Bösch, Frank; Su, Phi Hong

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Invisible, successful, and divided

Vietnamese in Germany since the late 1970s

Frank Bösch[1] and Phi Hong Su[2]

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Abstract: Until the 1970s, only 1000 Vietnamese lived in West and East Germany, most of them international students. West Germany, in particular, had not yet been confronted with non-European refugees. This changed after 1978 with the influx of around 35,000 "boat people" from Viet Nam and other countries in South East Asia, who arrived as part of a contingent quota admission. Their entry led to new strategies for integration, including obligatory language classes and a host of measures resembling those in other countries of refugee resettlement. Yet, the German case differs from other countries because of the simultaneous arrival of non-refugee Vietnamese, who came on temporary labour contracts to socialist East Germany starting in 1980. These two migration streams would converge when Germany reunified in 1990. Drawing on mixed qualitative methods, this paper offers a strategic case for understanding factors that shaped the arrival and resettlement experiences of Vietnamese refugees and contract workers in Germany. By comparing two migration streams from the same country of origin that experienced varied contexts of reception (government, labour market, and ethnic community), we suggest that a context of reception need not be uniformly positive for immigrants and refugees to have an integration experience deemed successful.

Keywords: integration, international migration, refugees, Germany, media analysis, qualitative interviews

JEL classification: J15, O15, R23, N34, N94

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[1] Frank Bösch, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany; [2] Phi Hong Su, University of California, Los Angeles, USA, corresponding author, phi.h.su@gmail.com (equal co-authors).

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Information and requests: publications@wider.unu.edu

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Katajanokanlaituri 6 B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland

1 Introduction: migrating to Germany

After the 1975 reunification of Viet Nam under a one-party socialist system, Hiếu[1] and his siblings were relocated to a largely uninhabited area called a New Economic Zone (NEZ). Both of Hiếu"s parents had died, and his future looked bleak. Because Hiếu "did not have merit with the revolution", opportunities to advance through education were closed to him. The "social and psychic costs" (Dang, Goldstein, and McNally 1997, 331) of the relocation to a NEZ would lead many, like Hiếu, to emigrate. The choice to depart the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (SRV) was constrained as well: "Because when you leave like that [by boat], you don't know if you'll survive or not". Refugees often escaped in unseaworthy vessels, and have thus been referred to as "boat people". Hiếu became one such boat person in 1979, having fled at the age of 18 along with most of his siblings. Their boat first docked in Malaysia, but was turned away after 12 days. They then continued onward to Indonesia, where they stayed in a refugee camp for three months. When the time came to declare an intended resettlement country, Hiếu pressed for the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or West Germany):

> It seems like no one thought of [going to West] Germany because everyone understood clearly that … the German language was also difficult … [but] I told my younger siblings that the German people … were victims of war. We were also victims of war, so I thought Germans would be able to understand us better.

Hiếu and his siblings subsequently became one of the first cohorts of Vietnamese refugees resettled in West Germany.

There was no pre-existing ethnic community at the time when Hiếu arrived in West Germany in the late 1970s, "so relationships with other Vietnamese were rare". While Hiếu looked to the few Vietnamese refugees who were present for emotional and moral support, he relied on government resettlement policies to integrate into German society. After arriving in the city of West Berlin, Hiếu and his siblings were assigned a sponsor family who facilitated their integration. Hiếu's relationship with his sponsor family lasted for the rest of their lives. In school, Hiếu's younger siblings received tutoring from teachers to catch up to classmates in their German language fluency. Additionally, they each received a monthly stipend that Hiếu considered very generous. After three months of language training as an adult, Hiếu convinced his case managers to let him take classes at the Goethe Institute for language certification so that he could attend university. As one of the refugees who arrived earliest in West Germany, Hiếu went on to participate in cultural efforts such as teaching the Vietnamese language to the younger generation. When the Berlin Wall came down, Hiếu learned of the presence of tens of thousands of Vietnamese contract workers in the German Democratic Republic (GDR or East Germany). He and other refugees organized efforts to "greet their countrymen" fleeing the East.

Hiếu embodies the success story, echoed across countries, of Vietnamese refugee resettlement. From facing a bleak future in a country that considered him and others like him "internal enemies", Hiếu eventually built an enviable life for himself in Germany. Today, he holds a PhD in a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) field. He works for a German corporation, and nearly all his colleagues are ethnic Germans. He married a fellow Vietnamese refugee, and they

[1] All names of interviewees are pseudonyms. Interviews were conducted by Phi Hong Su from 2014 to 2016.

have raised their children to speak both Vietnamese and German. For serious conversations, however, Hiếu and his wife speak German so that their children can fully express themselves.

Vietnamese refugees in Germany, like Hiếu, are widely considered successful on many integration measures (Wolf 2007). As in other countries of resettlement, the second generation is praised as highly academically achieving (El-Mafaalani and Kemper 2017), a barometer against which other immigrant groups are evaluated. At the same time, public debates stress the ambivalence of attitudes towards this success: Vietnamese in Berlin are considered "ideal migrants with sorrows"[2] or "invisible favourites",[3] as they do not often occupy positions in public life, business, or administration.

Yet, the Vietnamese population in Germany differs in one important respect from those in other countries of resettlement: Vietnamese in Germany constitute a heterogeneous national-origin group because of the Cold War context in which they arrived in divided Germany. While 35,000 refugees arrived in West Germany beginning in 1979, roughly 70,000 contract workers began to arrive in East Germany in 1980. These migration streams crudely correlate with regions of origin in Viet Nam, with many refugees hailing from former South Viet Nam and contract workers from former North Viet Nam. Pundits, scholars, and laypersons read these regions of origin (North and South) and Cold War migration streams (contract worker and refugee) as proxies for allegiance or opposition to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The varied migration experiences of Vietnamese, their social patterns, and their self-conceptions continue to be shaped by historical experiences in Viet Nam, arrival in democratic versus communist Germany, and the different consequences of reunification for these migrants in the West versus the East. The formerly divided city of Berlin thus provides a crucial site for analysing the development of Vietnamese communities in the German context.

In comparing these two groups, we consider how migrants, on average, integrated when met with a positive context of reception but limited ethnic social capital (as with refugees) or vice versa (as with contract workers). Since Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut's (2014 [1990]) observation of the importance of "modes of incorporation", a generation of scholars have recognized various contextual factors that impact how immigrants incorporate into host societies. Central to modes of incorporation is the idea that "the context that receives immigrants plays a decisive role in their process of adaptation, regardless of the human capital the immigrants may possess" (Portes and MacLeod 1996, 257). These contexts of reception include "the policies of the receiving government, the characteristic of the labor market, and the features of [immigrants'] own ethnic communities" (Portes and Rumbaut 2014 [1990], 139). Three ideal-type contexts of reception are: *hostile*, defined as when "[t]he government apparatus takes a dim view of the inflow and attempts to reduce or suppress it altogether" (Portes and Böröcz 1989, 618); *neutral*, when immigrants may freely compete with natives, specifically on educational measures; and *positive*, when the host government provides material assistance and the migrant group is received favourably by the public.

