Feel at Home. Vietnamese Immigrants in Poland

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Abstract

In this paper, we develop the concept of home, presenting an example of Vietnamese entrepreneurs running their business in Poland. This subject is peculiar to the perspective of immigrants, who have already left their home country and need to establish themselves in a new place. We base our study on material gathered from four sources: a broad ethnographic study, non-participant and direct observation of Vietnamese places in Poland, photographs taken in Poland and Vietnam, and interviews. We argue that the concept of home is extremely broad and is represented by immigrants in diverse ways. After our analysis, we propose a deeper understanding of the activities of immigrants and their ways of acculturation.

Keywords

homeland, Vietnamese culture, immigrant entrepreneurs, cultural transfer, cultural identity

Introduction

In recent years, researchers have often addressed the concept of home (Somerville, 1992; Levitt & Waters, 2002). In the era of globalization, it is difficult to actually define where one belongs and where one's home is. Travelers, nomads, and migrants look for their own places or give up the idea of building/owning their homes in their everyday lives. People have a sense of lost control and feel the need to separate places where they live and to mark their locality. Today, we are dealing with a fluid reality in which individuals are looking for certain anchor points where they feel stable (Bauman, 1997). In English, home country is generally defined as the country a person comes from. Therefore, every time immigrants talk about countries that they come from, they use the word "home", indicating that the place they left is their country. The Collins Dictionary (2019, July 10) defines host country more literally in its first meaning, "a country hosting an event"; only the second meaning mentions "the country to which an immigrant has come".

The idea of this study was born during a visit to Vietnam, when strolling through the streets of Hanoi, we had the impression that we had seen some things somewhere else. We wanted to understand how the place where Vietnamese immigrants work every day reminds them of their country of origin, how they build their places, and how they build their cultural identity.

In this paper, we analyze the ways in which the Vietnamese in Poland have reproduced a piece of their country. The following research questions were developed: How do Vietnamese immigrants construct their identities in terms of cultural identification? How do Vietnamese

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immigrants organize their workspace in their companies in Poland? How do immigrants cope with being a long way from their home countries in terms of belonging? The purpose of this study is to understand the process of building new cultural identities of Vietnamese entrepreneurs who live and work in Poland. We use the concept of home as a metaphor (Kövecses, 2010), and not as an explicit domestic place (Cieraad, 2006), to achieve this goal. "Home" sometimes refers to the nation and a national identity (Lam & Yeoh, 2004; Rabikowska, 2010). Other times, it helps to analyze the relations between the place and communication (Abdollahyan & Mohammadi, 2018). We perceive home as the process of "becoming" (Rampazi, 2016) and investigate the relationship between the concept of home as "becoming" and Vietnamese entrepreneurs' identity construction in situations of residential instability caused by transfer to another country. Like Latimer and Munro (2009), we state that the importance of a "home" can be understood as gravity from the feelings of belonging anchored in specific locations for identity issues entangled in locations that relate to the character itself.

Creating a New Cultural Space—Cultural identification

Immigrants begin their journey to find a safe space that they can symbolically call home. Many immigrants are mentally stuck somewhere between the desire to return to their country and the need to stay in their new country. This state is referred to as "the myth of return" (Anwar, 1979). It is a kind of nostalgia for the past and the pursuit of a utopian future (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002). Castells (1997) writes about the need for an individual to highlight his or her identity and belonging. He emphasizes that in response to increased migration groups, so-called cultural communes are emerging that build their cultural identity on territory, on religious and ethnic longing, and on historic memory. Culture connects people to the community. It is learned and passed on through successive generations in the form of beliefs and value systems (Chacko, 2003). Identity is the way in which an individual is perceived and differentiated from other people. Cultural, ethnic, and racial identity is part of the identity and changes with the experiences of migration and acculturation (Bhugra, 2004).

