

Political Integration through Latent and Manifest Political Participation: The Vietnamese Diaspora in Poland

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This article investigates the integration of Vietnamese-origin immigrants into the political sphere in Poland. Drawing on the reconceptualisation of integration as a two-way interactive process between migrant actors and host countries, this study examines the Vietnamese's political integration by disentangling the migrant group's willingness to be politically integrated through their participation in the political opportunities granted in the host society. Empirically, this study focuses on the viewpoint of immigrants, analysing the Vietnamese's latent and manifest political participation in Polish society. By employing mixed-method research with a parallel mixed design utilising qualitative and quantitative data, this study discloses the visibility of political integration into Polish society among Vietnamese-origin immigrants. The integration is characterised by a modest willingness for political engagement, exhibited by a low involvement level in latent activities and a very low rate of engagement in the manifest dimension. Political integration motivation is highly linked to the perception of obligation fulfilment to the host society, the desire to gain recognition from the hosts and the protection of liberal values. The results also uncover a variation in political participation across primary demographic factors, with a high degree of involvement manifested among males, older people and the 1.5 and second generation.

Keywords: Vietnamese immigrants, Vietnamese diaspora, Poland, political integration, political participation

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Introduction

How and to what extent do Vietnamese-origin immigrants in Poland integrate into the political sphere in the host society? This study is devoted to understanding the political integration of Vietnamese immigrants in Polish society. To this end, we have developed a theoretical framework for accommodating migrant political integration by adopting the two-sided reconceptualisation of integration, indicating the interaction between the host society and immigrants. We argue that political integration should be seen as a bidirectional and interactive process – involving migrant actors and the host society – aimed at reaching a joint movement and adaptation in the political sphere in the residence country (Penninx 2019; Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016). In this process, Polish society is responsible for including immigrants and their descendants in the political sphere by providing legal frameworks to facilitate opportunities and access to the political realm for migrant-origin individuals. In parallel, the Vietnamese are responsible for taking up the opportunities granted to engage in the political sphere in the residence country. In this process, we perceive immigrants as active actors who are able to grasp granted opportunities for political integration. Empirically, we observe the political integration of the Vietnamese in Polish society by assessing their capacity for integration facilitated by opportunities granted in the host country (Hammond 2013). Thus, we exclusively focus on the integrative mechanism pertaining to migrant-origin individuals' ability and willingness to be involved in the political sphere in the host country through their political participation (Morales 2011). In this vein, we build on a conceptual framework for latent and manifest political participation developed by Ekman and Amnå (2012) to investigate Vietnamese political integration into Polish society.

The Vietnamese community marked its first presence in Poland in the 1950s, originating from cooperation between the socialist states of Vietnam and Poland during the Cold War era as a result of the 'socialist fraternity' project, whereby the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites aimed to assist their socialist 'younger brothers' (Halik 2007; Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2019). The migrant group has now become one of the largest non-European immigrant communities in the country. Poland, with the refusal of voting rights for immigrants from outside Europe Union, is placed in a very low position in the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Solano and Huddleston 2020). This refusal of the political inclusion of immigrants certainly also affects integration in other dimensions. Our main aim is thus to contribute to the current literature on the Vietnamese diaspora in Poland by examining the political aspect of Vietnamese integration in which the social, cultural and economic aspects of integration received a plethora of academic interest (Głowacka-Grajper 2006; Grabowska and Szymanska-Matusiewicz 2022; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015; Hữu 2021; Nowicka 2014; Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2015a, b). Meanwhile, the political dimension of integration has been poorly covered. What is essential is that, by considering immigrants as active actors in the integrative process, this study can see how the Vietnamese negotiate their adaptation to the political sphere thanks to political opportunities granted in Polish society. It is not limited to the exploration of political integration only by voting but also takes into account other forms of migrant-origin individuals' political activities, as long as this does not reveal unlawful acts that have the potential for marginalisation or exclusion. Therefore, this work is of significance in understanding the scale and nature of the Vietnamese community's political involvement, broadening our knowledge about the functioning of this migrant group in Poland.

In this study, we employ mixed-method research with a parallel mixed design using both qualitative and quantitative data to analyse the political participation of Vietnamese immigrants in Polish society. Quantitative data, coming from an original complex survey with a sample of 347 Vietnamese-origin immigrants, are used to configure the pattern of political integration of the migrant group through their latent and manifest political participation. Meanwhile, qualitative data gathered through 15 semi-structured interviews play a crucial role

in providing further evidence explaining how the migrant group is involved in the political sphere in Polish society.

The paper is organised as follows. The next section presents the theoretical background of this study, where the conceptualisation of political integration is thoroughly deliberated. Here, through the brief discussion of the evolution of integration and its criticism, we place our view on political integration and its empirical measurement in our study. In the following section, we show how Polish society is open to including migrant-origin individuals in the political realm by analysing the legal conditions for immigrants' political engagement. We then move to a discussion of the methodology of this study, in which we justify the reasons for applying mixed-method research with the use of a parallel mixed design and how qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. After that, we present the findings of this study. By combining the illustration of quantitative and qualitative data, this section uncovers the political integration of the Vietnamese in Poland by disclosing the tendency and interpreting the way in which the migrant group participates in the political sphere of the host country. The final section concludes, discussing the main findings of this study in relation to relevant published work. It also highlights contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research.

The concept of political integration: A theoretical framework

'Integration' is a central concept in migration studies, capturing the process of immigrants' adaptation and settling in a destination country (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Ryan 2022). The research on migrant integration was popularised by the Chicago School in the early 20th century, which adhered to the classical assimilation perspective to see migrant integration as a linear and one-sided process and emphasising migrant-origin individuals' gradual abandonment of their original culture and acceptance of the dominant cultural patterns and values shared by the native population (Gordon 1964; Park 1926; Thomas and Znaniecki 1918). This perspective was challenged by subsequent empirical studies in which immigrants and their descendants were found to retain their original culture and persist in maintaining their ethnic differences. Alternative theoretical frameworks have been developed to account for the phenomenon, particularly the pluralist theory (Zhou 1997a), the structural perspective (Barth and Noel 1972) and the theory of segmented assimilation (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997b). While these perspectives seek to explain the difference in integration between the various groups of migrants, their questions concerning the disinclination of the second generation to be culturally absorbed into the receiving societies remain unanswered and they still adhere to the linear notion initiated by classical assimilation theory.

Recently, 'integration' has received growing criticism in migration studies, in which the normative sense of the concept used in political rhetoric and research that is affected by the 'assimilationist stance' is potentially seen as an insufficient tool with which to capture the complexity and dynamics of adaptation and settlement among contemporary migrants in Europe (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Phillimore 2018; Phillimore 2012). In addition, scholars consider 'integration' to be a fuzzy concept with messy measurements for empirical analyses (Schinkel 2018). In this light and drawing on empirical evidence, a dozen studies have disputed the notion of integration (Favell 2022; Ryan 2018; Ryan and Mulholland 2015). Meanwhile, other researchers propose alternative perspectives and concepts to capture migration as a complex and dynamic process of adaptation and settling in destination societies – notably, belonging (Eckersley 2017), anchoring (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2016, 2020) and differentiated embedding (Mulholland and Ryan 2022). Despite this fact, scholars who advocate using 'integration' in migration studies have tried to adapt the concept (Barbulescu and Beaudonnet 2014; Lessard-Phillips 2017) by reconceptualising 'integration' as a two-sided process of adaptation between the host society and immigrants (Klarenbeek 2019; Penninx 2019; Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas 2016). This approach describes the mutual changes that follow immigration for both the receiving countries and the

immigrants (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016), moving beyond considering integration as a one-way process foregrounding the conformity of migrant-origin individuals to the host society. This two-sided integration centres on the reciprocity between the receiving and the immigrating sides, in which the adaptation and change of immigrants results in changes in the receiving society, in turn conditioning the integration process' direction and temporal outcomes (Penninx 2019).

