SINO-VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANTS IN SLOVAKIA - FROM SEPARATION TO INTEGRATION? EXAMPLE OF CHINATOWN ON STARÁ VAJNORSKÁ STREET IN BRATISLAVA

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Abstract. Asian immigrants in Slovakia in general are characterized by strong internal separateness of their communities. This is manifested at the level of their integration into mainstream society, but also on the way of living and their concentration. Based on factors such as absence of knowledge of the majority language, legislation and so on, these communities are separated from mainstream society and generate local concentration zones with specific cultural manifestations. They are changing the original character and land use at the local level, and these changes are subject of the presented study. The research was carried out in the industrial part of Bratislava – Nové mesto on the Stará Vajnorská street, where there was recorded an increased concentration of longer-term immigrants from Vietnam and China. In the field survey was conducted, the observed data were evaluated and discussed with representatives of local government and by the Bureau of Border and Aliens Police of SR.

Introduction. Location, spatial manifestations of communities, but also the integration of foreigners in Slovakia is characterized by certain specific features that are closely related to the nature of communities. Their spatial distribution is conditioned not only by economic factors but also historical, political, cultural or social factors. The city as a multicultural space is specific to the various communities of foreigners seems much more acceptable in terms of integration than any other residential type (Uherek, 2003). Wirth (1938) argues that foreign communities are in urban area even measure of urban of settlement, operating in the city social climate and together create the social diversity of the city. As the biggest advantages for foreigners in the city area identified Uherek (2003) a high offer jobs, better accommodation and a high concentration of the necessary institutions.

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The city, however, also considered a space where foreigners can contact with other foreigners (mostly within their own communities), where there is a network of interaction between the source and destination country of all positive and negative, that this interaction brings.

All these conditions perfectly meets our capital city - Bratislava, where the most foreigners are concentrated in the whole country (Map 1). They come for different reasons, whether business, economic, study or family. Bratislava thus can not be described as one-sided in migration-oriented city (such as Galanta), but fills the attributes of interest with multi-space migration.

The typical "urban foreigners" are immigrants from Vietnam and China, who created the largest group in Bratislava and also in Slovakia. Their presence in the capital city, but also generally in Slovakia is economically strong contingent. Contrary example, the Koreans, however, does not bind to the nuclear company from source country that invest in Slovakia, but in smaller entrepreneurial activities of individuals who deal mainly with cheap commodity, textiles, electronics or in the catering industry. In connection with the presence of Vietnamese and Chinese in our country and their economic activities demonstrate Trembošová, Tremboš (2009). They characterized the phenomenon in the development of the retail network called “aziatization”. This is a particularly robust penetration of Vietnamese and Chinese vendors at our market. The model area in Bratislava on the Old Vajnorská street due to their increased concentration forms “Chinatown”. This is a social space, which is involved in the transformation of the country with specific manifestations (Bruge, 2012).

**Vietnamese in Slovakia – short genesis of arrival.** Vietnamese community in our area began to take shape as early as the 50th in the 20th of century, when they started coming in several waves under the Agreement for Mutual Economic Assistance between the Czechoslovakia and Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The intention of the post-war Czechoslovakia was help to Vietnam in training professionals in schools in Czechoslovakia, who later tribes occupied jobs for cheap labor mainly in engineering, as well as other industries (Hlinčíková, 2010). Their study or professional ambitions were regulated by competition and often they do not know to what school and to which company one of the "friendly" countries will go to study or work (Hlinčíková, 2010; Brouček, 2006). After 1989 began the transformation of Vietnamese immigration to Slovakia, but also to European countries. Spontaneous economic migration intensified, the main motivation was the personal growth of living standards (Martínková, 2008). Many of Vietnamese in the 90-ies of the last century have returned to their home country because of reemigration and repatriation pressures from Vietnam, but many of them went to the west and to the Czech Republic and Germany (Hlinčíková, 2010). During this period, significant changes have occurred in the area of legal residence in the Slovak Republic. Many of them have lost their jobs and thus the right to legal residence. Vietnamese so in order to maintain long-term residents gradually began their own business especially in the retail sector (Williams, Baláž, 2005; Brouček, 2003). Those who remained in Slovakia, as well as new immigrants in this country was increasingly favored business before an employment relationship, in addition to
retail and started to apply as small traders, wholesalers with cheap commodities, owners of restaurants or establishments (Divinský, 2009; Hofírek, 2009). During this period, the Vietnamese came to Slovakia in particular on migration networks, in 2006 also comes as agency workers (Filadelfiová a.o., 2011). In terms of their location they concentrated mainly in the larger cities, where demand for cheap commodities highest. Uhárek (2003), however, states in addition to the business because of their location, also the condition of quality schools that provide their children the best possible education and for the price it would cost to education significantly affected the structure of their costs. This confirms the location of the Vietnamese in Slovakia, which is linked in particular to districts with significant urban settlements (Map 2). Their incidence is highest in the districts of Bratislava, where there are almost 30% of all Vietnamese in Slovakia. More significant are represented in districts of Košice II, Galanta, Poprad and Trnava. In other districts they represented nearly uniform and only in six districts of central and eastern Slovakia had not representation.

