

TOWARD A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF RESETTLEMENT:  
VIETNAMESE REFUGEE MEN

BY

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1

Introduction . . . . .	1
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### CHAPTER 2

Involuntary Migration . . . . .	12
Involuntary Migration to Canada . . . . .	13
Refugees from Vietnam . . . . .	24
Vietnamese History . . . . .	25
Vietnamese in Canada . . . . .	29
Vietnamese in Winnipeg, Manitoba . . . . .	39
Summary . . . . .	55

### CHAPTER 3

The Conceptualization of Resettlement . . . . .	57
Approaches to Understanding Adaptation . . . .	57
Concepts Developed for Refugee Studies . . . .	68
The Study of Successful Resettlement . . . .	76
The Study of Vietnamese Refugees . . . . .	87
Summary . . . . .	95

### CHAPTER 4

Methodology . . . . .	99
Basic Premises of a Qualitative Approach . .	99
Grounded Theory . . . . .	104
Data Collection . . . . .	110

Techniques . . . . .	112
Participant Observation. . . . .	112
In-depth Interviewing. . . . .	115
The Interview Process . . . . .	117
Methodological Problems Related to	
Refugee Research . . . . .	125
Data Analysis and Model Construction . . . .	130
Summary . . . . .	132

## CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis and Model Construction . . . . .	134
Biographical Profile . . . . .	134
Definitions of Successful Resettlement . .	152
Economic Well-Being . . . . .	153
Psycho-Social Well-Being . . . . .	160
Political Well-Being . . . . .	162
Categories Representing Levels of Adaptation	166
The Settled . . . . .	169
Marginals . . . . .	176
The Unsettled . . . . .	182
Explanations for Variations in Levels of	
Adaptation . . . . .	188
Conditions in the Host Society . . . .	189
Class of Origin and Ethnic Variation .	196
Conditions of Exodus . . . . .	201
Family . . . . .	205
Individual Characteristics . . . . .	210

Summary . . . . .	215
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## CHAPTER 6

Summary and Conclusion . . . . .	217
Future Research . . . . .	236
Conclusion . . . . .	238
REFERENCES . . . . .	240

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A . . . . .	266
Ethics Approval . . . . .	267
APPENDIX B . . . . .	268
Interview Guide . . . . .	269

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Refugee resettlement has been documented since early times but has only recently been recognized as a field of study in its own right. Before this, it was located within the field of immigrant and ethnic studies where research is concerned with voluntary migrants and is informed by theories based on the experiences of European immigrants to North America (Neuwirth & Clark, 1981). Studies in refugee resettlement focus on involuntary migrants, most of whom come from developing countries.

Although all migrants share common experiences, scholars in the field of refugee resettlement maintain there are important differences between refugees and immigrants. According to Tepper (1980), "refugees are not immigrants, people who voluntarily depart from their homelands to seek a better life. They are emergencies: the homeless, the stateless, the dispossessed" (p.5). Refugees are persons who have fled their homelands and sought refuge elsewhere because of perceived threats to their well-being (Rogge, 1987). According to Kunz (1973), "it is the reluctance to uproot oneself and the absence of positive original motivation to settle elsewhere which characterises the refugee from voluntary migrants" (p.120).

Situations which give rise to refugee movements are generally precipitated by traumatic events such as political

upheaval, ideological purges or physical deprivation. Departures are often abrupt and frequently difficult. Refugees seldom have the opportunity to select their final destination and are not usually cognizant of it when they depart. Many are unable to bring material resources with them and often arrive with only the clothes they are wearing. They are seldom able to return to their country of origin or have family and friends visit. Most experience considerable family disruption, and communication with those left behind is often difficult or impossible. These problems are compounded because refugees, especially in recent times, usually come from countries significantly different from the countries of resettlement.

Although many immigrants experience some of the same events as refugees, they seldom experience the same degree of trauma or stress. They generally feel in control of their lives, have the opportunity to select and prepare for life in the new environment and anticipate upward mobility as a result of migration. Furthermore, they usually come from countries similar to the countries of resettlement (Richards, 1982).

Compared to immigrants, refugees are less prepared for the resettlement process. They maintain a greater commitment to their country of origin and often hope to return to it regardless of how unrealistic those hopes may be. Refugees are more likely to experience emotional and

physical stress related to their losses and their feelings of uncertainty about the future. They are less likely to have established links in the country of resettlement and given immigration policies, are more likely to experience large cultural differences (Hugo, 1990). As outlined, the experiences of refugees and immigrants are sufficiently different to affect the process and outcome of resettlement thus warranting separate fields of study (Kuhlman, 1991; Liu, 1979).

While there is a growing body of literature in the field of refugee resettlement, many gaps need to be addressed. Conceptual models from immigrant and ethnic studies are often applied to refugee research; however, the fit between the models and the data is not always appropriate (Ferguson, 1984; Neuwirth & Clark, 1981). According to Harrell-Bond (1988), much of the work produced to date has been done by researchers working for policy makers and service organizations. Consequently, there is a need for independent research, especially research that represents the refugee's perspective (Robinson, 1990). As Stein (1981) said, researchers need to consider the expectations refugees have for their own resettlement because expectations have a large impact on behaviour during resettlement. Of the studies that consider the process of refugee resettlement, most focus on problems and pathology. Few studies explore successful resettlement. There are no

definitions of or criteria for success and significant variables are often missed or ignored (Nann, 1982).

While existing studies contribute to our knowledge of the phenomenon, they do little to increase our understanding of how refugees perceive resettlement or how they define success. This research explores these questions and arrives at a conceptual model which incorporates the views and achievements of refugees in the process of resettlement. Specific objectives of this study are to understand how refugees define successful resettlement, to develop categories representing varying levels of resettlement and to identify variables which could explain these different levels.

Several authors have addressed the need to examine these issues. Bach and Bach (1980), for instance, identify a lack of information on the subjective dimensions of the resettlement process. Robinson (1990) argues for a research approach that allows us to understand how refugees see themselves. He suggests grounding the research in the refugee experience. Finally, Baker (1990) suggests that despite considerable research on the topic of refugees, we still do not know why some refugees resettle more successfully than others. Because migration by refugees is becoming an increasingly pressing concern, it is imperative that we develop a better understanding of this process at both the empirical and theoretical levels.

In Canada, the legal definition of a refugee is found in the Immigration Act and is taken from the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees established in 1951 (Law Union of Ontario, 1981). According to the act, people may be admitted to Canada as independent immigrants, family class members, convention refugees or members of designated classes. Independent immigrants are accepted on the basis of a point system. Those persons accepted as family members are sponsored by close relatives who are responsible for their maintenance for up to ten years. Convention refugees are persons who, by reason of well-founded fear of persecution, for reason of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, are unable or unwilling to return to their country of birth or habitual residence. Members of designated classes are persons in refugee-like situations who may not meet the strict definition of convention refugees.

As discussed in Chapter 2, refugees in this study, are simply and broadly defined as persons who have fled their homeland and sought refuge elsewhere because of perceived threats to their well-being (Rogge, 1987). While this is a much broader definition than the legal one, it offers a common understanding of the term and it is a common understanding that is the focus of this study.

There are three alternatives for persons who have fled

their countries. These are repatriation, indefinite detention in refugee camps and resettlement. Most refugees return home and others languish for years in refugee camps; however, some are accepted for resettlement by countries such as Canada.

Refugees from Vietnam were selected as the focus of this study because they form part of the largest contemporary refugee movement to Canada. For instance, Vietnamese accounted for almost two-thirds of all refugees to Canada in 1980 (Statistics Canada, 1990). Most refugee studies have emphasized the early stages of resettlement with data being collected within the first few years of arrival. At this stage, many refugees anticipate achieving successful resettlement within three to five years. As research is seldom conducted after this time, a gap exists in our understanding of the resettlement process over a longer period. Results from this study can contribute to narrowing this gap because most Vietnamese refugees have been in Canada between five and ten years.

The city of Winnipeg is an appropriate setting for this study for two reasons. First, there is a relatively large Vietnamese community established there. According to immigration statistics (personal communication, Immigration Statistics Division, Employment & Immigration Canada, April 1, 1991), approximately 7,500 persons from Vietnam officially arrived in Manitoba between January 1975 and

October 1990. Most of these newcomers settled in Winnipeg at the outset. Of those who initially settled in other parts of the province, almost all migrated to Winnipeg within one or two years. Second, the researcher has been associated with both refugees and organizations providing services to newcomers in Winnipeg for over nine years (Higgitt-Copeland, 1988). This includes time spent as a participant observer at a recreation centre for Southeast Asian youths and a research project conducted with this group to determine how refugee youths perceive their resettlement (Copeland, 1984). Additionally, the researcher has spent time working with refugees in an organization started by them and designed by them to provide sports, recreation, educational, cultural and social services to other newcomers. The researcher has also assisted in developing and implementing transitional housing for newcomers in their first year of residence in Canada.

Experiences such as these have provided an invaluable opportunity for the researcher to become familiar with newcomers and their communities and to develop an understanding of the issues involved in refugee resettlement. These experiences have served to establish the researcher's credibility among the refugee population and have allowed her access to that population for the current study.

A qualitative research approach was considered the most

efficacious means to achieving the objectives of this study. It is ideally suited for research that seeks to uncover the nature of peoples' experiences and to develop a conceptual understanding of that experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers working in the field of refugee studies (for example, Haines, Rutherford & Thomas, 1981; Taft, 1986) have recommended a qualitative approach as being particularly useful with refugees who come from very different environments where language, values and lifestyles may differ considerably from those of the researcher.

While a variety of theoretical perspectives support qualitative inquiry, two of the major perspectives closely associated with it are phenomenology and symbolic interaction and it is these two which inform the current inquiry. Specifically, these orientations stand on the assumptions that behaviour must be understood in relation to the subjective meanings that individuals construct and, that those meanings are multiple and socially constructed as well as context dependent (Chapman & MacLean, 1990).

Grounded theory was selected as the method to guide this study because of its emphasis on discovery and because "its systematic techniques and procedures of analysis enable the researcher to develop a substantive theory that meets the criteria for doing 'good' science" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.31). Developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is an advanced technique for the

collection and analysis of data gathered in the everyday world and has the capacity to generate theory which is derived from or grounded in the data. Through theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis and development of an increasingly abstract coding paradigm, grounded theory method can produce theory with the power to explain the phenomenon of interest (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986).

In order to complement the research approach, and meet the requirements of theoretical sampling, respondents were selected to represent a wide range of experiences. A snowball sampling technique was used. Initially, contact was made with community leaders and refugees known to the researcher as well as agencies and organizations involved in the resettlement process. These persons were asked for introductions to other persons who might be important sources of data. In the beginning, all available contacts were investigated. Later, as the research took shape, the selection of respondents became more specific.

In addition to many hours of participant observation, data were gathered from approximately 100 hours of intensive interviews conducted with 24 males living in Winnipeg, Manitoba who were refugees from Vietnam. Interviews which lasted about two hours took place between October 1989 and November 1990. While most respondents were interviewed only once, several were interviewed more than once. The purpose of the interviews was to have refugees share their

experiences and perceptions of the resettlement process with the researcher.

While social scientists have studied refugee resettlement for sometime, few have considered resettlement from the refugee's perspective. The aim of this study was to understand resettlement from the refugee's point of view and to develop a conceptual model of that experience. From a practical perspective, this study will provide information for policy-makers and service-providers concerned with the successful resettlement of refugees. Both federal and provincial governments as well as other researchers are interested in understanding the process of resettlement in order to enhance resettlement policies as well as refugee theory. Insights gained from this study will contribute to that knowledge.

The dissertation begins with a discussion of involuntary migration in Chapter 2. This is followed in Chapter 3 by a critical review of theory and research which deals with refugee resettlement. Chapter 4 describes the methodology. Here the nature and value of grounded theory is discussed and an account is given of the research process as it unfolded. Chapter 5 details the data analysis and model construction. This is followed by Chapter 6 which contains the summary and conclusions. Included here are suggestions for policy-makers and service-providers involved in assisting refugees in the resettlement process. The

conclusions also identify several ways of re-examining and testing the model.

## CHAPTER 2

## Involuntary Migration

Throughout history, people have left their homes and sought refuge in safe havens elsewhere, some because of natural disasters, others as a result of political, social, economic or religious pressures. In this century alone, as many as 140 million people have been forced to relocate primarily from Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America (Harrell-Bond, 1988). For the most part, these movements were viewed as temporary events which would disappear when disorders were resolved. Only recently, with the development of a more global perspective have we recognized the significance of these events as part of our global environment (Marx, 1990).

An early indicator of this changing perspective was the 1951 establishment of the Office of the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), whose mandate is to protect and assist refugees throughout the world. According to the High Commission (United Nations, 1990), there are more than 14 million legally recognized refugees in the world today, all of them uprooted by forces beyond their control. There are, as well, large numbers of persons displaced within their own countries and many economic migrants who share some of the same experiences.

Although refugees are a worldwide phenomenon, this

chapter outlines the history of involuntary migration to Canada. Of particular interest are Southeast Asian refugees, specifically those from Vietnam. The chapter describes their history and arrival in Canada with particular emphasis on their arrival in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

#### Involuntary Migration to Canada

Historically, migration has played an important role in Canada's development. The availability of land and other resources as well as a demand for labour encouraged many persons to seek their fortunes in Canada. While some came eagerly, many came reluctantly in order to escape conditions they considered intolerable.

Among the first refugees to seek sanctuary in Canada prior to Confederation were Quakers, Mennonites and Amish who felt compelled to leave the United States near the end of the eighteenth century to escape religious discrimination and persecution. These people, who settled in the Niagara and Waterloo regions, are often considered to be United Empire Loyalists. Their motivations for moving however, differed significantly from most Loyalists who left by choice rather than compulsion (Dirks, 1977; E.N. Herberg, 1989). Another early group to seek refuge were fugitive slaves from the southern United States and other black persons who experienced political and economic oppression in the northern United States (Dirks, 1977). Despite slavery being introduced to Upper Canada by some Loyalists who

brought slaves with them when they immigrated, the government of Upper Canada legislated free entry and settlement of American slaves in 1833 (Winks, 1971). As a result, approximately 50,000 blacks sought refugee from racial and economic oppression at this time. While some used this entry to Upper Canada as a stepping stone for other migration plans, many others were refugees in search of a safe haven (Dirks, 1977).