Our study further considers the impact of different components of contexts of reception (government, labour market, and pre-existing ethnic community). Scholars have noted, in

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[2] Thorkit Treichel, "Vietnamesen: Mustergültige Migranten mit vielen Sorgen," *Berliner Zeitung*, August 8, 2014. www.berliner-zeitung.de/berlin/vietnamesen-musterguеltige-migranten-mit-vielen-sorgen-3094164.

[3] "Vietnamesen in Deutschland: Die unsichtbaren Lieblinge," *Cicero: Magazin für Politische Kultur*, n.d. http://cicero.de/innenpolitik/die-unsichtbaren-lieblinge/46135 (accessed January 15, 2018).

particular, the significance of a pre-existing co-ethnic community in supporting the integration of immigrants (Landolt and Da 2005; Reitz 2002).[4] Of most relevance to us in this regard is Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston's (1998) foundational study of a Vietnamese refugee community in New Orleans. The authors propose a *theory of ethnic social relations*, wherein social capital that is generated by the ethnic community facilitates the educational attainment of the second generation, despite low levels of human capital among their refugee parents. In the German context, however, Vietnamese refugees are fewer in number and dispersed throughout the federal states, so that they never formed a concentrated ethnic community in the way that Vietnamese in the USA did. By contrast, contract workers who stayed after the fall of the Berlin Wall have formed visible ethnic communities in eastern Berlin. However, they were stigmatized as gangsters and criminals (Bui 2003) and discriminated against in housing and employment after 1990 (Hillmann 2005). We therefore extend Zhou and Bankston's work to consider the extent to which social capital can overcome an otherwise negative context of reception.

Drawing on historical sources from government administrations and media and on qualitative interviews, we first consider the arrival and social composition of Vietnamese in West and East Germany, respectively. In particular, we examine how the arrival of Vietnamese refugees forced the host country of West Germany to change its integration strategies, and contrast this with how East Germany dealt with its resident Vietnamese. We then provide a qualitative portrait of the arrival and integration experiences of Vietnamese in the city of Berlin. Next, we consider the outcomes and social dynamics of Vietnamese in reunified Berlin after 1990. Thereafter, we span out to a statistical portrait of integration outcomes in Germany, considering other regions in addition to Berlin. Because Vietnamese refugees and contract workers varied on several different dimensions, we also highlight intergenerational comparisons to provide supporting evidence of factors that shape integration outcomes. We then conclude with what our comparative case study suggests about the forces shaping integration and inequality.

2 Support and solidarity: refugees in West Germany

Very few Vietnamese lived in either West or East Germany prior to the late 1970s. On the eve of Vietnamese reunification, there were only about 1600 Vietnamese in democratic West Germany, the great majority of them students from South Viet Nam.[5] Some of them stayed after the victory of North Viet Nam over South Viet Nam in 1975. After the end of the war, the US government demanded that West Germany accept 3000 Vietnamese refugees, but only 1300 arrived because West Germany rejected the idea of being a country of immigrants.[6] Only 200 orphans from Viet Nam had been adopted by West Germans, though this group became very prominent because one of the adoptees, Philipp Rösler, would go on to become Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister of the economy in 2009. He was the first German federal minister with a migrant background and

[4] However, some have questioned the purchase of such a presumed community, and recognize that exploitation can happen within co-ethnic relations (Morales, 2004; Stein, 1979). Thus, an ethnic community may simultaneously have beneficial and harmful outcomes.

[5] Notice of the government 1975, Bundesarchiv B 136 16709.

[6] Non-Germans had only been accepted as temporary workers: at least 14 million of them came to West Germany, and 12 million returned to their home countries. This 'leakage and overspill, as families arrive, courts mitigate … and bureaucrats weaken' (Surak, 2013, 101), is typical of guestworker programmes all over the world.

thus became a symbol for the integration of Vietnamese, although he had no direct connection to Viet Nam and was an exception among those of migrant origin.

By 1979–80, the situation of Vietnamese in both German states had changed dramatically. First, due to public pressure from the media and UNHCR, the West German government reluctantly accepted a quota of 10,000 boat refugees in 1979 (Bösch 2017). The number of accepted people eventually increased more than three times for several reasons. First, many journalists participated in campaigns to help rescue and resettle "boat people". For example, the weekly *Die Zeit* raised funds to bring 274 refugees from Viet Nam to Hamburg, paying for travel, housing, and other social benefits.[7] With the support of fellow journalists, intellectuals, and politicians, radio journalist Rupert Neudeck gathered enough donations to hire a boat to sail around South East Asia. His organization and boat, the *Cap Anamur*, rescued more than 10,000 "boat people" at sea in the early 1980s. Because the ship sailed under the West German flag, the government felt formally obligated to take the shipwrecked refugees up to 1982.

Second, regional anti-communist politicians, like Ernst Albrecht of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), proposed initiatives to fly individual refugees directly to the federal states. Many conservative politicians supported Vietnamese refugees, whom they saw as fleeing communism.[8] The CDU also supported the integration of "boat people" to underline that it was a party with global solidarity that supported human rights, and that it was connected to the left. Even the former Christian Democrat Alexander Gauland, nowadays leader of Germany's most radical right-wing party, Alternative für Deutschland, visited refugee camps in Hong Kong and came back to Frankfurt with 250 Vietnamese.

Third, there was broad support and help for Vietnamese refugees within civil society. This outpouring of support remains exceptional to this day, perhaps with the exception of the mobilization for Syrian refugees in 2014–15. Vietnamese refugees' flight (presumed to be a rejection of the victory of the communist North) reminded many of the flight of 12 million Germans from their former eastern territories after 1945. At the same time, discussions about the US mini-series *Holocaust* led many to compare Vietnamese to the Jewish refugees of the 1940s.[9] Feeling culpable for that devastation, many Germans claimed that a rich and democratic country like West Germany should assist refugees.[10] Many individuals offered donations, jobs, and housing to Vietnamese refugees. Racial prejudices against Vietnamese were much lower than against refugees from Islamic or African countries because (South) East Asians were stereotyped as diligent and hard-working—traits that continue to be key elements of German self-perception. Because of these factors, Vietnamese refugees in West Germany had, relative to other foreign-origin groups, excellent external preconditions to start their new lives.

"Boat people" in West Germany received generous social support compared with other migrants. They first arrived in central camps in West Germany and were later distributed across the federal states by a fixed quota based on the population and economic power of each (the "Königsteiner Schlüssel"). They had the possibility of choosing towns if and where they had family relations.

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[7] See various articles in *Die Zeit* such as those on July 27, August 17, and September 28, 1979.

[8] Vietnamese and other Cold War refugees are generally described as having 'voted with their feet' against a socialist regime. However, the reasons people decided to flee by boat are complex and interwoven, often including a combination of political, economic, and social motivations (Su and Sanko, 2017).

[9] "Die Juden des Osten," *Spiegel*, 25 June 1979, 116.

[10] Even Christian Democratic politicians argued thus. See the press statement of the Vietnam-Büro, July 5, 1979, Archiv ACDP Bonn 04-007-471-<4.