In part of Bratislava city - New Town even opened class of Vietnam for the school year 2012/2013 at an elementary school on Odborárska street, where the Vietnamese children learn the language of their parents, while in the afternoon, the Vietnamese learn Slovak. Mutual interest in this kind of study is yet understandable because knowledge of the Slovak and Vietnamese language for both generations is vastly different. Distorts the natural way communication within the family affects the physical and mental balance in the lives of children and parents (Desíře, 2009). In addition, the Vietnamese community plans to apply for the inclusion of ethnic minorities in Slovakia. In the case of the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic their request was rejected on the ground that the Vietnamese are not historical minority and is also actively involved in the process of integration into the majority society (Krempaský, 2013). Their number is taking several times higher than in Slovakia and in the words of representatives of the Vietnamese community in Slovakia Viet Nguyen is the number of about 5000, which is almost twice as high as reported by official statistics residence permit of the Border and Alien Police of the Slovak Republic (ÚHCP SR).

Chinese in Slovakia - short genesis of arrival. The Chinese community is compared with the Vietnamese in Slovakia established only relatively short time (especially since 90-ies of the last century), but is characterized by large internal dynamics. Their distribution within the SR is very uneven and linked mainly to the western districts of Slovakia and Bratislava (map 3). Their frequency decreases in districts to the east of the country except districts Prešov and Poprad. Optically although their share of the population of foreigners may stagnate, but a significant proportion of them simultaneously acquire the citizenship of the Slovak Republic and thus fall out of the register of foreigners (Divinský, 2007). The most of Chinese came to Slovakia, respectively is linked to a number of selected regions in China, where migration takes place on our territory. Similarly, in the Czech Republic, where Obuchová (2002) found that between these regions in addition to the actual migration of people, there is also an intense flow of commodities and information, while other Chinese regions are not participate on migration to the Czech Republic.
Based on the survey Commercial Register (CR), which was conducted in June 2012, we studied a sample of 220 persons enrolled in CR coming from China in addition to business objectives, as well as their location in Slovakia by residence, as well as a link to the home regions country. Analysis of data from the register pointed to several specifics, particularly the linkage Chinese by business sector, which at first glance creates a kind of intra-national business network. This means that a company has several owners of Chinese origin, or residing in China who were also co-owners of other Chinese companies in Slovakia, often in different cities at the same time (e.g., co-owner of two Chinese companies in Bratislava, is co-owned by one company in Nitra, while two companies in Partizánske). Co-ownership of Slovak citizens occurred only in one case. However was often occurred co-ownership of Chinese residing in Slovakia and China. An interesting finding was also that the persons who reside in China was up 42.5%. The Chinese, who reported place of residence in Slovakia came mainly from the cities (92%), which accounted for 33.3% of Bratislava. The most common area of the business was area of food and beverage (50.1%), retail (22.5%), wholesale trade (21.6%) and intermediary services (4.6%).

