“Confessions of the Vietnamese” Facebook Page: The Intergenerational Conflict of Young Vietnamese Migrants in the Online Space in the Czech Republic

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Abstract.

“Confessions of the Vietnamese” is a Facebook community that creates a space for young Vietnamese migrants to get acquainted with each other, discuss their daily life experience, and share a wide range of emotions. Intergenerational conflict is present as a topic in approximately one-third of the posts on the “Confessions of the Vietnamese” page. Based on a qualitative analysis of these posts, we have determined what the conflict zones are, and we have uncovered the intergenerational problems between parents (first-generation migrants) and their children (1.5 generation and second-generation migrants), who are often seen by Czechs as the “model” minority. The language and cultural barrier between these children and their parents, as well as the parenting style of the Vietnamese, are some of the key factors causing distance and potential conflict among them. This often causes misunderstandings on the cultural level which lead to feelings of frustration and distance between the two generations of migrants.

Key words

second-generation migrants, young, migrant, Vietnamese, Czech Republic, intergenerational conflict, migration

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Introduction

Intergenerational conflict within families from a migrant background is a phenomenon widely reflected upon in migration studies (see Berry et al. 2006). As the first generation of migrants attempts to keep their cultural heritage and adhere to traditions, their children, on the contrary, tend to lean towards the culture of the host country which, among other factors, often contributes to creating intergenerational conflict (Zhou 2009; 1997). As a result, children from migrant backgrounds seek opportunities to negotiate their sense of belonging (Yoon 2018). For children who grow up in multicultural contexts, digital media facilitate their multicultural sense of belonging and identity (ibid). The role that parents and their parenting styles, as well as the role that peer relationships play in cultural integration, have already been examined by other researchers (e.g., Martinez-Callaghan – Gil-Lacruz 2017; Trieu 2014). However, only limited research has been conducted on the role of social media as a space for meeting peers with similar experiences and backgrounds or, additionally, on its role in discussing the specificities of being raised in a multicultural environment.

The need to make sense of their multicultural upbringing is distinctly visible in the lives of young Vietnamese in the Czech Republic. Over the past decade, Facebook has become a widely popular medium within the Czech Republic. Following the general trend, confession pages have spread since 2013 across the Czech-language Facebook environment, giving people a venue to anonymously post confidential secrets (Cyprich 2013). "*Přiznání Vietnamců*" ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")[1], a Facebook page primarily written in Czech, was followed as of this writing by 22,992 people[2] and was created by Vietnamese students as a space for young 1.5 generation and second-generation Vietnamese migrants to share a wide range of emotions and experiences – situations from daily life, hopes, disappointments and frustrations. Immediately after the page was started in 2013, it received enormous attention from young Vietnamese and later even from the Czech majority. It was the very first appearance of a platform for young Vietnamese on Facebook at the time. According to Freidingerová and Nováková, these "online exchanges later led to face-to-face meetings" (Freidingerová – Nováková 2021: 14) and civic activism and engagement among young Vietnamese. Intergenerational conflict is a frequent topic on "Confessions of the Vietnamese" (Homoláč – Sherman 2020) and is approached there with varying emotions. Our article aims to answer the following research question: What are the sources of the intergenerational conflicts between the parents and their children that are discussed on the "Confessions of the Vietnamese" page?

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[1] https://www.facebook.com/PriznaniVietnamcu/?ref=page_internal

[2] As of 19 December 2021.

Based on a qualitative analysis of the posts from "Confessions of the Vietnamese", we have determined the conflict zones and uncovered the intergenerational problems between these parents (first-generation migrants) and their children (1.5 generation and second-generation migrants). The language barrier between these children and parents and the parenting style of the Vietnamese are some of the key factors causing distance and potential multigenerational conflict. That said, we are aware that social media represent a specific space where a high level of stylization is present which can influence the style of the posts to the "Confessions" page.