Immigrants' need to arrange space can cause various misunderstandings (Dijkema, 2018; Donnelly, 2016). The homeless through memories, imagination, and daily practices build a sense of self and belonging (Hodgetts et al., 2010). Decisions related to adaptation in a new home—the host country—are described in theories of acculturation. One of the more popular theories incorporates a diagram of acculturation attitudes; Berry (1997) mentions four of them: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Each of these attitudes has a different degree of preservation of immigrants' cultural identity and the acceptance of a new identity. Several factors influence the process of integration with the society of the host country: pre-migration factors, characteristics of the socio-cultural origin of the individual and the identity characteristics of the individual, and length of stay and characteristics of the host society (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974). The process of acculturation involves a struggle between the "old" and "new" identity, between integration and rejection of cultural values. Research has shown that over time spent in the host country, immigrants become more like natives (Berry, 1997). However, for Vietnamese immigrants, this process may be different. The Vietnamese often transfer cultural patterns from the homeland to the host country because this makes them feel safer (Głowala, 2002). One of the most well-known researchers of Vietnamese immigrants, Trần Trọng Đăng Đàn (1997, p. 257), says, "Even though no longer holding Vietnamese citizenship, they still carry Vietnamese blood, Vietnamese feelings, and are thought of to be treated more warmly than foreigners." This is confirmed by Koh (2015), who notes that regardless of whether the individual was born in Vietnam or not, the sense of being Vietnamese is deeply rooted in the Vietnamese community and cultivated by immigrants, which makes the group even more interesting to study.

We assume that cultural identity is the most important type of collective identity, which is based on a historically conditioned, cultural way of preserving the existence and continuity of the species and biopsychic balance of a given human group (Berry et al., 2006; Szyfer, 1997). The category of identity is inseparably connected with the character of the social group it concerns and the processes that shape it. The basic distinguishing feature of a given group is its connection to a specific territory. In the case of immigrants, this is a factor that weakens national identity. Another category that distinguishes ethnic and ethnographic groups is the different types of ties connecting group members with each other and with the nation and the state (Szyfer, 1997):

- With the nation of which the group is a part, also referred to as an ideological bond
- Regional, also indicating collective attachment to a specific territory (Passi, 2003)
- Unitary, defined as the bond with the "private homeland"

This continuous self-identification is especially meaningful for immigrants, who suddenly find themselves in new conditions. The absence of certain anchors connecting them with the past may lead to emotional problems (Mehta & Belk, 1991), the lack of a sense of having their own place (Pastalan, 1983), and feelings of nostalgia (Subasinghe, 2018). Therefore, immigrants, while in a new country, try to reproduce their place of origin, arranging items that remind them of it (Thompson, 2005).

Longing for Homeland: The Concept of a Metaphor of Home

In the following text, we present the metaphor of the home as a host country. Home is filled "with objects that serve as reminders of travel experiences, achievements, close relatives and friends as well as of religious or ethnic identities" (Mehta & Belk, 1991, p. 399). To describe the place of origin, we use the word "roots" figuratively, which symbolizes permanence and belonging. For a plant, its roots are necessary for its life as the roots feed the plant, hold it in place, and prevent pulling it out easily (Malkki, 1992). Today, when everything is floating and changing (Bauman, 2000), a place called home provides us with a sense of meaning, belonging (Madigan, Munro, & Smith, 1990), security, oneness, and stability (Massey, 1994). Researchers have pointed out that home is a multidimensional concept (Mallett, 2004) that goes beyond physicality (Somerville, 1992). It is a metaphorical space that helps identify oneself and one's belonging; it is even a "mythic place of desire" (Brah, 1996, p. 192). Taking into account the specific situation today, when mobility is very intense and quite different than in the past, home gains a particular meaning in the context of a mythic desire. With the ability to travel, and sometimes even the pressure to seek a better life, and the simultaneous illusion that they can contact their home country without trouble, people experience a profound sense of loss of their roots, the lack of a sense of cultural identity. The original combination of place and culture slowly ceases to exist (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). Therefore, people now make representations of their homeland on the foundation of memories and images (Malkki, 1992), creating anchors to the physical space (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992), since home is associated with social homogeneity, peace, and security (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). It is an element that builds identity based on the past as home is also the place where culture and tradition are transmitted and the question about origins is answered, which is important (Papastergiadis, 1998). Kibreab (1999, p. 407) describes such a situation as "territorially-based identities."

This concept will, therefore, comprise all our habits and activities, traditions, and practices organized in a specific way that will then form the basis for building our values, our identity (Bourdieu & Wacuant, 1992). Creating a metaphoric home means "continually created and recreated through every day practices" (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 23). The most important home "is

the association of an individual within a homogeneous group and the association of that group with a particular physical place" (Warner, 1994, p. 162), which indicates the importance of the community in the feeling of home.