In this study, we adopt the two-sided reconceptualisation of integration to develop a theoretical framework for migrant political integration. We identify this latter as a dimension of integration (Heckmann 2005; Penninx 2019) and view it as a two-way interaction process between the receiving societies and immigrants with the aim of reaching a joint adaptation in the political sphere in a residence country. This process encompasses the reciprocity of rights and obligations of the two partners – immigrants and the receiving society – in which the country of residence is responsible for including immigrants and their descendants in the political sphere by providing legal frameworks to facilitate equal opportunities and access to the political realm between the autochthonous and the non-autochthonous residents. In parallel, individual immigrants are responsible for seizing the opportunities granted to engage in the political sphere in the residence country (Penninx 2019). In this process, we perceive immigrants as active actors who are able to take up these granted political opportunities for political integration; they can expose their reversible political integration at any time, depending on their motivations and resources for integration. In this vein, we preclude considering 'integration' as a unidirectional and 'end-state' process, taking the political patterns and modes displayed by the autochthonous people as a standpoint from which to evaluate the degree of immigrants' political integration in the host society. Instead, migrant-origin individuals' political participation can take very different forms from those of native individuals as long as they do not manifest unlawful acts and results in political consequences that have the potential for marginalisation or exclusion (Sajir 2018).

Although our view on political integration as a two-way process is in line with previous work on this subject (Bauböck, Kraler, Martiniello and Perchinig 2006; Sajir 2018), we are critical of how the concept is translated into empirically observable results in the literature. Generally, scholars have not reached a consensus on this issue. Some refer to the rate of successfully obtaining citizenship through naturalisation as a core indicator of the success of migrant political integration (Howard 2010; Martiniello 2006). This discussion regards citizenship and political integration as closely intertwined concepts (Mollenkopf and Hochschild 2009), in which the political integration of immigrants is implied as the process of inclusion of 'diverse people into a common citizenry' (Bloemraad 2006: 35). In another approach regarded as the responsiveness of the political system, scholars opt for measuring the degree of political integration in terms of policy and political outcomes, assessing the success of immigrants' political integration through the responses of the political system to the needs of immigrants, whereby the representation of migrant groups is guaranteed in policymaking in the host country. This view underlines the change in policies and institutions in favour of immigrants as core indicators for the measurement (Mollenkopf and Hochschild 2009; Jones-Correa, 2005). For example, Bauböck *et al.* (2006) postulate that policy changes, with more political rights granted to immigrants, indicate a high degree of migrant political integration. In addition to citizenship and the responsiveness of the political system, scholars also point to the identification with the host society and the internalisation of political values and norms of host politics as two more crucial indicators for migrant political integration (Bauböck *et al.* 2006).

While these approaches are suggestive in empirically observing migrant political integration, they are problematic on the following points. First, obtaining citizenship through naturalisation does not reflect political activism and the willingness to be politically involved in the host politics among migrant-origin individuals. Scholar thus, call for a separation between integration and national citizenship – as two independent constructs – considering citizenship as a simple tool of integration (Hansen 2003) or a potential facilitating condition of political integration. Second, the identification with the host society and the internalisation of political values

and norms in the host society still more or less mirror the linear notion of integration avoided in this study. Third, the responsiveness of the political-system approach implies that, although the two-way approach of political integration emphasises the responsibility between immigrants and the receiving society, the relationship between the two ‘partners’ is unequal in terms of power and resources in the integrative process. The receiving society, especially its institutional structure and public reaction to newcomers, is far more decisive for the outcome of the integrative process than the immigrants themselves (Penninx 2019). As we discuss in the next section, this inharmonious relationship holds true for the Vietnamese in Poland when the host country provides them with very limited rights (no right to stand in elections, join political parties or vote in local elections) for their political integration as third-country nationals, especially the Vietnamese without Polish citizenship. This lack of integration for immigrants on the part of the host country also seemingly indicates the lack of integration into the political sphere in the receiving society on the part of immigrants. The responsiveness of the political system approach is, thus, problematic because it does not entail the action, aspiration and capacity of migrant-origin individuals in the interactive process of political integration (Hammond 2013; Morales 2011) reflected in our own conceptualisation of political integration.

Considering the above, our study is exclusively interested in the integrative element which focuses on migrant-origin individuals, empirically observing the political integration of the Vietnamese in Polish society by assessing their capacity for political integration through the political opportunities granted in the host country. More specifically, in our empirical analyses, we look at Vietnamese immigrants’ ability and willingness to be involved in the political sphere through political participation in the receiving society. This empirical measurement approach to migrant political integration, on the one hand, satisfies our two-way conceptualisation of political integration that considers migrant-origin individuals as active actors and is suitable for the case of the Vietnamese in Poland, where legal conditions for immigrants’ inclusion into the host politics are limited, as discussed below. On the other hand, it aligns with previous work analysing migrant political integration (Morales 2011; Sajir 2018). Drawing on a well-known conceptual framework for political participation developed by Ekman and Amnå (2012), this study analyses Vietnamese migrants’ political integration by examining their latent and manifest political participation in Polish society. This framework is considered comprehensive and advanced in researching individuals’ political involvement because it fulfils consensus on political participation that comprises not only observable but also unobservable political behaviours (Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014; Morales 2011; Pilati and Morales 2019; Schildkraut 2005). The latent form, also labelled as civic participation, denotes individuals’ readiness and willingness to take political action, comprising involvement and civic engagement. Involvement refers to attention to – and interest in – political and societal issues and curiosity about political affairs, measured through indicators such as interest in politics and (self-assessment) knowledge of the host politics. Civic engagement refers to activities by ordinary citizens intended to influence circumstances in society that are relevant to others. This form is composed of discussing politics, reading and watching (following) political news and doing voluntary work (Ekman and Amnå 2012).

Manifest participation refers to individuals’ concrete activities that affect politics and political outcomes in society or the decisions that affect the public sphere. It consists of formal political activities and extra-parliamentary activities. The former denotes political acts directed towards elections or conventional political institutions or actors, including voting in elections, supporting political parties, donating money to political parties and contacting politicians and civil servants. The latter is divided into legal and illegal extra-parliamentary activities. The illegal form points to unlawful actions like participating in illegal demonstrations or violent protests bordering on riots. Because this study only observes the political engagement of the Vietnamese conditional on the willingness of the host society, meaning that political activities undertaken by the migrant group should be legal under the laws of the Polish state, the illegal extra-parliamentary activities staged by the Vietnamese are not taken into account in this study. Legal extra-parliamentary activities refer to protesting

behaviours, including boycotting, demonstrating, striking, handing out leaflets, signing petitions and contacting the media (Ekman and Amnå 2012).

The legal framework for the political participation of Vietnamese in Poland

This section discusses the opportunities granted to foreigners for political engagement in Polish society. It should be noted that the host society's willingness to include immigrants plays a decisive role in determining migrant-origin individuals' inclination to be integrated into the political arena in the interactive integration process. Here, we consider the political opportunity regulated in the legal frameworks adhering to policies of migration and integration implemented by the Polish state.

The legal framework for immigrants' political integration in Poland was initially set up in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland in 1997. It provides the most fundamental legislation regulating the rights of foreigners who reside in the country. According to the Constitution of Poland, all people under the authority of the Polish State shall enjoy the 'freedoms of expression' (Article 54), 'freedom of peaceful assembly' (Article 57) and 'freedom of association' (Article 58) (Kaźmierkiewicz and Frelak 2011: 7). Foreigners are considered equal to citizens according to the law and they shall not be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason (Article 32) nor subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 40) (Szulecka, Pachocka and Sobczak-Szelc 2018: 30). However, it should be acknowledged that the Constitution offers general protection to people and exemptions from principles stated in the Constitution regarding foreigners should be specified by statute or relevant laws.

According to the Law on Polish Citizenship of 2 April 2009 (which entered into force on 15 August 2012), a foreigner can be naturalised in Poland in four ways – namely, by virtue of law, by being granted Polish citizenship, by being recognised as a Polish citizen and by Polish citizenship being restored (Sobczak-Szelc, Pachocka, Pędziwiatr and Szałańska 2020). Once a foreigner is granted Polish citizenship, he or she reserves all political rights regulated by Polish laws. Otherwise, there are many differences between a foreigner – primarily a third-country national – and a citizen of Poland.

The right to vote and stand in elections is restricted to Polish citizens. Poland has not approved the ratification of the European Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level of 5 February 1992. Article 6 of the Convention states that every foreign resident legally residing in the country for at least 5 years is granted 'the right to vote and to stand for election in local authority elections' (Kaźmierkiewicz and Frelak 2011: 7). Amendments to the Law on Local Elections that entered into force on 1 May 2004 led to changes in the local electoral system. According to the amendments, only citizens of European Union Member States residing permanently in the given district are granted the right to vote in local elections, such as voting for community/municipality council and city mayors/community heads (Kaźmierkiewicz and Frelak 2011: 7; Łodziński, Pudzianowska and Szaranowicz-Kusz 2014: 12; Sobczak-Szelc *et al.* 2020). It does not include the right to stand in the local executive elections (Electoral Code 2011, Articles 10 and 11) (Łodziński *et al.* 2014).