Vietnamese in the Czech Republic and "*Banana Kids*"

According to the Czech Statistical Office (CSO), the Vietnamese are the third-largest group of migrants in the Czech Republic. Citizens of Ukraine, Slovakia and Vietnam make up 55.3% of the total number of foreigners with a residence permit in the Czech Republic (CSO 2021). The 2001 census found 17,462 ethnic Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic (CSO 2021). The Vietnamese population has grown very rapidly since then, with the Czech Statistical Office estimating that there were 62,842 Vietnamese citizens in the Czech Republic in December 2020 (CSO 2021). Nearly 60% of Third Country Nationals, including the Vietnamese, have permanent residence in the Czech Republic (ibid), which reflects their dwelling long-term in the country. As such families are having children who are born and/or raised in the Czech Republic, the Vietnamese represent a prominent share of the foreign nationals in the 1.5 generation and second generation of the migrant population overall. Data from educational institutions (CSO 2020) show that the majority of child foreign nationals attending kindergartens come from Vietnam (27.5%), and the same situation applies to high schools, where again pupils of Vietnamese origin outnumber other children of foreign national background. Moreover, they also constitute one quarter of primary school pupils of foreign national origin (19.9%). The data about university students are not representative because migrants who were brought up in the Czech Republic have an opportunity to apply for Czech citizenship at the age of 18, which makes the population of foreign national students statistically smaller at university. This indirectly reveals the distinct integration strategies of Vietnamese families who tend to move to the Czech Republic permanently and to raise their children there more than other groups of migrants who are numerous, such as those from Ukraine and Slovakia. Recent research on cultural orientation and acculturation conducted by Hřebíčková (2020) on the Vietnamese population among the 1.5 generation and second generation confirms this assumption, as the data from the representative survey show both the 1.5 generation and second generations are oriented towards Czech rather than Vietnamese culture (ibid). As can be seen in other national contexts, Vietnamese migrants are considered by the majority as the "model" ethnic minority (Lee 1996) but, especially in the first generation, the Vietnamese maintain close relations with relatives in Vietnam and within the Vietnamese diaspora (e.g., Dorais 2009). At the same time, the 1.5 generation and second generation of young Vietnamese are probably the most visible group of migrants in the Czech Republic.

The first decade of the twenty-first century was an era of new media and, for young Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, led to the discovery of a platform for publicly expressing their feelings for the first time. In 2008, Duong Nguyen Jirásková, later the author of the first book written by a Vietnamese person in the Czech Republic, published an article on her blog, "The Double Life of the Banana Kids", where she described the situation of young Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic (Nguyen 2008). This article, the first of its kind, started a lively discussion not only among the Vietnamese, but among Czechs as well. She was subjected to harsh criticism by her parents' generation and by some of her peers for losing her roots – *mất gốc* in Vietnamese (Holomáč – Sherman 2020). Conversely, many among the young generation praised her for hitting the nail on the head and describing their lives so well. Following her example, a number of other young Vietnamese started to write blogs to express their ideas and experiences (Martínková 2008).

The term "banana kids", used by the young Vietnamese themselves, quickly spread among their community, as it described their reality. Take, for example, the documentary film by Martin Ryšavý (2009) *Banánové děti* (*Banana Kids*) where a young migrant Vietnamese man explains to the "banana kid" metaphor to another Vietnamese friend:

> *What does a banana look like? A banana is yellow. On the outside a banana is 'normal' like us – yellow, but on the inside bananas are 'white' like us – we behave like Czechs, like Europeans.* (Banánové děti 2009)

Due to the nature of their parents' jobs (i.e., typically running corner shops or selling goods at Vietnamese markets), many Vietnamese children were raised by Czech nannies – often called "grandmas". It is assumed that every second Vietnamese child living in the Czech Republic was raised by a Czech nanny (Procházková 2012), although the amount of time these children spent with their Czech "grandmas" differed from case to case. Typically, children would spend entire weekdays at their nanny's residence until their parents would pick them up and take them home in the evening. Some kids stayed with their nanny for the whole week, residing with their parents only on the weekends. Sometimes these "grandmas" took care of babies only a few months old. Even today, Czech nannies are still "the door to the majority" for Vietnamese children (Souralová 2014a). These Vietnamese children cared for by Czech nannies were raised in a Czech environment with Czech traditions, celebrating Christmas, eating Czech food and listening to Czech fairy tales before bed, as described in the short film *Confession of a Generation (Zpověď generace)* shot in 2014 by Dužan Duong – one of the first ethnic Vietnamese students to attend the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU). This first-hand life experience of Czech culture – meaning it is not just a culture they have heard about – has made their integration into the Czech majority easier (Svobodová 2017). In many cases, these children formed a deep relationship with their nannies that frequently lasts into adulthood. Usually, Vietnamese children spent more time with their Czech nannies than with their own parents. For their parents, the combination of this babysitting and the Czech authenticity that their kids could only experience from a Czech nanny seemed to be ideal and beneficial (Souralová 2014a; 2014b; Freidingerová – Nováková 2021). The parents did not expect what such separation from them and from Vietnamese culture would cause in the future (ibid).

