

ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ ДЕМОГРАФИЯ

MIGRATORY TRAJECTORIES OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING WORKERS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR OF NHA TRANG (VIETNAM)

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Abstract. *The purpose of this paper is to explore an aspect of the structural mechanism of Nha Trang as a post-Soviet space by investigating the migratory trajectories of Russian-speakers working in the tourism sector of Nha Trang. Based upon the case studies of Russian-speaking workers, this paper unraveled transnational composition of the social space mediated by the Russian language as cultural capital, and showed importance of tourism economy for the transnational mobility of Russian-speakers. The complex social and political contexts that have been generated historically from the relationships between Vietnam and Russia or the former USSR produced Russian-speaking tourism economy and tourist enclave in Nha Trang, and Nha Trang became a node of mobility for Russian-speakers who have various forms of mobility that go beyond the static conceptual frameworks of “tourism” and “migration”. This paper examines the linkage between tourism and migration and educes the multiple intermediate forms of human mobility in order to promote a deeper understanding of the process of the emergence of Russian speaking tourism economy in Nha Trang, which has been rapidly developed in the last decade, from the social and political contexts.*

Keywords: *migratory trajectory, Russian-speaking tourism economy, post-Soviet space, Nha Trang, Vietnam.*

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Introduction

Nha Trang, the capital city of Khanh Hoa province located in southern Vietnam, has been seen as one of the best beach resorts in Vietnam since its first development as a resort for colonial officials during the French colonial period. After the Vietnam War, Nha Trang also served as a resort for high-level officials of the socialist government. Since the introduction of economic reforms known as “Doi Moi” in 1986, tourism development has been accelerated in Nha Trang. Nha Trang is now a major tourism destination in Khanh Hoa province, and the province received more than 4.5 million tourists, both domestic and international, in 2016.

Since around 2010, the number of tourist arrivals from Russia to Nha Trang gradually started to increase, and the sharp increase has been observed especially after 2012. The number of tourist arrivals from Russia to Khanh Hoa province, where Nha Trang is the major tourist resort, reached 273,809 in 2016, and this number accounts for more than 60% of the total number of tourist arrivals from Russia to Vietnam in the same year (433,987). The number of tourist arrivals from Russia to the province in 2016 remarkably increased – more than 9 times of the number counted in 2010 – when the number of tourists from Russia started to increase [Mishukova, 2017]. This rapid and massive increase of Russian tourists

in Nha Trang brought to produce Russian-speaking tourism economy and tourist enclave in Nha Trang. Accordingly, many Russian-speakers with various social and cultural backgrounds started to come to Nha Trang to look for jobs and business chances especially in the tourism sector. These Russian-speakers come to Nha Trang not only from Russia, but also from various former Soviet republics through various paths and routes. This situation makes Nha Trang a part of the post-Soviet space.

The purpose of this paper is to explore an aspect of the structural mechanism of Nha Trang as a post-Soviet space by investigating the migratory processes and trajectories of the Russian-speakers working in the tourism sector of Nha Trang. Based upon the case studies of personal histories of those Russian-speaking workers, this paper aims to unravel the transnational composition of the social space mediated by the Russian language as cultural capital.

This study is based upon the qualitative data collected from the interviews with Russian-speaking workers in the tourism sector conducted in Nha Trang intermittently between December 2015 and March 2018 for about two months in total.

Literature Review

The social and political contexts of tourism phenomena are taken as one of the factors that affect the decision-making and destination choice of tourists in the previous tourism studies. For example, Matheson and Wall included the political, social and economic situations as a part of destination resources and characteristics, which is one of four factors that affect the decision-making process of tourists, along with tourist profile, travel awareness and trip features [Matheson, Wall, 1982]. However, these studies are mainly approached by psychological and marketing viewpoints, and they tend to focus on tourist individuals and point to model the whole process of the decision-making and destination choice of tourists. In such circumstances, the social and political contexts of tourism phenomena tend to be taken as one of many external and peripheral factors, despite the facts that the social and political contexts surround all of tourists, tourism industries and destinations, and affect each of them.

