

# Vietnamese diaspora in Moscow as an actual migration trend in Russia-Asia dialogue: a partnership of the state and private business

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**Abstract**—The constant growth of migration conceals a number of challenges for the capital of Russia. In this regard, the problems of conflict-free, comfortable socio-cultural adaptation of external migrants are highlighted, among which the share of citizens not only from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, but also from the far abroad (especially the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, including Vietnam) is rapidly growing. They do not know Russian, as well as the Russian cultural traditions, well. It is obvious that the effective adaptation of external migrants to a new socio-cultural environment is systematically linked to the economic and legal security of the city, with the reduction and prevention of ethnic and confessional tension in the interethnic relations between the city's natives and its guests, with the preservation and development of a special Moscow identity.

**Keywords**—*Vietnamese diaspora, Russia, migrants, migration processes*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the Moscow government is implementing an effective socio-economic and cultural model for the development of the capital megalopolis, which creates a stable positive migration trend.

The relevance of the research topic is due to the fact that occurred at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Radical economic, political, demographic, ecological and socio-cultural changes are accompanied worldwide by mass population movements that are becoming global in scope. The redrawing of the modern political map of the world is connected with the disintegration of some and the formation of other states; this process leads to various influxes of migration, which leads to new ethno-territorial demarcations. Strengthening

ethnic tensions in the society and increasing ethnic conflicts testify to the increasing complexity of problems in the sphere of interethnic relations and the need to find ways to solve them. In this context, the phenomenon of the Diaspora, which attracts the interest of scientists, becomes especially important [1-4].

The Vietnamese-Russian relations have deep historical roots. Back in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russian travelers visited Vietnam. In 1904-1905, the Russian cruiser Aurora entered the East, or South China, Sea, to the port of Cam Ranh. The East Sea itself is one of the important and strategic waterways in the world economy today, and the struggle for the dominant positions in this sea is acute. But the true origin of the relationship of the Soviet-Vietnamese friendship dates back to 1923, when the Vietnamese patriot Nguyen Ai Quoc (later President Ho Chi Minh) came from Paris to Moscow to study at the University of the Working People of the East.

There he took part in the work of the First Congress of the Peasants' International, held from 12 to 15 October, 1923, was elected to its executive committee and presidium. At the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Comintern, held from 17 June –to 8 July, 1924, Nguyen Ai Quoc was elected a member of the Eastern Commission responsible for the work of the Southern Branch.

Perception of the Russian literature, one of the largest national literatures, and creative mastering of its achievements helped the Vietnamese culture to enter the context of European civilization. Features of the Vietnamese culture of modern times were the simultaneous development of their own culture and the development of modern literature. In the latter case, we

are talking about the formation of separate genre forms, which have no analogues in Vietnamese literature. This vibrant attitude of the Vietnamese to Russian culture ensured and ensures a constant influx of migrants from Vietnam to Russia, primarily to Moscow.

At the same time, the constant growth of migration conceals a number of challenges for the capital of Russia. In this regard, the problems of conflict-free, comfortable socio-cultural adaptation of external migrants are highlighted, among which the share of citizens not only from the CIS countries but also from the far abroad (especially the countries of the Asia-Pacific region) is rapidly growing. They do not know Russian and Russian cultural traditions well. It is obvious that the effective adaptation of external migrants to a new socio-cultural environment is systematically linked to the economic and legal security of the city, with the reduction and prevention of ethnic and confessional tension in the interethnic relations between the city's natives and its guests.

The Vietnamese felt the beauty of the Russian language deeper, and therefore Russian, for the Vietnamese, is easier than English. According to Vietnamese students who study first English, and then Russian, the latter is much more complicated [5]. Hence, the time factor is also important for foreigners who study a foreign language.

On the whole, the Vietnamese consider the Russian language to be difficult if compared with other languages, especially regarding the grammatical structure, phonetic features and stylistic differentiation. In this regard, the Russian language is very complicated. Moreover, it is even more difficult to study Russian in another country, in Vietnam, outside the language environment, when there are practically no films in Russian, and there is no music. The first channel has ceased to function in the last two years.