The history of involuntary migration to Canada after Confederation can be divided into several periods. The first, between Confederation and the end of the 19th century was essentially a time of unrestricted entry particularly for migrants from Great Britain, other European countries and the United States. The Canadian government was very interested in encouraging agricultural settlement and generally paid little attention to the reasons for migration (Dirks, 1977). However, not all migrants were well-accepted. For instance, the Chinese, who entered Canada primarily to work on the railroad, experienced discrimination in the form of an increasingly severe head tax imposed on them by the Canadian government (Driedger, 1989). In addition, efforts to have family members join them in Canada were severely restricted. Similarly, East Indians were prevented from entering Canada by a "continuous voyage" order which required non-stop passage from India to Canada (Buchignani, 1980a).

Refugees who were accepted for resettlement during this period included Russian Mennonites who came as political and religious refugees beginning in 1874. By the end of the decade approximately 9,000 had settled, mainly in Manitoba. They were the first non-British group to receive direct government assistance in the form of passage and materials as well as exemptions from military service and swearing of oaths of allegiance. Beginning in 1887, a small number of Mormons settled in Alberta, having left the United States to escape religious persecution. By the end of the century, more than 9,000 Russian Doukhobors had settled in Saskatchewan after receiving permission to reside in block communities in addition to a guarantee of exemption from both military service and the swearing of oaths. It was during this period that Canada's first Immigration Act was given royal assent; an act which established the Immigration Branch within the Department of Agriculture reflecting the view that resettlement and agriculture were closely connected (Dirks, 1977; Stushnoff, 1991).

From the turn of the century to 1914, free land was made available to newcomers most of whom came from the north, east and south of Europe (Driedger, 1989). It is not clear how many were economic migrants seeking improved economic conditions and how many were refugees seeking safe asylum as the Canadian government did not classify migrants on the basis of motivation and therefore did not distinguish

between immigrants and refugees (Dirks, 1977). Immigration policy was generally flexible and allowed special treatment or conditions of entry for groups requesting such considerations. Canada was anxious to do whatever was necessary in order to occupy the land and make it productive. As a result of this open policy, many newcomers to Canada resembled neither English nor French Canadians and prejudice and discrimination against these persons grew (Dirks, 1977). As a result of anti-foreign pressure, the government passed an order-in-council in 1919 which prevented the admission of "undesirables" (Dirks, 1977, p.38). The intent was to block the entry of those judged unable to assimilate and assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship (Dirks, 1977).

After the order-in-council was rescinded in 1922, more than 100,000 Jewish refugees from Russia and Eastern Europe were admitted to Canada on compassionate grounds. Most settled in the urban areas of Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. During the same period, approximately 20,000 Mennonites from Russia arrived in Ontario and the western provinces. As more and more so-called "undesirables" arrived, the Canadian public grew increasingly hostile. Finally, legislation was enacted which required provincial approval of federal plans for resettlement. Shortly thereafter, provincial governments became responsible for determining the number, kind and nationality of newcomers

accepted. This change reflected prevailing public opinion that linked economic problems such as rising unemployment with the acceptance of foreigners to Canada (Dirks, 1977; Malarek, 1987).

During the period of the two world wars, immigration to Canada was severely restricted. Beginning in 1931, entry was limited to American citizens, British subjects and agriculturalists with economic means. These restrictions were imposed because prejudice and discrimination against foreigners in Canada was intensifying, together with concerns about economic insecurity. At issue was the "absorptive capacity" of the country (Dirks, 1977, p.51). Consequently, the government adopted a passive approach toward refugees, admitting them only when pressured to do so. Two groups active in lobbying the government to accept more refugees were church groups who were concerned about the non-humanitarian attitude of the government and railway companies who wanted to sell land. Over the next decade, only a few small isolated groups were admitted. For example, as a result of pressure from the railway companies, a small number of Sudetens were accepted in 1939. The following year, a few thousand British children came to Canada as temporary guests. During 1940 and 1941, several hundred skilled technicians, scientists and engineers of Polish descent living in Britain were admitted in addition to some civilian internees being held in Britain (Dirks,

1977).

In the post-war period, immigration policy began to reflect a growing demand for labourers. By 1945, landed immigrant status was granted to wartime refugees in Canada. A year later, several thousand Polish war veterans funded by the British government were admitted as agricultural workers (Malarek, 1987). Shortly thereafter, in response to a tremendous labour shortage, the government agreed to admit displaced persons and more than 240,000 workers and their dependents, mainly eastern Europeans, arrived in Canada (Samuel, 1984). In time, these newcomers sponsored other close relatives. Despite an ongoing need for workers however, immigration regulations continued to favour Anglo-Saxons and other western Europeans while discriminating against others (Neuwirth & Rogge, 1988).

In 1952 a new Immigration Act was passed which emphasized control and enforcement. Prohibited classes were updated and final decisions about accepting certain groups were left to the discretion of the Minister of Immigration (Malarek, 1987). Despite tighter regulations, the government responded to public pressure, by admitting thousands of Hungarians who were displaced as a result of the Soviet invasion of Hungary. A large number of those admitted were professionals and academics. After this period, refugee regulations became more liberal and discriminatory practices were reduced, although those

holding ideological beliefs different from Canadian norms were not accepted (Malarek, 1987).

The period since 1960 has been an active one. In 1966, a White Paper on immigration outlined for the first time, the Canadian position on immigration. It stressed traditional reasons for encouraging immigration such as population growth and the enhancement of domestic markets (Malarek, 1987). One outcome of the paper was the introduction of a point system for persons seeking entry to Canada. Under this system, which is still used today, points are awarded according to education, personal qualities, occupational skill and demand, age, arranged employment, knowledge of official languages and the potential for successful resettlement. The number of points required for entry varies according to entry quotas as well as entry categories. While the point system is mandatory for immigrants it is used only as a guideline for refugees (Driedger, 1989; Neuwirth & Rogge, 1988).

In 1968 approximately 11,000 Czechoslovakians were admitted to Canada after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. A small number of Tibetan refugees living in India and some Jews from Iraq were admitted as well. This was followed by seven thousand Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin in 1972 (Adelman, LeBlanc & Therien, 1980). At this time, Canada issued a policy statement to the United Nations High Commission outlining its position regarding

refugees. Canada was prepared to accept refugees:

...as part of our normal immigration program and in response to special circumstances or situations which may arise. In both cases, these movements must be undertaken with due regard for Canada's capacity to absorb such refugees bearing in mind such factors as the public's interest and participation, the likelihood of refugees becoming successfully established in Canada and the funds which can be made available (Department of External Affairs cited in Dirks, 1977, p.232).

In the mid-seventies, more than 17,000 Latin Americans, the majority Chileans, were reluctantly admitted after the 1973 coup d'état in Chile. The source of the reluctance had to do with differences in political orientation between these refugees and the Canadian government.

In an effort to evaluate immigration policy and practice, a Green Paper on immigration was developed in 1974. This was the first time the federal government had presented a comprehensive explanation and analysis of its immigration policy to the public for comment. The paper outlined the basic principles underlying immigration policy; non-discrimination, family reunification, humanitarian concerns for refugees and the promotion of national goals. A strong link between immigration, population and labour market needs was emphasized (Malarek, 1987). The result of this paper, the 1976 Immigration Act, was proclaimed in 1978.

For the first time, Canadian immigration law recognized refugees as a distinct class of immigrants and defined the term refugee according to the 1951 Geneva Convention which

states that:

Convention refugee means any person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, by reason of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or not having a country or nationality, is outside the country of his former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of such fear, is unwilling to return to that country (Immigration Act, 1976, article 2).

In addition, Section 6(2) of the act provides that:

any person who is a member of a class designated by the Governor in Council as a class, the admission of members of which would be in accordance with Canada's humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted may be granted admission subject to such regulations as may be established with respect thereto and notwithstanding any other regulations made under this act {Immigration Act, 1976, section 6(2)}.

Incorporated in the act are three criteria used to recognize refugees and set quotas for their admittance; humanitarian grounds, Canadian self-interest and the legal definition under the 1951 Geneva Convention. The "point of balance in this triad of defining factors" determines the specific policy at any particular time (Adelman et al. 1980, p.140).

As a result of this act, a refugee may be considered for resettlement according to "whether the individual is a true refugee under the Geneva Convention or the designated class provisions and whether the person has the potential to settle successfully in Canada" (Adelman et al. 1980, p.145). Evaluation of the potential to settle successfully is

subjective and seems to depend primarily on the immigration officer's interpretation of motives (Neuwirth & Rogge, 1988). According to Adelman et al. (1980):

Personal motivation is assessed in a general way, taking into account such things as personal success in their own country, independent of whether they have worked as tradesmen, artisans, labourers or professionals...But the success of a farmer or fisherman cannot be measured in the same way as that of a lawyer or teacher, so it is difficult to understand how immigration officers make such judgements (p.145).

Another important outcome of this act was the introduction of the concept of private sponsorship whereby private citizens are able to share responsibility for resettling refugees with the government. Policy-makers expected that private sponsorship would give refugees significant advantages in becoming established compared to the more bureaucratic process of government sponsorship. In addition, they expected that private sponsorship would defray resettlement costs. As a result of this change, any church, corporation or group of five or more adult Canadian citizens or permanent residents is eligible to sponsor refugees. In agreeing to do so, groups assume responsibility for the material assistance, general orientation and moral support of the sponsored refugees during the first year of resettlement. In addition to providing furnished accommodation, household effects and clothing, they are required to support the refugees financially for one year or until they become self-

sufficient. Sponsors are responsible for assisting refugees to become economically self-sufficient and for facilitating their integration into Canadian society.

A weakness in the guidelines for sponsorship is that they do not specify minimum or maximum amounts of money that the refugees should receive. Neither do they make language training mandatory. Consequently, sponsors have considerable discretion in determining an adequate level of financial support and whether refugees attend language programs. Some sponsors have been accused of encouraging refugees to take jobs rather than to attend language programs as this reduces the period of financial responsibility (Lanphier, 1987).

The opportunity for private sponsorship was of paramount importance in the Southeast Asian refugee movement to Canada and resulted in far more refugees being accepted than had been planned. In less than 10 years, more than 130,000 had been admitted to Canada (Dorais, Chan & Indra, 1988). At the same time that Southeast Asians were entering Canada, other groups were arriving as well. Ten thousand Lebanese refugees arrived along with more than 12,000 refugees from Poland and smaller numbers from Latin America, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka (Malarek, 1987).

In summary, Canada's approach to refugee movements has been determined, for the most part, on an ad hoc basis according to particular economic, political or humanitarian

concerns of the time. For instance, economic factors influenced the decision to admit Mennonites, Doukhobors and post World War II displaced persons, whereas, political factors were involved in admitting Hungarians, Czechoslovakians and Southeast Asians. Reluctance to accept Jews and Chileans was related to differing ideological positions. Pressure from the Canadian public has been an important contributing factor in the decision to reject some refugees and to accept others such as the Southeast Asians. Recently, the number of refugees admitted to Canada has been decreasing. In Manitoba, for instance, agencies which provide immediate, short-term accommodation to new arrivals have experienced high vacancy rates over the past several months. It is possible that only about half of the annual Canadian quota of approximately 13,000 refugees may be met for 1992 (Nikides, 1991, November 18). This change reflects an increasingly pervasive view that refugees should be encouraged to return to their country of origin or settle in a country of first asylum rather than in countries of resettlement such as Canada.

#### Refugees from Vietnam

To set the context for understanding Southeast Asian refugees from Vietnam, it is useful to clarify the terms used to describe them and then to review their history. It is important to recognize that the term Southeast Asian can represent diverse groups of persons from different

countries. The term is commonly used in referring to persons from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Kampuchea) although many others, including persons from the Philippines, consider themselves Southeast Asian. Although this collective term is perhaps the most frequently used, many official documents including the Immigration Act, refer to people from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as Indochinese. To further complicate matters, Statistics Canada uses the term Indochinese but includes people from Thailand and Burma as well.

For purposes of this study, the term Southeast Asian will refer to persons from Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. It is important to note that these countries contain a number of ethnic minorities within their borders. These minorities usually originate from neighbouring states and are usually identified as such. In Vietnam, for instance there are a number of ethnic Chinese who live among the majority population. The term Vietnamese will be used in referring to all persons whose country of origin is Vietnam. When ethnic or cultural background needs to be addressed those persons whose background is Vietnamese will be identified as ethnic Vietnamese and those whose background is Chinese will be referred to as ethnic Chinese.

#### Vietnamese History

Vietnam is a small country in Southeast Asia located on the Indochina Peninsula. It borders China to the north,

Laos and Cambodia to the west and the South China Sea to the east. Situated entirely in the tropics, the country is hot and wet although climatic conditions vary throughout the area. Most of the sixty million persons are Vietnamese with the balance primarily Chinese. The standard of living is very modest compared to Canadian standards and even in times of prosperity, a substantial proportion of the population lives below the poverty level (De Koninck, 1980; Wurfel, 1980; Willmott, 1980).

Most religious orientations in Vietnam incorporate beliefs from Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism and emphasize ancestor worship. The cult of the ancestors holds an important place in Vietnamese families. Their social life is founded on the idea that respect and pious devotion should always be shown towards parents, even after their death. By tradition, people in difficulty call on their dead ancestors for help and praise them in the great moments of life. In this way, the dead participate in the life of their descendants and the institution of the family strongly guides Vietnamese life whether in Vietnam or in countries of resettlement such as Canada (Nguyen & Dorais, 1979).

Vietnam has a long history extending back to 3,000 BC. The very early periods are legendary, being transmitted orally from generation to generation. Recorded history begins about 111 BC when Vietnam was conquered and colonized by the Chinese, a situation which lasted over 1,000 years.

This period was followed by 900 years of independence under a number of dynasties. In the middle of the 19th century, Vietnam became a French colony for a period of approximately 100 years at which time two rival nationalist movements, one based on Western individualism and the other on communist doctrine, emerged. Shortly thereafter, Vietnam became the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh. The French-Indochina War followed from 1946 to 1954. This was a struggle between nationalism and colonialism or as some argued, communism versus democracy. The United States became involved in 1950 by providing financial support purportedly to stem the spread of communism (Chi, 1980; Montero, 1979; Nguyen & Dorais, 1979; Wurfel, 1980).

As a result of the Geneva Conference in 1954, the rival factors in Vietnam agreed to a temporary division of the country. The north, above the 17th parallel became the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam under the socialist leadership of Ho Chi Minh and was supported by China, the Soviet Union and other communist countries. The south, known as the Republic of (South) Vietnam, was ruled by the anti-communist or nationalist government of Ngo Dinh Dem. The United States provided financial aid, military advisors and equipment to the south. As a result of this division, approximately 10 million North Vietnamese sought refuge in South Vietnam as ideological refugees (Frieze, 1986; Montero, 1979; Nguyen & Dorais, 1979).