The foundation of the virtual space

One of the Facebook page's founders and administrators (admins), Nguyen Manh Tuan, says: "*We created the page at 9 PM and by 1AM we had 500 likes. The next day it had 1,000 and then 2,000 likes, and after one week we hit several thousands of likes*." Tuan (age 26), a student of IT and economics, was born in Vietnam and at the age of two came to the Czech Republic with his parents. The description section of the page calls it "*A page full of confessions, life stories, everyday problems and events from the lives of the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic*" (Confession of the Vietnamese). It does not specify whether the page focuses on young Vietnamese, although since the group's main language is Czech, it is assumed that most of the people posting and sharing are migrant Vietnamese youth (Homoláč – Sherman 2020). This trend is also apparent from the demographic data on the page's fans provided by Tuan:

> *"Confessions of the Vietnamese" is most popular among women and men 18 to 24 years old – women in this age group comprised 24% and men 30% of all fans. In the age group of 24 to 35, women account for 8% and men for 14% of all fans, followed by the 13 to 17 age group which comprises 77% of female and 7% of male fans.*

According to the founders, at the beginning the aim was simply to have fun. There was an agreement made among the admins that all confessions and posts would have to reflect real life situations, which allows "Confessions of the Vietnamese" to give insight into this group of young people and their lives. On the other hand, Tuan admits they received many confessions of a rather disturbing, depressing nature that they never published. Later, the aim of the page was to be not just realistic but also entertaining and uplifting.

Another admin of "Confessions of the Vietnamese", Pham Cuong (27), a former student of diplomacy and Tuan's friend, says that according to the posts, the creation of the page was liberating for many young Vietnamese. Many followers of the page shared a similar life experience. After reading posts from other people describing the same problems, they suddenly felt they were not alone, as Tuan explains here:

> *We observed this sentiment among many of our followers. For example, whenever we hit a certain milestone, like 10,000 likes, we thanked all of the followers. The fans responded with lots of comments, for example, that they had thought they were the only ones living such a life of family hardship and lack of parental love, yet now they see that they are not alone. They were happy that something like "Confessions of the Vietnamese" exists. In this way, the Facebook confession group has become a specific type of self-help group for some. Intergenerational problems are among the other frequently-presented topics on the confession page.*

Sources of Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Migration

To contribute to the literature exploring the acculturation gaps that influence family relationships in Vietnamese migrant families, we have conceptualized acculturation as changes in cultural attitudes, behaviours and values that result from contact between two distinct cultures (Phinney 1990). The acculturation gap between family members can be perceived as the primary source of conflict between parents and children from a migrant background. According to this approach, the process of acculturation creates clashes in values between children and adults that affect family relationships (e.g., Berry et al. 2006). Another approach argues that the acculturation gap hypothesis does not provide a full explanation for the quality of family relationships. For example, Merali (2002) argues that adolescents from migrant backgrounds attribute the conflicts they experience with their parents to acculturation discrepancies rather than attributing them to other reasons; nevertheless, intergenerational conflicts and parenting styles are more often to blame for youth distress than are acculturation gaps (Lim et al. 2008).

Migrant parents who are more oriented toward their native culture may find their parenting styles ineffective with children who are quickly adapting to the host culture (Buki et al. 2003). Zhou (2009) describes parent-child relationships in migrant families of Chinese backgrounds as based on Confucian traditions, which are dominant in Vietnamese families as well.

