



Looking back on the Development of Vietnamese Community in Australia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 10 January 2023	After about half a century of establishment and development in Australia, Vietnamese community groups in Australia have formed and developed community and flexibility, which are cultural features that contribute to preserving and promoting the traditional Vietnamese culture, helping them to adapt and integrate into the local multicultural society without dissolving into Australian society. The article uses qualitative data analysis methods, most of which are secondary data, besides some primary data collected by the author through surveying the experiences and lifestyles of Vietnamese intellectuals in the process of living with the boat people and their descendants. In addition, migration circumstances, family background and professional education are also considered as factors affecting the process of coexistence and integration among Vietnamese communities in Australia.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Australia and Vietnam are two middle-class countries in Southeast Asia with a particularly close relationship with the US-China. Originating from the same ancient Southeast Asian cultural-civilization cradle, both Australia and Vietnam have, in turn, increasingly moved away from that Southeast Asian cultural source in the development history of the two peoples. However, through many ups and downs, now, Australia and Vietnam have achieved much prosperity. The strategic partnership between the two countries has marked many important milestones. The number of Vietnamese in Australia is growing in both quality and quantity. Although many research works on the Vietnamese people in Australia from the perspective of anthropology, sociology and history have been published in both Vietnam and Australia, there are almost no works that put the relationship between the development of the Vietnamese community in Australia in the overall development of Vietnamese culture and Vietnam - Australia relations. Therefore, based on data obtained from the works of Ben-Moshe, Tran Thi Thanh Giang and Nguyen Hoang Bao Nguyen, involving Vietnamese Australians aged 18 years and older, including Vietnamese boat people who migrated before Doi Moi and intellectual communities in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, this article aims to provide a unique contribution to the literature relating to the cultural integration of diaspora intellectuals. Viet and boat people families in Australia, as well as the adaptation of Vietnamese intellectuals in

Australia to Vietnamese boat people families. Although the sample is not fully representative, it still covers key aspects of the adaptation and cultural integration process of the Vietnamese diaspora in Australia. The sample was selected by purposeful sampling technique. Participants were selected according to the following criteria: years of experience living in Australia and relationships with early-stage Vietnamese refugees in Australia. One gender has only two male office workers, one gender has no male international students nor male office workers. In addition, seven Vietnamese immigrants were not only interviewed through an online survey but also observed through their discourse. In the end, a total of 7 surveys and 9 discussions were conducted through 7 Vietnamese immigrants. To be eligible, participants must also have been granted citizenship by the Australian government and live in these two Vietnamese communities in Australia. In addition, officers and professionals are also included if they have studied in Australia prior to obtaining a permanent visa. Meanwhile, Vietnamese international students are selected on the basis that they are experiencing their life in a multicultural society. Guided by the study design, a sample of 7 participants was interviewed and the analysis of the collected data appeared appropriate to address the purpose of the study. In-depth interviews were used to collect data and an interview schedule was planned by the interviewee. Interviews were held during the participants' breaks and the session was recorded. Interviews were held from March to April 2022. All interviews were conducted by the researcher. Ultimately,

this paper hopes to provide a unique perspective not only from previous studies but also from data collected from Vietnamese intellectuals in Australia.

II. THE FORMATION OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

According to documents from the Australian Office of Population and Migration Research, the Vietnamese arrived in Australia quite early, from 1920, that is, exactly a century ago. They, including 38 Vietnamese men, came to Australia not to seek asylum. Nor was it to find gold like most of the Chinese had come to Australia before. They, on the contrary, arrived in Australia quite by accident. In fact, they weren't going to Australia. They were transported on a French ship to New Caledonia to make... coolies. Unfortunately, on the way, the ship encountered a storm. Finally, it had to pull over at a location near the town of Townsville, Queensland, Australia. Australian researchers could not find the trace of the first 38 Vietnamese who set foot on Australian soil. Only a few people are known to have died of illness shortly after landing. Whether the rest will survive and if so, where they drift, what their status is, no one knows (Bùi Khánh Thế, 1999, 94-101).

The distribution of Vietnamese in Australia was also greatly influenced by the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Although the percentage of Vietnamese who came to Australia was mainly after 1975, Vietnam and Australia have long enjoyed international public relations. Most of the Vietnamese who came to Australia before 1975 belong to a stable category of livelihoods. Although the current Vietnamese people in Australia are officials, soldiers, and officers of the US regime established in South Vietnam, accounting for a relatively high proportion, but only a few people have fierce anti-Vietnamese activities. In order to gradually reduce the effect of extreme wrong views, ideas and actions of a small minority of Vietnamese people, who make up the majority of associations, unions, groups, mouthpieces and media in Australia. The Vietnamese government has created favorable conditions for the Vietnamese community of the second and third generations to be closer to the country and to have a relationship with Vietnam so that they can contribute more to the construction of the Fatherland (Trần Trọng Đăng Đàn, 1997, 192- 202).