The researches on tourism in Vietnam have been increased and diversified along with the development of tourism itself in Vietnam. However, as tourism is taken as one of the most important sectors for national economic development, tourism studies tend to be based upon macroscopic frameworks [e.g. Var 1994]. Or, case studies in microscopic level tend to focus much upon each individual problem-solving for the development of tourism [e.g. Tran, Walter, 2014]. Some of the case studies are based upon qualitative and ethnographic approach, but this type of studies is mainly conducted by traditional anthropological interests and tend to deal with the cases on ethnic tourism [e.g. Michaud, Turner, 2017]. Sociological case studies focusing on social and political contexts of tourism phenomena are not yet well developed in the studies on tourism in Vietnam.

Concerning about the studies on Russian tourists, certain amount of studies is accumulated. However, more studies tend to deal with the cases of popular destinations among Russian tourists such as Finland [e.g. Suvilehto, Borg, 2001; Jakosuo, 2011], Turkey [e.g. Aktas et al., 2009] and Thailand [e.g. Lertputtarak et al., 2014]. Russian tourists in Vietnam have not yet much discussed internationally despite the great interests and concerns about this topic in Vietnam. The study on the social and political contexts of Russian tourism in Vietnam is one of the areas of research to be discussed more and this study is a preliminary attempt to discuss on this topic.

Background: Russian-Speaking Tourism in Nha Trang

The rapid and massive increase of Russian tourists in Nha Trang over the last decade was primarily and directly caused by the new business policies adopted by the major travel companies in Russia to develop a new market in the region and to send their clients to Nha Trang as an alternative destination to the popular tourist destinations among the Russians, such as Egypt and Tunisia, as well as to avoiding the political instability in North Africa and the Middle East in the early 2010-s. These companies organize affordable packaged tours and send their clients by charter flights directly from several Russian cities to Nha Trang. The rapid increase of Russian tourists in Nha Trang was mainly due to such kind of mass tourism system. Additionally, the Vietnam government's immigration policy introduced in 2009 to exempt Russian tourists from visa requirement for a short-term stay within 15 days, a decline of the Russian ruble's exchange rate, low performance of the Russian economy, and the restrictions on travel to Turkey and Egypt in 2015 also helped to increase the numbers of Russian tourists in Nha Trang.

The increase of Russian tourists in Nha Trang brought the accumulation of businesses and services, such as hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafes, tour agents, souvenir shops for Russian tourists in the central part of Nha Trang city, and that formed a tourist enclave for the Russians [Pouille, 2014]. In this area, the Russian language is an important source of amenity for Russian tourists, and an important cultural capital for businessmen and workers as well. This environment attracts many Russian-speakers from Russia and the former USSR republics for business chances and job opportunities [Ohashi, 2018].

In the central part of Nha Trang city, at the small area of about 0.12 square kilometers, surrounded by Tran Phu Street, the city's main street facing to the beach, Hung Vuong Street and Nguyen Thien That Street, we can observe the accumulation of many hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafes, tour agents, souvenir shops and other service facilities. Most of them are doing their business mainly for Russian tourists. Within this area, the special environment that makes possible to stay mostly only speaking in Russian is available. Many shops display signs in Russian and many restaurants prepare their menus in Russian. There are many store staffs, waiters and waitresses who speak Russian working in this enclave.

Some of the shops, restaurants, cafes and tour agents in the enclave are owned and managed by the Russians or other people from Russian speaking countries. The rapid and massive growth of Russian tourism in Nha Trang has prepared many business chances for both locals and foreigners. The Russians are not only situated in tourist side, but also in service supplier side in the enclave [Ohashi, 2017].

Migratory Trajectories of the Russian-speaking Workers in the Tourism Sector

The Russian-speakers who come to Nha Trang to work in the tourism sector have various socio-cultural backgrounds and migratory trajectories. To unravel the transnational social composition of Nha Trang as a post-Soviet space, 4 cases of different migratory trajectories are introduced and examined below.