> *Emphasising filial piety, education, hard work, and discipline serve as normative behavioural standards for socialising the younger generation. […] They have clearly articulated expectations that their children will attain the highest levels of educational and occupational achievements possible. […] Deviation from these expectations is considered a family shame or failure and is thus negatively sanctioned by the family and the ethnic community.* (Zhou 2009: 21)

Like other Asian ethnicities, Vietnamese parents usually adopt a punishment-oriented, authoritarian parenting style for raising children (Nguyen – Cheung 2009). Based on Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) typology of parenting styles, an authoritarian parenting style typically embodies a high degree of demands, control and expectations. In line with this typology, Vietnamese adolescents tend to rate their parents as overprotective and controlling. An authoritarian parenting style is correlated with depression and low self-esteem (Nguyen – Leung – Cheung 2011; Nguyen et al. 2013). In line with this argument, Kwak and Berry (2001) argue in their research among adolescents of migrant background that adolescents from an Asian ethnic background have a lot of responsibilities within the family while at the same time disagreeing more with their parents on issues of independence, their role in decision making, and their preferences regarding intercultural contact.

Social media, including the Facebook page we have analysed in this paper, provide a safe space for intimate storytelling about family, travels, or experiences with parents (Garde-Hansen – Gorton 2013). Nevertheless, in the search for sharing, there is always a certain level of exposure that implies vulnerability. The extent to which private content is disclosed depends on the topic, as well as on the audience. Content intimacy is known to regulate self-disclosure in face-to-face communication: People self-disclose less as content intimacy increases. Regulation of this sort appears to persist in social media as well. However, the decisive factor is anonymity – a factor that increases self-disclosure. Another important topic connected to intimacy-sharing practices is how identity is constructed on Facebook (see Zhao – Grasmuck – Martin 2008).

According to Zhao, Grasmuck and Martin (2008), Facebook is a "anonymous" online setting where users are required to reveal their real names in a fixed institutional context, which explains why users tend not to treat it as a platform for directly expressing their "hidden selves" or their marginalized or contested identities. Nevertheless, the anonymous, curated posting by the Facebook page "Confessions of the Vietnamese", which we analysed, serves like other anonymous online settings as a space where individuals can safely recreate their biography and personality (ibid.). In other words, the online space enables one to reinvent oneself through experimenting with new, often unconventional identities. An anonymous online environment also provides an outlet for the expression of one's hidden attributes or preferences and the exploration of various non-conventional identities, as Rosenmann and Safir (2006) have demonstrated in their research on sexual identities. In regard to the context of identity formation on social media, it must be noted that even social media pushes for a particular kind of conformity, thus influencing the nature of the posts published on specific Facebook sites.

Data Selection and Analysis

We decided to examine intergenerational conflict through the data (status posts) from the Facebook page "Confessions of the Vietnamese", one of the most popular platforms for young Vietnamese between the time of its founding on 5 May 2013 until 2017. We conducted interviews with founders and admins Nguyen Manh Tuan and Cuong Pham in 2018 to obtain supplementary information about the page itself, the circumstances of its establishment, and the process of curating the content. "Confessions of the Vietnamese" is an open page accessible to anyone with a Facebook account. However, the administrators curate the posts from contributions they receive via Google sheets and publish them on the page anonymously under the "Confessions of the Vietnamese" page name as Facebook status posts.

Described as "a page full of the confessions, life stories, everyday problems and events from the Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic"

(Confession of the Vietnamese), the language mainly used on the page is Czech.

We analysed the content of all 978 status posts published on the confession page between 2013 and 2017, when the page was at the peak of its popularity. For this purpose, we were provided with an anonymized table of status posts by a founder and admin. To ensure the anonymity of the Facebook page users, we are not revealing any comments or reactions whereby the authors could be identified. For the final analysis, we selected the 150 most-liked status posts to narrow the topic down. The admins consented to share the anonymized posts and related page-use data for the purpose of our analysis.

The most popular topics (according to the number of likes) are examples of everyday racism and encounters with Vietnamese parents. The majority of the posts involve references to parents as they describe the life of the Vietnamese community – working in corner shops open 7/11, the language barrier, parents’ superstitious beliefs and interactions with the Czech majority, and the conflicting relationship between the first generation and the 1.5 generation and second generation within the Vietnamese diaspora living in the Czech Republic. According to the founders and admins, who are of Vietnamese origin themselves, the status posts provide, in their opinion, an authentic reflection of the lived lives of the 1.5 generation and second-generation Vietnamese. With an aim “to be realistic, yet entertaining and uplifting as well”, the admins admit to excluding confessions of a highly disturbing, depressing nature. Tuan commented:

> *In its first six years of existence, “Confessions of the Vietnamese” has posted 1,726 confessions, videos and other posts in total. Approximately one third of the posts we analysed touch upon intergenerational conflict between Vietnamese migrant parents and their children from the perspective of 1.5 generation or second-generation migrants.*

This corresponds with our findings that approximately one third of the posts relate to intergenerational conflict.