Many remain in the north and south-west to this day, leading to a distribution of the refugee population. They likely also received more assistance with social integration than did their co-ethnic counterparts in other countries of resettlement such as the USA: refugees were provided with initial aid of 1000–3000 Marks and a monthly stipend of 1200 Marks (roughly US$1200 today). They also received longer-lasting, mandatory language and integration courses (Blume 1988, 378ff). Unlike ordinary asylum seekers, Vietnamese quota refugees were allowed to work after six months, and students could receive financial support for their studies. The federal government paid initial costs, but the majority had to be paid by cities, which were responsible for social benefits. Many refugees received great support from West German citizens in the first years. For instance, after a local newspaper in Cologne reported the arrival of 37 "boat people" in 1979, it received offers of 35 job openings, 25 flats, and a large amount of donations from its readers.[11] The first 1000 Vietnamese in the refugee camp Friedland, in Lower Saxony, received 14,000 parcels from the population within the first month (Blucher 2017, 194).

Despite this manifold support, however, the social integration of Vietnamese refugees remained much more difficult than expected. As observed by Hiếu in the opening vignette, one major obstacle was the German language. Those fleeing Viet Nam likely had some familiarity with French and English through, respectively, colonization and the presence of American military in the South. Thus, many opted to go to French- and English-speaking countries such as the USA, France, Canada, and Australia. Many more-highly qualified Vietnamese and those who had worked for American or French entities while in Viet Nam escaped to these countries. West Germany seemed a far less obvious choice for Vietnamese, but many chose it because they were saved by the West German ship *Cap Anamur*, or had no other option in the overcrowded camps in South East Asia. Within the Asian camps, West German officials and organizations tried to choose people with a moderate level of education. As the German language is highly difficult, only the second generation, which grew up in Germany, managed to deal with the language sufficiently to receive well-paid jobs. Data from German cities such as Munich show that more than half of all Vietnamese over the age of 16 had work in the early 1980s, two-thirds by the late 1980s, and three-quarters by 1989.[12] This is a very high rate even when compared with native Germans. West Germans accepted that the Vietnamese had come to stay. Indeed, only between 200 and 300 Vietnamese left the country each year.[13] After a decade, a great majority had jobs. In 1989 almost three-quarters of the Vietnamese in West Germany between 15 and 65 years of age were employees subject to social insurance contributions (Horr 1991, 53, 63); others were self-employed or had illicit work. There are no precise statistics on the profiles of Vietnamese in West Germany; however, some city- and state-level statistics suggest that many Vietnamese encountered more socioeconomic difficulties than expected in the 1980s. For example, an examination of 122 Vietnamese in Hamburg concluded that they were not qualified to work in their former jobs (i.e. as mechanics or tailors) because they lacked the required technical skills (Beuchling 2003, 107). The federal state of Lower Saxony found that in 1985, at least half of Vietnamese could secure employment, albeit below their level of qualification.[14] Many had been shopkeepers in Viet Nam, but strict German laws against late-opening corner shops made self-employment difficult until the 1990s. Thus, even those Vietnamese with university degrees opened *Chinese* restaurants. This was

[11] *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, September 13, 1979.

[12] In 1989, 780 of 1570 Vietnamese living in Munich were working. Statistisches Amt München, "Vietnamesen in München, 1975–1996"; data provided to the authors October 25, 2017.

[13] Statistisches Bundesamt, "Wanderung zwischen Deutschland und dem Ausland nach Staatsbürgerschaft"; data provided to the authors October 11, 2017.

[14] Vermerk Innenministerium Niedersachsen, August 20, 1985, Archiv ACDP Bonn 01-473-029/8.

not only because of the ethnic Chinese background of many refugees, but also because, for many Germans, Asia was synonymous with China. While non-refugee migrants were typically single men in their twenties, the Vietnamese quota refugees often arrived as families with young children. This had a conflicting impact on their integration. On one hand, it provided an opportunity for young children to acquire an education, master the German language, and integrate into the labour market. Yet, this set-up also hindered the integration of women, many of whom lived as housewives with limited contact with Germans because of the lack of daytime childcare in West Germany. While the arrival of "boat people" received much public attention, they largely became invisible in many respects after the 1980s.

3 Isolated: contract workers in East Germany

The migration history of Vietnamese to communist East Germany stood in sharp contrast to that of refugees in West Germany. From early on, the East German government had close relations and exchanges with communist North Viet Nam. The GDR provided training in its factories, party organizations, and universities for North Vietnamese. Some sources estimate that between 42,000 and 50,000 North Vietnamese students came for educational purposes to the GDR during the 40 years of its existence (Weiss 2005, 25; Elsner and Elsner 1992, 16ff). However, they rarely had private contact with East Germans. Some of these international students would later return to East Germany as group leaders for labour contingents.

In 1980, the SRV and GDR signed a bilateral labour agreement that would result in 70,000 Vietnamese workers coming to East Germany; the SRV had similar agreements with the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia (Schwenkel 2014, 239). In contrast to the refugees in the West, contract workers were seen as loyal to the communist government, being rewarded with coveted labour contracts that usually lasted four or five years. At least one-third were female. Whereas refugees arrived with their families, contract workers were expressly forbidden from doing so. In the early 1980s, contract workers tended to be more skilled. Beginning in the second half of the 1980s, when the majority of contract workers arrived, many unskilled workers and former soldiers came to work in the light- and heavy-industry factories of the GDR (Dennis 2005, 2017). While the Vietnamese in the West received obligatory language and integration programmes, similar support for contract workers in the East remained very poor, because it was expected that they would soon return to Viet Nam. Typically, a three-months language course was offered. In contrast to refugees, contract workers were also not supported by civil society, because private voluntary organizations, media, and donations were not allowed. Vietnamese had at least the same access to medical care as native East Germans and similar workers' rights. They had one big advantage in comparison with West Germany: everyone had work and earned his or her own money. Although this was obligatory, and dawdling in the factory was a reason to be sent home, this enabled at least some contact with other workers and some kind of independent consumption. As most of the Vietnamese seldom went out at night, they saved most of their income for the organized transfer of money and East German goods to their families in Viet Nam.

However, contact with native East Germans was restricted. The East German government supervised the entry of contract workers closely, with the goal of preventing, rather than facilitating, the integration of Vietnamese. Because both East Germany and Viet Nam stood to benefit from an ongoing contract labour exchange, the former made provisions to facilitate workers' transition abroad, for example by transporting new arrivals to East Berlin from Schönefeld Airport directly to their ethnic- and gender-segregated shared flats and confiscating their passports (Klessmann 2011, 192). Vietnamese were concentrated in some quarters of East Berlin and bigger cities like Leipzig, Rostock, and Dresden. Liaisons with East Germans and

marriages were prohibited, and it was stated in their contracts that pregnancy would lead to immediate return to Viet Nam (Raendchen 2000). Thus, on the eve of German reunification only 346 marriages had taken place (0.5 per cent), but one year later in 1990, when it was allowed and could prevent a deportation, 1300 married. The contracts included many other restrictions, such as on political participation. Violations of these restrictions would serve as grounds for removal from the programme. Yet, contemporary witnesses remember at least some contact between Vietnamese and East Germans at work and also in everyday life (Dennis 2017, 79). However, the lack of a shared language with East Germans was even a bigger problem than in West Germany: East Germans rarely spoke English or French, because Russian was the first foreign language taught at school. Compared with refugees in West Germany, contract workers in East Germany had far worse opportunities and external support to start new lives in Germany.

