrants do in the region? Instead of dominating one or two occupational sectors, 7 per cent to 9 per cent of immigrants in greater Philadelphia cluster in each of nine broad areas: production, sales, office and administrative, food preparation and related services, management, computer and mathematical, healthcare practitioners, transportation and material moving, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. Sixty-eight percent of immigrants occupy positions in these occupational sectors. These jobs require a range of skills. On the high end are healthcare and computer and mathematical, and at the lower end are jobs in food preparation and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. Comparing to other Asian minorities, Vietnamese have the highest unemployment, lowest income, and least education among these groups (John R. Logan *et al.* 2010). Otherwise, the result research of Manhattan Institute (2008) showed that Vietnamese American was one of immigrant groups with the highest integration index. Majority of Vietnamese American are political refugee, so then, their political integration index is highest, cultural and economic integration index as of other immigrant groups.

I remember the first day meeting my boss, I well answered his questions. He was very pleased. We worked hard, to be honest. I was given his trust. I accessed good conditions to improve income. Each extended hour were paid twice...only 3 years after settling in America we can buy a house of our own (Narrator 12. F. MD. U.S.)

3.2.2. Social – Cultural Integration

[The Vietnamese were the largest foreign-born group in South Philly east of Broad Street](#) following Mexican immigration from 2003 (Austin Argentieri *et al.* 2011). They established businesses and a community life anew—before then, there had been little Vietnamese immigration to America. Karin Aguilar-San Juan [calls this process “territorialized”](#), defined as the act of not only creating a space for Vietnamese social life and enterprise, but also forming an identity strong enough to go beyond community cohesion to generate political leverage (2008:10).

As in literature, the process of territorialized in Philadelphia has taken the physical form of shopping malls. The Hoa Binh Plaza opened 1990 at 16th St. & Washington and then Wing Phat Plaza at 11th and Washington was opened later in the decade. The New World Plaza and 1st Oriental Supermarket at 6th and Washington opened 1998 (Pappas 2005).

Shopping malls have become a common venue for Vietnamese commerce throughout the US. Walking on the Washington Avenue, you can see commercial centers owned by Vietnamese family businesses. They took advantage disused industrial sites on the Washington Avenue to rebuild. The available open space did not necessitate vertical consolidation into a high-rise structure. The form of small family businesses, as factory jobs were on the decline or they were unable to find work corresponding to their skills as a symbol of the versatility of Vietnamese (Lieu 2011:33) and to create a sense of “solidarity and significance” among the local Vietnamese (Aguilar-San Juan, Karin 2008:3). Social mobility of migrants is different cross-generations. Both vertical and horizontal mobility is for the second generation and downward mobility for majority of the first generation. (See Table 1)

Cultural Identity. The first observation from qualitative material is speaking Vietnamese language in home, eating Vietnamese foods daily. Going to the commercial center of Vietnamese to be eaten Vietnamese foods, to meet Vietnamese people and to speak Vietnamese language... are frequent demands of Vietnamese people residing abroad. Vietnamese food is in a family meal every day and Ancestral altar with the altar architecture of Vietnam is indispensable in their house too.

In local field research, majority of young Vietnamese-American collegiate students wish to be recognized for their unique Vietnamese culture, rather than be grouped under the umbrella “Asian” ethnicity or, even worse, be conflated with Chinese culture. In many Vietnamese little communities, the interlaced and often interdependent relationship between the Vietnamese and Chinese American communities is complex and contentious (cited from Lieu 2011:47).

According to the Office of Property Assessment, approximately half of the properties on and around the 500 block of Washington Avenue, site of [uptick of construction on the 500 block of Washington Ave](#) multiple ongoing projects, are Vietnamese owned, including several that were sold in the past year. This may in fact indicate that with Center City expanding south and property values in Bella Vista still rising, real estate development is for some Vietnamese a way to territorialize while seeking access to the American Dream. (Austin Argentieri *et al.*2011).