Taking the above into consideration, we have decided to apply the perspective of intergenerational conflicts in the context of migration and have selected three dominant themes discussed on the analysed page which can be seen as the main cause of such conflicts:

1. Children not meeting parents’ expectations (representing parenting style)
2. Cultural / language barrier (representing the acculturation gap)
3. The value of family ties (everyday practices of ethnic identity)

In most cases, the topics of the individual posts cross over and merge into other categories, thematically. Due to the character of the posts and their topic merging, it would be rather subjective to create a table with the precise number of posts belonging to each post category. Instead, we have provided examples of each category and, in turn, discussed their specific situations and content. The presented findings are case-specific – they are valid for the context of the confession page, and it would be speculative to assume the same topics would be discussed in face-to-face encounters. However, they open the possibility for discussion of identity formation in both the virtual context and in a context of migration and intercultural exchange.

Results

Children not meeting their parents' expectations

Claims such as "They will never be happy with me" or "I will never be good enough for my parents" are characteristic of the negative feelings that young Vietnamese express rather often in their posts. These young Vietnamese express their disappointment with their parents' reactions to a wide variety of situations, even using the hashtag #YouAreNeverGoodEnough.

These young Vietnamese feel pressured by their parents to achieve and be successful while also feeling unappreciated and unpraised when they do succeed. The pressure to deliver an exceptional contribution to both the family and society is often ironically commented on in the posts, here revealing both the pressure to shine and the conflicting values between the generations regarding what "success" means:

> Young Vietnamese (YV): *Mom, I found a cure for cancer, won a Nobel Prize, composed three symphonies and, with my bare hands, stopped a famine in Africa.*
>
> Mother: *The neighbour's wife has a cousin who is the adopted grandson of my friend from my hometown. He works 25 hours a day, has four grocery stores, a beautiful BMW and three iPhones. Stop slacking and do something useful so I don't have to be ashamed of you in front of them.* ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Here we can see the focus on the economic security of the family versus contributions to the broader society, between dead-end labour and creative work, and between the good name of the family within the Vietnamese diaspora versus merit in the majority society.

One field where the 1.5 generation and second-generation Vietnamese experience a great deal of pressure is education – these migrants are expected to have excellent results at school and to study at university: "*My parents take it for granted that I will get into university and that I will finish it with a red diploma*[3]." ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

It is common for young Vietnamese to face pressure from their parents to study in a field of high prestige within the Vietnamese community, such as medicine, economics, or the financial sector (Formánková – Lopatková 2018).

> *Many of us certainly heard from our fathers: "Go to any university you want – economics, medicine or law. It's up to you! We hope this great article will help you 'negotiate' your university choice with your parents!*" ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Vietnamese parents believe the only way to overcome the "migrant" label is to put pressure on their children not just to have the best study results, but also to be better than their Czech peers (Souralová 2014b). Migrant parents push their children to reach the highest goals, convinced that it is the only way to be accepted by the majority (Zhou – Lee 2004).

The "Confessions of the Vietnamese" page reveals that young Vietnamese often emphasize a desire to have a warm relationship with their parents. They idealize the relationship between parents and children in Czech families, believing they have more warm, intimate encounters. The following post reveals this idealized picture of Czech families:

> *I envy Czechs for the relationship they have with their parents. They can talk or chat about anything. About relationships or other problems. At home, I barely speak to my parents. They only care about my studying, doing household chores, etc. I know they don't mean it, but it would be nice to hear that they love me.* ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Although in some of these posts the young Vietnamese express their sadness and frustration with this comparison of parental practices, others suggest Vietnamese parents have devoted their entire lives to securing the economic stability and social integration of their children in Czech society:

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[3] Red colour of the diploma signify the best possible study results.