This multidimensional concept lets us look at home from the perspective of structure, geography, culture, relationships, and emotions. Hill (1996, p. 576) argues that "[home] is our history, our past, the reality of our soul. Not only does it extend into the past through memory, but also into the future through imagination." Home is associated with giving meaning to one's workplace by adding cultural symbols, so that immigrants feel closer to their roots, a place they know, which they miss.

Note on methodology

As researchers, we are interested in national cultures and in the phenomena that occur in societies under the influence of cultural factors. The purpose of this article is to present a unique group of immigrants in the times of global mobility of cultures and attempt to understand their identities. Research and the article remain in the interpretive paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). We formulate the following research questions to investigate this field: How do Vietnamese immigrants construct their identities in terms of cultural identification? How do Vietnamese immigrants organize their workspace in their companies in Poland? How do immigrants cope with being a long way from their home countries in terms of belonging? For the purpose of this study, we combine field material gathered from three sources: (a) The outcomes of an extensive ethnographic study (based on open interviews with Vietnamese entrepreneurs and non-participant observations); (b) Field research on the Vietnamese entrepreneurs' diaspora (we visited Vietnamese enterprises/the Asian town); and (c) An analysis of photographs taken by the authors in Poland and Vietnam (visual ethnography).

In this way, we apply three types of triangulation to authenticate and validate material collected from the field: methodological, data, and researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The first source of field material comprises interviews with 30 Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs from all over Poland (20 people from the 1.5 generation and 10 from the first generation; 17 women and 13 men). The representatives of the 1.5 generation came to Poland at age 4–6 years. At the time of the interviews, their ages ranged between 25 years and 36 years. The respondents belong to the first generation came to Poland as adults and are age 55 years to 65 years at the time of the conversation. They came with their partners and gave birth to children or arrived with small children. Some came to Poland to study and some came for profit, to earn more money. The length of stay is examined from 21 years to 30 years. Interviewees who came to Poland with their parents as young children mostly already had families, some with Polish partners. All the people we interview had higher education (information technology, musician, teacher, accountant, engineer, economist, administrator, graphic designer, and architect). However, none of the people of the first generation works in a profession, and only a few of those from the 1.5 generation are fulfilling their professions in line with their studies. Interviews are conducted in Polish because each of the respondents is fluid in this language. The analyses are also conducted in Polish. Interviews last from 45 to 90 minutes. Cases are selected in accordance with the assumptions of the strategy of maximum variation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The research process also uses elements of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data are collected systematically, and the researchers commence the research without any pre-defined hypotheses. An interpretative perspective is adopted with a focus primarily on explaining and understanding the community studied (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The second part of the material is obtained during a visit to the Asian town in Poland—Wólka Kossowska. The methods include non-participant observation and direct observation supported

by photographs taken on site. We spend one day collecting situations, interactions, and photographs at the sites where the Vietnamese run their own businesses. Our goal is to observe and get direct experience of the Vietnamese culture transferred to the new, strange ground. We treat the creation of meanings as a work process and its effects in the intersubjective space (Willis, 2000). The businesses whose place photos are taken are run by people from the first generation, the 1.5 generation, and entire families with mixed generations.

Finally, the third source of data is the analysis of photographs taken on site and their comparison with our pictures from Vietnam. Following Barthes (1967), we interpret three dimensions of the images: results of our observations, photographs from both sources, and descriptions from interviews.

We use visual ethnography to enhance the understanding of cultural communication (Banks & Morphy, 1999). Konecki (2011) emphasizes the need to use visual reports (not only verbal) on anthropological and social phenomena. The work of both ethnographers and interviewers can provide verbal information about the context that is hidden and which we are unable to see in the picture (Ball & Smith, 2011). Then in the analysis, we use the comparative method looking for analogies (paying attention to functional similarity). In this method, we focus only on visual process and discourse, without considering the problem of intentionality (Clarke, 2005).

Limitations

We are aware of the limitations of the study. We need to mention that "home" and the practices associated with cultivating Vietnamese culture were not the main topics of the interviews conducted with Vietnamese entrepreneurs. The idea to enter the field and take pictures documenting their workplaces was based on conversations held with Vietnamese on several other topics.