Under the Law on Associations of 7 April 1989, foreigners may join existing associations such as trade unions, foundations, employers' and other organisations but may not be members of political parties. The restriction of membership of political parties to Polish nationals is written in the Law on Political Parties of 27 June 1997, where Article 2 states that 'Membership of political parties is open to citizens of the Republic of Poland...' (Kaźmierkiewicz and Frelak 2011: 9; Sobczak-Szelc *et al.* 2020).

Regarding the right of assembly, Article 1 of the Law on Assemblies reserves the right of peaceful assembly for 'everyone'. A peaceful assembly is defined as a gathering of at least 15 persons. The gathering functions

as ‘called up to hold a session or make a joint declaration’. Under this law, foreigners with legal status can organise such gatherings (Każmierkiewicz and Frelak 2011: 10).

Drawing on the legal framework for immigrants’ political participation in Poland, we can see that the Vietnamese are granted limited political rights for their political integration into Polish society. As third-country nationals who do not obtain Polish citizenship, Vietnamese immigrants are prevented from having legal rights to engage in the political process. They have no right to stand in elections, join political parties or vote like their European Union counterparts in local elections. While these political rights are fundamental for migrant-origin individuals’ political engagement in the country of residence, the restrictions on the rights may impede the political activism of Vietnamese immigrants, reducing their willingness and ability to be involved in the political process. However, according to the legal frameworks, third-country nationals are not legally excluded from practising civic and political activities as long as they obey Polish laws. In this sense, the conceptualisation of political integration employed in this study, looking at the latent and manifest dimensions of migrant civic and political participation, provides appropriate theoretical guidance for empirically observing the migrant group’s integration into the political sphere in Poland.

Research methods

The empirical analysis of this study employs data from a doctoral research project implemented in Poland from 2018 to 2023.¹ The project employed mixed-method research with a parallel mixed design in which qualitative and quantitative methods were used to jointly seek answers to the research questions (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). This application provides the opportunity for a greater assortment of divergent views, validating one database with the other (Creswell 2015) to gain multidimensional and comprehensive insight into the engagement of the Vietnamese in the political sphere in Polish society. It thus allows us to observe how immigrants as active actors negotiate in order to adapt to the political sphere conditional on the political opportunities granted in the host country. By employing this design, the two methodological traditions were practically independently implemented (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). The quantitative method was used through a survey to draw out the pattern and measure the degree of political integration by researching the migrant group’s latent and manifest political participation. Meanwhile, the qualitative method used semi-structured interviews to understand and interpret how the Vietnamese are involved in host politics. After the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed, the findings from the two methodologies were mixed and integrated to provide a more illustrative insight into the political integration of the Vietnamese in Polish society.

The quantitative data come from an original survey conducted from mid-May to mid-September 2020 in Warsaw and the surrounding areas of the Voivode of Mazovia Region, where Vietnamese people account for more than 80 per cent of the total number of legal Vietnamese immigrants in Poland (Office for Foreigners 2020). The survey was administered with a questionnaire as a data collection tool, consisting of a battery of questions measuring variables capturing latent and manifest political participation. Due to the challenges in drawing up an adequate sampling frame for correctly identifying and determining the sample size of Vietnamese-origin migrants in Poland, which results from the impossibility of including irregular ones and the fluctuation in the number of Vietnamese people in the country, using a simple random sampling method based on formal registration of places of residence for the quantitative survey was deemed not workable. Therefore, the survey categorised the Vietnamese into different groups – as students and academics, business-owners and employees (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2019) – to which different sampling strategies were applied to select Vietnamese respondents randomly.

The survey used face-to-face interviews for data collection for business-owners and employees who were recruited by employing a two-stage sampling strategy. In the first stage, the centre sampling technique (Baio,

Blangiardo and Blangiardo 2011) was applied to identify locations where the Vietnamese often congregate; the random walking technique (Graffigna, Bosio and Olson 2010) was then employed to access respondents in the second stage. Because the offline survey was conducted during the outbreak of Covid-19 in Poland in 2020, the interviews were carried out when regulations on social distancing were broadly lifted; we proceeded with the assurance of safety, for example, keeping an appropriate distance and wearing medical masks. A total of 217 questionnaires were collected through face-to-face interviews. For the students and academics, online interviews were applied using self-administered questionnaires through Google Forms. Respondents from these groups were selected from a sampling frame of a list of emails of participants (including scholars and graduate students) joining the 4th Workshop of Vietnamese Students in Poland in 2019, organised by the Vietnam Association of Science and Technology in Poland. Respondents who are students were also approached using a list of the Facebook addresses of members of a Facebook group of Vietnamese students in Poland. Because the Facebook group involves users with diverse backgrounds, members as students were identified by checking their private profiles and filtered to sort out those studying in Warsaw. The two lists were checked to determine whether an overlap existed, which helped to draw up a final list of students. A simple random sampling method was used to select respondents from student and academic groups. Among those selected, 130 respondents agreed to participate in the online interviews. In total, the survey recruited 347 respondents.

The socio-demographic characteristics of our survey indicate that male respondents constituted a slightly larger share than females in the selected sample – 53.6 per cent compared to 46.4 per cent. While the oldest group (46 years and above) made up a modest portion (16.8 per cent), the percentages of respondents from younger groups were much higher, with 44.1 per cent from the 30–45-year category and 39.1 per cent from the under-30s group. The majority of respondents were those who were married or had a life partner (59.4 per cent), followed by the single group (36.5 per cent). Those who are divorced or widowed accounted for tiny portions of the sample, 3.8 per cent and 0.3 per cent, respectively. In the sample, nearly nine-tenths of respondents were first-generation Vietnamese (89.1 per cent), while 1.5 and second-generation respondents constituted only 10.9 per cent. Almost all respondents (99.4 per cent) owned legal status, and a very modest share of the sample (0.6 per cent) was irregular at the time of the survey. Among legal respondents, 19.2 per cent earned Polish citizenship. The number of respondents holding short-term resident permits is nearly two times larger than those with long-term residence, 43.9 per cent compared to 22.2 per cent. 14.1 per cent was in the situation of renovating resident permits.

We acknowledge the limitations regarding the sample's small size and under-representativeness, which does not reflect an adequate quota of the different groups structuring the Vietnamese community in Poland. Therefore, these limitations require prudence in generalising and validating the study's findings on scale and patterns within the Vietnamese community in Polish society. Quantitative data from the survey are analysed using descriptive statistics to portray the trends and patterns of political engagement of Vietnamese-origin immigrants. We will further apply the Chi-squared test to elaborate on how the political participation pattern differs across three primary categories of gender, age and migrant generation.

Qualitative data were collected between May 2020 and January 2021 by conducting 15 semi-structured interviews. The participants consisted of 15 Vietnamese people who were approached using snowball sampling and who satisfied the following sampling criteria: had lived in Poland for at least 1 year, were at least 18 years old at the time of the interview and were a member of political parties or actively participating in civic and political activities in Poland. Of the 15 interviewees, 11 were male and 4 were female. Most interviewees (8) were aged between 30 and 49 years, followed by 6 informants in their 50s and above. Only one participant was under 30. Most of the participants (13) were married or had a life partner, with 10 in a homogenous relationship and 3 living with Polish spouses or partners. Of the other 2 interviewees, 1 was single and the

other was widowed at the time of the interview. Most participants (11) were first-generation Vietnamese, while the 1.5- and second-generation categories comprised 4 participants. All informants were legal immigrants, with 9 people obtaining Polish citizenship and 6 others still holding Vietnamese nationality.

Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Poland at the time of data collection, all qualitative interviews were conducted online using voice calls from the Messenger app on Facebook. The interviews were initiated with a brief introduction to the study's purpose and the permission requirement for recording. After acceptance, the interviews proceeded with an interviewing scenario probing informants' views of the importance of the interest in the host politics, of the importance of Vietnamese immigrants' interest and participation in the political sphere, of informants' initiation of political engagement, participation in political activities and the challenges of the Vietnamese-origin immigrants in participating in the political sphere in Polish society. Each interview ranged from 40 minutes to more than an hour. Although disadvantages occurring during online interviews – such as dropped calls or poor audio clarity – caused misunderstandings and limited the ability to generate meaningful conversations, online interviews were more flexible in scheduling, providing more private spaces for the informants to feel comfortable in narrating rich information. Qualitative data were analysed using deductive content analysis (Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 108). After transcribing the interviews from audio files into texts, we organised and coded the data corresponding to the categories and concepts identified, before writing reports interpreting the findings and results.