"I admire my parents for having the courage to come to a foreign country and start working here." ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Cultural Barriers: Language Barrier is the Most Pronounced

As we have previously noted, many of the young Vietnamese raised by Czech nannies – "grandmas", as mentioned above – have limited active use of the Vietnamese language (Freidingerová 2014). They would speak Vietnamese with their parents just in the evenings after their parents got home from work, and in some cases they spoke Vietnamese only a few hours a week (Souralová 2014b). As a result, young immigrants of Vietnamese origin sometimes regard Czech as their native language instead of Vietnamese and use Czech in their interactions with each other; this represents one reason for their overall orientation towards the culture of the majority (Formánková – Lopatková 2018). In the confession posts, young Vietnamese share sentiments about the lack of communication between them and their parents caused by the language barrier – their lack of knowledge of Vietnamese and their parents' limited knowledge of Czech. This creates feelings of detachment from their Vietnamese origin, as presented in this highly-liked post: *"YV: I can't even describe my day to my Mom in Vietnamese."* ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Additionally, limited knowledge of the language influences the acceptance of the 1.5 generation and second-generation migrants into both their broader family and the Vietnamese diaspora, which is dominated by first-generation migrants:

> YV on parents: *My parents: "We would give anything to have a son like yours! […] Ours is such a dummy. And he doesn't speak Vietnamese!"* ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Language barriers cause problems when communicating with other relatives as well, especially those in Vietnam. The Vietnamese living in Vietnam often perceive their kin living abroad, known as the *Việt Kiều*, as *mất gốc* and, having lost their roots, as those who are unable to behave properly and speak Vietnamese. They often make fun of young Vietnamese migrants because of their limited language knowledge. Moreover, Vietnamese youth experience this situation not just in Vietnam, but also in the Czech Republic, within their community, and sometimes even with their own parents.

The Value of Family Ties

In relation to the above-mentioned strong ties of the first-generation Vietnamese migrants with the local diaspora, and in contrast to their children’s loose identification with Vietnamese culture, the question of maintaining this culture and language for future generations emerges. According to the posts popular on the “Confession of the Vietnamese” page, Vietnamese parents in the Czech Republic – first-generation migrants – tend to pressure their children to marry or date other Vietnamese. As confessed in the following post, the reasoning is based on the parents’ concern about cultural differences between the Czech majority and the Vietnamese community:

> YV: *My Mom constantly tries to put me together with Vietnamese girls I barely know, to ensure I do not move towards the dark Czech side.* (“Confessions of the Vietnamese”)
>
> YV: *My parents suggest I should not marry a Czech girl because they only go to parties and eat bread rolls.* (“Confessions of the Vietnamese”)

Despite the anonymity, some confession posts do reveal the gender of the author (as the Czech language is not gender-neutral), revealing gender differences between the pressures placed on sons and daughters when it comes to choosing a life partner. Young Vietnamese women seem to face less pressure than their male counterparts. One well-known Vietnamese proverb refers to any daughter as a “child of other people,” suggesting she will become a member of her husband’s family after marriage. Traditionally, the wife moves in with her husband’s family after the wedding and thus her position is subordinate both to her husband and to his family (Kibria 1990). From a cultural perspective, Confucianism still has a strong influence on the Vietnamese family, which therefore embodies aspects of a patrilineal, patriarchal model with a distinct connection to hierarchy (Hoang – Yeoh 2011). The man is the head of the family, whereas women are supposed to take care of the household members, including the husband’s parents. The oldest son and his wife usually take care of elderly parents and worship their ancestors. Parents customarily require that their daughter-in-law understand Vietnamese culture, “know how to behave”, and help while performing family rituals.

Vietnamese women, on the other hand, face their own challenges: They are discouraged from finding a partner (even a Vietnamese one) prior to finishing their studies, since their parents are convinced it would distract them from studying. In the eyes of Vietnamese parents, it is important to find a good husband only once one's education is completed – but also, to find one immediately thereafter. Parents as well as others in the Vietnamese diaspora put a lot of pressure on Vietnamese women to find a husband as soon as possible following graduation, otherwise, she is labelled "old", "problematic" or simply "*ế*" – "past her 'sell-by' date".