Culture of Vietnamese Entrepreneurs in Poland—Empirical data

Diversified research material allows us to present both spatial design elements and spatial practices of Vietnamese immigrants. We present material from mixed sources altogether (interviews, observations, and photographs).

Coming to the centers where Vietnamese entrepreneurs dominate, many places have altars that the owners of the premises look after. The altars generally offer fresh fruit and incense is burned. The Vietnamese are actively involved in continuing this tradition.

> *I care about the altar, is also the same place, the aura is pleasant, it is better. And people get in and feel better, e.g., people are tired and they are rested and it is nice here.* [R22]

Despite being a representative of the generation who grew up mostly in Poland, cultivating faith in ancestors is very important. Thus, the interviewee maintains an altar in his house, which is looked after by the spiritual guardian. The Vietnamese appreciate tradition and are strongly associated with the past of their families and the entire nation; hence, hereditary status is important in their culture. In Poland, entrepreneurs are detached from their roots so their behavior differs from that of Vietnamese living in their home country.

> *In all this, still the family is very important, and that's the value of humanity there.* [R16]

Immigrants are forced to adapt quickly to their new surroundings. The Vietnamese are able to do this perfectly. Their inclination to stick to the group is helpful in this regard. Arriving in Poland, they are immediately drawn into their cultural environment. A group helps them adapt to new conditions.

> *It was like that she asked friends, they were very helpful and open and told her that at first she should go there and there because it will be the best for her. She took the advice of her friends.* [R29]

The Vietnamese (both at home and abroad) definitely have a culture that prefers dealing with family, friends, and persons or groups they know well (pro-partnership culture). For this reason, they usually go into business only when they know their future business partners well.

Strolling around the place where Vietnamese entrepreneurs operate in Poland, one can get the impression that chaos is everywhere. Similar feelings occur when walking the streets of Hanoi, with dense traffic and hubbub, and the observer can be overwhelmed by the volume of items that are offered for sale by Vietnamese entrepreneurs.

> *So, a Vietnamese entrepreneur may have chaos at home, but he/she always tries to maintain a certain order in her environment.* [R25]

The interviewer belonging to the first generation describes this disorder as apparent. The logic of the distribution of objects is known to the owner of the premises. On the other hand, a representative of the 1.5 generation comments:

> *Here is a mess, because the Vietnamese do not care about order.* [R22]

Chaos is therefore the domain of the Vietnamese. This can be perceived by some as a mess and for others as a targeted action strategy. The number of objects and the way they are arranged can be overwhelming for the observer. For Vietnamese, even a 1.5 generation, it is a natural state.

The interviewees emphasized that Vietnamese immigrants are able to find themselves in every situation and that nothing is impossible for them. The interpretation of interviews showed how strong Vietnamese entrepreneurs are connected with the home country and organize their life in Poland. This applies to both generations of immigrants, to the 1.5 generation, those who spent the majority of their lives in Poland, as well as to people who came as adults.

Cultural Transfer—Example of Working Spaces of Vietnamese in Poland

In the 1990s, the Vietnamese built a shopping center (e.g., ASG Shopping Centre) in Wólka Kosowska, providing jobs not only to the Vietnamese but also to Poles and Turks. We visit that place to experience the culture of the Vietnamese living in Poland. The importance for the Vietnamese entrepreneurs to build their place in Poland is reflected in their attitude toward space. What matters is treating the space as a common good—very characteristic of the Vietnamese. Spaces are usually open, inviting, respectful of property, and facilitative of borrowing and lending things.

We first saw the elements of physical structure such as rooms full of goods. Packages and boxes piled up to the ceiling can be noticed in most shops. They might be perceived as clutter, but actually are carefully grouped and controlled by the salespersons. People responsible for the various sites are always able to find the items sought. The salespersons' workstations are usually the most interesting places in the whole space because they are highly personalized. What can be found there are personal belongings, photographs of the salespersons and their families, and many cultural and religious symbols.