The Vietnamese identity of the author who conducted all the semi-structured interviews became a substantial advantage for the qualitative data collection. It allowed Vietnamese, the first language of the interviewer and all participants, to be used in all interviews, ensuring a thorough and mutual understanding of communication. Unlike most of the Vietnamese in the United States who are critical of the communist government of Vietnam (Le 2014), the Vietnamese in Poland are virtually constituted of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese workers and students who are strictly connected to the North Vietnamese government and, thus, more politically affiliated with the communist state (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2019). The positionality of the interviewing author, who comes from contemporary Vietnam ruled by the communist government, could thus be seen as an insider by proxy with the community, especially with the interviewees, regarding migration background (Carling, Erdal and Ezzati 2013). The snowball sampling method also guarantees the trust of any subsequent participants introduced by previous ones. This positionality helped to ensure the psychological safety and convenience of the participants. Moreover, the informants became even more open to a greater degree – and willing to share their stories with the author – as they put much of their trust in the interviewer during the interaction. This phenomenon makes the author's positionality become fluid, from an insider by proxy to a trusted insider (Baser and Toivanen 2018) which, in turn, provides many benefits in the qualitative interviews and results in rich and reliable data being collected.

Researching political issues reminded us of a notable characteristic of the Vietnamese, who regard politics as a sensitive topic. In addition, as documented in the literature, many Vietnamese people are reluctant to engage in politics because they consider political participation risky (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2019). Thus, when conducting the semi-structured interviews and the survey and when designing questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides, the project avoided any wording which might frighten respondents and interviewees; we obtained their informed consent after explaining to them the purpose of the study and reassuring them of the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time. In particular, in the semi-structured interviews, informants were asked for their permission to record the interviews and notes were made for interviews in which informants refused to be recorded. The application of the snowball sampling method in the semi-structured interviews might lead to the spread of participants' information within the community due to the open network through which participants were approached. We addressed this issue by assuring subsequent participants of the guaranteed confidentiality of information in the process of obtaining informed consent from previous ones.

We also acknowledge that exposing the real names of informants agreeing to participate in semi-structured interviews and presenting qualitative results might potentially cause harm to them. Thus, we guaranteed their confidentiality by using pseudonyms for the informants whose narrations are quoted.

Empirical findings

Latent political participation

Table 1 presents the quantitative findings on Vietnamese immigrants' latent form of political participation through 5 indicators: interest in Polish politics, (self-assessment of) knowledge of Polish politics, discussing Polish politics, following Polish politics and involvement in voluntary work in the host society. As shown in the table, the Vietnamese are generally characterised by a somewhat low level of latent political participation.

Table 1. Latent forms of political engagement of the Vietnamese in Poland

Forms of latent political participation	Percentage in total response	Total response	Non-response	Total sample
Interest in Polish politics				
Very interested	9.68			
Fairly interested	36.25			
Not very interested	43.50	331	16	347
Not at all interested	10.57			
Total	100			
Knowledge of Polish politics				
Very well informed	3.65			
Reasonably informed	19.76			
Only a bit informed	56.53	329	18	347
Not at all informed	20.06			
Total	100			
Discussing Polish politics				
Almost every day	8.43			
Sometimes	36.45			
Rarely	40.96	332	15	347
Never	14.16			
Total	100			
Following (reading or watching) political news				
Almost every day	17.58			
Sometimes	35.76			
Rarely	34.55	330	17	347
Never	12.12			
Total	100			
Involved in voluntary work				
Yes	30.72			
No	69.28	332	15	347
Total	100			

Except for following political news, the number of respondents with answers denoting the low degree of engagement constituted larger shares than those reporting high participation for all investigated forms of latent activities. Based on the high degrees of latent political engagement, following political news is the form involved in by the highest proportion of respondents (53.34 per cent), which is also the only form engaged in by more than half of those surveyed. This is followed by an interest in politics (45.93 per cent) and political discussion (44.88 per cent). Meanwhile, self-assessment of knowledge of Polish politics is the form that received the lowest proportion of respondents with the answers pertaining to high degrees of engagement. This might be partly attributed to most Vietnamese immigrants' limited knowledge of the Polish language, as demonstrated by the survey's finding that less than 15 per cent of respondents indicated a high level of Polish proficiency. Table 1 shows that only 23.41 per cent of the respondents declared that they were 'reasonably' or 'very well-informed' in understanding host-country politics, nearly 3 times lower than those who indicated their limited knowledge of Polish politics. Involvement in voluntary activities, a form of civic engagement investigated by a question regarding giving money to charity, was confirmed by nearly one-third of respondents (30.72 per cent), compared to the percentage of those not involved in the activity (69.28 per cent).

However, as presented in Table 1, the high levels of latent political participation are defined by a predominance of moderate answers. The high degree of interest in Polish politics comes mainly from the 'fairly interested' answer. Similarly, the high levels of (self-assessment of) knowledge of Polish politics, political discussion and following political news are primarily constituted by the answers 'reasonably informed' and 'sometimes', respectively. This finding again reinforces the relatively low level of engagement in latent political activities among the Vietnamese in the survey.

We further break down the latent political participation of the Vietnamese into primary demographic factors – gender, age and migrant generation – by applying the Chi-square test to examine whether the latent forms vary significantly across the demographic factors. The findings are displayed in Table 2.

The results suggest that, except for involvement in voluntary and charitable work, most latent forms of political participation are greatly conditioned by gender, age and migrant generation. Regarding gender, the results show a higher percentage of men than women in latent political participation, which is proved by statistically significant Chi-square tests on interest in Polish politics ($p=0.049$), (self-assessment of) knowledge of Polish politics ($p=0.001$) and discussion about the host politics ($p=0.039$). This finding implies a higher level of political activism among Vietnamese male immigrants than females. For age, Table 2 reveals a higher proportion of older respondents than younger ones participating in latent political activities, which is also confirmed by Chi-square tests, specifically in interest in the host-country politics ($p=0.000$), (self-assessment of) knowledge of the host politics ($p=0.022$), political discussions ($p=0.000$), following the host-country politics news ($p=0.001$) and involvement in doing charitable work ($p=0.083$). Finally, the variation of latent political participation by migrant generations only significantly manifests itself in (self-assessment of) knowledge of Polish politics and following political news. The 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese migrant individuals are found to have a higher degree of self-assessed knowledge of the host-country politics ($p=0.002$) and following political news regarding the host society than the first Vietnamese generation ($p=0.006$).

Table 2. Latent political participation of the Vietnamese by gender, age and generations

Latent political activities	Gender (per cent)		Age (per cent)			Generations (per cent)	
	Male	Female	18–29	30–45	45+	1st	1.5 and 2nd
Interest in Polish politics							
Very interested	9.8	8.8	9.2	7.8	15.4	9.2	13.5
Fairly interested	42.2	28.3	24.6	40.4	53.9	36.4	35.2
Not very interested	37.6	51.4	48.5	44.0	28.8	43.9	40.5
Not at all interested	10.4	11.5	17.7	7.8	1.9	10.5	10.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-squared test	$\chi^2=7.9$, $p=0.049$, $N=321$		$\chi^2=26.26$, $p=0.000$, $N=323$			$\chi^2=0.74$, $p=0.86$, $N=331$	
Knowledge of Polish politics							
Very well informed	3.4	4.1	3.9	2.2	7.7	2.4	13.9
Reasonably informed	10.1	28.3	13.8	23.0	28.9	18.8	27.8
Only a bit informed	63.5	49.7	55.4	57.5	53.8	58.3	41.7
Not at all informed	23.0	17.9	26.9	17.3	9.6	20.5	16.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-squared test	$\chi^2=17.05$, $p=0.001$, $N=321$		$\chi^2=14.73$, $p=0.022$, $N=321$			$\chi^2=14.8$, $p=0.002$, $N=329$	
Discussing Polish politics							
Almost every day	8.6	8.1	6.2	7.8	15.4	7.8	13.5
Sometimes	43.1	28.4	26.9	40.1	46.2	37.6	27.1
Rarely	35.1	48.0	41.5	44.4	32.7	40.7	43.2
Never	13.2	15.5	25.4	7.7	5.6	13.9	16.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-squared test	$\chi^2=8.4$, $p=0.039$, $N=322$		$\chi^2=28.14$, $p=0.000$, $N=324$			$\chi^2=2.47$, $p=0.48$, $N=332$	
Following (reading or watching) political news							
Almost every day	14.8	20.2	15.3	16.3	29.4	15.4	35.2
Sometimes	31.5	38.2	25.4	41.2	45.1	37.9	18.9
Rarely	38.9	31.2	40.8	32.6	21.6	33.8	40.5
Never	14.8	10.4	18.5	9.9	3.9	13.0	5.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-squared test	$\chi^2=4.94$, $p=0.18$, $N=322$		$\chi^2=22.37$, $p=0.001$, $N=322$			$\chi^2=12.6$, $p=0.006$, $N=330$	
Involving in voluntary works							
Yes	31.2	29.6	24.2	32.2	40.4	31.0	28.6
No	68.8	70.4	75.8	67.8	59.6	69.0	71.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Chi-squared test	$\chi^2=0.09$, $p=0.75$, $N=325$		$\chi^2=4.98$, $p=0.083$, $N=323$			$\chi^2=0.08$, $p=0.77$, $N=332$	