> *During my school years, my parents warned me against having a boyfriend, as he would distract me from my studies. Since I received my Bachelor's degree in June, they have many times suggested I am old and should get married by the end of the year. #LogicOfVietnameseParents* ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Religious beliefs play an important role in choosing life partners as well. On the confession page, posts often mock parents' superstitious and religious beliefs, for example, "*My mom is a Buddhist. She reads those religious texts faster than Eminem raps!*" ("Confessions of the Vietnamese") The superstitious practises of Vietnamese parents are also a matter for negotiation between parents and children. The Vietnamese are generally very superstitious and perform a significant amount of practises in order to avoid bad luck. Horoscopes, for example, are part of everyday life among many Vietnamese people, not only in Vietnam but also in the diaspora:

> *I naively thought that if I invited a 100% Vietnamese person from a good family and with a university degree, my parents would approve, but right after he left they told me: "Break up with him. Your astrological signs aren't compatible."* ("Confessions of the Vietnamese")

Posts to the confession page of this particular type elicit strong support from other group members who struggle with parental disapproval of their partner choice. Followers of the page, usually those who say they have succeeded in marrying or dating a Czech partner, share their stories and express warm support for people in this situation. According to the posts, parents who do accept their children's Czech partners insist that their partner learn Vietnamese to communicate with the family, especially since the parents often do not speak Czech.

Although first-generation Vietnamese parents often protest against mixed marriages, such marriages are becoming more common in the Czech Republic. In 2011, one of the Vietnamese community's most famous wedding halls hosted a Vietnamese-Czech marriage for the first time ever in Prague's Sapa Market (a Vietnamese woman and a Czech man) (Březina

– Procházková 2011) which can be seen as an expression of approval by the Vietnamese community.

Discussion

Overall, the posts from the Facebook page “Confessions of the Vietnamese” show an intergenerational conflict characterized by unmet expectations on both sides and fuelled by cultural and language barriers, such as culturally-embedded ideas about appropriate ways for family members to relate to each other or to show care and compassion.

Overall, the “romantic” idea of open, understanding Czech parents versus the demanding, cold Vietnamese upbringing described in the posts can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, it can be the result of a specific arrangement whereby care for children of Vietnamese origin was typically provided by Czech families via nannies, since institutional childcare was not available for children under three years of age (Souralová 2015). Vietnamese migrants felt pressured to economically ensure their family and so they did not opt for the three-year-long parental care model provided by a parent staying at home with the child, which is popular in the Czech Republic and reinforced by state subsidies (ibid; Formánková – Lopatková 2018). The Czech nannies were usually female pensioners who welcomed the contribution to their generally low pensions and, at the same time, provided “grandma”-style warmth and empathic care (Souralová 2014b). Due to the high-intensity work lives typical of first-generation migrant Vietnamese, their children often spent every work day, including the occasional overnight stay, with Czech families in their homes. For lack of time spent with their own parents, the 1.5 generation and second generation migrants have fewer memories to share with their parents today, and they understand Czech culture and habits better than Vietnamese ones; moreover, they experience a language barrier with their own parents, as they were primarily socialized into the Czech language (Formánková – Lopatková 2018).

Secondly, this conflict could also come from everyday practices of ethnic identity, whereby the Vietnamese community is seen in these posts as having less desirable characteristics than the Czechs, including their habitual forms of relating to each other in public and inside families. Studies of ethnicity in everyday contexts reveal the daily instability and renegotiation of ethnic identity (e.g., Karner 2007). It is important to take into account the fact that identities are renegotiated in everyday situations and that the force of real-life encounters between people can destabilize these identities, so everyday practices and relationships may take place in forms that are neither attentive to, nor significantly ordered by, individual understandings about ‘race’ or ethnicity (e.g., Kramvig 2005). In Vietnamese culture, for example, it is not common to express one’s feelings in public (given the possibility of losing face), nor in front of one’s own children. It is much more common to see two men holding hands than it is to see a man and a woman holding hands. In Czech culture, on the contrary, expressing one’s feelings is more common, and people hug and kiss in public as well, to a certain extent (Svobodová 2017). Since these Vietnamese youth have been socialized strongly into Czech cultural norms, they ignore the behaviour of their own parents and interpret it as “cold”, from the perspective of the dominant Czech culture. Had they been more embedded in Vietnamese culture, they would likely see the behaviour in the dominant society as too frivolous (ibid.). The conduct of Czech children is also seen by the Vietnamese to be lazy and lacking in discipline, which leads to a third possible explanation for this conflict.