However, these factors do not affect the growth of Vietnamese migration to Russia, in particular to Moscow. In modern Russia there is quite a large Vietnamese community (about 60 thousand people). Vietnamese citizens live mainly in big cities: Moscow (tens of thousands), Ufa, St. Petersburg, and Kazan, Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, Samara, Chelyabinsk and others (from a few tens to a thousand people).

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

At present, the Vietnamese Diaspora in Moscow in particular and in Russia in general functions in two areas: 1) reception of Vietnamese students in Russian universities, and 2) participating in business activities. As the research team under the leadership of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) Correspondent Sergey Ryazantsev points out, migration due to climate change cannot be discarded in the future [3].

Periodically conducted surveys of Vietnamese migrants in Moscow show that there are certain reference points that allow talking about the prospects for adaptation and integration of the Vietnamese in Russia as a whole. The Vietnamese survey was conducted through consulting centers, where

multidisciplinary services are provided - translation, legal, financial and others, namely the "Viet-Nga", "Thu-Nga", "Song Lam", "Ha Lam", "New Century", "Faith", "Vinh Ha", "Hong Phieu". A total of about 300 people were interviewed in 2015 in these centers. We interviewed them. Vietnamese and plays an important role of mediation between the Vietnamese Diaspora and the surrounding world. The main task of the conducted surveys was to identify the attitude of Vietnamese citizens residing in Moscow to the prospects of their socio-cultural adaptation to the life of the capital megapolis.

The source of the research is complex. International normative legal acts, treaties, programs of the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam helped to illuminate the current migration, and the interethnic and ethno-social situation.

A significant group of materials on the topic under consideration was given by various legal acts of state authorities at various levels: federal laws on the legal status of foreign citizens, the procedure for leaving and entering the Russian Federation and migratory registration of foreign citizens, decrees of the President of the Russian Federation on the attraction and use of foreign labor, decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation on quotas for foreign persons, orders of the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and provisions of the Federal Migration Service of the Federation.

We have obtained information on the demographic and social processes characteristic of Moscow, their influence on an interethnic situation. Besides, this group includes results of the sociological survey conducted by authors in 2015-2017. We consider the content analysis of the press in Russian and English (2015-2017) on the issue of the Vietnamese Diaspora. The mass media-contains texts of official statements by representatives of public authorities, reports of public figures, scientists at conferences and other scientific, socio-political forums; the problems of which touched upon the functioning of the Vietnamese ethnic community in Russia and Moscow in particular. These sources are rich in both factual and analytical material, reflecting the vision of ethnic issues by different layers of society and allowing one to trace their reaction to important events taking place in the life of the Vietnamese population [6].

So many problems have not yet been sufficiently investigated from the standpoint of the modern methodology.

## III. RESULTS

We regard as a new and successful migration trend the positive adaptation of Vietnamese people in Russia, by which we understand their achievements of integration with Russian culture. In most cases, integration [7] becomes the most preferable variant of such a migration trend as an acculturation strategy for a large mass of ethnic migrants. This strategy presupposes the careful preservation and further

development of their own cultural heritage with the most benevolent, harmonious and open attitude to various forms of interaction with the host community. For migrants, a successful and effective type of adaptation is, first of all, integration.



Fig. 1. Graduates of the Moscow school #338 in 2018: To Ngoc Anh, Baboshin Maxim and Karabulatov Mikhail (Photo by author I.Karabulatova, published in the Russian Network "VKontakte", 27 June 2018).

Vietnamese citizens in Moscow are divided into several categories: employees of diplomatic missions, employees of state and independent firms, students and graduate students of civil and military universities. However, the main Diaspora's mass consists of people concentrated in the spheres of legal, semi-legal and illegal trade and production and related services. These people do not speak Russian, are unfamiliar with the mentality of Russians, used to the fact that their problems are solved by mediators and, as a rule, bypassing the laws of Russia.

The Vietnamese Diaspora has taken root in Russia. Those who live there more than ten years and have a well-established business will not to go home. However, their children are often sent to Vietnam for secondary education, so many children of the preschool age can be found in Vietnamese hostels, but students of Vietnamese nationality are rare.

Despite the fact that the Vietnamese live in the tropical and subtropical climate in their homeland, they are well acclimatized in Russia. Some live even beyond the Arctic Circle, for example, in Murmansk and Dudinka, and the Krasnoyarsk territory.