Civil war was waged between the north and south for 30 years. When the communists in the north increased in strength, the United States increased its role in Vietnam and entered directly into the war. The war ended in 1975 when Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese and communist control. Thousands fled the country in panic. Among the first to leave were members of the southern elite, mostly government administrators and military personal. Urban, middle class, ethnic Vietnamese who feared social and economic persecution, loss of freedom, internment in re-education camps and the threat of being sent to new economic zones followed soon after. The next wave of refugees, in 1978, was mainly ethnic Chinese followed a year later by ethnic Vietnamese from various socio-economic levels (Chi, 1980; Montero, 1979; Wurfel, 1980).

Between 1975 and 1982, more than a million refugees left Vietnam in search of asylum in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, China, Hong Kong and Macau. After being detained for varying periods of time in refugee camps in these areas, a large number of refugees were accepted for resettlement in Canada as well as in other countries including the United States, France, Australia, West Germany, China and Britain. Sixteen years after the first flight from Vietnam, people continue to seek asylum in refugee camps hoping to be admitted to other countries for resettlement. While some are successful in doing so, many

are not. In an attempt to deal with the problem of ever-increasing numbers of asylum-seekers and the waning interest of resettlement countries, currently, new arrivals are frequently returned to their country of origin. This controversial action is based on the argument that these recent arrivals are not refugees but economic migrants fleeing their country because of material hardship. The act of returning them to their country of origin is considered a deterrent for others (Frieze, 1986; Hugo, 1987; Jambor, 1990; Montero, 1979; Wurfel, 1980).

#### Vietnamese in Canada

Canada responded to the crisis in Southeast Asia with a large-scale program of admissions (Tepper, 1980). In fact, this was the largest refugee movement to Canada since the end of World War II. "At no other time in history has Canada accepted such large numbers of immigrants from a single source area outside of Europe within such a concentrated time span" (Neuwirth & Rogge, 1988, p.255). What made this movement distinctive was not the large numbers per se, but the fact that private citizens directly influenced the government, first to accept more refugees than planned and second to institute a matching program of sponsorship. For instance, in 1977, the federal government agreed to take 50 Southeast Asian families per month, to be increased to 70 in 1978. In fact, 9,000 refugees were admitted between 1975 and 1978 (Adelman et al. 1980). The

1979 quota, originally set at 5,000, was revised upward to 8,000 and finally, under the new matching formula, the government agreed to accept up to 21,000 refugees if matched by the private sector. By 1990, more than 130,000 refugees from Southeast Asia had been admitted to Canada (personal communication, Immigration Statistics Division, Employment and Immigration Canada, February 1, 1991).

The overwhelming response to the plight of refugees from Vietnam is attributed to the influence of the media in arousing pity and compassion among people in Canada and the rest of the world. Some argue that the media was manipulated to serve western political interests (Adelman, 1980; Adelman et al. 1980). "Boat people", as they were called, were portrayed as victims, first of an evil communist government and then of callous and indifferent governments in the countries of asylum. Stories were told of large numbers of courageous refugees risking their lives in search of freedom. The Hai Hong incident is an example. In this case, more than 2,500 refugees from small, rickety fishing boats swarmed aboard the ship located off the coast of Malaysia. Conditions on the Hai Hong became very difficult due to extreme overcrowding. Upon arrival in Malaysia, that government refused to let the ship dock and threatened to tow it back out to sea. As a result of dramatic media coverage of this event, the Canadian government air lifted more than 600 people from the ship to

Canada.

Refugees from Southeast Asia were recognized as a special designated class within the Immigration Act of Canada. The Act, which referred to this group of refugees as Indochinese stated:

Indochinese Designated Class means a class of persons the members of which are citizens or habitual residents of a country listed in the schedule, have left their country of citizenship or former habitual residence subsequent to April 30, 1975, have not become permanently resettled, are unwilling or unable to return to their country of citizenship or former habitual residence, cannot avail themselves of the protection of any other country, and are outside Canada and seeking resettlement in Canada (Immigration Act, 1978, Indochinese Designated Class Regulations).

Thus, most of these persons were not recognized as refugees according to the Geneva Convention but were identified instead as a designated class of refugees under the humanitarian proviso (Adelman et al. 1980). To date, only two other groups, certain Latin Americans and some self-exiled East Europeans, have been recognized as designated classes.

There were only about a thousand Vietnamese in Canada before 1975. Most were students or professional persons living in Toronto and Montreal (Indra, 1980; Nguyen & Dorais, 1979). However, immediately after the fall of Saigon in April 1975, several thousand arrived as political refugees. Many had been army officers or government workers in South Vietnam. By 1979, the numbers increased substantially. Between 1979 and 1980, more than 45,000

arrived including northerners displaced to South Vietnam in 1954, middle class persons associated with the South Vietnamese government, southerners fleeing for economic reasons and some people from North Vietnam (Indra, 1980). After this large influx, the number of refugees decreased considerably with between six and eight thousand arriving per year from 1981 to 1983. Then the numbers increased again, with more than 10,000 arriving in each of the next two years after which the numbers decreased, remaining relatively stable since then (personal communication, Immigration Statistics Division, Employment & Immigration Canada, February 1, 1991).

The largest number of refugees from Vietnam settled in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia (see Table 1). Both Manitoba and Saskatchewan received a modest number and the other provinces considerably less. As a proportion of provincial population, however, the largest Vietnamese community is in Alberta followed by Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. Vietnamese in the other provinces constitute only a small percentage of those populations (White, 1990).

As immigration statistics document the arrival of refugees to Canada according to their country of last permanent residence and their designated province of resettlement it is impossible to determine whether people arrived at or stayed in the place to which they were

Table 1.

Landed Immigrants to Canada from Vietnam by Designated Province between 1975 and 1990\*

YEAR	ATLANTIC	QC	ON	MB	SK	AL	BC	Y/NWT	TOTAL
1975	31	1276	489	98	35	242	110	0	2281
1976	18	1810	376	10	3	21	53	0	2291
1977	4	312	109	0	2	14	18	0	459
1978	7	279	209	52	0	80	29	0	656
1979	882	3898	7778	1044	1005	2899	2227	66	19989
1980	1063	3518	8496	1902	1586	3935	3981	53	25535
1981	102	1524	2623	460	400	1540	1135	8	8226
1982	120	1315	2036	375	244	1149	691	3	5933
1983	74	1137	2452	404	219	1327	837	1	6451
1984	191	1707	4235	638	437	2448	1285	9	10950
1985	201	1498	4251	628	454	1962	1400	10	10404
1986	162	823	2813	400	255	1385	775	9	6622
1987	111	661	2427	345	214	1130	770	10	5668
1988	152	815	2719	355	213	1118	825	4	6196
1989	196	1501	4359	452	283	1556	1065	13	9425
1990	182	1464	3428	453	282	1213	850	4	7876
TOTAL	3496	23578	48800	7616	5632	22019	16051	190	128881

Note: \*1990 data based on preliminary figures between January and October.

Sources: Adapted from Personal Communication, Immigration Statistics Division,  
Employment & Immigration Canada, 02/01/91.

designated. These figures do not account for secondary migration within provinces, between provinces or on an international level. In this case, census data is of little help. For instance, in the 1986 Census, about 53,000 persons identified Vietnamese as their single ethnic origin and another 10,000 indicated it as part of their multi-ethnic origin. In adding these numbers together, one might conclude that there are no more than 63,000 persons from Vietnam in Canada. Unfortunately, these data do not capture the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam who likely identified themselves under the category of Chinese and are consequently "buried" among Chinese from Hong Kong, China and other sources (Statistics Canada, 1988). Estimates from persons working with these communities suggest that more than half of the persons from Vietnam may be ethnic Chinese.

Although almost all Vietnamese now live in large urban areas, especially Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, many were originally sent to small towns or rural areas. Most stayed only a short time before moving to more densely populated areas to seek employment, further their education or be near family and friends.

In terms of age distribution, refugees have a range similar to the Canadian population but the shape of the pyramid differs. Refugees have a higher proportion of their population in the younger categories. For instance, most refugees from Vietnam are less than 45 years of age and

almost a third are less than 15 years. While the majority live in nuclear families consisting of spouses or lone parents and children, they are much more likely than other Canadians to have extended family members such as aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters living with them. They are also more likely to live with non-relatives and much less likely to live alone. It must be noted, however, that most of these differences are relatively small (Neuwirth et al. 1985; White, 1990).

Although refugee families in Canada tend to resemble other Canadian families, they are often different than in Vietnam. There, families were often larger and frequently contained more extended family members. If these members did not live in the same household, they frequently lived close by. In Canada, it is uncommon for all members of former households to be present. This can be an especially serious problem for refugees from Vietnam because family ties and responsibilities are a central part of their cultures. The fact that few families arrive in Canada intact places considerable stress on family relationships and generally means that family dynamics must be restructured. Even with intact families, relationships between members are subject to excessive strain resulting from the trauma of escape and resettlement. Whether newcomers arrive as part of a family unit or as individuals, they tend to experience considerable anxiety regarding the

safety and well-being of family members who have remained behind. They often assume responsibility for the provision of significant economic support for absent members at a time when their own incomes may be less than adequate.

Men from Vietnam have about the same levels of formal education as other men in Canada. In both cases, about 10 percent have a university degree and almost 20 percent have less than Grade 9. Women, on the other hand, have less formal education than Canadian women in general. Although the proportion of university educated women is similar, there is a substantial difference among the less well-educated. For instance, one-third of Vietnamese women have less than Grade 9 compared to about one-fifth of other women in Canada (White, 1990).

Chinese (either Mandarin, Cantonese or Cheo Chow) and Vietnamese are the languages most frequently spoken in the homes of people from Vietnam. For many, learning English is a struggle. Neuwirth et al. (1985) reported that one-third of the respondents in their study of refugees from Vietnam did not know enough English to get along in their daily life and a similar number did not know enough to function in a job after two to four years in Canada. Similarly, in a study of Southeast Asian<sup>1</sup> adolescents in Winnipeg by the author (Copeland, 1984), over half of the respondents had

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<sup>1</sup> Southeast Asian in this case includes Vietnamese (66%), Cambodian (9%), and Laotian (24%).

difficulty understanding English and two-thirds hesitated to speak to Canadians because they might not be understood. Although many newcomers enrol in language courses they often drop out when entry-level jobs become available or because they find the language programs do not meet their needs. Success in language programs appears to be positively related to the level of education received in the country of origin. Those with higher levels of education tend to complete language programs more often than those with lower levels (Neuwirth et al. 1985).

In addition to differences related to levels of education, gender plays a role as well. Women are much less likely than men to attend language programs for a variety of reasons. As men are often perceived to be the primary breadwinners, they are encouraged to attend whereas women often are not. Frequently, as a result of policy decisions or interpretations of those policies, women have not been given the opportunity to attend language classes. In some cases, cultural barriers prevent women from participating and in others, their responsibilities for children make their attendance difficult. Two problems women face in this regard are transportation to the programs and child care while they attend.

Fewer Southeast Asian's<sup>2</sup> are employed than other

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<sup>2</sup> Southeast Asian includes Vietnamese (66%), Cambodian (19%), Laotian (9%), Thai (2%) and other (13%).

Canadians. In 1986, only two-thirds of men aged 15 to 64 were employed compared to three-quarters of the larger male population. On the other hand, about half of Southeast Asian women in the same age group were employed, a number which was similar to the national average for women (White, 1990). The occupational distribution of persons from Vietnam is distinctly different compared to other Canadian workers. Most are employed in unskilled or low-skilled jobs. More than twice as many men and six times as many women work in product fabricating and processing occupations<sup>3</sup> or in service jobs compared to other Canadian men and women. Only a small proportion of men and an even smaller proportion of women are in professional occupations (Neuwirth & Rogge, 1988; White, 1990). The annual incomes of many refugees are much lower than the Canadian average. For instance, in 1985, males working full-time earned two-thirds of the income earned by all men working full-time (White, 1990). Among females, refugees earned three-quarters of the income earned by other women but all women earned less compared to men.

Many refugees have difficulty transferring occupational skills. Barriers to this transfer include: (a) differences in the types of jobs available, (b) lack of English or French language skills, (c) lack of Canadian experience, and

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<sup>3</sup> Product fabricating and processing, as defined by Statistics Canada, are occupation codes within the manufacturing industry.

(d) problems associated with education equivalency. The last barrier, which includes both documentation of education received and establishing the equivalency of that education, is particularly difficult for many professionally trained persons to overcome. In many cases, the required documents are unavailable. Licensing regulations and nation-specific professional qualifications often prevent refugees from re-establishing themselves in the professions for which they were trained (Johnson, 1985).

#### Vietnamese in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Although Vietnamese refugees began to enter Canada shortly after the 1975 crisis in Vietnam, only a few arrived in Manitoba before 1979. Between 1979 and 1980 however, 4,000 refugees were destined for Manitoba. This represents almost half of the total number to arrive in Manitoba. Most were destined for Winnipeg with a small number scheduled for other areas of the province (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1982b). Of those originally destined for places outside of Winnipeg, most migrated to Winnipeg or left the province within one or two years of their arrival. Very few remained in small urban centres or in rural areas. About half of the refugees received were sponsored by the federal government, with the balance sponsored privately, most often through church-related organizations. The Mennonites in Manitoba have been particularly active in private sponsorship and have made special efforts to sponsor

difficult cases.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of persons from Vietnam currently residing in Winnipeg. According to the Immigration Statistics Division, Employment & Immigration (personal communication, February 1, 1991), slightly more than 7,500 persons from Vietnam officially arrived in Manitoba between January 1975 and October 1990. Estimates by persons working within the Vietnamese community support that number and suggest that the population is fairly evenly split between ethnic Chinese and ethnic Vietnamese<sup>4</sup>.

Winnipeg, with a population of more than 625,000, has a very heterogeneous character. As ethnic minorities in Winnipeg, people from Vietnam share this commonality with more than 30 other ethnic groups. The four largest ethnic groups in Winnipeg are British, Ukrainian, German and French (Statistics Canada, 1988). Starr and Roberts (1982) suggest a positive relationship between the personal adjustment of refugees and the proportion of nondominant ethnic groups in a community. They posit that a more heterogeneous population results in greater contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds. The outcome of this

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<sup>4</sup> Much of the data collected by government sources is based on country of last permanent residence, defined as the last country in which a person has resided for at least one year. Hence, this designation does not necessarily indicate citizenship, ethnicity, country of birth or country of origin (Manitoba Employment Services & Economic Security, 1983).

experience is that refugees such as those from Vietnam, even though they constitute less than one percent of the population, may be perceived to be less of an anomaly than would be the case in a more homogeneous population (White, 1990). In light of variations in the degree of ethnic diversity among provincial populations and the implications of these variations for ethnic groups and mainstream society, this is an area which could profit by further comparative investigation.