The quantitative findings above provide significant insights into the scale and patterns of the surveyed respondents' latent form of political participation. Here, we present the qualitative results enabling further

understanding of the way in which the Vietnamese are involved in latent political activities. Our analysis reveals that the perception of the importance of interest in politics is a crucial driver of interest in Polish politics among our participants. For example, Mr Nam, an IT technician who arrived in Poland aged 10 and is one of the 1.5- and second-generation Vietnamese interviewees, shared his view on this issue with almost all other informants. He revealed that concern about politics in the host country helps to protect the migrants' rights and interests, due to acknowledging and understanding those political outcomes that influence migrant individuals' daily lives. Interest in the politics of the residence country helps immigrants to be aware of the host country's political system and to foresee and respond to political outcomes affecting their living, as Mr Nam, now in his 20s, points out here:

I think we need to be concerned about Polish politics because it is important. It is related to the lives of the Vietnamese people here. Because each political party has different policies related to foreigners, any party coming to power will directly affect foreigners here. So politics is significant and we need to be concerned.

Qualitative data also disclose that the issue of political parties in Poland prevalently disclosed in narratives raised special concerns by the interviewees. Participants particularly showed censorious attitudes toward the ruling party, PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* – Law and Justice Party) and suspicion about its opposition, PO (*Platforma Obywatelska* – Civic Platform Party), whose ideologies are primarily attributed to the current political cleavage in Poland. In his narrative below, Mr Đinh, now in his 60s, who arrived in Poland 2 years after the fall of communism in the country, strongly criticised the ruling party, PiS, for issuing policies to control the media, business and the judiciary and adopting an anti-migrant vision in their political programme. His view is analogous with those of most informants who disclosed a negative view of the PiS ruling with its concentration of power and perceived the party as authoritarian, conservative, pro-nationalist or even communist. Despite showing intensively unfavourable attitudes towards the PiS party, informants seemed to doubt the power of the opposition, the PO party. While this latter party was more or less supported by a number of interviewees thanks to its political stand inclining towards protecting democratic values and supporting immigrants, informants suspected that the party is still weak, incompetent and incapable of solving social problems and leading Poland to become a strong country. Mr Đinh says:

The PiS party, when it came to power for the first time, changed a series of issues such as controlling the media, strangling business and manipulating the judiciary. It is not as liberal as the PO party. At that time, I strongly condemned it. Furthermore, as you might know, the PiS party almost follows the path of a communist party, interfering with the media, changing the national court and controlling the President. What does it mean for the separation of powers? That is, the National Assembly, the President and the Constitution are in its hands.

The competition between the two parties during the last presidential election in 2020 was also central in the political discussion of participants in qualitative interviews. Ms Duyệt, a woman in her 40s who arrived in Poland in the 1990s and is currently working as an office staff member, narrated that she was intensely involved in talking about Polish politics with colleagues in the workplace during the last presidential election. Like other informants who find the lead of the PiS risky in maintaining a consolidated democracy in the country and who favour a change in the ruling party after the election, she showed her support for the PO party's candidate in the discussions with colleagues concerning the last presidential election in Poland.

For example, I often discussed the two presidential candidates in the last election, Trzaskowski and Duda. My colleagues in my office were divided into two groups, one supporting the incumbent president and the other supporting Trzaskowski. I was in the group that expected a change, so I supported Trzaskowski.² I had arguments with my friends in the office about why I supported and should support Trzaskowski. The reason is that I need a change in the cabinet of the government...

While evidence in the quantitative findings showed that involvement in voluntary work attracted the engagement of a number of Vietnamese people, the qualitative results show the scope of and the reason behind this type of civic engagement. Participants in the qualitative interviews indicated that they were involved in a wide range of voluntary work, which primarily related to other immigrant groups or Polish society rather than simply within the Vietnamese community. The voluntary work included participating in associations that protect the environment and supporting vulnerable people by delivering free food and clothes to those experiencing poverty or without housing. Notably, during the interviews, Mr Phúc (60s), who came to Poland at the end of the 1990s and is one of the 3 informants actively engaging in voluntary activities, felt very proud when recalling charitable acts carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic in Poland:

We thought we could not do anything to support Poland in fighting against the pandemic better than doing what we did. This means that, although we cannot find a cure for the pandemic, we should do everything else. Our ability is that we are cooks working in restaurants and, thus, we can make and take meals to everyone. Those who participate directly in the fight against the epidemic are doctors, sanitary and epidemiological workers, law-enforcement agencies, the authorities and police officers. They are always on duty, so we have to support them.

As narrated by Mr Phúc, his voluntary work supported the frontline forces fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. The support was implemented to his team's full capacity, such as supplying meals and medical masks for Polish nurses and doctors. In addition, the participants were unanimous in the view that doing charitable work or engaging in voluntary work is significant for the Vietnamese immigrants' integration into the political sphere in Poland. On the one hand, engaging in such activities is supposed to provoke and promote the political activism of the Vietnamese, who are allegedly disinclined to involve themselves in political affairs. On the other hand, charitable works, particularly recent activities supporting Polish doctors in the fight against Covid-19, are well known by the Poles, thus the Vietnamese become more positively visible in the eyes of the native population. Consequently, it helps to gain more tolerance and recognition of the Vietnamese community by Polish people, facilitating Vietnamese integration in all dimensions, including the political sphere. As clarified by some informants, the main reason for engaging in voluntary work is the desire to pay off the debt and take responsibility towards the host country that the migrant group perceives to be their second homeland, manifesting their sense of belonging to Polish society.

Manifest political participation

As discussed above, as third-country nationals who do not have obtained Polish citizenship, Vietnamese immigrants are not granted legal rights to vote, stand in elections, and or join political parties. In order to investigate the degree of engagement in the voting of respondents, we asked the surveyed individuals whether they voted in the last local and national elections. The finding shows that most respondents, accounting for more than 80.78, are not eligible to vote. This result implies that a significant share of individuals joining the survey does not have acquired Polish citizenship. Among the 19.22 per cent of respondents who were eligible

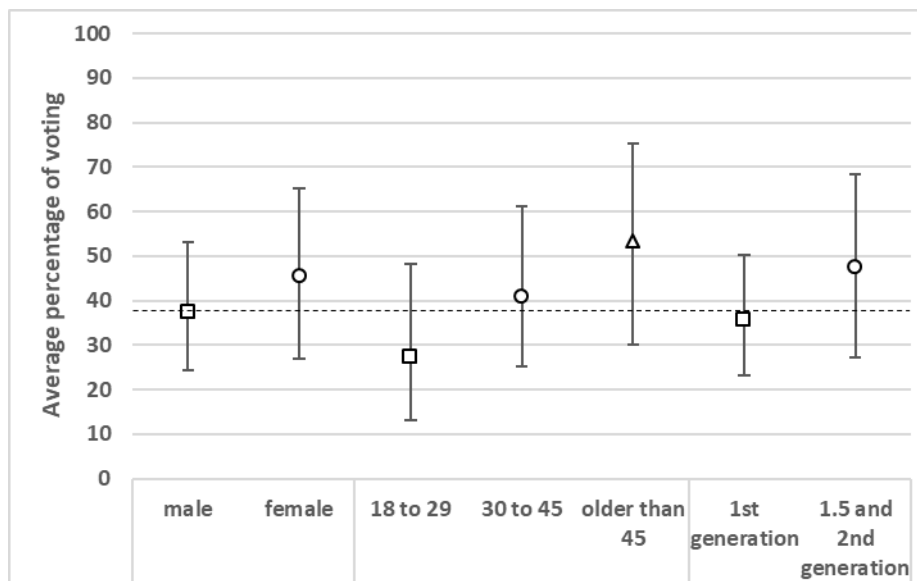
to vote, the percentage of individuals who voted in both the last elections is smaller than those who did not, which is the same for both local and national elections, – 7.51 per cent (corresponding to 39 per cent of eligible voters) and 11.71 per cent (corresponding to 61 per cent of eligible voters), respectively.