In Moscow, the concept of "Vietnamese market" became a household name. Associations that arise with this concept are large-scale closed trade structures with non-transparent logistics and accounting. The emergence and development of such structures is stimulated by the imperfection of the work of migration and tax services, as well as migration legislation. In Moscow, four Vietnamese markets are widely known.

As for the negative view, this hierarchy within the Vietnamese Diaspora is a psychological adaptation, and it helps to isolate and marginalize. The Vietnamese Diaspora in Moscow demonstrates some negative aspects of adaptation. For the Vietnamese, the community is important. The social principle in Vietnam stands above individualism. The Vietnamese Diaspora in Russia is well organized. Vietnamese associations, various social organizations established in Moscow. These communities hold various events: the speeches of speakers alternate with the pronunciation of toasts, the singing of national and patriotic songs. Even a member of the presidium can act as a vocalist.

Taking into account the traditional cheerfulness and optimism of the Vietnamese, the completely different way of life shown by them in Russia (characterized as being closed, distrustful, and extremely secretive), carried out within the framework of isolated ethnic groups that are not reaching for full contact, speaks of their perception of the surrounding cultural environment as being alien to them. The perception of the cultural life of the metropolitan metropolis by migrants from Vietnam as alien to them has its own reasons.

When asked about the time spent in Moscow, 66% of the respondents answered that they had been there for less than a year, 12% - for a period of more than a year, and 22% were at a loss to answer. Obviously, the shorter the term of a migrant's stay in the capital, the lower his motivation for a full socio-cultural adaptation. Vietnamese migrants, for the most part, articulate preferences for a short stay in Moscow. This circumstance negatively affects their readiness to perceive cultural traditions and behavioral stereotypes of Muscovites.

In addition:

- 18% of respondents have higher education,
- 48% have secondary special education,
- Only 8% work in the specialty (92% of the respect do not work in their specialty).

A small share in the structure of the Vietnamese Diaspora of people with higher education testifies to the human capital problem faced by the Diaspora in the process of socio-cultural adaptation. People with higher education are more open and prepared to perceive other socio-cultural experiences.

An extremely small percentage of Vietnamese work in Moscow in their specialty, and this is an indicative point. Obviously, migrants working on a diploma are interested in long periods of stay in the capital and, consequently, in mastering the basics of culture. A huge percentage of non-specialists, confirms the installation of migrants for a short stay in Moscow, and therefore, their disinterest in socio-cultural adaptation.

The absence of uncertainty of interest in the change of citizenship is proportional to the lack of interest in full-fledged socio-cultural adaptation. 59% of the respondents answered the question of obtaining Russian citizenship negatively, 5% of the respondents

positively, and 36% were at a loss to answer. It is obvious that a person striving for citizenship will actively master the culture of their future homeland, using for this purpose all possible instruments, including those provided by the host country. On the contrary, a person who does not aim at obtaining citizenship will ignore such tools.

Quite calm is the opposition of 'one's own' in the perception of culture. In the comparative assessment of relations with Vietnamese migrants from Muscovites and the Moscow authorities, the opinions of the respondents differ significantly. 34% of respondents are confident that Muscovites are favorably disposed towards Vietnamese, 59% are neutral or negative neutral (indifferent), and only 5% have indicated a negative, hostile attitude. The absence of conflict between Vietnamese and Russians (Muscovites) is especially noticeable in comparison, for example, with the attitude of Russians (Muscovites) towards Caucasians. This indicates the existence of socio-cultural compatibility and, as a consequence, the great potential for the Vietnamese to adapt to the Russian (Moscow) environment. Among the positive qualities of Muscovites, Vietnamese respondents took the first places: active, educated, tolerant, and efficient.

The fact that the Vietnamese focus on these qualities indicates that they share the positivity of these qualities. Thus, the qualities indicated by respondents indicate not only the socio-cultural 'maturity' of the Moscow multinational community, but also about common values shared by representatives of the Vietnamese Diaspora and indigenous Muscovites.

