



“Vietnamese People Don’t Die”: Discourses about undocumented Vietnamese immigrants in Poland

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The presence of Vietnamese people in Poland is the result of a number of socio-historical events, such as the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Since the last decade, a new group of Vietnamese immigrants started coming to Poland in growing numbers. In Polish media, these undocumented immigrants are often portrayed as criminals, who take away resources from Polish citizens. In Vietnamese diasporic media, they are seen as either a new generation of communist victims or prey of human trafficking. These narratives often fail to include the voice of the undocumented immigrants or misinterpret their statements. Looking at the Polish, German, and diasporic Vietnamese media reports alongside the Polish short movie *Hanoi-Warszawa*, I argue that the three competing discourses about this growing population illustrate the contentious dynamics within the Vietnamese diasporic community in Poland as well as the relationship between diasporic Vietnamese and their country of residence. I contend that we can only understand the complex power relationships governing their lives in the diaspora if we read the stories of undocumented Vietnamese against the turbulent history of Vietnamese people in Poland.

Anh Thang Dao received her Ph.D. in American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. She is currently a lecturer for the Department of Women’s Studies at UC Riverside.

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