Despite the strict regulation of their movements and activities, many contract workers in East Germany considered their lives in the GDR a "paradise" up until the fall of the Berlin Wall (Kolinsky 2004, 85). Even though this paradise had few mechanisms of mobility in place, contract workers still had far higher earning capacity abroad than in Viet Nam, and could remit their savings to family members back home. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, many companies laid off workers regardless of the length of time left on their contracts. The state offered 3000 German Marks as an incentive for workers to repatriate, and conducted mass deportations of failed asylum seekers and those with a criminal record (Bui 2003). Many had to return to Viet Nam, while others remained in Germany with illicit or unclear status (Schmiz 2011, 91–94). While contract workers had come voluntarily to the GDR, their return to Viet Nam often became a sort of forced migration. Many applied for asylum to remain. While the reunification did not significantly disrupt the lives of Vietnamese in West Germany, it impacted the contract workers with real force, even more than it did native East Germans. The increasingly high employment rate and higher cost of living in the former East Germany was accompanied by a new wave of nationalism. This led to xenophobic and racist violence in the early 1990s. Vietnamese, who were the biggest migrant group in East Germany, were attacked in 1992 and several flats were burned by mobs, such as those in Rostock and Hoyerswerder. Vietnamese victims report how friendly neighbours and colleagues turned a blind eye to their plight (Long 2017, 138). Moreover, there remained an open question as to whether the reunification of Germany would go hand in hand with a reunification of Vietnamese in Germany.

4 A qualitative portrait of Vietnamese in West and East Berlin

Interviews with refugees and those who arrived in West Germany through family reunification for refugees corroborate the point about generous government and public support. Yến,[15] for example, arrived in West Berlin in 1983 through family reunification for refugees. She was already in her thirties when she migrated, and thought she would start working immediately, but "[West] Germany took care of [her] so fully", better than rich parents ever could have, she insisted. She cited no difficulties in her early days in West Germany, with assistance from some of the earlier-mentioned government programmes. Yến interacted with co-ethnics often, especially during religious holidays. However, she attributes the ease of her integration solely to the infrastructure provided by the West German government. She could not imagine ever returning to Viet Nam, "because here is paradise". Yến enjoys a fulfilling career today as a medical professional. She often

[15] Yến was one of a handful of respondents who declined to be voice-recorded. Therefore, her narrative is largely paraphrased here.

treats Vietnamese citizens, and especially former contract workers or new arrivals from Viet Nam who arrive undocumented. West and reunified Berlin boast a larger number of ethnic Vietnamese than do other federal states; consequently, Yến occasionally participates in ethnic activities such as cultural nights.

While all refugee respondents spoke favourably (and gratefully) of the assistance provided to them by West Germany, some were critical of what they saw as Germans' suspicion of foreigners and foreignness. One example comes from Thọ, who fled Viet Nam at the age of 14. Originally accompanied by an older family member, Thọ was left alone when his chaperon was discovered and captured trying to flee. At the time Thọ fled in 1979, some Vietnamese police participated in the refugee exodus by taking bribes, and Thọ's family could only afford to pay the passage for one person. Because Thọ's father was in the South Vietnamese army, Thọ would not have been likely to advance educationally or occupationally. More pressing from his parents' point of view was the fact that Thọ would have come of age to be drafted in a few years. They feared he would have to fight in Cambodia and would likely die there. After successfully escaping Viet Nam, Thọ was in transit in Indonesia for three months, and eventually continued directly to West Berlin. In his first months in West Berlin, Thọ was with 150 unaccompanied youth (mostly boys) like himself, who were later split between three cities as part of West Germany's dispersal policies. He learned German together with the other youth during the day. He had a translator, and three teachers who came into the refugee camp to teach him German. He was later relocated to a home in Wannsee, a wealthy south-west Berlin neighbourhood. Fifty youth, including Thọ, were housed in four buildings in a complex equipped with gardens and tennis courts so that they would not feel "sensitive because they were poor and did not have parents [with them]". After several months, Thọ moved in with a foster family. He had an adoptive mother who warned him, when he later considered moving to a small village to work, that Germans were unfriendly when they were unaccustomed to something: "When they meet you and they don't know who you are, they hate you … from fear [it turns] to hate." His adoptive mother was quick to note, however, that this was not racism, but fear of the unfamiliar, and that "once they like you, then they care a lot".

Thọ started becoming very involved with Vietnamese organizations during college, when he joined a student group. He also participated in organized efforts by the fledgling Buddhist organization Linh Thuu Buddhist Mindfulness Road to resettle contract workers who were fleeing the collapse of East Germany. He studied administration, and thus learned how to better help Vietnamese newcomers with paperwork needs. Today, he is employed in the civil service, with nearly all German colleagues. He retains knowledge of the Vietnamese language, however, noting that he only achieved this because his adoptive mother emphasized the importance of maintaining his heritage. Thọ marvels at the trajectory his life has taken as a result of resettling in Germany. During his first return visit to Viet Nam, he encountered old friends and acquaintances who remembered him as the kid who scored the second-lowest grade in his class. As an adult, however, he had become a person who was seen as having all of the answers and being very knowledgeable. He explained: "Because I got [the opportunity] to learn. Back then I did not get to learn."

Compared with both Yến and Thọ, however, Huệ's trajectory as a former contract worker in the GDR looks very different. During German reunification, Huệ experienced xenophobic backlash in the form of skinheads demanding money and goods from her, as well as people on the street yelling at her to "go back to Viet Nam" (*ab nach Vietnam*), while yelling racist slurs such as "Fiji" (*Fidschi*). She relied on fellow contract workers to help translate materials so she could apply for the right to stay in Germany. Today, she continues to associate nearly entirely with co-ethnics. She receives unemployment benefits, and works on the side in childcare. She spends her spare time in a Buddhist pagoda in the eastern part of Berlin that is maintained and attended largely by

unemployed, female former contract workers like herself. Huệ's children, like the offspring of other women in the pagoda, have secured positions for themselves in the *Gymnasium* despite their parents' limited social and economic capital. They have also gone on to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees. Where contract workers have, on average, not caught up to refugees in their socioeconomic incorporation, their children seem to have performed almost as well as the children of refugees in Berlin and as their co-ethnics in other parts of eastern Germany.