Thirdly, Asian migrant parents often enforce an authoritative parenting model characterized by a high level of control and demands and a low level of warmth and emotional support (Nguyen – Williams 1989; Herz – Gullone 1999 in Szymanska-Matusiewicz 2015; Hubertová 2014). This trend is clearly visible in the posts from the confession page and leads to the belief that Vietnamese parents “do not care”. However, the opposite is the case: Their children’s education is the priority for Vietnamese parents. The pressure to achieve, in other words, is pressure to ensure a better life for their children, as educational accomplishments strengthen the position and prestige of the entire family (Phung Thi 2006). An important feature of the migrant experience, as is supported by Pranee Liamputtong’s (2006) study on Asian mothers in Australia, is that education and its achievement are prestige symbols and a mark of “successful parenting”, not just for the child but also for the family, and especially for mothers. This applies to Vietnamese migrant parents in the Czech Republic as well (Formánková – Lopatková 2018; Souralova 2014b). Moreover, education is traditionally perceived as a mark of prestige in Vietnam even today (Huard – Durand 1990).

In this context of cultural differences and language barriers, the issue of mixed marriages becomes more evident as a conflictual one. However, a number of scholars claim that mixed marriages represent a benchmark and indicator of integration into the host country’s society (Khoo 2011), and that the growth of intermarriages indicates barriers are loosening between the majority and minority (Alba – Nee 2003 in Svobodová 2017), which may be threatening to the Vietnamese diaspora. Nevertheless, an in-depth study on Vietnamese parents’ preferences concerning their children’s marital partners is still needed.

Conclusion

By analysing popular posts on the Facebook page "Confessions of the Vietnamese," we have identified the main areas of tension between migrant Vietnamese parents and their children in reaction to which young Vietnamese are negotiating their generational identity. In accordance with studies focusing on intergenerational conflict in Asian communities worldwide (e.g., Herz – Gullone 1999; Kwak – Berry 2001; Szymanska-Matusiewicz 2015; Zhou 2009), we find similar aspects and patterns in the upbringing of Vietnamese children in the Czech Republic. Our findings also correspond with research from other studies focusing on young Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic (see Souralová 2014a; 2014b; 2015; Freidingerová 2014; Freidingerová – Nováková 2021).

According to our analysis, the crucial factor is the language barrier that young Vietnamese face when communicating with their own parents. Highly-acculturated migrant Vietnamese youth, who have often been raised by Czech nannies, lose their connection not just to the Vietnamese language but simultaneously to the culture of their parents; this is often described in the literature as being a source of mutual conflict (see Berry et al. 2006). This cultural clash prevents young Vietnamese from understanding their parents, not just on a linguistic level, but also at the normative level of values and beliefs (ibid).

A high level of social control within the community, and the idea that a successful child equates to prestige for the entire family, puts enormous pressure on Vietnamese youth. Moreover, the language barrier and cultural clashes lead to feelings of estrangement as young Vietnamese struggle to explain their behaviour and feelings to their parents. Implementing an authoritative parenting style, Vietnamese parents put pressure on their children to achieve the highest goals, which their children often struggle to accomplish (see Maccoby – Martin 1983; Nguyen – Cheung 2009). The distance grows as children feel unappreciated and unloved, leading to feelings of loneliness and frustration, which are revealed through the "Confessions of the Vietnamese" to a receptive audience.

According to our analysis and the opinions of the admins who created the page, it appears that these confessions represent authentic accounts about the everyday family lives of 1.5 generation and second-generation Vietnamese migrants living in the Czech Republic. The specific style of the posts, which is mainly ironic, does not diminish the authentic experience upon which they reflect. Nonetheless, it is necessary to point out the limits of our study. The posts from "Confessions of the Vietnamese" that we have selected for our analysis gained popularity for several reasons. For instance, fans "like" posts either because they reflect their own experience, or because they find them amusing/interesting, or all of the above. Therefore, it is possible that other posts did not gain visibility merely because there was less appreciation of their style, not because of their informational value. This is, however, a limitation when analysing social media self-presentation. Nevertheless, the posts provide valuable insight into the specific sense of belonging held by ethnic Vietnamese youth in the Czech Republic in the specific context of social media.

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