Although the age distribution of Vietnamese refugees in Winnipeg is similar to that for all Vietnamese refugees in Canada, it is important to note the emphasis on the younger categories. For instance, of those destined to Winnipeg between 1979 and 1980, more than four-fifths were under 30 years of age. Almost half were between the ages of 15 and 29 and children under 15 years accounted for more than one-third. On the other hand, fewer than two percent were 65 years old or more (Employment & Immigration Canada, 1982b).

Most of those who arrived in Winnipeg between 1979 and 1985 indicated no knowledge of either official language. While approximately eight percent indicated some knowledge of English, less than two percent identified knowledge of French (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1982b).

The education level of many refugees who came to Winnipeg during this period was low. According to data available, less than one-tenth had received post-secondary

schooling compared to almost one-third of other Manitobans. The majority (69 percent) had not completed high school and almost five percent reported no formal education at all (Manitoba Employment Services and Economic Security, 1983). In view of the history of disruption in Southeast Asia such low levels of education are not surprising. They do however make learning English more difficult which, in turn affects job training as well as opportunities for adequate employment.

In assessing the employment patterns of Vietnamese in Winnipeg, the primary resource was a study conducted in 1983 by Manitoba Employment Services and Economic Security. For this study, the population included persons from Laos and Vietnam. For the group as a whole, the unemployment rate was more than three times the provincial average. When figures were examined by gender, a similar discrepancy existed. Among the youth (ages 15 to 24) for instance, the Southeast Asian group had an unemployment rate of 38 percent as compared to 12 percent for the province as a whole. Similar findings were found in a survey conducted by the Canadian Mental Health Association of Manitoba (1982). The only other group in Winnipeg with a similar profile involved the aboriginal peoples, where according to Clatworthy's studies (1981a, 1981b), the unemployment rate is three to four times the city average.

In addition to a high rate of unemployment, many of

those holding jobs are underemployed, that is, not working in positions for which they have the most training and experience. Estimates suggest that a third of the men and two-thirds of the women may be underemployed (Manitoba Employment Services and Economic Security, 1983). Compared to Manitoba's labour force, a high proportion of persons are employed in (or unemployed from) the processing, service and construction industries. The Canadian Mental Health study (1982) suggests that almost half of those employed worked in the garment industry. Others were employed in secondary manufacturing and service occupations. Most are menial jobs. The low wages often necessitate working long hours and holding extra jobs in order to cope financially. The fact that a large proportion of Vietnamese newcomers work in these areas fits Manitoba's industrial base and its immigrant employment patterns. These industries attract newcomers because English-language competency is not a primary concern, most jobs do not require previous training or experience and, until recently, jobs have been readily available. Due to difficult economic conditions and changes associated with the Free Trade Agreement, however, many of these jobs, particularly in the garment industry are at risk.

In a non-random study of Southeast Asian adolescents in Winnipeg by the author (Copeland, 1984), respondents reported that most of their fathers and almost half of their

mothers were employed in their country of origin. Examples of the occupations in which they were employed included government, business, military, farming and fishing, for men, and business, education, medicine and noodle-making for women. Of the parents in Winnipeg, most fathers were employed, whereas few mothers were employed. Men tended to work as cooks, dish-washers and unskilled labourers while women worked mainly as sewing-machine operators or as kitchen help.

In comparing the employment patterns of parents in their country of origin and in Winnipeg, two factors seem apparent. First, far fewer women are employed in Winnipeg. Second, there appears to be considerable negative occupational deflection for both men and women. For many, current employment status is considerably lower than in the country of origin. Stein (1979) relates this negative deflection to occupational adjustment which he describes as the ability to transfer occupational skill and status from the country of origin to the country of resettlement. According to Neuwirth and Rogge (1988) few refugees from Vietnam are able to make this transfer.

While a decline in status is common for many immigrants, Stein (1979) suggests that recovery must occur within three or four years of resettlement or it is unlikely to occur at all. If he is correct, parents in the adolescent study may be at risk for recovery because many

have passed the critical period without recovering lost status.

The majority of persons from Vietnam in Winnipeg live in the inner city, an area comprising a high proportion of persons from the lower socio-economic levels. Most tend to live in an area bounded by Portage Avenue on the south, Pacific on the north, Main street on the east and Banning Street on the west (see Figure 1). This section known as the core area, was part of the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative, a tri-level government plan aimed at revitalizing the inner area of the city, physically, socially and economically.

By surveying the July 1985 Winnipeg Telephone Directory for eleven of the most common Vietnamese surnames, it was possible to derive a sample of 450 directory entries. Based on the addresses for these entries, more than a quarter of the sample was concentrated on just nine streets in the core area. In addition, some apartment blocks have only Vietnamese tenants. Besides this highly concentrated area, small residential pockets are located on the periphery of the core. There are also a few persons residing in outlying suburban locations. Some, located near the University of Manitoba, may be students. Others may belong to a somewhat higher socio-economic group or may have chosen to move out of the core area for other reasons.

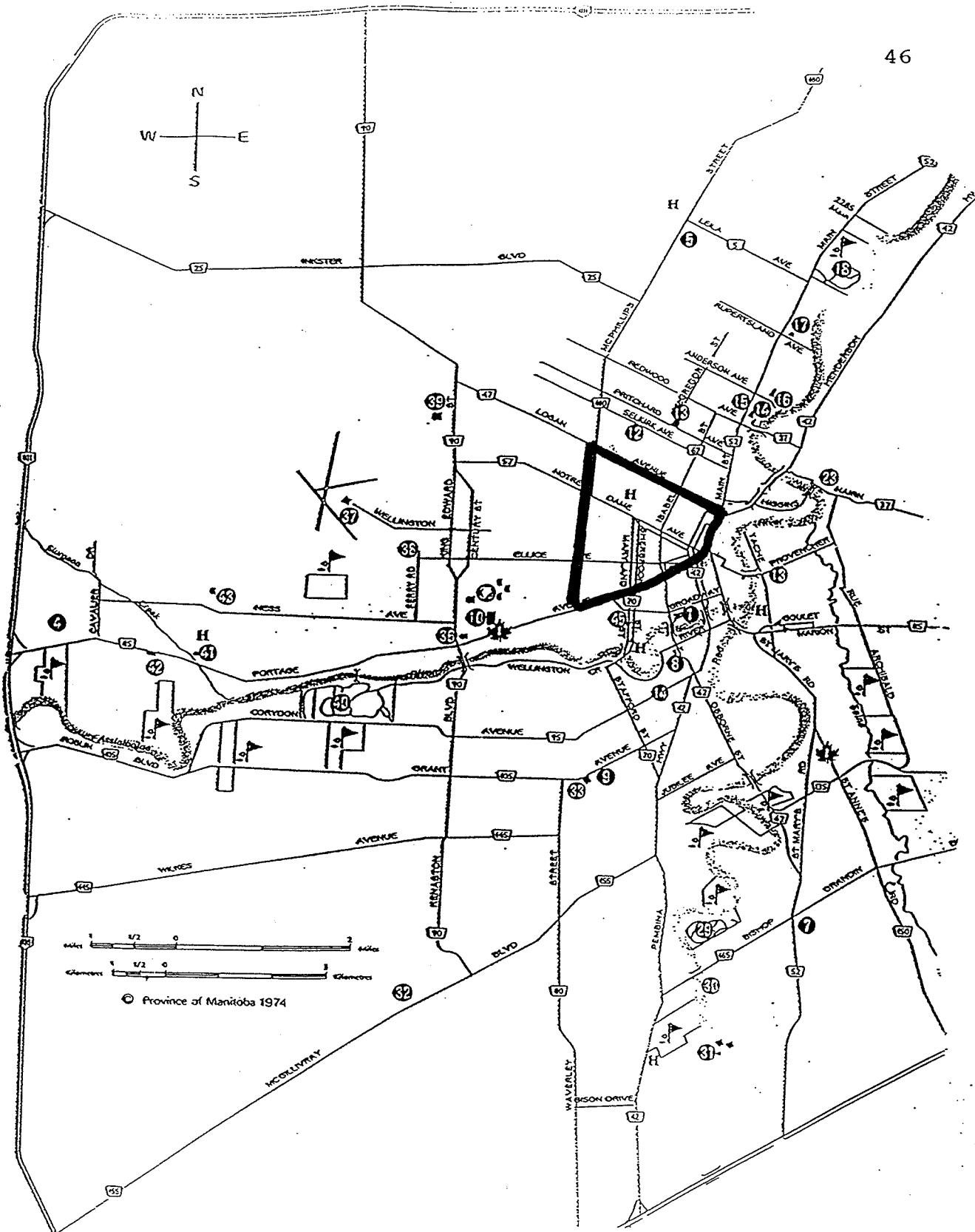


Figure 1. Map showing residential concentration of Vietnamese refugees in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The dense concentration in the core area indicates a high degree of residential segregation among persons from Vietnam in Winnipeg. Residing in the core area means mixing with other low-income populations and being affected by the social problems inherent within that environment. As the core area contains a high proportion of aboriginal persons, many newcomers misinterpret the relative proportion of aboriginal persons in Winnipeg.

As a group with limited financial resources, these newcomers settled into an already run-down area, often displacing other low-income groups. Some newcomers are just now becoming sufficiently upwardly mobile to relocate from the inner core of the city. This movement from the core towards the periphery acts to decrease residential segregation and may eventually result in what Stasiulis (1980) refers to as situational ethnicity, whereby participation in the ethnic community becomes very selective.

As a result of the high level of residential segregation, the school population is also highly concentrated. To support this high concentration, schools in the area employ a number of ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese teacher-aides in addition to several Community Liaison Officers who mediate between the schools and the community. As education is a primary mechanism for reestablishing oneself in a new environment, it is highly

valued within the Vietnamese community. This value is evident in both the number of students currently attending universities and community college, as well as in the aspirations expressed by respondents in the author's adolescent study (Copeland, 1984). Almost half expected to complete university or attend at the graduate level. One-fifth intended to receive vocational training and the balance expected to complete high school.

According to the author's adolescent study (1984), respondents reported that most parents seldom spoke English and they objected to children speaking it in the home. Reasons for this included fear that children would lose their first language, an inability of parents to understand what was being said and a low tolerance for the "grating sound of English on the ears". As a result of disparities in language ability between parents and children, the potential for misunderstanding exists, especially when the essence of an idea is lost because it cannot be transmitted between languages. About half of the adolescents used their English skills to translate for family members in stores, hospitals, schools, at church and with sponsors. The feelings expressed by the respondents about this responsibility ranged from good to embarrassment and shame.

Results of the adolescent study (Copeland, 1984) also suggest that youths may not interact extensively with Canadian-born youths. Many teenagers hesitated to speak to

Canadians because they feared they would not be understood, and a large number reported difficulties in understanding Canadians when they spoke. Twice as many adolescents had five or more friends from their country of origin than Canadian friends and they reported getting along better with these friends. About one-quarter of the respondents indicated having no Canadian friends and almost half reported never having been invited to the home of a Canadian-born person. According to Charron and Ness (1981), youths who do not form friendships with native-born peers may be at risk for emotional distress. As in many communities, there is a small group of rebellious teenagers within this community who have a reputation for engaging in disruptive behaviour.

There are a number of ethnic organizations established in Winnipeg and new ones being formed on a regular basis. Most operate mainly at the local level but a few are affiliated with national and international associations. While specific objectives vary across organizations, most are concerned with cultural preservation, mutual support and self-help. There is often an emphasis on traditional music and organizations occasionally sponsor ethnic entertainers from the United States.

Formal participation in these organizations is very much a male phenomenon. In many cases, the most active leadership has come from young, single men or older men

without their families. One explanation for this is that these people have the most time available, and that organizational work is a substitute for families. Although the number of active members may be relatively low in many organizations, social events attract a large audience of both males and females.

Most organizations are specific to one ethnic group. Cooperation is not easily achieved and friction within and between groups is common. One source of considerable friction is the political position taken by particular groups and members within those groups. Much of the politics relates to pro and anti-communist activity both here and in the country of origin. Another contentious issue is legitimate representation of members within both the ethnic community and the larger society. Power struggles within and between groups often revolve around the issue of who speaks for the people.

Woon (1985) offers an explanation for this factional phenomenon, which is supported by many community leaders in Winnipeg. She suggests that organizational problems may relate to the fact that most clubs and organizations in Southeast Asia existed only for the rich. Hence, most people have not had an opportunity to participate in developing and maintaining these types of social relationships. This experience is in direct contrast to the North American situation where voluntary organizations are

largely a middle-class activity.

There are several active and interesting ethnic organizations in Winnipeg of which the following are examples (see Figure 2). The Indo-China Chinese Association, whose members are primarily ethnic Chinese, has operated English classes and small training programs for sewing machine operators as well as employing community outreach workers. The Free Vietnamese Association has constructed an apartment complex for Vietnamese tenants and has sponsored a number of elaborate celebrations for Tet. The Southeast Asian Refugee Community of Manitoba (more recently known as Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba or IRCOM) is of particular interest because it is the only group which crosses ethnic boundaries to any extent. This group places considerable emphasis on cooperation among ethnic groups and provides social, recreational and educational programs for a large number of ethnically diverse participants. It also provides post-settlement services through IRCOM House, a special housing complex for refugees in the process of resettlement. Additionally, some refugees are involved in the Vietnamese Seniors Association and others are active in religious organizations including the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, Chanh Dao Vietnamese Buddhist Association and the Vietnamese Catholic Association.

Reitz (1980) suggests that political participation in

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Agencies and Organizations Providing Services to Vietnamese Refugees in Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Ethnic Organizations

Chanh Dao Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Manitoba  
Free Vietnamese Association of Manitoba  
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba  
Incorporated (IRCOM)  
Indo-China Chinese Association  
Vietnamese Catholic Association  
Vietnamese Mennonite Church  
Vietnamese Seniors Association

Government Departments

Employment and Immigration Canada  
Manitoba Immigration and Settlement

Non-government Organizations

Immigrant and Refugee Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)  
International Centre of Winnipeg  
Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council

Examples of Other Organizations Providing Services to Refugees

Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg  
Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba  
Immigrant Women's Employment Counselling Service  
Planned Parenthood

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Figure 2. Agencies and organizations providing services to Vietnamese refugees in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

mainstream society tends to be low for socially marginal persons, for those who experience social discrimination and for those who have strong ties with an ethnic community. If he is correct, one might expect a low rate of participation by newcomers in mainstream political activity. While this is generally the case, some interest and concern is evident. There was one candidate of Vietnamese origin in a previous federal election. Although this person was not a refugee, he did generate considerable interest within the ethnic community. As well, a number of ethnic organizations actively lobby elected representatives for financial support and these representatives, in turn, solicit political support.