Yet, some contract workers have ended up doing well for themselves despite initial difficulties encountered on German soil. One such person is Trinh, who went to a socialist satellite country as a contract worker in the late 1980s. When the Berlin Wall fell, and the USSR shortly thereafter, Trinh hired a guide and crossed over into Germany, where she filed for asylum. She stayed in a refugee camp, where she learned German and received visits from refugees, who often came to the camps to provide assistance. In the early 1990s, Trinh began to write dissenting pieces about the SRV and to participate in protests as a ruse to bolster her asylum claims. Her case was deemed unconvincing, however, and she feared she and her new husband, also a contract worker, would soon be deported. They eventually regularized through legislation that granted rights for her German-born child. This legislation also provided Trinh with language classes. They speak German fluently, and often assist their friends in translating paperwork as well. Today, Trinh and her husband run a family business in eastern Berlin and are active in ethnic associations that focus on sports, the arts, and culture. In what follows, we consider broad statistical trends relating to the lives of Vietnamese in present-day Berlin.

5 Divided in unity: Vietnamese in present-day Berlin

After 1990, Berlin became the centre of the Vietnamese communities in reunified Germany (Röttger-Rössler 2016).[16] Estimates differ greatly, but official statistics mention 26,000 people with Vietnamese passports or at least one Vietnamese parent.[17] Only 16,000 of them retained a Vietnamese passport.[18] In comparison with the refugees in the West, the legal and cultural integration of contract workers in East Berlin took more time. By the early 2000s, less than 150 Vietnamese had received a German passport each year. Since 2012, this number has tripled to 300–350 each year (Statistische Bundesamt 2017).

Although ethnic Vietnamese are just 1 per cent of Berlin's population, they are the biggest non-European ethnic community in the capital city.[19] There are no precise statistics about their income. However, we found very detailed statistics of the residential areas of Vietnamese in Berlin. As of 2016, 9 per cent of ethnic Vietnamese with German passports and almost 6 per cent of those with Vietnamese passports lived across numerous neighbourhoods. More than half of each group live

[16] By contrast, refugees from Viet Nam constituted only a fraction of the 233,000 people with foreign passports in West Berlin in 1980 (10%). Statistics did not even mention them as a separate group. As mentioned, the situation was different in East Berlin, where Vietnamese were not only the biggest migrant group, but the largest foreign diaspora.

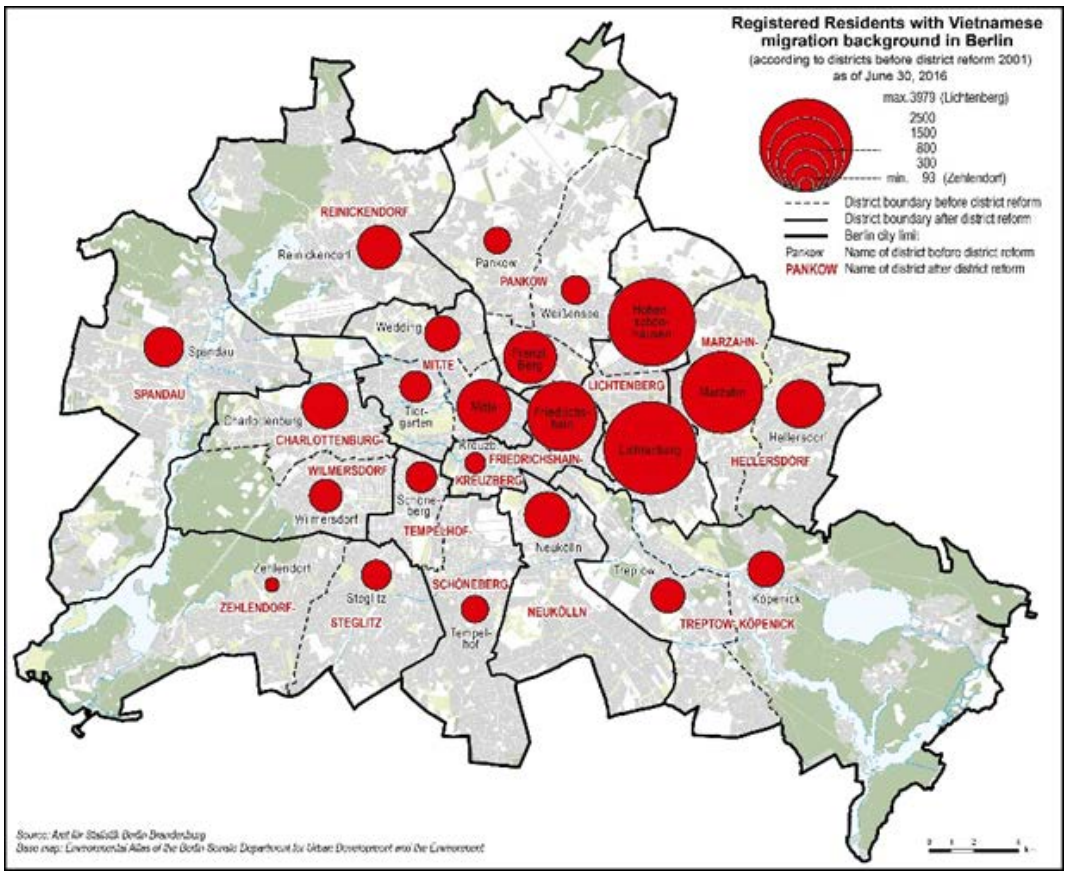
[17] Registered inhabitants of Vietnamese background number 35,000, according to Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2, 2015, 131. www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund2010220157004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, "Melderechtlich registrierte Einwohner mit Hauptwohnsitz in Berlin," June 30, 2016; these numbers are different from those reported by Weiss (2017, 112).

[18] Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, "Einwohnerinnen und Einwohner im Land Berlin am 31. Dezember 2014," Statistischer Bericht A I 5—hj 2 / 14, 17.

[19] Note that the Turkish count as Europeans in this statistic.

in average-income residential areas and the rest in more basic ones.[20] Those with large houses almost all live in the western part of Berlin (e.g. Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf), which underlines that former refugees or Vietnamese coming to the West had more economic success than those in East Berlin. In 1989, 64 per cent of Vietnamese in West Germany were employees subject to social insurance contribution (Horr 1991, 53). They have managed to remain in quarters experiencing high levels of gentrification in the last decades. In East Berlin, almost all Vienamese lived in collective accommodation and had to look for cheap flats. Almost half of Vietnamese continue to live in the cheaper districts of Marzahn-Hellersdorf and Lichtenberg in eastern Berlin, which are dominated by socialist apartment blocks. This underlines that Vietnamese have not translated their high levels of formal education into spatial mobility to integrate across neighbourhoods. The major centres of the Vietnamese community remain those quarters where contract workers originally settled in the GDR. By contrast, refugees are more dispersed in the western part of the city, and have had better integration outcomes than contract workers who lived with uncertain legal status after 1990 (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

Figure 1: Number of Vietnamese in Berlin districts, 2016



Note: As at 30 June 2016. This map shows the strong segregation of Vietnamese in former socialist eastern Berlin, compared with the dispersed population of former "boat people" in the west.

Source: Kitzmann and Schmiz 2017, 5 (reproduced here with permission).

[20] Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, "Einwohnerregister-Statistik: Wohnlage von Vietnamesen in Berlin"; data provided to the authors October 11, 2017.