Based on our survey, we found that the most intense Chinese contacts in Slovakia are with the provinces located in southeast of China. The most numerous contacts we noted with compatriots of Zhejiang Province (Če-ťiāng), whose share of the total sample accounted for only 90.3% (Figure 1). The largest share came from the city of Lishui (65.6%). We therefore believe that the application of network theory of migration (Massey and others, 1993; Light, Bhachu and Karageorgis, 1989, Fawcett, 1989; Drbohlav, Uherek, 2008), the majority of Chinese people come to Slovakia from this province. Company Advance Investments a.s. (2011), which is engaged in trading with China in Slovakia, characterized by the province, as the fourth largest regional policy in China. It also states that the province is a long-time major textile and garment production base in China, with about 20% market share. In other provinces it was mainly Jiangxi (Jiāngxī) with 5.5% representation, which is an industrial area of China with a strong automobile, aviation industry, as well as electrical engineering. Also has a strong presence in agriculture, especially the cultivation of grain, rice, fruits, vegetables and fish farming.

**Trade means as openness and community separation - example Old Vajnorská street in Bratislava.** As already mentioned, the majority of immigrants from the two Asian countries are concentrated in Bratislava. Like they did in the past, but only if Slovakia were not considered a transit country, but as the target. Here they based their first entrepreneurial activity (base) in the catering and food and beverage as well as retail sales of cheap consumer commodities. Bratislava acted as an important logistical point of supply of commodities as well as a significant center of demand for their commodities and services. The most important condition of profit is a sufficient concentration of population in urban lifestyles and certain specific of eating and shopping habits Obuchová (2002). Their concentration is highest in the capital city, in addition to the traditional areas of the urban marketplace Miletčová and Jedlíková street, especially at Old Vajnorská street in the part of New Town of Bratislava. Based on these data, we carried out the
field research, in which we tried to analyze the type of area in terms of the concentration of foreigners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>province</th>
<th>residence</th>
<th>determined number</th>
<th>share of permanent living in China (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhejiang</td>
<td>Lishui</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wenzhou</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ningbo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>bez udania</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujian</td>
<td>Fuzhou</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiānxī</td>
<td>Jiújiang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Ji´an</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ganzhou</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jiāngsū</td>
<td>Suzhou</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nanking</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shensi</td>
<td>Yulin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Šanghai</td>
<td>Šanghai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 – Survey of Chinese registered in the Commercial Register and their localization at the Chinese provinces and cities (June, 2012)

Source: Business Register 2012, own calculations

Vajnorská Old Street is located in a former industrial area of Bratislava - New Town in district Bratislava III (map 4). Industry in this part of Bratislava and its nearby area began to develop in the late of 19th century and phasing out its agricultural character (cables factory, refinery Apollo, Dynamit Nobel, Cvernovka, Danubius).

Figure 2 – Definition of the model area on the Old Vajnorská street in Bratislava

Source: Google Earth – Tele atlas, 2013, modified by authors

In connection with the development of industrial enterprises have been located here also warehouses, which after certain adjustments have continued until this day, unlike from the above-mentioned companies. Industrial character is in this part of Bratislava evident even today, the importance of the industrial buildings are but in most cases transformed or completely disappeared. Empty and abandoned storage
facilities, which originally served for storage of various commodities (various materials, chemicals, textiles, clothing and footwear, etc..) began to buy back (to rent), wealthy businessmen from Vietnam and China who need them mainly due to the increasing demand Slovaks after cheap commodities from Asia. Gradually, especially in warehouses have employed their compatriots who disseminate advice of their communities especially in the 90's of the 20th century (Gašparovská, 2006). Currently, the storage area at the Bratislava on the Old Vajnorská street is like trade and social center of immigrants from Asia and carries elements of traditional Chinatown (eg more Dieth, 2012; Bruge, 2012). Compared with other countries, however, has not such spatial and social dimensions. It brings together a complex of buildings with different functions, which are used as warehouses, but also business contact points, restaurants and cultural and social centers. In the field research, however, has been identified as buildings that were in the ground floor as a retail shops, restaurants and entertainment centers, the upper floors were used as warehouses and on the highest floors had residential function. This is contrary to the building code administration of Bratislava – New Town, where as we confirmed by their executives, residential function is not allowed.