In addition to ethnic organizations, there are a number of agencies which provide services to refugees in Winnipeg. At the federal level, Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) is responsible for admitting refugees and providing adjustment assistance to them for up to one year. They also provide funding to non-government agencies that assist in refugee resettlement. The provincial government, through the Immigration and Settlement Branch, also plays a significant role in providing support for refugees. Examples include access services for newcomers, language programs for housebound women and seniors and a newspaper for newcomers. They also assist refugees in establishing education equivalency.

As a result of the large influx of Southeast Asian refugees to Winnipeg, a number of non-government organizations either redirected their resources or expanded their operations to provide settlement services. For instance, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council expanded from a small organization which provided limited assistance to immigrants on a voluntary basis to a relatively large organization which provides initial settlement services, a host program and short-term accommodation on a full-time basis. Similarly, the International Centre of Winnipeg, which provided limited services such as language and citizenship classes to immigrants, enlarged its focus to include specialized services for refugees similar to those provided by Interfaith. In contrast to these organizations, the Immigrant and Refugee Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM), which was initiated by refugees themselves, provides accommodation and transition services to refugees through IRCOM House as a follow-up to initial settlement services. In addition to these organizations, a number of others provide special services. A few examples of these are Planned Parenthood, Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, Immigrant Women's Employment Counselling Service and Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg.

The timing of the demand for refugee services coincided with the inception of the Core Area Initiative Program, an urban renewal plan involving federal, provincial and civic

governments. With social service as one of its mandates, this program contributed funding for some of the services described in addition to developing specific programs designed to assist refugees in securing employment. One such program was the Refugee Workers Training Program, a two-year course which trained refugees for employment as paraprofessionals in settlement agencies. All of the agencies and organizations described have hired and trained people from Vietnam to facilitate the delivery of their services thus contributing to employment and training opportunities for newcomers.

#### Summary

Canada has a long history of receiving involuntary migrants or refugees and the motivation for accepting them has varied according to particular economic, political or humanitarian concerns of the time. Pressure from Canadian citizens has been an important factor in the decision to accept or reject many groups. The most significant group to be admitted recently consists of refugees from Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam. This movement is distinctive for several reasons: (a) the large numbers admitted over a short period of time, (b) the cultural differences between these refugees and Canadians generally, and (c) the impact private citizens have had on government quotas.

Since 1979, approximately 130,000 refugees from Vietnam have been admitted to Canada. About 8,000 have settled in

Winnipeg, Manitoba. Most refugees were relatively young when they arrived. Among those with previous employment experience, many have had difficulty transferring that experience here and have had to pursue new forms of employment. On the other hand, many young people have had considerable success in their educational pursuits and some are beginning to establish careers.

Despite a long history of accepting refugees to Canada, most of our knowledge and understanding of the resettlement process is based on British and European immigration to Canada during the early part of the century. At that time the technical and social differences between the countries of origin and resettlement were not great. There is, however, a vast difference between traditional migrants of that era and those today. Refugees, in particular, are often culturally different from their hosts, come from less developed countries and frequently arrive during times of economic constraint (Stein, 1981). Because migration under these conditions is an increasingly common phenomenon, it is imperative that we develop our understanding of this process at both the empirical and theoretical levels. The following chapter will review literature pertinent to the topic of resettlement by refugees.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Conceptualization of Resettlement

This chapter reviews literature pertinent to refugee resettlement. It provides an overview of approaches used in studying adaptation as part of the resettlement process for both immigrants and refugees. Studies of successful resettlement are discussed as well as studies which focus specifically on refugees from Vietnam including variables that affect the resettlement process.

#### Approaches to Understanding Adaptation

Many researchers have studied how immigrant groups change over time. Some have focused on cultural change, that is, how immigrants come to resemble the dominant group (eg., Berry, 1980; Kovacs & Cropley, 1975; Park, 1950; Portes, 1969; Taft, 1966). Others have emphasized structural change, studying how immigrants enter into and are accepted by the social institutions of the host society (eg., Gordon, 1964; Kim & Hurn, 1979). Some researchers have taken a unilinear approach to studying these changes (eg., Bar-Yosef, 1968). Others have adopted a multilinear view (eg., Guadagno, 1983; Nagatta, 1971; Pereira, 1981) and a few have considered them from more holistic perspectives (eg., Bernard, 1975; Brody, 1970; Ex, 1966).

Adaptation by immigrants to new cultural situations has been studied by researchers from different disciplines for

some time. For instance, many anthropologists focused on changes in group cultures. Some sociologists considered the unequal distribution of power, prestige and resources among different ethnic groups while others observed the patterns and processes by which immigrant groups accessed the political, social and economic structures of the host society or the dynamics of relationships among minority and majority groups (e.g., Glazer & Moynihan, 1970; Gordon, 1964). More recently, attention has turned to understanding the process of adaptation by refugees in major resettlement countries such as Canada and the United States. In some cases, researchers have been interested not only in the process of adaptation itself, but in the way that refugees perceive that process (eg., Ferguson, 1984). For this study, adaptation is used in a broad sense to refer to the complex process through which an individual fits or is compatible with a new cultural environment (Kim & Gudykunst, 1987). Although both the individual and the host society change in the process, the emphasis at this time is on the individual.

Among the many studies of cultural change, most tend to emphasize adoption of the dominant culture by the newcomer. This includes the norms, values and behavioral patterns associated with individual and institutional life. Early researchers such as Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) described how immigrant cultures change over time to become

more like the dominant one. In a similar vein, Robert Park (1950) maintained that immigrants eventually lose their distinctive ethnic identity to the dominant culture. In some cases, the process is a smooth one, beginning at the time of first contact with the dominant culture. In others, it occurs only after a period of conflict and competition with the dominant group.

Other researchers have built on the idea of conflict as part of the adaptation process. Berry (1980), for instance, conceptualized cultural change in terms of conflict reduction. He discussed how conflict may be reduced if behaviour is modified to be more like that of the host society. This may occur through assimilation, where newcomers move into the larger society by relinquishing their original cultural identity. Alternatively, it may occur through integration where newcomers become an integral part of the larger society while maintaining some of their own cultural distinctiveness

According to Taft (1966) the process of adaptation involves obtaining cultural knowledge and skills in the areas of language, role performance, history, ideology, norms and social structures. It requires social interaction, membership identification, integration, and conformity to group norms. Similarly, Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtinez and Oronaldo (1975) developed a psychosocial model to explain how individuals modify their customs, habits,

language, lifestyle and value orientations to fit into the new environment. The model assumes that differential rates of change which occur among family members result in high levels of family disruption. This is reflected in high rates of behavioral disorders within the immigrant community. Variables affecting the outcome include time in the country of resettlement, age (young persons adapt faster than older persons), and sex (males adapt faster than females). Along the same lines, Kovacs and Cropley (1975) described adaptation as a process of alienation. Newcomers who are alienated from their culture of origin are said to be assimilated while those who are alienated from the host culture are considered maladjusted.

In studying the adaptation of Cubans in the United States, Portes (1969) conceptualized the "integrated family as one that has given up living in memories and attachments to old Cuban goals and values and has reoriented its cognitive and motivational structures to the opportunities offered by the new life" (p.510). As Portes saw it, adaptation is a function of rewards and costs, the main rewards being economic. Perhaps, this explains the frequent focus on economic factors in the resettlement literature.

According to Bar-Yosef (1968), adaptation in resettlement involves the parallel processes of desocialization and resocialization. He used role and identity theory as developed by Erikson, Goffman, Mead and

Merton to develop these ideas. Bar-Yosef argues that migration has a desocializing effect on newcomers who soon realize that their old ways of operating are inappropriate but are uncertain about the definition of the new situation and the accompanying rules of social interaction. As part of the process of adaptation, newcomers must become resocialized in order to function in the new environment.

In contrast to these studies which assume a unilinear direction of change, Nagatta (1971) introduced the idea of selective change. She argues that adaptation is not a process where individuals become progressively more Canadian. Rather, it is a situational one, where individuals are sometimes Canadian and sometimes old world ethnic, with preference given to expediency as much as cultural loyalty.

In studying immigrant adaptation, social scientists have also focused on structural changes. Here adaptation is considered in terms of individuals entering into and adjusting to the various institutions of the receiving society (Gordon, 1964). Kim and Hurh (1979), who studied Korean immigrants in the United States, used the terms occupational and social assimilation to discuss this change. They consider occupational assimilation to be the entire process by which the careers of newcomers become similar to those of the majority and social assimilation as the non-economic aspects of that process.

Those structural studies which examine economic adaptation are of particular interest. For instance, Park (1930) recognized economic participation together with political and social participation as critical indicators of immigrant adaptation to the host society. Gordon (1964) situated economic change within the domain of structural assimilation which he defined as the large scale entry of minorities into the cliques, clubs and institutions of the dominant society. Like Park, Gordon considers cultural and structural assimilation to be the most important dimensions of the adaptation process.

At the empirical level, there has been an accumulation of data on the economic adaptation of immigrants. Richmond (1981) reviewed a number of Canadian studies (e.g., Anderson, 1974; Goldlust & Richmond, 1974; Kalbach, 1980; Li, 1978; Marsden, 1977; Ramcharon, 1983; Reitz, Calzavari & Dasko, 1981; Richmond, 1974, 1981; Sharma, 1981; Weiermair, 1971). Information from these studies suggests that in the first three to five years in Canada, immigrants experience complex problems associated with economic adjustment including high rates of unemployment and low levels of income. Additionally, persons who have been in Canada less than five years, especially unattached individuals, frequently have incomes well below the low income cut-offs as defined by Statistics Canada. Underemployment often results from non-recognition of qualifications, lack of

Canadian experience and discrimination, particularly against visible minorities. Finally, persons who arrived prior to 1970 experienced relatively favourable economic conditions compared to later arrivals who faced declining economic prosperity, rising inflation and high rates of unemployment.

In a similar vein, Lanphier (1987), reviewed resettlement research in Canada, United States and France. His results indicate that newcomers who delay entering the labour force in order to improve their language skills and to enhance their level of entry into the labour force may experience more satisfactory employment over the long term. As few refugees achieve occupational levels beyond those at which they enter the labour force, this entry level trap might be overcome if refugees were able to delay their entry into the labour force until they had received additional education or training, rather than having to secure early employment at low levels. Adequate funding would be required for this to occur. Although most studies of structural change consider adaptation primarily in terms of employment and self-sufficiency, this limited perspective contributes to a superficial understanding of a complex process. Economic adaptation involves more than getting a job in order to be self-supporting. It involves patterns of education, employment and shelter as well as household management and leisure pursuits. Economic adaptation involves, for example, decisions about retraining,

underemployment and resource-pooling. The process may be influenced by family members, non-related household members or even others outside the household itself. Demographic characteristics such as household size and dependency ratios may be important as well as the transferability of education and work experience. A variety of external factors such as rates of inflation, unemployment and economic growth likely influence the process. According to Pereira (1981), economic adaptation includes job satisfaction, realization of economic aspirations and social adaptation. Guadagno (1983) has identified similar factors including personal resources such as education, health and personality; family resources including intactness, cohesion and adaptability; formal and informal social supports; residency patterns such as household structure, geographical location, residential concentration, ethnic propinquity and type of tenure; household management; employment patterns including employability, Canadian experience, aspirations, occupational status and income generating ability; expenditure patterns; and educational patterns.

While economic adaptation of immigrants has perhaps received the greatest attention, several authors have approached adaptation in a more holistic, multivariate fashion. For instance, Ex (1966) assumed a broader approach by considering a wide range of factors which influence the process including personality, language ability, an attitude

that life must go on, group membership, having a job, newcomer perceptions of how the host community judges them and the presence of children. In a similar vein, Brody (1970) viewed adaptation in an holistic manner and defined it as the process of establishing relatively stable and reciprocal relationships with the environment and meaningful interpersonal relationships within the community.

Michalowski (1986) also considered adaptation holistically. She described it as "partaking in the life of the country productively (economically and socially) and to one's advantage (making use of the country's opportunities for advancement, its culture, social services and related features)" (p.2). Using this definition, adaptation involves both social and emotional adjustment and acceptance of and conformity to social norms.

Another variant in the area of immigrant adaptation as an holistic perspective involves the development of typologies or theories to explain the process over time. Bernard (1973), for instance, incorporated the concept of economic adjustment in his conceptualization of integration which he says is achieved when migrants become a working part of society, take on many of the attitudes and behavioral patterns, participate freely in activities but at the same time, retain a measure of their original cultural identity. He identified three broad levels in the process. First, newcomers, who are primarily concerned with self-

maintenance, begin to move informally into the community structure. Gradually, they engage in more formal activities, often seeking citizenship as part of putting down roots. Finally, they accept the values, norms and goals of the dominant society, both externally and internally, thus becoming full members of that society. Implicit within the process is the notion of increasing economic participation at each stage. Bernard notes that this is a two-way process of change. Not only do newcomers adapt and change as they move into the larger society but society also changes as a result. Although many newcomers may accept the dominant lifestyle as Bernard suggests in the last stage of the model, the extent to which newcomers are absorbed into that lifestyle if they are visibly different from the dominant group is questionable.

D. Herberg (1989) suggests that immigrants who come from less developed nations (as most refugees do), may experience severe economic dislocation and perhaps slower adjustment because the economic norms and roles which they bring with them are inappropriate for a post-industrial society such as Canada. She has developed a comprehensive model of adjustment encompassing the pre-immigrant phase, the immigrant stage and at least two of the post-immigrant generations. Herberg considers the model useful in explaining adjustment by immigrants, refugees and aboriginal peoples.

An important part of the model is the concept of contexting which refers to the degree that kinship structures and values govern everyday life. According to the model, traditional societies involving extended family relations, gender segregation and considerable interdependence are considered high context cultures while post-industrial societies emphasizing nuclear family values and structures are considered low context ones. As most refugees move from high to low context cultures, the process of adjustment would be influenced by the degree of contextual disparity between the two cultures.

According to Neuwirth (1987), many traditional theories fall short of explaining the process of adaptation as it applies specifically to refugees. For instance, she argues that most current sociological theories have little explanatory significance because they are based on European immigration to North America during the early part of this century. At that time, as industrialization in North America was developing, the technical and social differences between the societies which immigrants left and those to which they came were not large. There is however a vast difference between traditional immigrants of that era and many immigrants today. Refugees, in particular, are often culturally different from their hosts, come from less developed countries and frequently arrive during times of economic constraint (Stein, 1981). Refugees who arrived in

Canada after the 1975 crisis in Vietnam, are typical of these newcomers who move, often involuntarily and frequently under very difficult conditions, from less technical societies to highly technical ones.