Table 1: Residential areas of Vietnamese in Berlin by districts, 2016

residential area	German citizens with immigration background				foreign nationals			
	Vietnam				Vietnam			
District	good residential areas	average residential areas	basic residential areas	areas not affected	good residential areas	average residential areas	basic residential ar	areas not affected
Berlin	795	4613	3829	37	1028	9059	6185	91
01 Mitte	85	469	563	-	108	734	589	18
02 Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg	6	496	347	3	-	1023	621	3
03 Pankow	34	444	262	-	70	759	542	6
04 Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf	392	259	42	-	502	304	34	-
05 Spandau	-	69	314	3	-	78	309	3
06 Steglitz-Zehlendorf	79	164	30	-	103	128	25	-
07 Tempelhof-Schöneberg	164	164	102	-	183	117	94	-
08 Neukölln	-	70	452	3	-	31	357	3
09 Treptow-Köpenick	3	218	134	3	17	462	281	13
10 Marzahn-Hellersdorf	-	623	604	10	6	1437	1463	30
11 Lichtenberg	17	1515	552	15	24	3892	1637	15
12 Reinickendorf	15	122	427	-	15	94	233	-

Note: As at December 31, 2016.

Source: Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2017 (reproduced here with permission).

The level of segregation of Vietnamese is highest among migrant groups—and even higher than among Turkish, who are very concentrated in quarters like Kreuzberg and Wedding. While the index of Vietnamese segregation declined between 1992 and 1995 due to the reduction of the number of Vietnamese in eastern Berlin, it increased in the late 1990s due to economic problems and unemployment among former contract workers from East Germany (Gyapay 2012, 46–55). Even when Vietnamese former contract workers have economic success, however, they tend to remain in their ethnic neighbourhoods, near major markets like the Dong Xuan Center in eastern Berlin. In high schools in Berlin-Lichtenberg, like the Barnim-Gymnasium, up to one-quarter of pupils are of Vietnamese backgrounds.[21] The great majority of Vietnamese in these eastern quarters seem to marry Vietnamese, maintain close contact with family networks, and prefer Vietnamese television (Schmiz 2011, 102–105). In general, a strict Vietnamese upbringing remains typical, and the majority speak Vietnamese within their families, as their language is seen as a key connection to Vietnamese culture (Müller 2017, 40–45). Another major characteristic is that Vietnamese in Berlin are still socially and culturally divided between contract workers (largely from northern Viet Nam) in the east, and refugees (many from southern Viet Nam) in the western part of the city.

As many reports stress, former "boat people" from the western part of the city seldom visit the big Vietnamese markets in the eastern part of the city, because they assume the markets are run by communists.[22] National symbols, like the flag of the SRV at markets or the celebration of the "day of liberation", lead to conflicts, while some former "boat people" still display the flag of South Viet Nam and mourn the day of occupation as "Black April". Clubs founded respectively by former "boat people" and contract workers do not co-operate, but, rather, compete. A conference in March 2017 in Berlin is said to have been the first meeting of the two migration streams, where Vietnamese with different backgrounds publicly discussed their migration experiences. Even then, different perceptions were strongly visible: former "boat people" levied accusations against the communist regime in Viet Nam, emphasizing their suffering during their forced migration and the

[21] Suzanne Vieth-Entus and Sidney Gennies, "Stille Community: Wie Vietnamesen in Berlin leben," *Tagesspiegel*, May 11, 2016. http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/stille-community-wie-vietnamesen-in-berlin-leben/8799898.html.

[22] Vieth-Entus and Gennies, "Stille Community."

warm welcome in West Germany; conversely, former contract workers mentioned their suffering in reunified Germany since the 1990s.[23]

After 1990, western German Vietnamese could still rely on their image as a diligent and ambitious ethnic group. However, the situation and image of the former contract workers in eastern Berlin changed dramatically. Because many of them lost their jobs and had no legal status, criminality increased. The image of Vietnamese illegal cigarette sellers became dominant in eastern Berlin. This was not just a stereotype: in Berlin, and in the eastern German states of the former GDR more broadly, Vietnamese were disproportionately convicted of criminal activity more than in the west. Brutal violence by Vietnamese perpetrators increased. Often, Vietnamese themselves were victims of it: in the first five years after reunification, 39 Vietnamese were murdered in Berlin in Vietnamese gang fights (Beuchling 2008, 85).

This changed the image of Vietnamese in the west, too. Former "boat people", who had a more positive reputation, increasingly became associated with the gangs in the east. In general, the increasing number of migrants coming to Germany in the early 1990s after reunification led to xenophobic reactions in western Berlin and western Germany. In particular, migration from eastern Europe and Africa created new fears and led to stricter asylum laws in 1992. Vietnamese suffered from this, and it became harder for them to apply for asylum in Germany. Polls suggest that Vietnamese felt much more strongly discriminated against than did migrants from Europe and Turkey: around the year 2000, two-thirds of Vietnamese felt discriminated against in their neighbourhoods, and 80 per cent in their encounters with administration and clubs (Steinbach 2004, 147). The greater number of Vietnamese who have left Germany since 1990 is an outcome of this unstable situation: in 1991, 10,000 Vietnamese left the country, and at least 4000 did so each year up to 2008. Since then, the number of those leaving has declined.[24]

The image of the Vietnamese as "cigarette mafia" has further evolved since 2000. Former contract worker families in east Berlin have since had more success in securing jobs and attaining higher levels of education.[25] If we look at social data on the children of Vietnamese in Berlin, slight differences from other regions are visible. They attend the highest form of education, the *Gymnasium*, less often than Vietnamese in all other parts of Germany. This points to persisting integration difficulties for the children of former contract workers. Still, the Vietnamese second generation in Berlin achieve educationally on par with those without a migration background.

6 Integration outcomes: a socioeconomic portrait of Vietnamese in Germany

In the remainder of the findings, we consider how the integration outcomes of Vietnamese in Berlin compare with those in other regions of Germany today, beginning with general population estimates. Broadly, though many contract workers had to leave reunifying Germany after 1990, the total number of Vietnamese and people with Vietnamese parents increased. In many respects,