The qualitative findings reveal the participants' agreement on the active tendency to vote among Polish-naturalised Vietnamese people. The informants postulate that most Vietnamese people who hold Polish citizenship vote in every election at both local and national levels. These findings present an image that is different from that found earlier in the quantitative analysis, which disclosed a small percentage of Polish-Vietnamese individuals involved in voting. It should be noted that the informants' assessment of this issue is concluded through their subjective observation and experience of the voting participation of the Vietnamese who are known and close to them. A high consensus among the informants of semi-structured interviews on the findings reflects a limitation of snowball sampling that can result in the enrollment of participants with similar experiences, which might lead to the production of biased information. Therefore, the supplement of quantitative data from the survey helps to improve the validity of the findings. Regarding voting, informants also pointed out three fundamental reasons for casting a ballot in elections among Polish-naturalised Vietnamese. First, it is regarded as the fulfilment of the rights and obligations of the country. Second, voting is viewed as a straightforward form of expressing opinions and making political decisions. Third, the participants perceive voting engagement as contributing to building the country by setting up a new state apparatus to lead Poland for the future. As exposed in the narration of 60-year-old Mr Đình below, acknowledging the impact of the outcomes of elections on his life stirs up the inclination to vote.

When I lived in Poland, I became politicised and had my own political views. The ruling PiS party directly affected my life, so I needed to have a voice and make a choice by myself. Thus, since I got Polish citizenship, I went to the polls at every election. I voted in all elections at all local and national levels.

Figure 1 presents the difference in voting in the last national election among eligible respondents (19.22 per cent of respondents in the survey) across gender, age and generation. Although the figure depicts a more active tendency to vote in the last national election among females, older people and respondents from the 1.5 and second generations, the results from Chi-square tests of the differences were statistically insignificant. This finding implies an unclear discrepancy in the voting behaviours of the Polish-naturalised Vietnamese across all demographic characteristics.

In addition to voting, we examined other formal political activities related to the manifest participation of Vietnamese immigrants in Poland. The respondents were asked whether they engaged in the following 4 traditional forms of political participation in the last 12 months: supporting political parties, contacting politicians, contacting civil servants and donating money to political parties. As presented in Table 3, the number of respondents who took part in those traditional forms in the last 12 months is deficient. Generally, the proportion of the surveyed engaging in the first three activities is smaller than 5 per cent. Specifically, only 2.69 per cent supported political parties, 3.59 per cent had contacts with politicians and 3.89 per cent contacted civil servants. Although the number of respondents who donated money to political parties is more than that of the first three forms, the number is unremarkable, accounting for only 8.08 per cent of respondents. However, this result is interesting when uncovering a greater willingness for political giving among the Vietnamese compared to the Poles, whose number donating to political parties was recorded as no more than 1 per cent (Ponce and Scarrow 2011).

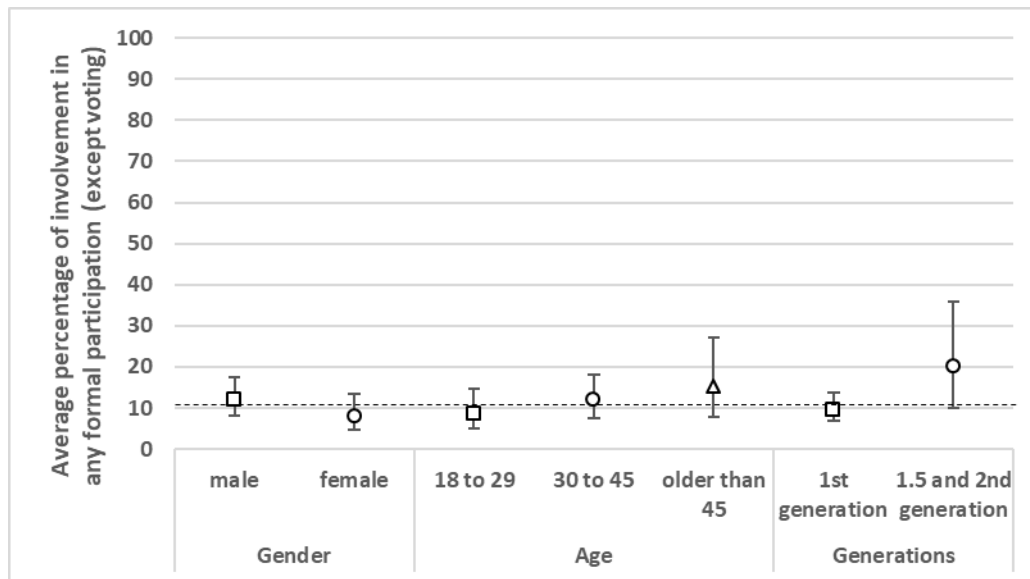
Figure 1. Voting in national elections by gender, age and generations

Note: The dot/square/triangle indicates the value of the mean and the bars mark the 95 per cent confidence interval of the mean. The dotted line indicates the value of the sample mean. $\chi^2 = 0.373$, $p = 0.541$, $N = 62$ (gender); $\chi^2 = 2.60$, $p = 0.272$, $N = 59$ (age); $\chi^2 = 0.78$, $p = 0.37$, $N = 64$ (generations).

Table 3. Formal political activities

Formal activities	Supporting political parties	Contacting politicians	Contacting civil servants	Donating money to political parties
	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)	(per cent)
Yes	2.69	3.59	3.89	8.08
No	97.31	96.41	96.11	91.92
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
(N)	334	334	334	334
Non-response	13	13	13	13
Total sample	347	347	347	347

In Figure 2, we portrayed how the percentage of individuals participating in traditional forms of political engagement – except voting – varied by gender, age and generation. In this analysis, we constructed an indicator, a dichotomous variable assigned the value of 1 – indicating any of the 4 conventional activities in which the respondent had participated in the last 12 months – and 0 otherwise. As illustrated in the figure, just over 10 per cent of respondents were involved in any of these activities. The findings also show that the variation of engagement in formal forms across age and generation is unsurprising. A high percentage of participation is seen among more politically active categories: males, older respondents and people within the 1.5- and second-generation categories. While it is not possible to verify the variation of the pattern of engagement in formal political activities across gender and age, as shown in the p-values, the potential difference between migrant generations is confirmed through a Chi-square test with a statistical significance at a 10 per cent level ($p=0.063$).

Figure 2. Formal political form by gender, age and generations

Note: The dot/square/triangle indicates the value of the mean and the bars mark the 95 per cent confidence interval of the mean. The dotted line indicates the value of the sample mean. $\chi^2 = 1.51$, $p = 0.219$, $N = 327$ (gender); $\chi^2 = 1.747$, $p = 0.417$, $N = 325$ (age); $\chi^2 = 3.46$, $p = 0.063$, $N = 334$ (generations).

Our qualitative interviews further revealed that most informants supported political parties during elections by mobilising friends or relatives to vote for the preferred parties. Mr. Vãn, who came to Poland in the late 1990s and was now in his 50s, stated that he supported the political party campaign by urging Vietnamese people to vote for candidates of the PO party in elections. During the last presidential election, he mustered votes for the coalition between PO and other parties in the competition with the PiS party.

Well, I am a member of the PO party. I go to every party meeting. In fact, the PO does not have that many party members – only 30,000–40,000 – and they do not need a large number of members as long as its members can mobilise strong support for them in elections. So I support them in this way, mobilising supporters. For example, if the Mayor of Warsaw runs again for election as a presidential candidate, I will urge all Vietnamese who support the PO to vote for him.