Adapting to economic and social conditions in the receiving society is a concern for all immigrants. It is even more critical for refugees because language, culture, employment-related skills and experience are often not transferable. Because migration, under the conditions outlined, is an increasingly common phenomenon, it is imperative that we develop a better understanding of refugee resettlement and the various categories or levels of resettlement achieved by refugees. New theoretical approaches capable of doing this are required. Neuwirth (1987) argues that these new approaches should be multidimensional in character. They should be able to take into account the unique aspects of refugee migration and resettlement, characteristics of the new environment that facilitate or inhibit the process, individual differences in the manner in which refugees adapt to their new setting and be capable of explaining the reasons for the differences (Nicassio, 1985).

#### Concepts Developed for Refugee Studies

Although Fairchild observed as early as 1918 that refugee migration was a subject separate from the study of immigration, only recently have researchers approached

refugee studies in this way. While some studies have described how refugees are different from immigrants, other studies have focused on cultural and structural adaptation in an effort to understand and document the resettlement process.

Several researchers have focused on cultural change. For instance, Hurh, Kim and Kim (1980) studied how refugees modify their attitudes and behavioral patterns to be more compatible in their new environment. Similarly, Charron and Ness (1981) studied behavioral changes undertaken to cope with new environmental circumstances and cognitive and emotional changes that develop as individuals attempt to live in that environment. Taft, North and Ford (1979) and Stein (1981) describe adaptation as the complete merging of refugees into the host community with individuals being accepted according to their individual merits. The process is complete when refugees are considered reasonably well-adjusted to an environment that was completely new and different.

Although many researchers have emphasized a unilinear direction of change, some have considered reciprocal change. For instance, Haines, Rutherford and Thomas (1981) described adaptation as a reciprocal process between refugees and their environment. Similarly, Nyakabwa (1989), who studied African refugees to Canada, considered adaptation to be a process of establishing a relatively stable and reciprocal

relationship with the environment in which newcomers find themselves. She identified age, language, degree of occupational deflection, employment, individual perception and length of residency as important variables affecting the process.

Undoubtedly, economic adaptation has seen the most attention among scholars of refugee studies. As in the case of immigrants, this aspect is considered to be a critical factor in the resettlement of refugees. Samuel (1987) maintains that employment and income are emphasized as indicators of adaptation because they are easily measured and have a pervasive influence on life. He argues that this is appropriate because employment demonstrates a contribution to society and earnings represent power to participate in all aspects of society. Successful economic adaptation occurs when refugees earn enough to support themselves and their families in reasonable comfort.

In a similar vein, Finnan (1981) emphasizes occupational adaptation which is composed of social and cognitive components. The social component refers to the important role the refugee community plays in employment. For example, the community influences the job choices of its members, sets criteria for acceptable jobs and helps members identify with their new occupations. The cognitive component refers to how refugees shape their identities in relation to their jobs.

In his study of Vietnamese refugees in the United States, Bach (1988) also considered economic adaptation but in this case, he classified households according to their source of income, that is, earned income, social support or a combination of the two. Bach argues that these categories reflect the extent to which refugees have been able to reconstruct families and households in the new environment. Differences between the categories delineate forms of collective economic activities and levels of well-being. While Bach's work in category development is useful because it refers directly to Southeast Asian refugees, its usefulness is limited because of the narrow definition of economic adaptation employed.

In a similar vein, Neuwirth (1987, 1988), also emphasizes the significance of economic adjustment of refugees as a critical dimension of the total resettlement process. She distinguishes between economic adaptation and occupational adjustment. According to Neuwirth, economic adaptation is the ability to find employment and become self-sufficient. It is relatively easily attained. On the other hand, occupational adjustment, refers to the ability to transfer occupational skills from the country of origin to the country of resettlement or the ability to obtain a job of similar status. Although it is more difficult to achieve, Neuwirth argues that occupational adjustment is the most important aspect of adaptation and all other dimensions

are contingent upon it. If it does not occur within three to four years after arrival, Neuwirth suggests that it is unlikely to occur at all.

Some researchers have taken a multivariate approach to studying refugee resettlement. For example, Kim and Nicassio (1980) used the term adjustment in describing a multidimensional process in which psychosocial, social and economic patterns are interrelated. The process is enhanced by interpersonal relationships, language competency, institutional participation and affective factors. These studies have contributed considerably to our understanding of economic adaptation as a process by which refugees normally move from economic self-sufficiency in their country of origin, through a transitional period of dependency to economic self-sufficiency in the country of resettlement (Taft, North & Ford, 1979). However, there is a continuing need for a more comprehensive understanding of that process. In particular, there is a need to clarify the assumptions that refugees are economically self-sufficient in their country of origin and that they do achieve economic self-sufficiency in the country of resettlement. Although this may be the case for many, experience suggests that some refugees do not fit these assumptions either because they were not self-sufficient in the country of origin or because they do not achieve self-sufficiency in the country of resettlement. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for a

broader, more inclusive understanding of the concept of economic adaptation.

Only a few researchers have developed typologies or conceptual models to explain the process of refugee resettlement. Petersen (1958) was one of the first to consider the different social forces affecting refugee migration. His model was simplistic, however, in its assumption that movement between origin and destination occurs in a single step, whereas, migration by refugees is usually a complex process involving many steps.

Building on this work, Kunz (1973) developed a more comprehensive understanding of the process. Using the classic push-pull theory of immigration developed by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918), Kunz argues that refugees are not pulled to a new location as immigrants are. In fact, they have no advance information regarding their future. Instead, they are pushed out by forces beyond their control and leave because they are afraid to stay.

There has been considerable debate regarding the factors which influence decisions to migrate. However, it is generally accepted that refugees and immigrants are both influenced by push and pull factors. The difference is in the relative force of each; refugees respond primarily to push factors whereas immigrants respond mainly to pull factors. While this differentiation seems clear, whether the push or pull factor is greater often depends on the

migrant's personal perception of the situation (David, 1970). Those who consider themselves refugees, generally perceive their departure as involuntary. They flee because they believe that social, economic or political changes in their country will have detrimental effects on their lives and they are willing to risk the unknown rather than endure the changes (Lam, 1983).

As part of his typology, Kunz (1973) identified two common flight patterns among refugees. The anticipatory pattern is often associated with educated and well-to-do persons who are in a position to anticipate danger. Departure by individual family units is orderly and they are often able to bring considerable resources with them. Although these persons resemble ordinary immigrants in ways such as the anticipated departure, they are different because of the inordinate sense of urgency and pending doom associated with the departure as well as their inability to select a final destination. Acute flight patterns, on the other hand, generally occur during crisis. People may decide to flee themselves, they may be expelled or they may be absent when the crisis occurs and unable to return. Flight is usually spontaneous and often disorganized.

In modifying his typology, Kunz (1981) included three categories of factors that influence the resettlement process. Home-related factors refer to feelings refugees have about their country and their displacement from it.

Displacement factors refer to anticipatory or acute flight patterns. Host-related factors include attitudes and policies in the country of resettlement. Although Kunz acknowledged that personal factors play a role in refugee resettlement, he did not include them in his model.

Based on work by Kunz (1981), Scudder and Colson (1982) developed a conceptual model of refugee resettlement which describes the process of resettlement in stages. Recruitment, which is the first stage, incorporates the home-related and displacement factors developed by Kunz. Events at this time determine the course of flight and influence resettlement.

After reaching safety, refugees enter the transition stage, which usually lasts at least two years and, for some such as the elderly, ends only with death. Refugees cope at this time by attempting to preserve as much of their old lives as possible. Scudder and Colson (1982) argue that it is possible to predict how individuals will respond to resettlement during the period immediately following relocation because the stressful nature of relocation minimizes the range of potential responses at this time. The stressors to which refugees are exposed are physiological, manifest by increased morbidity and mortality; psychological, involving trauma, guilt, grief and anxiety; and sociocultural, resulting from reduced cultural inventories. Refugees respond to these stressors by

adopting a conservative strategy which is to make the fewest changes possible. They cling to family and friends, seek familiar occupational environments and recreate familiar institutions. Some maintain that ethnic communities assist in this preservation in addition to acting as a bridge to the future (e.g., Breton, 1964; Finnan, 1981). Others, such as Pisarowicz and Tosher (1982), argue that ethnic communities delay the transition process by enabling refugees to live in the past. The dual tasks of desocialization and resocialization as described by Bar-Yosef (1968) occur at this time.

Potential development, which is the third stage in the relocation process, begins after refugees feel comfortable in their new environment and are ready to take risks and explore opportunities. Characteristics that result from the refugee experience can be used positively at this stage (Keller, 1975). For instance, because they have survived against all odds, some refugees accept the high risks associated with entrepreneurship or employ tenacity to facilitate the recovery of occupational status. In the final stage, which the authors call incorporation, refugees regard the new society as theirs. In some cases, this stage may require several generations to achieve.

#### The Study of Successful Resettlement

Accepting refugees for resettlement is considered a humanitarian act, yet, host countries pick and choose the

refugees they select (Taft, North and Ford, 1979). Canada, for instance, has been accused of skimming the cream off the top (Lam, 1983). Neuwirth (1988) argues that this is because Canada, together with other resettlement countries, operates on a policy of calculated kindness. It seems that refugees are accepted according to their potential for success in the process of adaptation to resettlement. There are, however, no clear definitions of success nor are there clearly identified variables associated with success in resettlement. Guidelines to ensure those selected will be successful are vague (Neuwirth, 1988). Indeed, some refugees selected for resettlement are not successful while others who are rejected may well have experienced successful resettlement given the opportunity. Except for Viviani (1984) and Stein (1979), who investigated Australian and United States policies, almost no research has been conducted on this aspect of the resettlement process. As the resources to cope with increasing numbers of refugees seeking resettlement are quickly being depleted, there is some urgency in determining answers to these questions and to the larger question regarding the future of those refugees considered lacking potential for successful resettlement.

Despite an apparent bias towards selecting potentially successful refugees, most of the literature has focused on resettlement problems. There has been very little emphasis

on successful resettlement. Only Ferguson (1984) has attempted to deal with the topic at any length. Others have touched on it superficially, usually discussing success in terms of economic adaptation. As Stein put it:

There is no definition of or criteria for successful resettlement...and the problem of standards and criteria for the overall resettlement reflects a lack of evaluation for parts of the process...mental health, language and vocational training programs are funded, operated and renewed without any measure of their effectiveness (cited in Ferguson, 1984, p.4).

In 1954, Jones noted that knowledge of factors which facilitate or obstruct resettlement had not advanced beyond the realm of opinion. He asked the question "what is expected of the immigrant family as a unit of Canadian society?" (p.62) and argued that answers to this question are necessary in order to assess relative success or failure. Jones identified a need to be informed about the aspirations of newcomers, the extent to which they are realized and the way newcomers respond when their aspirations are frustrated. It has been more than 35 years since Jones raised these issues and they have not yet been adequately addressed.

According to most resettlement policies, success is achieved when refugees are self-sufficient; when they are employed and not in receipt of social assistance (Yu and Liu, 1986). Samuel (1984) stated that success occurs when refugees earn enough to support themselves and their families in reasonable comfort. The primary indicator of

success is level of income which is influenced by type and level of employment and language proficiency. According to De Vos (1980), success is measured according to American ideology which defines it in terms of occupational and social mobility. Although these indicators are easy to measure, Hanh (1982) argues that they are out of context when used to measure successful resettlement by refugees and therefore inappropriate.

Success in resettlement is seldom defined except in a narrow economic sense. There are almost no discussions of it in broad, holistic terms and almost no consideration of success from the refugee's perspective. If one equates success with a sense of well-being, it is readily apparent that economic factors are only one part of a larger holistic condition.

Although success has been poorly conceptualized in the resettlement literature, fuller development of similar concepts has occurred in other contexts. For instance, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD, 1984) developed a broad holistic, multidimensional model of well-being incorporating psychosocial, economic and political participation factors. In this model, psychosocial well-being involves a sense of worth and pride and represents the spirit of well-being. Economic well-being means having sufficient income from a steady, reliable source which allows for hope and the realization of some dreams.

Political participation well-being refers to power in the sense of feeling some degree of control over things like housing and events in the larger political arenas.

According to the model, persons who exist below a certain level of overall well-being experience poverty of spirit, income and power; feelings to which most refugees can relate. On the other hand, those who experience spirit, income and power positively are successful in a broad, holistic sense.

Similarly, the Canadian Action Committee on the Status of Women (CACSW, 1989) considers well-being to encompass physical, emotional, social, environmental and economic health. They describe it as the means to existing in a satisfactory state. Along the same line, Bubolz, Eicher, Evers and Sontag (1980) use a human ecological approach to describe quality of life which includes satisfaction of basic physical, biological, psychological, economic and social needs.

Smith (cited in Hugo, 1990) indicates that social well-being of refugees should incorporate both economic welfare, that is, what people get from the consumption of purchased goods and services and social welfare, which embraces all things contributing to the quality of human existence. As viewed by Smith, social well-being has seven dimensions:  
(a) income, wealth and employment; (b) the living environment; (c) health; (d) education; (e) social order;

(f) social belonging; and (g) recreation and leisure. In accord with these perspectives, Lown (1986) argues that subjective measures of well-being are more valuable than objective measures because individual perceptions of well-being relate more closely to them than to objective indicators such as income or wealth.

Ferguson (1984) is the only researcher to have explored successful resettlement by refugees. Among Vietnamese refugees to the United States, she found that few refugees defined success only in material terms. As one of her respondents put it, "success has many aspects...you can quantify it in terms of income and assets but it's more than that" (Ferguson, 1984, p.56). Some said it was not so much what they had but how they felt. Most had modest expectations for success. Typical responses suggested that success was living in dignity, having self-respect and peace of mind, feeling settled, secure and at ease with the future and feeling satisfied with life. Many considered freedom to be the most important criteria of success as it was a quest for freedom which motivated most to become refugees in the first place. Most said success in family life was important. One respondent explained it this way; "Success in life for a Vietnamese is not a matter of personal achievement, but rather a kind of fulfillment in interpersonal relationships (Ferguson, 1984, p.61). Family unity, both physically and spiritually was an important

aspect of this success. Education was considered a sign of success in itself as well as a means of achieving success in financial, professional and social areas.

A number of variables were associated with success. Time in the country of resettlement was important. Success in the early stages of resettlement involved meeting basic human needs. Later, higher expectations for success were set, somewhat like Anderson's (1974) unholy grail. Age also influenced success. Older refugees tended to defer their hopes for success to their children whereas younger refugees sought social success. Socioeconomic background influenced expectations for success. For many lower status refugees, anything greater than survival was considered to be success because this was more than they could expect in Vietnam. Most higher status refugees considered success regaining the quality of life they left behind, a goal few were able to achieve. For educated persons, success was resuming their professions.