Although there are still differences between the two countries related to democracy and human rights, this does not seem to be a big issue when Australia does not emphasize this issue too much in its bilateral relations with Vietnam. On the other hand, the pressure of the Vietnamese community on the Australian government regarding democracy and human rights is not as great as in the US. Therefore, while continuing to maintain dialogues on human rights as a tool to resolve differences, enhance mutual understanding and trust, Australia will not let this issue cast a shadow over its long-term prospects of the bilateral

strategic relationship (Nguyễn Minh Giang, 2021, 1172–1180).

III. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

A. *The development of resident culture of the Vietnamese community in Australia*

As a community with a high population density associated with famous Vietnamese settlements including Footscray, Springvale, Sunshine, North Richmon areas in Melbourne, Cabramatta and Bankstown areas in Sydney. In particular, each zone is often associated with a Vietnamese community with the same origin and hometown in a certain cultural region in Vietnam. For example, Springvale area has a concentration of Ben Tre people, Ba Ria Vung Tau area, North Richmon area has a concentration of Hue people (Trần Thị Thanh Giang, 2019, 685-696). Communism is also reflected in the tradition of living in the suburbs and suburbs of the city, often focusing on upholding the spirit of solidarity, mutual affection, and the tradition of living in a gathering place. The imprints of the cultural traditions of Vietnamese villages are still preserved according to the class of Vietnamese immigrants, and at the same time, it is also one of the effective ways for the community to be able to share in suffering. help each other, reduce costs and save a lot of spending (Hồ Bảo Uyên, 2014, 48). The most prominent feature in the densely populated areas of Vietnam are the Vietnamese commercial centers, including markets, shops, and service offices of Vietnamese people. There, almost nothing is missing. Pho, Hue beef noodles, Quang noodles, from bottles of fish sauce, seasoning to salted eggplant, pickles, duck seeds, durian, jackfruit, basil, cinnamon, mango, guava, etc. Many people come from Vietnam. also praised the goods in those markets are richer and more diverse than the markets in Vietnam (Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2007). They not only cook without losing the traditional taste but also decorate the dishes to become beautiful and solemn, simple but beautiful, especially in style and color according to the concept of white Anglo-Saxon people (Đoàn Duyên Anh, 2009).

B. *The development of communication culture of the Vietnamese community in Australia*

During the interviews, participants were asked to describe their ability to speak, listen, read and write English at home and at work. The Vietnamese language proficiency of the people is very high. Most tend to use Vietnamese (more than English) with their parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives in Vietnam and Vietnamese friends. They speak English and Vietnamese with their spouses, children, siblings, and English-speaking 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 to maintain Vietnamese are: maintaining relationships with relatives, maintaining Vietnamese cultural

identity and building friendships. Language use is more with parents and grandparents than with members of the student generation. Vietnamese is used more in private and ethnic contexts such as family and community events than in public settings. Vietnamese ability decreases and English ability increases with residence time. Total length of stay in Australia and age of residence start have more influence on language retention than attitudes towards cultural retention (Ben-Moshe, 2012). Practice maintaining language including conversation in Vietnamese and personal activities requiring access to Vietnamese books, magazines, news, movies, radio and music. Multilingual people often have stronger community ties, greater understanding of cultural values and practices, and act as cultural bridges between their communities, their families, and society (Nguyen Hoang Bao Nguyen, 2020). Thus, it can be seen that, despite living and growing up in Australia, the Vietnamese language is still quite strong in their lives (Ben-Moshe, 2016).

C. The development of religious culture - beliefs of the Vietnamese community in Australia

Most of the religions and beliefs developed in the Vietnamese community in South Vietnam appear in Vietnamese Australians, including Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and ancestor worship. The Vietnamese quickly established activities, organized Tet fairs, built pagodas, established a Catholic activity center, a Protestant church, opened a Vietnamese language school, and organized the Mid-Autumn Festival. Some large Vietnamese temples such as Quang Minh and Quang Duc (Melbourne) after a long period of lockdown, have opened their doors for Vietnamese Buddhists to light incense, collect buds and watch lion dances and New Year's Eve fireworks. In particular, to share the feelings of expatriate children who miss their homeland, many Vietnamese groups in Melbourne have organized programs to welcome Spring such as the Vietnam Australia Mothers Association, the Vietnam Australia Elderly Association. The above-mentioned cultural, educational and commercial activities of the Vietnamese refugees have pushed the Australian government to complete its multicultural policy, successfully building an Australia with over a hundred ethnic communities from all over the world to settle down (Carruther Ashley, 2008, 102-109). The preservation of traditional cultural values of the nation is also shown through the regular maintenance of community activities, typically activities in religious institutions; organize activities on Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival; Teaching Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture to children. In Australia, besides going to Catholic churches, Vietnamese people often build many different large and small temples in cities where they live such as Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane.