Ancestor veneration (thờ cúng tổ tiên) is present in Buddhist and Christian families, and among those that do not recognize any religion. It is a part of the Vietnamese identity, a way of showing gratitude to parents for their hard work by, for example, paying off a debt (ơn) owed to them. It is also a way of cherishing the memory of one's roots. Followers of a particular religion

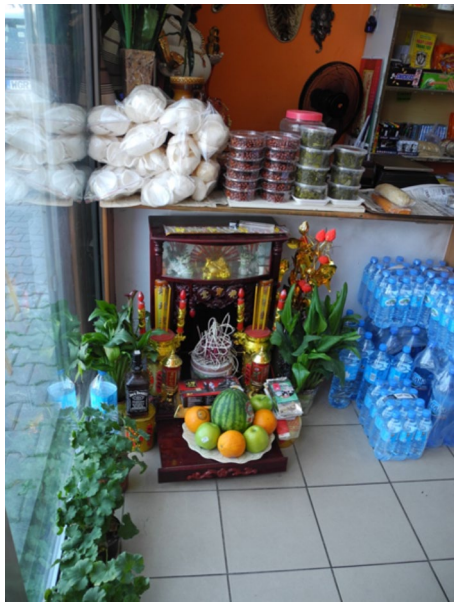

Figure 1. Altar in a shop. Photo taken in Poland.
Source: Private collection.

put up an altar connected with that religion; for example, in the case of Buddhism it is a Buddhist altar. In addition to bigger or smaller altars, food is often put out for the dead at workplaces, together with symbols of happiness and prosperity (see Figure 1).

Also, walls are characteristically hung with pictures, posters, photographs of the Vietnamese wildlife, and relatives. Densely covered walls give the impression of abundance and chaos. This can be seen clearly in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 was taken in Poland in a shop in Wólka Kosowska. For comparison, Figure 2 shows an altar in a shop in Vietnam. As shown, it is difficult to distinguish which picture was taken where. At first glance, they look very similar. The fact that religion is commonly practiced in Poland is evidenced by the fresh fruits placed as oblation on the altar. Hence, it is undoubtedly not just a dead souvenir from Vietnam but an alive, still upheld tradition.

The walls are also covered by other traditional symbols such as artificial and natural flowers. In Vietnam, natural flowers are used as interior decoration, but artificial flowers are popular too. They frequently serve as a religious artefact, a gift for the dead. This reflects the influence of animism, ancestor veneration, and the cult of guardian spirits. In these cases, the altar is set up at the entrance. In a store in Poland, the altar is not hidden, but rather is highlighted so that it is the first thing one encounters when entering the store. In Vietnam, in many places, the entrance to shops is closed with a special lattice attached to the ceiling. Thus, there is a greater impression of the store opening to the street, to passers-by. In Poland, opening to passers-by may symbolize the fact that the wall is glazed. Such openness and transparency visible from the outside is more reminiscent of Vietnamese solutions.

Flowers also symbolize harmony with nature and indicate the significance of the proximity to nature in human life. They emphasize how important this link is and what role nature plays in everyday life. Birds have a similar meaning in Vietnamese culture. Both in Vietnam and at Vietnamese sites in Poland, canaries and other species of small birds are kept in cages. Figure 3,

Figure 2. Altar in a shop. Photo taken in Vietnam.
Source: Private collection.

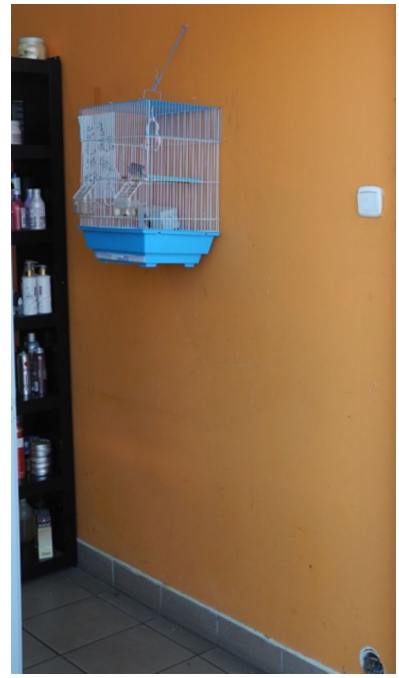

Figure 3. Bird in a cage in a shop in Poland.
Source: Private collection.

showing a bird in a cage, proves how much the workplace of Vietnamese entrepreneurs resembles home. Indeed, keeping a live animal makes it necessary to regularly visit the workplace as the bird needs care. In Vietnam, as depicted in Figure 4, keeping birds in cages is natural.