Although most participants favoured the PO party due to its liberal stand, it does not mean all Vietnamese in Poland supported it. Unlike other informants, Mr Vãn referred us to a few Vietnamese immigrants supporting the PiS party. However, as he stated below, these people become supporters of the PiS not because of their identification with the party's political stance but because of promises regarding social security:

In my opinion, not many Vietnamese people support PiS because people are afraid of the party's xenophobic stance. However, up to now, there are also some Vietnamese people who support it because it grants them 500 zł. Because these people see financial benefits, they support the party. However, they do not know much about politics.

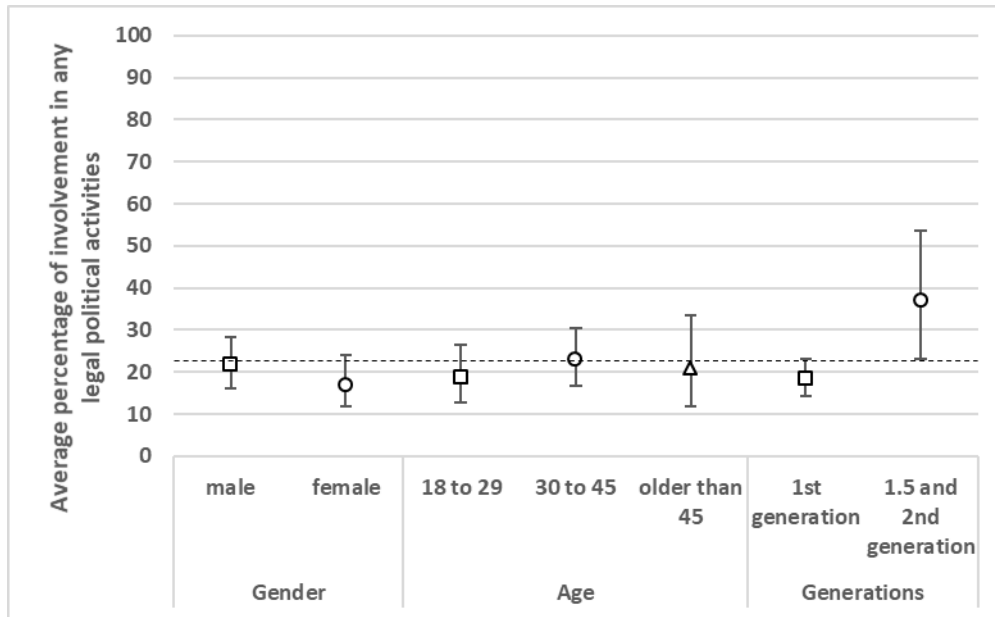
Regarding engagement in legal extra-parliamentary activities, we asked respondents in the survey whether they had taken part in the following activities in the previous 12 months: striking, boycotting, handing out leaflets, protesting, contacting the media or signing petitions. Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents

participating in each activity, with very few participating in them in the previous 12 months. The lowest percentage concerned going on strike, at only 1.8 per cent, followed by boycotting (3.89 per cent) and handing out leaflets (4.79 per cent). More respondents engaged in protesting (8.8 per cent) and contacting the media (8.68 per cent). Most respondents joined the legal extra-parliamentary form by signing petitions (12.87 per cent). This pattern of Vietnamese immigrants' political participation is relatively analogous to that of Poles' engagement in non-conventional political activities. Data from recent waves of the European Values Survey show that signing petitions was preferred the most by Polish people (37.12 per cent), nearly three times higher than the second most favourable activity – peaceful demonstrations (13.63 per cent). Boycotts and strikes persuaded very few Polish people to participate – just 5.3 per cent and 4.7 per cent, respectively (EVS 2022).

Table 4. Legal extra-parliamentary activities (%)

Formal activities	Striking	Boycotting	Handing out leaflets	Protesting	Contacting the media	Signing petitions
Yes	1.80	3.89	4.79	8.08	8.68	12.87
No	98.20	96.11	95.21	91.92	91.32	87.13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	334	334	334	334	334	334
Non-response	13	13	13	13	13	13
Total sample	347	347	347	347	347	347

Figure 3 portrays how engagement in legal extra-parliamentary forms varies across gender, age and generation. Like formal political activities, we constructed a dichotomous variable, assigned the value of 1 whenever the respondent had participated in any of the 6 legal extra-parliamentary activities in the previous 12 months; 0 otherwise. Compared to the participation in the formal form shown in Figure 2, the average percentage of individuals engaging in legal extra-parliamentary activities, as illustrated in Figure 3, is approximately 2 times higher (20.36 per cent compared with 10.78 per cent). Interestingly, the variation of involvement in this kind of manifest political activity across genders and generations is similar to that of traditional forms. Male respondents (more than 20 per cent) constituted a slightly higher share than females (less than 20 per cent) in involvement in legal extra-parliamentary activities. However, this difference in terms of gender is not supported by the Chi-square test ($p = 0.295$), pointing to an uncertain variation by gender. Unlike gender, the gap in involvement in non-conventional political forms is real for generations, as shown by a statistically significant Chi-square test ($p = 0.009$). Respondents belonging to the 1.5 and second generation constitute a more substantial share – 2 times higher than the first-generation group – in engaging in the extra-parliamentary form, around 40 per cent for the younger generation compared to 20 per cent for first-generation immigrants. As for age, although the Chi-square test uncovers unclear evidence for a discrepancy across age groups ($p = 0.7$), the result suggests a non-linear association between age cohorts and participation in legal forms among the Vietnamese. Figure 3 shows that the highest percentage of those surveyed who took part in the legal extra-parliamentary form was respondents aged 30 to 45 (approximately equal to the average rate of joining this form of the whole sample). In contrast, respondents attached to the younger and older categories have low engagement. Specifically, just under 20 per cent of respondents joining the form are aged 18 to 29 and the proportion of the oldest people is slightly over 20 per cent.

Figure 3. Legal extra-parliamentary form by gender, age, and generations

Note: The dot/square/triangle indicates the value of the mean and the bars mark the 95 per cent confidence interval of the mean. The dashed-dotted line indicates the value of the sample mean. $\chi^2 = 1.097$, $p = 0.295$, $N = 327$ (gender); $\chi^2 = 0.712$, $p = 0.7$, $N = 325$ (age); $\chi^2 = 6.79$, $p = 0.009$, $N = 334$ (generations).

Qualitative interviews revealed that most participants participated in manifest political forms by protesting. Some demonstrated opposition to ‘inappropriate’ policies adopted by the Polish government. For example, they were protesting against the law on ‘the protection of freedom of social media users’ differing from that of the ruling party in its control over the judiciary branch. Some pointed to the support for primary- and high-school teachers’ demand for higher pay, engaging in demonstrations to make abortion law stricter or supporting the LGBT+ or gay-pride movement. Other participants also reported helping people who joined protests by donating food or money and expressing an opinion to advocate protests. Mr Hùng, a participant in his 40s actively doing voluntary work even though he arrived in Poland just 3 years previously, narrated how he was involved in the host politics through protesting activities:

I participate in political movements that stand up for the weak in society. For example, I participated in protests of gay pride or LGBT... I also engaged in demonstrations against the abortion law with Polish friends and foreigners.

Signing petitions is also a manifest form of political engagement that several participants have taken. As they said, petitions were made to oppose drafts or bills proposed by the Polish parliament –such as the new draft of the abortion law – or which supported LGBT+ movements. In addition, handing out leaflets or banners is a form of protest that participants indicated enabled them to expose their expressions. For example, Mrs Hồng (40s), who arrived in Poland in 1996 and considered herself active in protesting activities, reported that she held up a banner to oppose ‘inappropriate’ policies adopted by the government in order to express her opinion on the issue:

I also hang up a banner at home with the slogan 'I oppose' because I thought that decisions made by the government were bad. So that is a way for me to express my views.

In sum, our findings uncovered a very low degree of participation in manifest political forms among Vietnamese immigrants. The participatory pattern is characterised by a tendency to prefer extra-parliamentary activities over formal political participation. The gap in manifest political participation is evident solely in terms of immigrant generations, especially in non-conventional political activities, where the 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese immigrants are shown to be more active than first-generation Vietnamese.