D. The development of educational culture of the Vietnamese community in Australia

Churches and pagodas are not only places for Vietnamese to perform religious ceremonies, but also to connect and maintain community activities. Located in the Australian city of Melbourne, Quang Minh Pagoda is considered a symbol of the success of Australia's multicultural policy. Every month, on the occasion of the full moon or the first day of the lunar calendar, the temple welcomes a large number of Vietnamese people coming and going to worship. This is also the place to organize strong activities in the field of youth education such as Buddhist Family, Vietnamese Language School, Vovinam martial arts classes and Vietnamese festivals in the area. Vietnamese classes here usually take place on weekends. The curriculum is divided into 12 levels from grade 1 to grade 12. Classroom teachers are teachers who used to teach or work in the education field in South Vietnam before 1975. The majority of students are the children of Vietnamese families residing in Australia sent to practice Vietnamese communication (Ben-Moshe, 2016, 112–127).

Familism is linked to almost every aspect of the study of the Vietnamese community in Australia, from the role of community cohesion, the maintenance of homeland culture, the preservation of languages and other traditions, preserving community memories, especially war memories among the first generation Vietnamese who settled in, to the role of improving the social position of Vietnamese people in Australia through education, study promotion, investment for the second and third generations of Vietnamese to settle in Australia. The dominance of familism is closely related to the migration context of Vietnamese in Australia, most of whom migrate as family reunification or the whole family migrates together as boat-people. When they come to Australia, they have the need to settle down, live together, and live together for a long time to support each other and stabilize their livelihoods. Therefore, even though there are no traditional symbols such as bamboo ramparts, village gates, wharfs, communal yards, each Vietnamese residential area in Australia can also be considered as a village gathering large families with the same surname, from the same hometown, migrated together. Familism is also seen as a product of the process of adaptation and cultural integration of the Vietnamese (who are more attached to communitism) in Australia (who are more attached to individualism). At the same time, it is familism that becomes a catalyst to help the process of adaptation and cultural integration of Vietnamese people in Australia become easier and more favorable without causing unnecessary disturbances, instability, and conflicts between the Vietnamese and the Anglo-Saxon communities in Australia, as well as between the first generation Vietnamese and the second and third generations of Vietnamese who settled in Australia (Tran Thi Thanh Giang, 2018).

For Vietnamese families in Australia, the flexibility in focusing on preserving and transmitting cultural values in the family is reflected in their acceptance and adaptation of new values, new ways of life and 'Western' lifestyles. However, Vietnamese parents are always aware of and value the standards needed to maintain relationships between family members. At the same time, many Vietnamese families in Australia instill in their children and practice core values such as filial piety, harmony and solidarity. These festivals and anniversaries are often celebrated with their entire extended family, providing an opportunity to reunite with the family they now live in Melbourne. Gatherings are described as the best way to connect children with their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. In many cases, their relatives have migrated to Australia later under the Family Reunification Scheme. When family members arrive, they usually live close to each other. Most refugee participants live with their extended family in Melbourne or other states in Australia. Therefore, they have the opportunity to see each other often. Many participants added that their children often stop by their relative's place whenever they want to strike up a conversation and chat with grandparents, cousins and others (Tran Thi Thanh Giang, 2018).

If children of Vietnamese refugees often watch Paris by night, podcasts, VOA Vietnamese, and mostly only follow news when attending meetings of Vietnamese people in Australia; Skilled Vietnamese immigrants watch and listen to Vietnam Television's programs more often such as Super Intelligence, Thank God, You're Here, Rap Viet. They shared the reason as "It's almost impossible, because compared to foreign programs, Vietnamese programs are really boring and unattractive to children. Vietnamese writing? Almost none. But If the book is translated into Vietnamese, read the English version". Similar in terms of reading culture, children of Vietnamese refugees often prefer to read Western-influenced newspapers and magazines such as BBC News, GAM 7 Marketing, and VNExpress, while skilled Vietnamese migrants often read more newspapers and magazines. magazines published by Vietnam, such as Tien Phong, Thanh Nien, Tuoi Tre, Lao Dong. Especially, for the respondent who is an overseas Vietnamese female student, the reason she often chooses Vietnamese online newspapers to read is because "I watch when I want to update the situation in Vietnam (eg pandemic)"

