

Abstract

In my thesis, I examine the importance of ethnic and social capital in the context of a second-generation Vietnamese ethnic associations. Previous research on ethnic communities and associations demonstrates that for their members, these platforms play an important role in capital generation and upward social mobility. This is also the case for second-generation Vietnamese who were born in the Czech Republic or arrived here at an early age. Therefore, a large proportion of second-generation Vietnamese grew up in close contact with the Czech cultural environment and their primary educators were often Czech nannies. Because of this, some of them may have developed an ambiguous relationship with both the majority society and their own Vietnamese community. This research demonstrates that a response to this perceived disadvantage resulting from the second-generation immigrant way of life may be the formation of ethnic associations that provide individuals with a trusting and safe environment consisting of like-minded members. Drawing on methods of in-depth unstructured interviews with association members and participant observation at association-organized activities, this paper sheds light on the role of ethnic and social capital in the environment of an ethnic association. An ethnic association serves as a platform for sharing, overcoming challenges, collective support and building new opportunities. The results of the thesis find that these associations serve not only as a safe haven to help individuals overcome the hardships they experience, but also as a place where overall personal development occurs through learning new skills.