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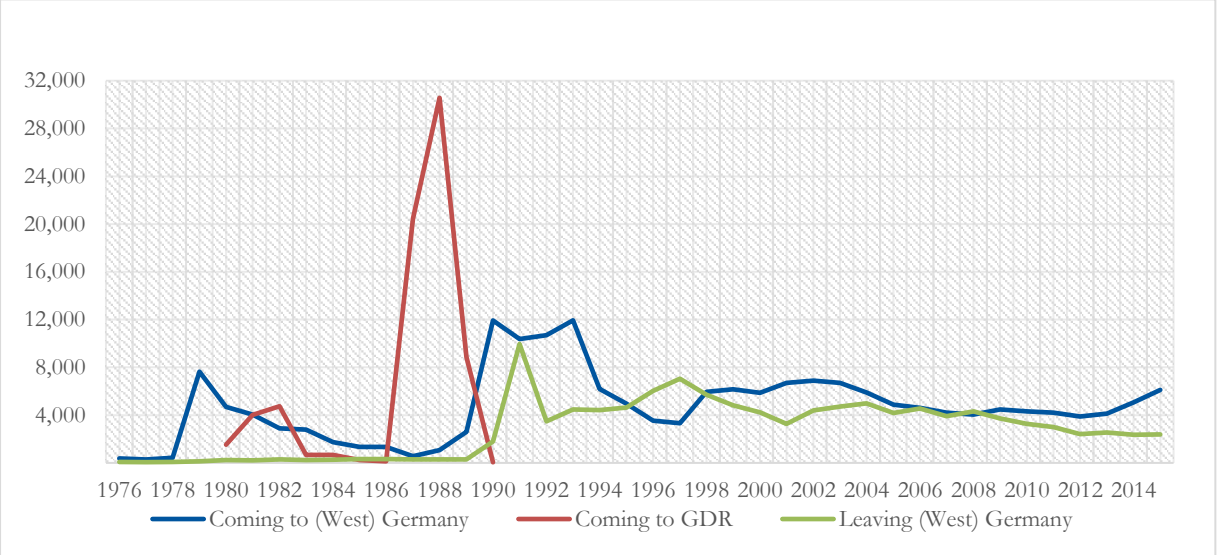
[23] Conference "Unsichtbar. Vietnamesisch-deutsche Wirklichkeiten," April 25, 2017. https://www.fes.de/oas/portal/pls/portal/filefunctions.download/PLAKON/VERANSTALTUNG/209836/FES%20Programm%2025.04.17.pdf.

[24] Statistisches Bundesamt, "Wanderung zwischen Deutschland und dem Ausland nach Staatsbürgerschaft"; data provided to the authors October 11, 2017.

[25] Martin Spiewak, "Das Vietnamesische Wunder," *Die Zeit*, January 22, 2009. http://www.zeit.de/2009/05/B-Vietnamesen. See also Trần (2017, 229).

the existing structure was shattered after the end of the Cold War: in the first half of the 1990s, about 45,000 Vietnamese (contract workers from other Eastern Bloc states, relatives of contract workers, and refugees and asylum seekers) came to Germany, while about 25,000 (mostly contract workers from the GDR) returned to Viet Nam (see Figure 2). By 2016, an estimated 176,000 people of Vietnamese origin resided in Germany; two-thirds were foreign-born migrants.[26]

Figure 2: Vietnamese coming to and leaving West and East Germany (to 1989) and united Germany (since 1990) each year



Source: Authors' illustration based on data from the Statistische Bundesamt (West and East Germany); East Germany data based on Dennis 2005, 16; Priemel 2011, 157.

Their average age is 32, making them much younger than European migrants and native Germans. About 86,000 retain a Vietnamese passport. These tend to be former contract workers, and asylum seekers of the 1990s, who struggled to legalize their migration status and kept closer emotional connections to their home country. In the following, we provide a portrait of socioeconomic outcomes among Vietnamese in Germany. These statistics, however, are complicated by several data issues: first, sources such as the Federal Statistical Office do not include among ethnic Vietnamese those who have naturalized into German citizenship. This includes former refugees as well as contract workers. Second, the data do not accurately capture the number of undocumented Vietnamese citizens. Third, survey analysts must rely on region of residence in Germany as a proxy for migratory origins (refugees in the west, contract workers in the east), even though contract workers moved westward after the fall of the Berlin Wall. And fourth, the social situation of Vietnamese migrants (income, jobs) is not documented in federal or local statistics, because this community is seen as too small to merit evaluation. For these reasons, while we discuss secondary data, we note that neither do they fully account for the social status experiences of Vietnamese in Germany nor can they perfectly distinguish between contract workers and refugees.

The majority of migrants live in Berlin (20 per cent) and bigger cities in the west, such as Hamburg, Hanover, Frankfurt am Main, and Munich. The southern state of Bavaria has the largest Vietnamese community of all German federal states (15 per cent), although it did not take a great proportion of the "boat people" after 1979. These data suggest that many Vietnamese followed the labour market, because Bavaria has offered the best job opportunities in Germany since the

[26] Compare the results of the *Mikrozensus* 2016 in Statistisches Bundesamt (2017, 85–86).

1990s. This also becomes evident in an east–west perspective. Many former contract workers left eastern Germany, where the unemployment rate was and remains high, and went to the west; only 12 per cent remain in eastern Germany (besides Berlin), most of them in the industrial area of Saxony in the south-east. Experiences of racism, which are much more prevalent in eastern Germany, also explain why many Vietnamese moved to cities in western Germany and avoided migrating the other way around. For example, between 1989 and 1993 the numbers of Vietnamese in Munich doubled to 3000, and they continue to increase.[27]

On socioeconomic measures such as income, educational attainment, and poverty, Vietnamese refugees are generally considered well integrated, though exact numbers are difficult to gauge (Wolf 2007). Among interview respondents, refugees tended to work for German entities. Their ranks included doctors, engineers, government workers, and corporate employees. Of course, there were also refugees who were unemployed or underemployed—but even so, they were largely protected by their refugee or naturalized German status, and therefore received a monthly living allowance. Thus, while we are theorizing the factors that lead to successful integration outcomes, even those considered unsuccessful are shielded socioeconomically by their legal status. By contrast, former contract worker interviewees ranged from the long-term unemployed (nearly two decades) to those who became wealthy, successful entrepreneurs after the fall of the Berlin Wall. For unemployed and underemployed contract workers, those with legal permanent residency shared similar rights and protections to refugees. For many others with liminal status or who were undocumented, the German welfare state remained relatively closed to them.

One concrete measure of the socioeconomic incorporation of Vietnamese citizens in Germany is the educational attainment of the second generation. In the German school system, students are tracked early on into different paths of decreasing academic prestige: *Gymnasium* (traditionally for the university-bound, roughly 42 per cent); *Realschule* (traditionally for technicians and businesspeople); *Hauptschule* (historically for a general education, nowadays mostly migrants or those with learning difficulties); and the *Förderschule* (for those with disabilities). There are also mixed forms, *Gesamtschule*. Academically, Vietnamese are the most successful social group—much more successful even than native German students: more than half of the children of Vietnamese citizens attend the prestigious *Gymnasium*, and this proportion actually increased from roughly 50 to roughly 60 per cent between 2005 and 2015 (El-Mafaalani and Kemper 2017, 217). Proportional to their group size, the children of Vietnamese citizens are more likely than those of German citizens (42.7 per cent) or other immigrant groups (22.6 per cent) to attend the prestigious *Gymnasium* versus a lower-ranked secondary school system (El-Mafaalani and Kemper 2017, 217, 220). The migratory conditions under which Vietnamese came (as refugees versus contract workers) did not seem to impact on the educational outcomes of their children (El-Mafaalani and Kemper 2017, 225). These trends have led commenters to marvel at the "Vietnamese wonder",[28] and at the second generation who have seemingly succeeded "against all odds" (Nauck and Schnoor 2015). Yet, the data also stress a gap among Vietnamese: while 11 per cent, mostly the elderly, do not hold any school degree, 25 per cent of Vietnamese have already completed their *Gymnasium* studies. As they are a relatively young community, 31 per cent of Vietnamese migrants and children with Vietnamese parents are still in schools, universities, or other forms of education. The data of the Microcensus, an evaluation of 10 per cent of the German population, show a big gap in the education of ethnic Vietnamese: about one-seventh of adult Vietnamese have no school degree at all and almost half of the adults have finished an apprenticeship (Statistisches Bundesamt

[27] Statistisches Amt München, "Vietnamesen in München, 1975–1996"; data provided to the authors 25 October 2017.