IV. LOOKING BACK AT THE INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR THE FORMATION AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

In the post-Cold War regional context, Australia prioritizes developing strategic relationships with Southeast Asia, especially ASEAN countries. While the strategic relationship with the US is still identified as a "key factor",

it no longer has the "overarching meaning" as before. Therefore, encouraging the development of a regional security community in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific region would be one of the "measures to reduce the likelihood of instability, conflict, and breakthrough for the region" (Gareth Evans, 1991). Along with the above strategic focus, in the first half of the 1990s, shifting sharply to the Asian orientation, establishing the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, Australia focused on developing and expanding comprehensive relations with ASEAN (Trinh Thị Định, 2013). In an effort to strengthen cooperation between Australia and ASEAN, Australia always considers Vietnam as a reliable and effective bridge. This gradual approach ensures a sustainable basis as Vietnam increasingly actively contributes to the development of ASEAN. Vietnam's progress in ASEAN integration can also provide valuable lessons for Australia with its growing prestige in ASEAN (Nguyễn Đình Chiển, 2013, 22). In the period 2020-2023, Foreign Minister Marise Payne affirmed that the Australian Government continues to place high priority on Vietnam in foreign policy, considering Vietnam as one of the key partners in the Indo-Pacific. and hope that the two countries will soon upgrade their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership (Thanh Thanh, 31/12/2020).

After World War II, Australia was exposed to and welcomed a host of new cultures for the first time that were not Anglo-Saxon cultures as before. Australia implements a series of assimilation policies with three dimensions. First, in terms of language, all newcomers have to learn the English language. Second, promote Australian cultural practices. Finally, immediate material assistance related to accommodation and employment. The Government's view is that these newcomers need to integrate as quickly as possible into a new society and country, which makes it easier for them to adapt to life here (Jupp, 2001, 35). From about 1970, immigrants began to be seen as a political factor, as they constituted a significant proportion of the working-class electorate. The Australian Labor Party has even set up divisions for Greeks and Italians, which are advertised in the press by ethnic groups and Labor even selects some migrants as candidates (Collins, 1988, 135-137). The Labor Party's victory in the 1972 election seems to be due in part to this clever policy. Labor's Immigration Minister Grassby talks about multiculturalism and openly rejects assimilation, seeing growing social diversity as an economic and cultural wealth. The emphasis in Labor's policies, however, is not on culture but on welfare and education (Castles et al, 1990, 59).

From all angles, Vietnam has no interest in conflicting with Australia on its own. Vietnam's development does not challenge Australia's interests in the region. Therefore, now and in the future, it can be clearly seen that cooperation with Vietnam and Australia is more beneficial than conflict. In addition, the Vietnamese community in Australia can

become a catalyst in cooperation to strengthen the interests of each side, making a positive contribution to peace and development in the region.

In general, the Vietnamese community in Australia today has been actively nurturing the Vietnamese people's sense of preserving cultural identity, promoting activities to preserve and promote community, flexibility such as teaching and learning Vietnamese, summer retreats, and community activities during the Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival.

Preserving cultural identity, especially community and flexibility, is an inevitable rule in the process of adaptation and cultural integration of an immigrant community like the Vietnamese community in Australia. Although the village community tried to distinguish between the Vietnamese immigrants who immigrated to Australia before Doi Moi and the Vietnamese immigrants who moved to Australia after the Doi Moi, it was flexibility that helped narrow the gap between the two classes of Vietnamese immigrants, through the creative use of communication and mass media such as community festivals.

The process of adaptation and cultural integration of Vietnamese people in Australia is heavily influenced by their political experience before immigrating to Australia, their proficiency in foreign languages, specifically English, and their personal financial capacity. These are also key factors that determine their effectiveness, as well as the type of family education strategy they choose, their adaptation strategy and their cultural integration into Australia's multicultural society.

The second and third generations of Australian-Vietnamese immigrant families before Doi Moi tend to be more connected with Vietnam and with Vietnamese immigrants who immigrated to Australia after Doi Moi. Three typical evidences presented in the article, through the survey results of (Ben-Moshe, 2012) are the increase in participation in socio-political activities related to Vietnam, the increase in economic investment in the Vietnamese market, and the increased use of Vietnam-related media. The cause of this phenomenon is the decline in political ideological conflict with the current political regime in Vietnam due to the decrease in experience connection with the wars in Vietnam in history. along with the increasingly attractive Vietnamese market, facilitated by the Australian government more than ever.

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