Being and Belonging: Cross-Generations Vietnamese Diaspora in Comparative. Vietnamese Americans is one of the newest immigrant groups in the United States as well as in Australia, so they are still pretty tight engagement with the cultural values of Vietnam, especially the generation of immigrants first. Cabramatta, about 20 minutes away from Sydney by car is called the capital of Vietnamese in Australia. These economic activities here are run by Vietnamese and powerful to the extent of anyone who wants to work here must speak Vietnamese language. Architect Ben Thanh market presents not only here but also in almost all the states that have many Vietnamese settled in the United States and Australia.

It is not only evidence of specific economic activities but also a testament to maintain the cultural identity of Vietnamese people residing abroad. To meet the needs of first-generation Vietnamese abroad want their children to preserve the culture through the proficiency of Vietnamese language, public elementary school at Bankstown has classes of Vietnamese language for the their children. Bilanguage proficiency simultaneously is target of Vietnamese overseas for their successful integration into the host society and preserving cultural identity.

According to the survey in 2000, there are 1,009,627 people of 5 years and older self-reported that they speak Vietnamese at home, making Vietnamese became the language ranked No. 7 of the common language in the United States. For Vietnam residing overseas, fluently Vietnamese ability is an indicator of coherence with national culture. However, if limited English proficiency, they will face difficulties in the process of integration into the host society. Limited English proficiency became the biggest barrier for the first generation of Vietnamese residing overseas. Choosing spouse is considered an indicator of cultural integration. Practice shows that the majority of Vietnamese young, from the second generation onwards settled abroad who choose the same origin. However there is a little difference when compared between men and women (Table 2).

Table 2. Birth place of Partners of Vietnamese Bridegrooms and Brides in Australia (1999-2000)

		Bridegrooms			
		Australian	Vietnamese	Others	Total
Brides	Australian		43		
	Vietnamese	161	1602	260	2023
	Others		216		
	Total		1861		

Source: www.VietnameseInAustralia.com.au/ Association/ Statistics/Cencus 2001_001. Sumary.asp. CabramattaNet.com.au- Vietnamese Community in Australia.

Data in the table 2 showed that selected spouse range of women is wider than men. This not only is guided by value-orientation but is affected by public opinion, by those around.

All 5 of my sisters were married to the French. When my oldest sister married the French, many Vietnamese were to blame my parents. They responded by not attending her wedding ceremony... We belong 3rd generation... Generally those who born here most get married native people; But those who born in Vietnam to settle here, most get married Vietnamese. (Narrator 5. F. Australia)

However, a Vietnamese American expert on the Vietnamese overseas made the comment that, for second-generation men onward, they choose spouse, not only Vietnamese girls but has expanded to Asian ones. This can be considered as a significant change in terms of culture.

3.3. Image Vietnamese Diaspora through the perspective of domestic Vietnamese people

War has receded more than half a century. The hatred, prejudice between those who left Vietnam and settled abroad and who stay in Vietnam was no longer available. The majority of Vietnamese residing abroad for many different reasons has returned to Vietnam to visit their homeland and relatives. The spiritual and materials connections between them are increasing. That affected people's consciousness about the position of overseas Vietnamese in Vietnam entire nation. The result of a small-scale survey in Ho Chi Minh City of early 2014 showed that 97.5 of respondents agreeing with the statement "overseas Vietnamese are an inseparable part of the people of Vietnam". It is 75 per cent of respondents, agreeing with the statement "Viet kieu" is acting as a bridge between Vietnam and the world" and 68.5 per cent of respondents, agreeing with the statement "Viet kieu" consciously preserve the values of Vietnamese culture. At family level, the connection between overseas Vietnamese to their relatives in order to satisfy the spiritual needs but also towards other needs in their life. To find out whether Vietnamese overseas – called "Viet Kieu" is a value for the young, the question "Do you want to become "Viet Kieu"? And how do you make that intended?" were used. We have obtained results, 59.4 per cent of respondents, answered "yes", of which there were 62.1 per cent in the 18-25 age group and 33.3 per cent in the 26-40 age group answered "yes".