When Ferguson (1984) asked successful respondents what helped them to achieve success in resettlement they identified personal characteristics such as a strong will, moral courage, discipline, self-confidence and independence. They considered themselves friendly, flexible and willing to learn new things. Others, they said, were too shy, overly sensitive and too dependent. Their family background helped. As one respondent put it "tiger father produces

tiger cubs" (Ferguson, 1984 p.97). North Vietnamese considered themselves more disciplined, hard working and frugal than South Vietnamese and they identified these characteristics as contributing to their success. Finally, previous refugee experience, in the case of North Vietnamese who fled to South Vietnam, helped because if they did it once they could do it again.

As so little research has considered successful resettlement by refugees, it is necessary to look elsewhere for other examples. Dosman (1972), was concerned as to why some aboriginal people in Saskatchewan fared better in urban areas than others. He isolated three distinct groups based on level of successful adaptation; the affluent, the welfare and the anomic. Variables included stability of employment, quality and stability of housing, stability of family life and degree of entrenchment within the dominant society. Those persons belonging to the affluent group were relatively well-off compared to the others. They had steady employment, secure incomes and were upwardly mobile. Their housing was comfortable and favourably located. They had stable family relationships and were visible in the white middle-class community but did not develop intimate relationships with members of that community.

In contrast, persons in the welfare group experienced chronic poverty. Their jobs were unstable, they moved frequently and lived in poor housing. Most depended on

social assistance at least part of the time. Many had family-related problems and were permanently alienated from the larger community.

Members of the anomic group were caught in the middle. They tried to adapt to urban life but experienced limited success. Overall, they remained marginal not fitting with the members of either the affluent or welfare groups. Dosman (1972) maintains that only the anomic or transitional group is affected by migration. The others, he argues, maintain or regain the status they had prior to migrating. He concludes that families who were successful prior to migration are also successful after migration. Those who belonged to the welfare group on the reserve also belong to that group in the urban environment. As aboriginal peoples who move from reserves to urban environments, are in a sense, refugees and share some of the same experiences as international refugees, Dosman's work is useful in the context of refugee resettlement.

Additionally, from the field of immigrant studies, Anderson (1974) studied Portuguese immigrants to Toronto in order to determine how they achieve success. Her focus was on economic success, which she defined as getting ahead. Anderson concludes that the formula for success is a combination of chance and motivation combined with a knowledge of the job market or suitable contacts. She found that many immigrants achieve economic success but experience

a decrease in their quality of life. This trade-off occurs because the quest for economic success never ends. What begins as a quest to obtain the necessities for life in a new land becomes a way of life, a quest for the unholy grail as Anderson calls it.

In a similar vein, Model (1988) attributes socioeconomic success among European and East Asian immigrants in the United States to socioeconomic status, demographic factors and labour market variables. Just as Weber (1947) identified the secular asceticism of Calvinism as a major impetus for capitalism, Model indicates that culture transmits attitudes, values and beliefs which influence economic decisions. Socioeconomic status influences the type and amount of resources available and shapes expectations, education, job skills, experience and English proficiency. It plays an important role in a newcomer's ability to convert resources into economic rewards. Demographic factors such as sex, fertility rates, geographic location and ethnic-racial composition of local labour markets are important factors in addition to labour market variables. She warns that many of the conditions that allowed early immigrants to improve their situation no longer exist, hence, contemporary migrants face more difficult times.

Although strategies for success have not been discussed in detail in any particular study, they have been

mentioned in several works. For instance, Dorais (1988) suggests that strategies for success originate in the country of origin when families decide that one or two young family members, preferably sons, should leave the country and seek refuge elsewhere. There are several reasons for this decision. First, families are able to avoid having their sons serve in the military by sending them out of the country. Second, some families feel the only way to assure maintenance of the family name is to start a branch of the family in a safe country. For others, the decision is made with the expectation that those family members will contribute to the welfare of the remaining members in the country of origin. Finally, some expect that the family will eventually be reunited in the country of resettlement.

Finnan (1981) observed that refugees usually live frugally, spending little on entertainment or clothes. Anderson and Higgs (1976) reported that new arrivals from Portugal usually rented accommodation from earlier arrivals. In this way, the newcomers were able to save on rent as well as have access to the guidance of earlier arrivals who used the rental income to help pay for their houses. Buchignani (1988) reports that refugees frequently pool their economic resources to achieve certain lifestyle goals, with women and older men participating more than younger men. Yu and Liu (1986) found similar cases where friends pooled their resources to make a large down payment on a house so as to

qualify for a smaller bank loan. They also reported situations where newcomers falsified their incomes, often with the understanding of their employers so as to secure loans for houses and other consumer goods.

Tran (1975), a Vietnamese refugee himself, reported that refugees perceive resettlement as the material task of adopting to a new milieu and ignore or dismiss as unimportant the psychological and social aspects of the process. As a means of coping, they separate the external act of conforming from any internal intentions of compliance. In this way, the inner self remains intact and one simply "bends with the wind" (p.60). As a result of this attitude, refugees are often unaware of the changes which occur in themselves and other family members. Another coping mechanism is to adopt two faces and two standards of conduct, one for public appearances and the other for private life. Tran pointed out that refugees expect relief to be brief and are not adverse to making the most of it while they can. Education is considered the route to success and refugees often try to access welfare programs in order to get financial support to pursue their educational goals.

#### The Study of Vietnamese Refugees

Studies of Vietnamese refugees have reflected their resettlement patterns. Most of the early work was produced in the United States because refugees arrived there very

soon after the fall of Saigon. Some of these works explored the flight experiences of refugees to the United States and their internment on arrival (Kelly, 1977; Rahe, Looney, Ward, Tung & Liu 1978; Shaw, 1977). The early stages of the resettlement process were frequently studied (Lin, Johnson, Tazuma & Masuda, 1979; Liu, 1979; Montero, 1979; Stein, 1979). Many researchers looked at specific aspects of resettlement including housing (Haines, 1980), employment (Bach & Bach, 1980; Bach & Carroll-Seguin, 1986; Finnan, 1981; Strand, 1984) and mental health (Lin, Tazuma & Masuda, 1980, Rahe, Looney, Ward, Tung & Liu, 1978). Community structure was explored by some (Haines, Rutherford & Thomas 1981; Starr & Roberts 1982).

Research was occurring in other countries as well. For example, experiences in Australia and Britain were described by Viviani (1984) and Jones (1982). Finally, adaptation, especially economic adaptation was examined by several researchers (Haines, Rutherford & Thomas, 1981; Jones & Strand, 1986; Velasco, Ima, Stanton & Yip, 1983). Overall, however, most studies focused on men; only a few considered children and women (Ellis, 1980; Equity Policy Center, 1981).

In Canada, research on the progress made by Vietnamese refugees has reflected the history of their arrival and resettlement in this country. Although small numbers of refugees began to arrive in 1975, it was not until 1978,

when large numbers started to enter Canada, that information about them became available. Most of the early work was very practical in nature, consisting of background information about the refugees, their homeland and their culture. Guidelines about working in a cross-cultural environment and orientation materials for service providers were hastily prepared by municipal, provincial and federal levels of government as well as by private organizations involved in assisting these newcomers in resettlement (e.g., Employment and Immigration Canada, 1980; Minister of State, 1979; Vietnamese Association of Toronto, 1979).

One of the earliest scholarly publications, edited by Tepper (1980), furnished background information about the refugees and the reasons for their flight. Several large conferences which focused on this refugee movement were held in various locations across Canada and the proceedings constituted other early academic publications in this area (e.g., Adelman, 1980; Beiser, Johnson & Nann, 1984). Most of these works were oriented towards service providers, policy-makers and sponsors.

Early empirical studies focused on mental health problems. Many were clinical studies conducted among clients receiving treatment for mental health problems. A number were conducted by a psychiatrist from Vietnam living in Canada (Nguyen, 1982). Not surprisingly, the findings from most of these clinical studies suggested that mental

health problems were prevalent among refugees from Vietnam. Berry and Blondel (1982), for instance, found that Vietnamese refugees exhibited high levels of psychological dysfunction associated with cultural change. Similarly, Chan and Lam (1983) found that refugees were obsessed about their separation from family members to the extent that it interfered with their adaptation to life in Canada.

Shortly after the emphasis on mental health, empirical studies began to document physical health problems among the refugees. Although there were many valid health-related issues, there were many false concerns related to cultural ignorance as well. For instance, Vietnamese children were often seen with bruises on their bodies and concern arose that they were being abused. Only when westerners learned more about culturally based remedies, was it recognized that coining, which was the source of the bruises, is a culturally acceptable remedy for a variety of ailments.

Academic debates arose at this time about the cross-cultural validity of measures used in many studies of the mental and physical health of the refugees. Some researchers maintained that the application of western-based measures by western researchers to people from eastern cultures resulted in questionable findings (Eyton & Neuwirth, 1984).

When the initial demand for basic information about this group of newcomers subsided, research interests moved

in several directions. Some researchers explored the effects of different sponsorship variables on the resettlement process. In Canada, private sponsorship directly influenced the number of Vietnamese refugees accepted. As discussed in Chapter 2, a change in federal policy introduced in 1979, resulted in the federal government matching the number of refugees sponsored by private groups. Neuwirth and Clark (1981) found that in the absence of any clear guidelines, the support provided by private sponsors varied considerably. Although the maximum period sponsors were required to provide support was one year, the actual amount of support and the minimum period for which it had to be provided was not explicit. Many sponsors tried to get refugees to become self-sufficient as soon as possible by locating entry-level jobs for them as soon as they had received a minimal amount of language training. In this way, sponsors could relinquish their financial commitments as quickly as possible. This type of pressure from sponsors meant that many privately sponsored refugees pursued employment rather than vocational or professional upgrading.

Sponsorship was studied by others as well. Adelman (1980) focused on government policies and public response to the sponsorship program. Employment and Immigration Canada (1982a) conducted a national survey to evaluate the private sponsorship program. The Mennonite Central Committee

surveyed the sponsorship experiences of their church members (Kehler, 1980). Chan and Lam (1983) studied the relationship between sponsors and refugees and found it to be a dominant-subordinant type of relationship.

Several researchers explored the impact of the refugee experience on families and the effect loss of family had on individual members (e.g., Chan & Lam, 1983; Neuwirth & Clark, 1981). Evidence from these studies suggests that family plays an important role in the identity and stability of individuals. In their studies of refugee families in Montreal, Chan and Lam (1983) found evidence of role reversal between husbands and wives and parents and children. In some cases, wives and children became primary wage earners for families because it was easier for them to secure employment than it was for husbands. In many cases, children who acted as translators and interpreters for their parents, were thrust into positions of power as gatekeepers of the information that flowed in and out of their families.

Despite the fact that a large number of refugees are young single males, almost no research has focused on this group. It is clearly evident, however, from reports by social service agencies, that many of these persons experience difficulties related to their separation from family and they frequently develop lifestyles quite different from those they would have had in Vietnam. A serious problem for this group is the lack of suitable

female partners. In some cases, competition for partners has resulted in socially unacceptable behaviour.

In response to concerns about resettlement progress by refugees, a number of studies have focused on economic adaptation as an important indicator of overall adaptation. Buchignani (1980b), who studied early arrivals to Canada, found that refugees were employed in marginal jobs with low incomes. In order to cope financially, they often shared accommodations with friends or distant relatives, they sometimes took on more than one job and changed jobs frequently in search of better pay. MacRury (1979) studied the occupational adaptation of former military men from Vietnam who had been in Edmonton for only a short time. He found that most respondents were more concerned about being reunited with their families and returning to Vietnam than they were about their occupational status. This finding fits with Stark's (1989) position that immigrants who plan to return to their country of origin are slower to adapt to economic conditions in the country of resettlement compared to those who plan to stay. Montgomery (1986) studied the economic adaptation of Vietnamese refugees in Alberta between 1979 and 1984 and found that economic success was closely tied to economic conditions at the time. The progress of these respondents was similar to the progress of immigrants described by Richmond (1981) in a summary review of immigrant economic adaptation to Canada.

As part of a large, multi-disciplinary study of Southeast Asian refugees in Vancouver (Beiser, Johnson & Nann, 1984), Johnson (1989) identified changes in financial practices as an indicator of economic adaptation. She found that most changes were made by privately sponsored males who were relatively well-educated and employed. When Johnson (1988) studied unemployment among refugees, she found little evidence of economic distress aside from the fact respondents had to postpone plans for family reunification. Compared to their earlier experiences, most refugees did not consider unemployment a serious concern.

Although Neuwirth (1987) maintained that adaptation should be treated as a multidimensional concept including economic, social and cultural factors, she focused almost exclusively on economic aspects. She noted that while most refugees were able to find jobs quickly and become self-sufficient, these were generally low paying, marginal jobs and upward mobility was limited to minor wage improvements. Few were able to regain their former occupational status. Of the variables thought to influence economic adaptation only motivation and chance were strongly correlated. Others such as education, previous work experience and language training showed only small effects. According to Neuwirth, few refugees who begin in blue collar work are able to leave it without vocational training and upgrading programs being made available and accessible early in the resettlement

process.

Neuwirth et al. (1985) conducted a three year longitudinal study for the Department of Employment and Immigration in which they studied the economic adaptation of Southeast Asian refugees. They found the labour force participation of refugees to be higher than that of other Canadians. The rate of unemployment, however, increased substantially more than that for Canadians in general during the economic recession in the early 1980's.

Recognizing the difficulties inherent in studying refugee resettlement without adequate indicators of success, the Department of Immigration contracted with Neuwirth, Jones and Eyton (1988) to assess the feasibility of developing settlement indicators. According to the researchers, indicators should identify whether newcomers have acquired competencies, behaviours and attitudes which would allow them to participate actively in the spheres of social life identified as linguistic, economic, social institutional and privacy and sociability. Work, to date, has been at the conceptual level and requires formulation of instruments explicitly designed to study adaptation and resettlement.

#### Summary

A number of different approaches have been taken in studying the process of adaptation as it occurs during resettlement. Until recently, most researchers have

considered the process as it pertains to immigrants rather than refugees. As Neuwirth (1987) argues, new theoretical approaches are required that apply specifically to refugees.

Successful resettlement, so far, except for Ferguson (1984), has been defined objectively, that is, from the perspective of researchers, government officials and service providers. Refugees have almost never been given the opportunity for self-expression and their point of view has not been explored.