[28] Martin Spiewak, "Das Vietnamesische Wunder."

2017, 182, 207–209). This shows a gap between generations that is much stronger than within other migrant groups.

A great majority of the Vietnamese are employed. According to the official Microcensus, one-quarter are self-employed, another quarter are "blue-collar" workers, and half work as "white-collar" employees (Statistisches Bundesamt 2017, 412). Two-thirds work in the trade and food business (63 per cent), a quarter in other services, and the rest in the producing industry. Some concentrations include small corner shops, laundries, nail studios, and restaurants. The second generation, most of whom have German passports, work to a significantly higher degree as white-collar employees. In comparison with other migrants and refugees, this is a success story, too.

To assess the cultural lives of Vietnamese, we consider their participation in civic associations. Since the 1980s, "boat people" in West Germany founded several Vietnamese organizations (such as the Vietnam-Zentrum e.V. Hannover or Verein der Vietnamesischen Flüchtlinge in Frankfurt, and Umgebung e.V) to support recent refugees. Today, there are about 130 official Vietnamese organizations and many other informal networks. While some studies suggest that the majority of organizations are in the west (Schaland and Schmiz 2015, 6), others report that refugees tend to be "lone warriors", while former contract workers lead more vibrant associational lives (Wolf 2007, 5). Most seem to support the integration of Vietnamese, especially regarding the education of the second generation. Buddhist centres also play a major role for "boat people" in the west, as compared with the relative suppression of religion in the GDR. Political activism plays a minor role in the lives of Vietnamese when compared with other refugee groups. It is quite telling that there is no shared Vietnamese organization in Germany even today: the federal umbrella organization, the Bundesverband der Vietnamesen in Deutschland e.V. (BVD), is seen as too close to the SRV and therefore not recognized by Vietnamese refugees.[29]

7 Discussion and conclusion

Today, roughly 176,000 Vietnamese and Germans of Vietnamese background live in Germany (BAMF 2016, 162). They comprise the second-largest Vietnamese community in Europe and the sixth-largest in the world, behind the USA, Cambodia, France, Australia, and Taiwan and tied with Canada. The fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany provided an exogenously driven opportunity for contract workers to try to change their legal status from temporary worker to immigrant. Many would eventually stay in reunified Germany, whether through new legislation or as undocumented, liminally legal (Menjívar 2006) migrants, called *Duldung*. Our comparative case study thus offers a natural experiment of Vietnamese refugees and contract workers who began arriving in divided Germany at the same time, and who were reunified in the country of Germany and, for many, in the city of Berlin after 1989–90.

Drawing on historical, statistical, and interview data, our analysis has shown a generally positive picture of Vietnamese integration, albeit with some persisting areas of concern. Arriving beginning in the late 1970s, Vietnamese refugees have largely gone on to master the German language well enough to work for German corporations, have experienced residential assimilation with ethnic Germans, and do not rely on ethnic communities for their livelihoods, though they still participate in cultural activities. By contrast, former contract workers' outcomes are much more bifurcated. Some drew on the 1:1 exchange rate of East to West German Marks after the fall of the Berlin Wall to set up ethnic-minority-run businesses (like gastronomy, corner shops). These former

[29] Its homepage mentions only a few clubs represented by it: http://www.bvd-vn.de/index.php/de/.

contract workers turned entrepreneurs have gone on to achieve enviable success. Yet, there remain many unemployed or underemployed, lacking in knowledge of the German language, and reliant on co-ethnics for support in navigating their lives in Germany. While contract workers experienced stigmatization and discrimination in eastern Germany, their children have gone on to graduate from high school at high rates that are similar to those of the children of Vietnamese refugees, and much higher on average than those of non-immigrant Germans.

Despite some initial ambivalence from the West German government, refugees by and large encountered an overwhelmingly positive context of reception. The government apparatus sought to facilitate their integration, and public support was even stronger than it was in countries such as the USA, where polls reported increasing "compassion fatigue" in relation to refugees throughout the 1980s. Unlike the Vietnamese in the USA, however, refugees in West Germany did not cluster as much into ethnic communities that supplied them with employment opportunities. Rather, they integrated into German neighbourhoods and jobs with German colleagues, although networks in small corner shops and restaurants were also common. Contract workers were initially received positively too, as industrious workers in socialist solidarity with East Germany. The companies that hired contract workers, together with their Vietnamese group leaders, arranged all their travel, housing, and everyday needs, even while depriving them of the means to self-navigate in German society. But as the former East German economy broke down after the reunification in 1990, contract workers became seen as pariahs infringing on an already weak economy. Their reception in reunified Germany was extremely hostile in terms of everyday interactions, racist assaults, and efforts by the reunified government to forcibly repatriate contract workers to Viet Nam. To stay in Germany, former contract workers relied largely on ethnic networks to help them navigate paperwork (Hagan 1994), find employment, or start up their own businesses.

Our comparison of refugees and contract workers from a shared country of origin offers some evidence of how government and public reception change over time (Stepick and Stepick 2009). Another quintessential example is that of the contexts of reception facing earlier versus later waves of Cubans coming to the United States (Bach, Bach, and Triplett 1981). Those arriving before 1980 were largely met with government assistance programmes and a supportive public that viewed Cuban refugees as delegitimizing the Castro regime. However, those arriving after 1980 were deemed far less deserving economic migrants rather than refugees (Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008). Thus, contexts can "[turn] discriminatory", for example during economic crises (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002). The variable nature of contexts of reception is exemplified by the contract workers in our study, who were once seen as industrious workers in socialist solidarity with East Germany, but during the economic and political turbulence leading up to reunification experienced xenophobic violence and pressure to repatriate (Bui 2003).

Finally, we suggest that the components of contexts of reception (government, labour market, and pre-existing community) need not all be positive for immigrants and refugees to have an integration experience deemed successful. While refugees experienced a positive government, public, and labour market reception, contract workers drew on the strengths of a pre-existing community. Those contract workers who have gone on to socioeconomic success were catapulted by exogenous shock: the fall of the GDR and reunification of Germany, which meant a sudden loss of jobs, but also a new opportunity to start private businesses. Among the first generation, then, a positive context of reception enabled stable employment and social outcomes among refugees, while a negative context meant that contract workers did both exceptionally well and exceptionally poorly. By the second generation, however, the disadvantages confronting contract workers do not seem to have hindered their children's educational opportunities. The experiences of Trinh, for instance, suggest that German provisions for even failed asylum seekers have been very generous. Thus, our study suggests that the presence of a strong welfare state, as well as the

resources of an ethnic community, may in time offset the initial disadvantages of a hostile context of reception.

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