Discussion and conclusion

Our analyses have revealed Vietnamese-origin immigrants' modest willingness to integrate into the political sphere in the host country, exhibited by a low level of involvement in latent activities and a very low rate of engagement in the manifest dimension. This finding is understandable when referring to previous studies documenting that the Vietnamese in Poland are cautious and reluctant to engage in political affairs, considering political discussions as 'sensitive issues' (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2017, 2019). The degree of political participation of the Vietnamese in Poland mirrors the low degree of political participation among migrant groups in European countries with new migration experiences, such as Hungary, Italy and Spain (Pilati and Morales 2019). It also imitates the pattern of the political participation of non-European nationals, especially those from Asian and African countries, in other European contexts (Pilati and Morales 2019). However, compared to their counterparts in the United States, the Vietnamese in Poland are much less active in political participation. A study of the Vietnamese-American people's political participation in the US shows that the Vietnamese are relatively politically active, with more than 70 per cent of those who acquired American citizenship engaged in the last election and more than 55 per cent involved in non-conventional political activities such as protesting, campaigning and attending local meetings (Le 2013). The reason for the difference can be attributed to the effect of premigratory political socialisation in which most of the Vietnamese in Poland experienced political learnings in the context of a communist culture prior to migration, characterised by political apathy and a low level of political efficacy (Mierîna and Cers 2014). This political culture is thought to migrate with the Vietnamese to the residence country, discouraging the migrant group from political participation in Poland.

In our findings, we observed a variation in the degree of participation across forms of political activities. Like the results of Lee's work (2019), in which Vietnamese students in the Czech Republic were shown to be inclined towards civic engagement and tended to withdraw from the traditional form of political activity, we found that the Vietnamese in Poland prefer latent political participation while being unwilling to participate in manifest political activities. In addition, the findings of this study reflect those of Le (2013), who revealed a significant preference for non-conventional political activities over traditional political acts among the Vietnamese in the US. We detected a tendency for Vietnamese to be more active in non-conventional political acts (legal extra-parliamentary activities) than formal political activities within the manifest dimension. These results are highly suggestive. While the disinclination to manifest political activities can be understood as a result of the premigratory political culture that offered very limited political efficiency for Vietnamese political participation in the host country, it should be noted that the perception of civic engagement as an obligation to the host society can be a crucial factor in driving their preference for involvement in latent political activities.

We also uncovered a significant variation in the pattern of political engagement across primary demographic factors. The difference between men and women in political engagement is displayed solely in latent political activities, in which a high degree of involvement was found among males rather than females.

This finding can be attributed to the lesser motivation and fewer resources associated with political participation due to Vietnamese women taking on more family responsibilities compared to men. Also, the gendered stereotype in Confucian contexts that incites women to focus on family duties while discouraging them from participating in social and political affairs provides justifiable insight into understanding the difference in political engagement between Vietnamese men and women. Like gender, the variation in age groups is only manifest in the latent forms of political participation, with older people being very willing to be involved in political affairs. The greater political activism of older Vietnamese immigrants compared to the younger ones can be explained by the lifecycle and generational effects, where young immigrants have less motivation for focusing on host-country politics due to their unstable residential situation in the host country, preferring to put more resources into their living and responsibilities for their families. Unlike in gender and age, the variation in the degree of engagement across generations is observed in both latent and manifest forms of political participation, in which the 1.5- and second-generation Vietnamese people show a higher level of participation in the host politics than the first generation. This result implies an increased willingness to be included in the political sphere in Polish society for the first 2 groups, confirming the findings of previous studies which observed these generations' high connection to Polish society (Pokojska 2017; Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2019). It should be acknowledged that high human capital – notably knowledge of the Polish language and culture, coupled with being politically socialised in the host country with the political culture of a democratic regime – enables the 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese-origin immigrants to have a higher level of political participation than the first generation.

Interestingly, we found Vietnamese migrants' sense of responsibility towards Polish society to be an incentive for the former's political integration into the host country. As evident in our findings, the migrant group's civic engagement and political participation – notably voluntary involvement, voting and protesting activities – are regarded as the fulfilment of the rights and obligations of the country. This perception results from their gratitude to Poland, defined as the second homeland, for accommodating them during their immigration. In this sense, we can be reminded of filial piety, a prevalent value in Vietnamese culture that describes children's respect for their parents. This cultural value is relevant in accounting for Vietnamese immigrants' political integration into Polish society, stimulating the Vietnamese to pay off their presumed debt to the host society. Additionally, our findings disclose that their willingness to be involved in political activities comes from the desire to gain the host's recognition for the migrant group's presence and role in Polish society. In this vein, our results align with findings from the work of Grabowska (2023), in which the charitable activities of the Vietnamese in Poland are found to play similar roles. However, our study postulates that it is not only charitable work but also other forms of the civic and political participation of the Vietnamese that carry analogous values and meanings, manifesting their belonging to Polish society.

This study provides significant insights into the Vietnamese in Poland, advancing knowledge on the political aspect of the migrant group in Polish society, which has thus far been sidelined in academic discourse. Although this gap has been filled by the recent publications of Szymańska-Matusiewicz (2017, 2021, 2022) and Hũu (2022), those works are based on the ethnographic methodological perspective and exclusively touch on the migrant group's transnational political practices with a focus on pro-democracy activism or online political involvement. By employing a parallel mixed method with the use of qualitative and quantitative data, this current study is one of the first investigations providing a comprehensive picture of the political integration of the migrant group through their pattern of engagement in the political sphere in Polish society.

We provide ample empirical foundations that reinforce the conceptualisations applied to the empirical analysis of Vietnamese-origin immigrants' political integration in Polish society. Unlike recent research that employs alternative perspectives and concepts to examine the complex and dynamic processes of immigrants' adaptation and settling in destination societies, we adapt the two-sided reconceptualisation of 'integration' to

investigate how the Vietnamese integrate into the political sphere in Polish society. By employing this conceptual framework, we observed the visibility of political integration into Polish society among Vietnamese-origin immigrants, with their wide range of latent and manifest political activities. For example, they were interested in political parties in Poland, following and discussing political news concerning presidential elections. Furthermore, we found that the dominance of the preference for liberalism among the Vietnamese can be seen as the core, stirring up the migrant group to get involved in protests against the ruling party for issuing policies challenging liberal values in Poland.

While the results provided crucial insights into the political practices of the Vietnamese in Polish society, this study contains limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the small sample size of the survey and the limitation in the number of participants involved in the qualitative interviews can have drawbacks in generalising and validating the study's findings. Second, the research design focusing on a single migrant group in a single context might result in overlooking the effects of contextual factors affecting migrant political participation and may not allow the degree and pattern of Vietnamese political engagement to be presented from a comparative perspective. For example, the similarities and differences in involvement in the political sphere in the host country between the Vietnamese in Poland and their counterparts in other Central and Eastern European countries cannot be studied. Therefore, future work could be implemented by focusing on the political integration of Vietnamese immigrants in several destinations in the Central and Eastern European region, thus helping us to understand the effects of contextual factors – for example, political opportunity structure and citizenship policies – on migrant groups' political participation and the degree and patterns of Vietnamese immigrants' political participation from a comparative perspective. Furthermore, the effects of contextual factors on migrant political integration should be taken into account when it is approached as a two-way process of the interaction between the host country and migrant-origin individuals. It helps to uncover a more nuanced picture of migrant political integration by considering how the host country negotiates in a bid to adapt to the integrative process in accordance with migrant actors' ability and willingness to be included in the political sphere in the host society.

Future work can also focus on other issues that were not included in this study. It can touch on Vietnamese political integration in Poland by employing alternative conceptualisations of migrant political integration or alternative perspectives to capture the complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional processes of migrant adaptation and settlement in the host country in order to understand how the Vietnamese in Poland negotiate their involvement in the political sphere in Polish society. More importantly, future studies should consider significant drivers of Vietnamese-origin immigrants' political integration in Polish society. This can be achieved by considering the influence of important demographic and migrant factors, such as education, religion, employment, language proficiency, citizenship acquisition, length of residence in the host country and identity. In addition, the approach to social capital offers a lens that helps to figure out how types of social networks – particularly bonding and bridging ties – accumulated in the host country, form the way and degree of the migrant group's political engagement. Likewise, from transnationalism, an analysis of political and non-political transnational ties with the homeland will reveal how the ties with the origin country determine the integration of the migrant group into the political arena of the destination country. In particular, future work should not overlook the way in which communist legacies, a distinctive political characteristic of the Vietnamese in Poland, influence the political integration of the Vietnamese in Poland.


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Notes

1. Project title: ‘Political Integration of the Vietnamese Diaspora in Poland’.
2. Trzaskowski is a Polish politician. He became the PO party’s candidate for the presidency of Poland, standing in the presidential election in May 2020.

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