[Case 1: Ms. A]

Ms. A is a young Russian in her late twenties who comes from Irkutsk. She works in the center of Nha Trang's Russian tourist enclave as a manager of a small restaurant owned by Russian businessman who comes from Khabarovsk. She firstly came to Nha Trang as a tourist for a holiday in 2016 and found that many Russians live and work in Nha Trang, so she got interested in emigrating to Nha Trang. During her two weeks' holiday in Nha Trang, she asked questions to many Russian-speakers in Nha Trang about job opportunities and

living to collect the information for her future plan. Also, she learnt that there exists the SNS site which is specially designed for Russian-speakers about the living in Nha Trang, and this SNS site helped her to collect the information about Russian-speakers' living in the city. Returning to Irkutsk from this holiday trip, she made up her mind to emigrate to Nha Trang in spite of having no prospects of job and living. Upon her arrival in Nha Trang in 2017, she looked for an apartment and job by the SNS site for the Russian-speakers in Nha Trang and timely found a job offer. She was lucky to get this job and started to work as a restaurant manager. She works from 4 pm till 10 pm for 6 hours a day at the restaurant and has one day-off a week. She is pleased with the job and her living in Nha Trang and plans to stay in Nha Trang for at least another half a year.

[Case 2: Mr. B]

Mr. B is a Ukrainian in his early thirties; he came to Nha Trang in 2014. In Ukraine, he studied international tourism at college. After graduation, he started to work for a travel company in Abu Dhabi, UAE selling excursion tours to Russian tourists. After working in UAE for 6 months, he moved to Antalya, a popular holiday resort among the Russians in southwestern Turkey, to work as a Russian-speaking tour guide for Russian tourists. He worked as a tour guide in Antalya for 8 months, and then moved to Thailand to continue to work as a Russian-speaking tour guide. In Thailand, he worked in Pattaya, Bangkok and Phuket for 3 years. And then his journey of career development in Vietnam continued. In 2014, he came to Nha Trang to work for a travel company at first; then he became a freelance photographer and designer for a tourism magazine published in Vietnam. He was also involved in setting up and managing a night club for tourists in the Russian tourist enclave in Nha Trang.

[Case 3: Mr. C]

Mr. C is a Kyrgyz in his early forties who owns and manages a small cafe in the Russian tourist enclave in Nha Trang. At first he came to Vietnamese Ho Chi Minh city, then he moved to Nha Trang, and there he opened his cafe in 2015. He took over this cafe business from its former owner who was a Tajik, and then he started up his own cafe together with his Kyrgyz wife hiring 3 local Vietnamese. In 2018, he also opened a sheesha bar in a hotel hiring 4 staff members from Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Moldova and Egypt. He left his homeland in his late twenties and started to work as a photographer for Russian tourists at first in Antalya, Turkey for 6 years, and then in Hurgada, Egypt for 5 years. Antalya and Hurgada were both very popular holiday resort among the Russians then. However, political situation of the region reduced the numbers of Russian tourists in Egypt. So he left Egypt, moved to Vietnam and chose Nha Trang for his business as a flourishing new tourist destination among the Russians.

[Case 4: Ms. D]

Ms. D is a Vietnamese in her late forties who comes from Hai Phong. She went to Russia in 2002 at her early thirties to get away from her family problems in Vietnam relying on her Vietnamese relatives in Barnaul for support. She prepared some funds for business upon her departure and started her business at a bazar in Barnaul. She dealt in clothing and accessories, and learned Russian language practically through her business at the bazar. She heard about Nha Trang from her Russian customers who traveled to Nha Trang for their holidays. They told her that Nha Trang is a paradise and advised her to do business there. In Nha Trang, her relatives opened a restaurant for Russian tourists with a Russian business partner in 2009. When she confronted the problem of visa renewal in Russia and had to leave the country in 2014, she returned to Vietnam and came to Nha Trang to work

as a manager at the restaurant opened by her relatives. Her Russian language skills and customer service know-hows for the Russians attained through her business experience in Russia contributed greatly to the success of the restaurant business.

Discussion and Conclusion

Each of the 4 cases given above shows that Nha Trang is connected dynamically with the post-Soviet space of countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan through various migratory processes and trajectories of these Russian-speaking workers.