The content of answers to questions about the Russian culture and Russian language testifies to the readiness of ordinary members of the Vietnamese Diaspora to study the Russian language and culture on a voluntary and gratuitous basis. Thus, 70% of respondents are sure that special measures are needed to promote the achievements of the Russian culture among the Vietnamese Diaspora, while 22% found it difficult to answer, and only 8% considered it superfluous. For one reason or another (lack of necessity, financial difficulties, time problems, etc.), 97% of the respondents cannot attend paid Russian language courses, and 3% of them study Russian with tutors. At the same time, in the case of free Russian classes, 56% of the respondents are ready to study it, and 44% were at a loss to answer. Obviously, the offer of such a service by the Moscow government for Vietnamese would be an important condition for the removal of migrants from their socio-cultural autarky.

If current trends continue, Russia will face a severe demographic crisis. Therefore, the Russian government is interested in attracting Vietnamese migrants. Despite the slight improvements observed recently, the aging and depopulation processes are likely to continue for decades. Given the current migration trends, the population of Russia is estimated to decline by 20% by 2050 to 112-119 million people. In the near future, the country will also face the problem of shortage in the working-age population. In order to compensate for

these trends, one million immigrants come to the country every year - three times more than the average official data on the population influx in the last 15 years, and five times more than in recent years after the tightening of the migration legislation.

The multi-profile "Hanoi-Moscow Centre" in the northeast of Moscow has become a social and cultural Centre and a symbol of cooperation and friendship between Vietnam and Russia, one of the main centers of Asian cultures in the capital and a platform for promoting interesting oriental products.

This is the first investment project in Russia, which is fully funded by Vietnam. The investment was valued at USD 250 million [8]. Muscovites are offered with excellent textiles, footwear, arts and crafts items; crocodile leather products, pearls and silk, habitual and exotic fruits and vegetables, and much more. A total of 150 shops are open. In addition, in the shopping Centre "Hanoi-Moscow", you can get acquainted with the culture of Asia. A copy of the pagoda "Chua Mot Cot" (One Pillar Pagoda) is built on the territory of this multifunctional center of Vietnamese culture.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Petra Muellerova has once analyzed the Vietnamese Diaspora in the Czech Republic, which allowed her to formulate the main classification characteristics of Vietnamese immigrants [2]. In general, the Vietnamese Diaspora in the Czech Republic ranks third in the country in number, according to Interior Ministry statistics, more than 56,700 Vietnamese live in the country. This fact prompted the announcement of 2015 in the Czech Republic the year of Vietnam [9].

P. Muellerova made a classification of the Vietnamese Diaspora and the researcher identified several groups. We believe that these groups are organized as pyramids. The most numerous and disenfranchised group of small traders (Vietnamese: *dân đen*, lit. black people) is located at the bottom, it forms the Foundation. The second level is represented by *chủ hàng* group (owners of goods). Next level formed by a group *xã hội đen* (the light society), it represent the Vietnamese mafia. The top of the pyramid there is a group *dịch vụ*, that is, the people providing the services [2]. This hierarchy resembles a caste bundle, and it is impossible to move from one caste to another [10]. We think that this pyramid of the Vietnamese Diaspora can be represented as a schematic pagoda.

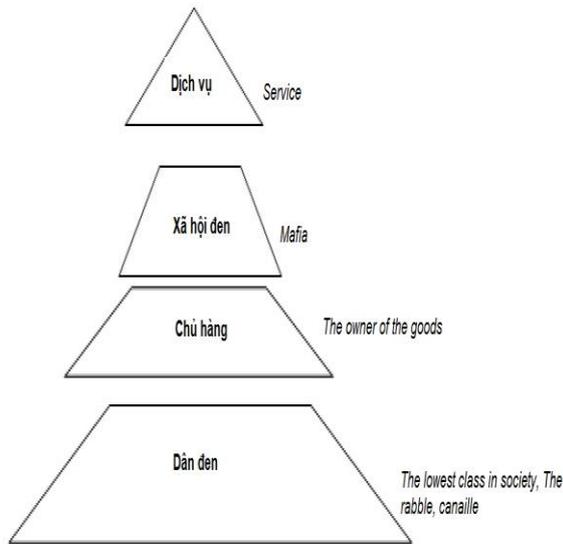


Fig. 2. Pyramid of the Vietnamese Diaspora.