My uncle told me that in the U.S. there are many poor people as unemployed, because there is no money to go to college or vocational training. In America, the rich are to formal education and hard work. They have tried a lot. I do not want to settle in the United States. I have a stable job in Vietnam, good income, have more friends, funny... I have the money to travel to America. (Interviewer 8. F).

I'm going to America to study and work there after graduation. I think that working in the U.S. I have access to modern technology, expanding knowledge... know much more than in Vietnam (Interviewer 15. M)

On the question of how to become "Viet Kieu", have 71.9 per cent of respondents, chosen "Go study abroad and find a job after graduation and settle"; Only 17.5 per cent of respondents have chosen the "Marrying a foreigner"; 10.5% selected method "to labor export and re-settled in"; 8.8% chosen the "Investment abroad". These findings showed partly that there is positive attitude to Vietnamese oversea.

4. Conclusions and Discussion

The degree of social integration of the Vietnamese community in developed countries like the U.S. and Australia can be explained by reasons of their departure. The majority of Vietnamese residing in the U.S. and Australia were refugees, largely unprepared to learn the suitable employment to U.S. labor market. Their property has been lost due to piracy, pirates on the road of moving. When coming to America, they are the poor. On the other hand, most refugees used to be former Vietnam soldier, not through a vocational training program. They are the older; even people who go under the family reunification program later, mostly of 50 years or older. In such circumstances, they faced more difficult. The U.S. labor market is always a priority for the young, professional training and skills to meet recruiting market. Unemployment, not having the capital assets of business, English unskilled proficiency, all that make low economic – social status of Vietnamese refugees. That is the main reason why many Vietnamese people rely on government subsidies, particularly on health care.... Immigration to developed countries, there are very few people that can practice their occupation. Needs to find a suitable job for trained professionals in Vietnam is impossible. Those who want to have access to employment and professional skills must be trained at a university, vocational schools of the host country.

However, the second generation of Vietnamese residing overseas has accessed higher education more than their fathers, and of course, higher economic-social status. Much is influenced by western lifestyles so, the social integration between immigrant generations have a relatively large difference. At the same time, there is much evidence of the phenomenon, the more economic integration (high economic-social status, fixed income, property..) of Vietnamese abroad increased the higher needs of practice and maintain the value of the Vietnamese culture and more capable of performing those needs in daily life.

In terms of methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to study phenomenon of social integration of Vietnamese residing abroad is an appropriate choice. The data from their narratives, their experiences, observations, photos... are linked and generalized to be big story that will help us to discover the nature of objective reality, more vivid and meaningful. The big story is closely structured as a symbol. It means that this social reality is shared and accepted by many people. That was the reason for us to focus on studying of what happens in the process of Vietnamese overseas integration into the host society and their reasons. Narratives, experiences of each person reflected in the lively nature of the big stories. It helps you discover the migratory pattern and mechanisms needed to help immigrants overcome barriers, integration into the host society, contributing to the development of both individuals and communities.

Notes

1. [Tiềm năng và phân bố của người Việt ở nước ngoài - Học viên ngoại giao.](#)
Online Available:
<http://www.tgvn.com.vn/Item/VN/KieuBao/2012/8/AC00DE8998409F1F/>
2. US Census Bureau. Online Available:
http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S0201&prodType=table. Online Available:
<http://www.mediafire.com/?s791b2lzceibrsp>.
3.
http://www.vietnameseinaustralia.com.au/Association/Statistics/Census2001_001Summary.asp
4. [Australian Bureau of Statistics 20680-Ancestry \(full classification list\) by Sex - Australia](#)
- 5, 6. ["2007 American Community Survey: Selected Population Profile in the United States"](#). United States Census Bureau. Only Vietnamese, not multiracial people.

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