Figure 4. Birds in a cage in a shop in Vietnam.
Source: Private collection.

One can see that in Poland these are single cages with birds kept inside the building. In Vietnam, they are kept outside and in large numbers. Having this kind of animal might be an expression of homesickness and a desire to reproduce a similar atmosphere of life in Poland, despite other climatic and housing conditions.

The place that we visited was dominated by clothing shops as well as restaurants and grocery shops. They all have the distinctive characteristics of the Vietnamese space. Restaurants possess equipment that we associate with Vietnam. All the furnishings, arrangement of workplaces, and dining facilities are copied from Asia. As the Vietnamese themselves say, "We serve food like in Vietnam" [R22p], and they are very proud of that. A multitude of food products exhibited in the most visible places brings about the effect of many colors, as at the Vietnamese sites in Asia. We also found interesting comparisons of physical structures in more practical dimensions of work. Besides traditional and religious symbols, we noted how the Vietnamese used means of transport. They rode self-modified kick scooters to move between their shops (one person often has several shops at different locations) and other sites. This reminded us of Vietnam, where motorbikes, scooters, and bicycles reign over Vietnamese streets. The smaller the vehicle, the greater the likelihood of reaching the destination successfully. Kick scooters are used to transport not only people but also goods. It is interesting that in Poland, tools and items that could help the Vietnamese transport their goods are definitely available and used by Polish shopkeepers. Even so, the Vietnamese prefer to adapt kick scooters to their needs. This also shows how deeply rooted self-sufficiency is—to the extent that immigrants are reluctant to use possible aids in the host country.

Figure 5 presents kick scooters tailored by the Vietnamese to their needs. The practice is similar in Vietnam, where such adaptations are, on the other hand, usually made to bicycles and scooters (Figure 6). In fact, the Vietnamese in Poland use equipment available for transport

Figure 5. Modified kick scooter. Shopping center in Poland.
Source: Private collection.

Figure 6. One of many modified bicycles in Vietnam.
Source: Private collection.

that is professional and available in stores, which can be seen in the background of Figure 5. However, they do not seem to satisfy all the needs of entrepreneurs and invent their own solutions.

The earlier example illustrates what the Vietnam-based combining is all about. If Vietnamese immigrants need a device and it is not available on the market, they will adapt another device to meet their needs. This ability allows them to cope in all conditions.

Figure 7. A bar in Wólka Kosowska.
Source: Private collection.

Figure 8. A food stand in Vietnam.
Source: Private collection.

In Vietnam, usually goods from stores literally spill onto the street; thus, going through the street gives the impression of being in a store. This can be seen in Figure 4. It is similar in Poland in the Vietnamese towns, where, as seen in Figure 5, packages with merchandise are in the aisle. One does not quite have a sense of where the store border is and where the space is more for buyers. This appropriation and the sharing of space is characteristic of the Vietnamese culture and can also be transferred to Poland.

Also, the furnishings in bars and restaurants in Wólka Kosowska are reproduced (Figure 7). Metal utensils and plastic jars can be found in both Poland and Vietnam, although Poles tend to use a different kind of kitchenware, so such a sight would not be common. In contrast, Vietnamese stands that sell jellies, juices, and similar products typically use this type of kitchenware (Figure 8).

It is worth noting that in both cases, the buyer sees prepared food in Vietnamese and Polish conditions. Figure 7 does not represent a typical Polish bar. Usually, kitchens are separated by a wall, and the consumer has no right to see what is happening in the kitchen. In Vietnam, the consumer sees the options for food directly and chooses from them. The space between the customer and the product is very small.

To conclude, the Vietnamese in Poland put a strong emphasis on their roots. Despite the generational change, this is still a very strong trend. Building homes and home-like spaces allows these immigrants to maintain their identity. It is also a part of upholding traditional values and religion. It facilitates living in a foreign environment and makes it possible to become accustomed to unknown places. The Vietnamese build spaces to resemble the real Vietnam, and at times this involves creating the ideal world that they dream of. Those places are an expression of their longings and aspirations, telling stories about their memories, experiences, and emotions.