At first glance, the Case 1 appears to be an example of simple process of labor migration from Russia to Vietnam, however there exists tourism mobility as a premise for this labor mobility. This case shows us that tourism mobility is an important trigger for labor mobility. Cases 2 and 3 show that there exist several tourist resorts for the Russians from every corner of the world, and these tourist enclaves are interconnected globally by the transnational mobility of the Russian-speaking workers in the tourism sector. Their transnational mobility creates a post-Soviet space mediated by tourism economy, and Nha Trang is a part of it. The Case 4 shows that the Vietnamese are also important actors in this social space. In the 1980-s, the Vietnamese labor migration composed an aspect of the migration in the former Soviet space, but it also composes an aspect of migration in the post-Soviet space today.

Nha Trang is socio-economically characterized by tourism. Tourism is a form of migration, but it is also a channel for labor migration. The demands for labor generated in tourist resorts attract many migrant workers to the tourism sector. It is because tourism is a labor-intensive industry, and human resources which create hospitality are the most important source of the industry. Meanwhile, tourism, which is very sensitive to the influence of political and economic conditions, has variable and unstable nature. However, on the other hand, this nature makes tourism labor market very flexible. These characteristics of tourism industry create the dynamics and complexity of migratory processes and trajectories of the workers in the tourism sector [Ohashi, 2019].

In Nha Trang, where the Russian language is an important component of the tourism amenity and hospitality, the Russian language is an important cultural capital for the Russian-speaking workers in the tourism sector. Russian-speakers move transnationally around the tourist enclaves for the Russians in the world to optimize their cultural capital, and this transnational mobility makes Nha Trang a part of the post-soviet space mediated by Russian-speaking tourism economy.

The social and political contexts of tourism phenomena are the structural and environmental factors that surround all of tourists, tourism industries and destinations and affect all of them. Not only the formation of images, emotions and information on tourist destinations, but government policies and business strategies are also affected much by the social and political situations. The social and political contexts are the major factors that affect the tourism phenomena rather than mere background.

Behind the phenomena, we could identify several different social and political factors, such as international political situations and special characteristics of the diplomatic and socioeconomic relationship between Vietnam and Russia or the former USSR, besides tourism marketing in narrow sense. Especially, various socioeconomic conditions and environments generated by the special relationship historically developed by Vietnam and Russia since the time of the Soviet Union have been closely related to the emergence of Russian speaking tourism economy in Nha Trang.

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МИГРАЦИОННЫЕ ТРАЕКТОРИИ РУССКОЯЗЫЧНЫХ РАБОТНИКОВ В ТУРИСТИЧЕСКОМ СЕКТОРЕ НЯЧАНГА (ВЬЕТНАМ)

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Аннотация. Целью данной работы является исследование одного из аспектов структурного механизма Нячанга как постсоветского пространства путем изучения миграционных траекторий русскоязычных работников в туристическом секторе города. Основываясь на исследованиях, посвященных проблемам русскоязычных трудовых мигран-

тов, автор раскрывает транснациональную структуру социального пространства, опосредованного русским языком как культурным капиталом, и показывает важность экономики туризма для транснациональной мобильности русскоязычных мигрантов. Сложный социальный и политический контекст, исторически сложившийся в результате отношений между Вьетнамом и Россией или бывшим СССР, привел к появлению русскоязычной туристической экономики и туристического анклава в Нячанге, и Нячанг стал центром притяжения для русскоязычных мигрантов, которые демонстрируют различные формы мобильности, выходящие за рамки статичных концептуальных рамок «туризма» и «миграции». В этой статье исследуется связь между туризмом и миграцией и выявляются множественные промежуточные формы человеческой мобильности, чтобы способствовать более глубокому пониманию процесса возникновения русскоязычной экономики туризма в Нячанге, которая быстро развивалась в последнее десятилетие, исходя из социального и политического контекстов.

Ключевые слова: миграционные траектории, русскоязычная туристическая экономика, постсоветское пространство, Нячанг, Вьетнам.

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