These processes are an inalienable feature of the formation of a transcultural language personality [11]. To adapt and integrate the Vietnamese in the Russian realities, it is necessary to take into account that in general this people is in the framework of the traditional (Buddhist-Confucian) “southeastern” model. However, in addition to traditional features, Vietnamese people demonstrate modern features associated with a clear national identity and modernization, the basis of which is in long-term contacts with European, more widely – “Western” cultures: France, the US, Russia. Similar (or more pronounced) traits are found among citizens of South Korea, Hong Kong, and other “Asian tigers”. This suggests that the forecasts for the upcoming “Vietnamese economic miracle” are more than justified.

Russia’s migration policy has been and remains rather counterproductive. Previously, the Russian authorities focused on the Western type of policy (EU and US) and the Russian government ignored the noticeable differences in the situation in countries from Russia. First, in Russia, the need for migrants is more acute, because the demographic problems in the country are more serious. Second, the costs of migration are lower. Migration to Russia from other countries is becoming an important prerequisite for sustainable economic development of the country. In fact, the spread of assessments of the presence of migrant workers in Russia varies within very wide limits: “According to various estimates, the number of illegal labor migrants in Russia varies from 1.5 to 15 million people.” [1].

In turn, to date, *Việt Kiều*, or overseas Vietnamese, has invested approx. USD 6 billion in the country’s economy in 3,000 projects. A large number of enterprises are successfully developing, turning into those with leading brands, such as Vingroup and Eurowindows. The main spheres of participation of the overseas Vietnamese are agriculture, healthcare,

education, real estate, hospitality and tourism. For now, these are small investment projects with a more rapid payback period, which are aimed mainly at developing the country’s domestic market. The most significant of them include the “Dan Funicular” in Danang and “Dalat Eden Resort” in Dalat. Many foreign Vietnamese businessmen are the main shareholders of large banks and corporations in Vietnam, such as the Techcombank, VPBank, Melinh Plaza, and others [12].

The Foundation of the Vietnamese Diaspora is a community that already has a clearly defined identity formed in the country of Exodus. We are talking about the preservation and continuous development of the original and “only true” identity, despite the possibility of the emergence of new forms of self-identification.

## V. CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the purposeful creation of conditions for acquaintance with all the wealth of Russian culture, both traditional and modern, is one of the most important tools for involving members of the Vietnamese Diaspora in the cultural life of Moscow. Russian culture is of interest to the overwhelming majority of Vietnamese respondents: 88% want to know it better and regret the lack of time and conditions for this acquaintance, but 12% are indifferent to Russian culture. We believe that a positive attitude towards Russian culture is an important resource for the socio-cultural adaptation of the Vietnamese Diaspora.

Comfortable living conditions in Russia - not only economic, but also socio-cultural - could change the initial motivation of visitors. However, this does not happen. There is a serious reason why Vietnamese citizens try not to attend cultural and other events, public places. The survey shows that migrants from Vietnam, in contact with local residents, and especially with representatives of the authorities, tend to get negative experience of communication. Certain alienation in large megacities is characteristic of the whole world. However, the perception of the activities of Moscow officials and employees (in the opinion of the respondents in our survey, the majority of officials and employees demonstrate indifference or hostility to migrants - 64% and 28% respectively) as an obstacle, not a demonstrative aid. In this case, we can say that, in comparison with the western state-administrative culture, the Russian state is imperfect, not only at the institutional level, but also at the communicative level.

At the same time, we find a great and unselfish interest in Russian culture, which was demonstrated by Vietnamese respondents, which clearly indicates the serious adaptive potential of the Vietnamese Diaspora.

The corporate nature of the Vietnamese Diaspora, among other reasons, is also considered an advantage in economic activities. While the majority of people in the surrounding society are socially dispersed, representatives of the Diaspora use corporatism. The corporate identity can be both internal and external. Internal corporatism manifests itself in mutual assistance provided by the Diaspora’s members to one

another. The Vietnamese Diaspora works in the economic sphere, and has a variety of forms: assistance in the adaptation of newcomers, including employment, preferential financial loans, preferences in business contacts, etc. With the development of international integration, external corporatism becomes more and more important. The Diaspora can be connected with many different kinds of communities: state-place of origin, mother-ethnos, other Diasporas of the same ethnic or religious affiliation. Often, Diasporas have contacts with other Diasporas who have common characteristics with them, or with other communities that are somehow connected with them culturally and historically.

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