Discussion

Summing up our analyses, we will refer to the levels of ties that build the cultural identity of ethnic groups (Szyfer, 1997). The first level concerns the relationship with the nation of which the group is a part. Vietnamese entrepreneurs have a strong sense of national belonging; therefore, their assimilation with Polish culture is a difficult and slow process. The regional bond, which indicates a collective attachment to the territory, is not strong for the immigrant group studied. In contrast, the individual bond (bond with the "private homeland"), according to the interviews, is significant. Researchers have also paid attention to the durability of ethnic groups, which can be defined as groups of long and short duration. Under certain conditions, the groups of long duration are transformed into "transition groups" with double consciousness, which certainly applies to second-generation Vietnamese entrepreneurs. They transform their structures to eventually become ethnographic groups. Anna Szyfer (1997) also distinguishes the ethnographic groups of the borderland, which often become "buffer" groups, saturated with the cultural characteristics of both sides. To distinguish social groups, authors dealing with these issues accept two basic criteria: objective cultural features and self-identification. The first one we tried to determine on the basis of field observations and photo analysis, catching both spatial design elements and spatial practices. The second part of the analysis is based on interviews in which the Vietnamese themselves defined their cultural affiliation and shared elements of a new identity creation process. The research clearly shows that Vietnamese entrepreneurs have a very strong sense of cultural identity. Also, despite the peculiarities of the times—strong globalization, interpenetration of cultural patterns, mixing of cultures—they strongly support their values taken from the "home." Moreover, they pass these values on to their children who, despite being brought up in Poland and rare trips to their country of origin, feel strongly connected to Vietnam, continue their traditions, and talk about Vietnam nostalgically. It is likely of great importance that these children are brought up in a kind of cult of the country of origin, surrounded by Vietnamese cultural symbols, since identities are formed and maintained in the socio-spatial environment (Cuba & Hummond, 1993).

Undoubtedly, the Vietnamese try to reproduce their home country by surrounding themselves with various objects that connect them to the past, let them create this symbolic home—the place that they come from and that forms their identity (Friedman, 1998)—and are reluctant to adopt symbols associated with Poland unless this can help them do business. Introducing symbols related to cultural identification helps immigrants build a sense of belonging. It helps them create their own world, which does not have to stand in opposition to the host country culture, but rather acts as a coping mechanism while preserving the memory of the past in a new environment.

Conclusions

Vietnamese often treat Vietnam as the country to which they will return someday or as a legend of the place of their roots. Younger generations often live their parents' legends, that is, the so-called myth of return (Anwar, 1979); they sometimes think of returning to their parents' homeland, which is providing more and more career opportunities for people educated in the West, and

thus great chances of development for appropriate remuneration. Among them are people who feel the need to return to their home country, even if they do not know this country very well and visit it only every few years. One reason for this longing for the home country is a kind of nostalgia for the past and the pursuit of a utopian future (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002).

The Vietnamese who come to Poland experience a culture clash. They must face new conditions and must adapt their norms and values to a new setting. We consider maintaining strong bonds among family members and fostering intimate (mainly cultural) communities to be among the most important characteristics of the Vietnamese culture. The Vietnamese often get together, or help each other at work and in establishing business relationships.

Also worth noting is that the Vietnamese language itself contains a special name for Vietnamese who have left the country—Việt Kiều, which means "overseas Vietnamese," or Vietnamese living abroad. The Vietnamese emphasize their origin and current residence, which is outside Vietnam. Thus, people who live outside their country of origin are reminded that they have left their country and are, in a sense, marked by the trip. The Vietnamese immigrants are attached to their religion and make it visible in their shops, which allows them to feel safer and see the meaning of their existence (Shoeb, Weinstein, & Halpern, 2007). We also saw a Buddhist temple near the workplace. Its proximity may indicate the significant role that religion plays in the lives of immigrants and the importance of work.

The phenomenon we described took place for generations 1 and 1.5. It would be worth checking how the second generation builds its national identity and how it presents its nationality. We hope that the subject of our research will serve as a good basis for further exploration of the topic of home, which is an urgent issue in times of increased migration. Our research contributes to understanding one of the behaviors aimed at preserving the memory of the home country.

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