Some of the warehouses themselves hired Vietnamese and Chinese. According to the testimony of one of the Vietnamese entrepreneur for Trend magazine (Orfánus, 2010), is not trying to create Chinese city, but the wholesale center. However, the entrance evocate the presence of Asians by Chinese inscriptions on buildings, as well as increased concentration at the site. The actual space is intrinsically structured and "street" are created and closed by large shipping containers in which are commodities stored. Individual high-rise buildings look like a hostel dormitory type (Picture 1), but on closer inspection, the windows are hidden behind a myriad of cardboard boxes with a wrapped commodities. Inside the warehouses are made the sale of commodities, which in most cases consists of textile range, footwear, toys and ornaments.

The whole complex is monitored by camera system and even sale and entry into various stores is limited only to entrepreneurs who demonstrate by the appropriate confirmation. Spaces are crowded by commodities with low hygienic standards. Above the shops are often located warehouse space, which in some cases can reduce the overall security of people by the purchase and sale. Some stores were employed Slovaks, others employed only people from Asia. Their knowledge of the Slovak language was limited to the number and names of the type of commodities. In addition, Vietnamese and Chinese, in which have dominated, we have seen also the people of India, Turkey and Pakistan. An interesting contrast were owners trucks that were parked at their entrances of stores. It was the most expensive and luxurious SUV type car models, which strongly contrasted with cheap commodities in the stores and the overall view of the environment. As stated by one of the Vietnamese traders (Orfánus, 2010), the car is in their culture as well as a sign of success and evidence of the seller's skill, which can affect the final price of the offered commodities.
Figure 3 – View of the "Chinatown" on the street Old Vajnorská in Bratislava  
Source: Bilic, 2012

The character "city in the city", complement the service of the type of restaurant and hospitality, which is in the complex a few. Except those selling prepared foods and drinks often sold Asian foodstuff. Specialized Asian food store is only one and is located at the beginning of the area. There are working only Asian immigrants. In the interior there is a large-format television and play Chinese TV stations. Assortment consists of wide variety of Asian foodstuffs which are not available in ordinary stores in Slovakia. The restaurants are employed Slovaks, usually only as waiters, the kitchen is dominated by Asian staff. Slovaks are therefore employed not only to the traditional position, but also fulfill the role of some kind of language or communication mediators.

The complexity conclude of the bank's services, located in the nearby shopping center, where they have a testimony by one of the warehouse workers Vietnamese and Chinese people open accounts and where are blocked the daily sales.

The area of storage space on the street Old Vajnorská in Bratislava supply and the nature of services and their complexity allows communities of Vietnamese and Chinese accumulate their numbers even in a relatively small space. Even though the site is free to enter and is almost free and basically doing business for everyone, the communities remain strongly closed. In addition to visual elements through field research failed to penetrate the various communities and carry out more research on whether integration or hierarchy of life of Vietnamese and Chinese in a relatively small area. All attempts to establish communication with them have stucked to their reluctance to answer any questions. Communication was limited to trade. Some streets of the area resembled “ghettos” rather than commercial district for customers. Therefore believe that, in this complex, despite the openness of "outside" there gradually formed community of foreigners from Asia with high separation elements to mainstream society and the nature of what a "naked ghetto". But more significant
Criminal activity in this area was not recorded, so it is just the type of separation community-based based on common trade. More significant visual signs of Asian culture (architecture, building exterior decoration and so on) were not recorded at this locality.

**Conclusion.** The object of this paper was examining the issue of social and spatial manifestations of Sino-Vietnamese immigrants in Slovakia. We draw our attention to the site of storage facility on Old Vajnorská street in Bratislava, on the basis of their increased concentration gradually forming Chinatown. It shows signs of social and spatial separation of the majority and to the surrounding environment. Despite the different characters of immigration in both communities, local Chinatown area is a sign of economic cohesion. However, those below the spatial and social dimensions, as is the case in western countries, especially the EU and the U.S. In contrast, the local business and social center is faced with significant and distinctive exterior architectural elements of Asian decor to individual buildings. Asians, however, reveal the presence of numerous brand names and billboards in the Chinese sign language as well as their increased concentration. Complex simultaneously perform several functions, in addition to the business or social function, we observed and residential, which is inconsistent with the permitted use of the space. Efforts to establish communication with the Asian people was not possible for their reluctance, which shows the strong closeness to the majority.

**REFERENCES**