Studies of adaptation by refugees have focused almost exclusively on economic aspects. While economic success is important for successful resettlement, little is known about the other aspects despite the discourse about their place in the process. According to Brody (1970), for instance, adaptation is the process of establishing relatively stable and reciprocal relationships with the environment and meaningful interpersonal relationships within the community. Similarly, Michalowski (1986) discusses partaking in the life of the country both economically and socially and to one's advantage. Despite perspectives such as these, there is little systematic information about the other aspects of the process. There is a need to explore these areas, particularly from the refugee's point of view.

Much of the literature refers to levels of adaptation at one point in time, but again, no consistent models have been developed. The literature also identifies variables

that affect the process but these need to be applied in a model which accounts for variations in levels of adaptation achieved. This research is an attempt to fill the gap.

Although the literature specifically on Vietnamese refugees to Canada is larger than for most other groups of similar size, it is evident that the emphasis has been uneven and there are a number of gaps. There is generally very little in the way of comparative studies. Except for a publication edited by Dorais, Chan and Indra (1988) which considers refugee communities ten years after the arrival of Southeast Asians to Canada, little attention has been paid to resettlement over the long term. Additionally, almost no attention has been paid to women, in fact they have been excluded from most studies. There is considerable need for additional research if the gaps in our understanding of the process of adaptation in resettlement are to be reduced.

It is important to understand refugee resettlement for several reasons. Government policy regarding refugees is affected by assumptions about success. Particular refugees are selected for resettlement by immigration officers according to their perceived potential for success. Service providers need to understand success in order to assist refugees in resettlement. Finally, refugees need information about successful resettlement in order to define success for themselves. They need information about alternative perceptions of success, successful coping

strategies and opportunities for success. Researchers need to explore success in resettlement in order to better understand the resettlement process as a whole and to make information available to the other players.

This research is an attempt to increase our understanding of how refugees perceive resettlement. The specific objectives are to determine how refugees define successful resettlement, to develop categories representing varying levels of resettlement and to identify variables which could explain these different levels.

## CHAPTER 4

## Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore successful resettlement including the perspective of the refugees themselves. Specific objectives were to understand how refugees define success, to develop categories representing varying levels of resettlement and to identify variables which could explain these different levels. A qualitative approach to the inquiry was considered the most efficacious means to achieving these objectives. It is ideally suited for research that seeks to uncover the nature of peoples' experiences and to develop a conceptual understanding of those experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Both the theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying a qualitative approach to research are discussed below. Following this, the particular method used in this study is described.

Basic Premises of a Qualitative Approach

A qualitative approach to inquiry seeks a subjective understanding or emic view of the world of everyday experience (Marshall, 1985; Swanson & Chenitz, 1982). It has been used in many classic studies which describe how people interpret their experiences of everyday life (e.g., Becker, Geer, Hughes & Strauss, 1961; Gans, 1962; Liebow, 1967; Lofland, 1971; Luxton, 1980; Whyte, 1955). For

instance, Liebow (1967) studied a group of black men who gathered regularly on a street corner in an inner city ghetto. He recorded and interpreted a segment of their lives to understand that lifestyle from their perspective. Herbert Gans (1962) studied native-born Americans of Italian parentage living in an inner city Boston neighbourhood to understand the experiences of low income people living in such neighbourhoods and what makes them different from others. Whyte (1955) conducted an extensive examination of a slum district inhabited by Italian immigrants and their children to develop a better understanding of how that segment of society functions in daily life. Meg Luxton (1980) analyzed the lives of women in Flin Flon, Manitoba in order to understand what it is to be a working-class wife and mother.

In an overall assessment, Marshall (1985) claims there is a pressing need for researchers to look at the subjective interpretation of events by the participants in the setting. She argues that a return to this type of research would capture the quality of earlier works such as those by Liebow, Whyte and others.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), areas of research that lend themselves to a qualitative inquiry are those that explore peoples' experiences with phenomena such as illness, religious conversion or addiction. The resettlement experience of refugees also lends itself to

this approach. Researchers working in refugee studies (e.g., Haines, Rutherford & Thomas, 1981; Taft, 1986) recommend a qualitative approach as being particularly useful with refugees who come from very different environments where language, values and lifestyles may differ considerably from those of the researcher. Viviani (1984) suggests that qualitative research is an effective means of gathering information from refugees, particularly those from Vietnam, because they tend to respond in a very verbose manner. She argues that other less flexible approaches to research would inherently censor the information being tapped.

Although the interpretive paradigm is becoming an increasingly popular one in contemporary research, its history can be traced back to the Greek classics and to biblical scholars. Dilthey, a German social theorist of the last century, has been identified by Prus (1990) as a founder of interpretive social science. Other authors trace the origins of qualitative research to Frederick Le Play's (1871) observational study of European families and communities in the same century (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Many others are recognized as being influential as well, including the ethnographic tradition of the Chicago School with Park and Burgess (1921) and Hughes (1943), phenomenological scholars such as Schutz (1964), Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Garfinkel (1967), symbolic

interactionists like George Herbert Mead (1934) and Herbert Blumer (1969) and, of course, the interpretive understanding or *verstehen* of Weber (1947). Among the various theoretical perspectives which support qualitative inquiry, two of the major perspectives closely associated with it are phenomenology and symbolic interactionism and these serve as the foundation for this current inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Prus, 1990).

More specifically, qualitative research is an interpretive orientation based on the philosophical assumption that reality is socially constructed, that is, people construct meanings through interaction and negotiation with others and with the environment in which they live. Accordingly, the meaning of a situation is created by the actor and that meaning leads to action (and consequences) arising from that meaning. As W.I. Thomas (1928) put it, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (p.572). Additionally, because people interpret experiences in different ways and because experiences vary depending on the context, there is no one true, fixed meaning or reality, rather, there are multiple ways of interpreting experiences and hence multiple realities. The Chinese proverb that suggests one never steps in the same river twice fittingly describes this idea.

From this perspective, behaviour must be understood in relation to the subjective meanings that individuals

construct in their daily lives (Chapman & Maclean, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Because people know that world only as they experience it, researchers must tap into this experience and attempt to understand the meanings that experiences have for people in order to understand their world (Achterberg, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Prus, 1990). In other words, it is important to know what people experience and how they interpret their experiences. It is important, as well, for researchers to recognize that they are part of that subjective world and, as such, can never objectively know the meaning phenomena have for others (Chapman & Maclean, 1990).

According to Patton (1990), qualitative designs are naturalistic and seldom attempt to manipulate the research setting. Using inductive logic, the analysis begins with specific observations and builds toward more general patterns. Gradually, the researcher comes to recognize and understand the patterns that exist in the empirical world being studied. Important dimensions become evident without presupposing what those dimensions will be. Theories about what is happening are grounded in experience rather than being imposed on the setting through predetermined hypotheses. Fieldwork, consisting of direct and personal contact with people in their own environment, is an important aspect in developing insight. It allows the researcher to know people personally and makes it possible

for them to share their definitions of the world with the researcher (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Empathy, as understood in the form of verstehen, is emphasized. The design is intentionally flexible and open to change as understanding increases or the situation changes. The data are detailed and usually include direct quotations which capture the experiences of the respondents. Although not all of these strategic ideals are incorporated in every design, they embody the spirit of qualitative inquiry.

In summary, qualitative research methods are designed to support the basic premises of this approach. Although specific methods vary, each emphasizes behaviour in the natural setting, facilitates an understanding of the respondent's world and helps researchers to translate that understanding into the language of the research discipline. Grounded theory was selected for this study because, as Strauss and Corbin (1990) put it, the "systematic techniques and procedures of analysis enable the researcher to develop a substantive theory that meets the criteria for doing 'good' science" (p.31). As the guiding method, grounded theory allowed the researcher to develop a conceptual model of resettlement incorporating the refugees' perceptions of success, different levels of resettlement and some of the variables associated with those different levels.

#### Grounded Theory

Developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967),

grounded theory is based on an interpretive view of human behaviour. It is an advanced technique for the collection and analysis of data gathered in the everyday world and has the capacity to generate theory which is derived from or grounded in the data. The method is distinctive in several ways. First, data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously. Theory is generated from data and data collection is shaped by analysis and discovery. Second, the grounded theory method does not follow traditional canons of verification. Finally, systematic application of these methods leads to progressively more abstract levels of analysis (Charmez, 1983).

In grounded theory, data collection is guided by a strategy known as theoretical sampling "whereby the researcher jointly collects, codes and analyzes data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.36). This approach precludes specifying the entire sampling design prior to data collection. Instead, sampling decisions depend on the analysis of incoming data and the collection of data is controlled by the emerging theory (Knafl & Howard, 1984). It is a dynamic process in which ideas are developed and checked by collecting further data. The researcher makes ongoing decisions about where to collect data based on the constant comparative analysis of data already collected in order to verify, compare, contrast and saturate categories

emerging from the data (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). With this process, the researcher does not know in advance precisely what to sample for nor where it will lead.

Initial decisions about sampling are based on a general understanding about the phenomenon of interest. Sampling techniques are generally purposeful and open to persons, places or events that will provide the greatest opportunity to gather relevant data. The power of this approach lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 1990).

There are several strategies for purposefully selecting cases and selection depends on the purpose of the study, the questions asked and the resources and constraints involved. Three common strategies are opportunity, snowball and judgement sampling and each requires knowledge of the social situation and access to social networks from which to select respondents. With opportunity sampling, the researcher selects respondents willing and able to cooperate. Snowball sampling begins with a small group of informants who put the researcher in touch with other potential sources of information. In judgement sampling, respondents are selected because they possess certain distinct characteristics (Burgess, 1984).

As outlined, grounded theory involves collecting detailed information about a small number of cases. However, there are no rules about the exact number of cases

required. Piaget, for instance, made a major contribution to understanding how children think by studying his own two children (e.g., Ginsburg & Opper, 1979). The issue is similar to the dilemma students face when they ask about the required length of a term paper and are faced with the response that it should be as long as necessary to do justice to the subject. The general rule in grounded theory is to sample until new data merely confirm the information already collected and no new information is generated (Lincoln & Guba 1985). This saturation process is the key to generalization and is analogous to random sampling in survey research. Sample size generally only becomes an issue when criteria for probability sampling are inappropriately applied to purposeful samples.

Data collection can occur in several ways. Many researchers spend at least some time participating and observing to learn first-hand about the respondent's world. When interviews are conducted, they are usually guided by a series of open-ended questions. These may be informal conversations in which neither the content nor the form is pre-determined. They may have a semi-structured format where a list of topics to be covered is identified but the wording and sequence are flexible. Finally, interviews may be standardized with predetermined topics, wording and sequence. What makes these interviews different from others is that respondents can express themselves in their own

words. In this way, it is possible to learn the respondents' terminology and to capture the complexities of their perceptions (Patton, 1990).

The raw data of interviews are the actual words of the respondents. These are recorded during the interview by tape or by hand. Immediately afterwards, the researcher generally engages in a period of reflection and elaboration of the data collected.

Coding is the means by which data are analyzed and theory is generated. Data are broken down into discrete parts (word by word, sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph), closely examined and compared for similarities and differences. Codes are generated which describe themes or variables emerging from the data. At first these codes are descriptive. By asking questions about the data and making comparisons between events, concepts are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. As the analysis proceeds, more focused coding begins. Descriptive codes are collected and collapsed into more abstract categories. Links are made between categories and they are arranged in relationships which best represent the phenomena (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). Finally, core categories are selected, systematically related to other categories and relationships validated. The coding process is facilitated by writing analytic memos which are elaborations of ideas about the data and the codes. They

are an intermediate step between coding and writing the first draft of the analysis. In this case, the codes allowed for definitions of success and led to the development of categories representing levels of resettlement.

Evaluation of qualitative research differs considerably from that of quantitative work. As the philosophical underpinnings are different and the theoretical and methodological approaches differ as well, it follows that the criteria for evaluating the soundness of the work should also be different. Traditionally, quantitative research has used concepts such as validity, reliability and objectivity to assess soundness. Although some researchers attempt to use these same criteria to judge qualitative research, others argue that they are inappropriate.

Most researchers who conduct qualitative studies agree that the soundness of a study is enhanced when: (a) there is prolonged and intensive contact with the field of study; (b) negative cases are analyzed; (c) selected participants and professionals read drafts of the analysis; and (d) the researcher is explicit about how data were collected, the conditions under which they were collected and from whom they were collected. Final evidence of a sound study is that the theory fits the data and explains the phenomenon being investigated (e.g., Achterberg, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Chapman & Maclean, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1986;

Marshall, 1985).

Through theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis and development of an increasingly abstract coding paradigm, grounded theory method can produce theory with the power to explain the phenomenon of interest (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process can generate either substantive or formal theory depending on the variety of situations studied. Substantive theory evolves from the study of a phenomenon in one particular context. It is a systematic account of relationships among a limited number of variables and is usually confined to a particular setting. Formal theory emerges from the study of a phenomenon examined under many different types of situations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

As the purpose of this study was to understand successful resettlement from the perspective of the refugees themselves and to develop a conceptual model of that experience at the substantive level, a qualitative approach to inquiry was considered appropriate. At the theoretical level, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism informed the work and grounded theory guided the methodological design.

#### Data Collection

In any field research involving respondents, it is important to develop trust and rapport between researcher and respondent. When cross-cultural factors are involved,

it becomes not only important but imperative. According to Oakley (1981), finding out about other peoples lives is much more readily done through friendship than a formal interview. She states that there can be "no intimacy without reciprocity" (p.40) and argues further that:

the mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement...is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives (p.58).

According to Oakley (1981) and Thorogood (1987), a subjective approach such as this enables the researcher to act as an instrument through which the respondents can make their personal experiences known. Making their perceptions and experiences central to data-gathering and interpretation helps to counter any imposition of assumptions and values by the researcher.

This approach was considered appropriate and efficacious in this case where, as a white, English-speaking Canadian of European origin, the researcher was interacting with highly visible minority respondents from very different cultural backgrounds for whom English was not their first language. Hence, time was spent getting to know members of the community. As part of the process of developing trust and building a relationship, the researcher frequently volunteered or was asked to assist with certain problems. Although this was time-consuming, it was a practical way to

develop rapport and provided an opportunity for a richer, first-hand understanding of the situation (Mirdal, 1984). Examples of tasks undertaken include writing letters of reference, giving information about landlord and tenant problems, editing newspaper articles and assisting with the process of gaining acceptance into university programs.

#### Techniques

In addition to information gathered from secondary sources, the specific techniques of data collection included participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Participant observation involves a commitment to understanding the perspective of those studied by sharing in their day-to-day experiences. Participant observation, in this case, occurred while attending both formal and informal events as well as in the natural household setting. In a grounded theory study, interviewing is often combined with participant observation. In this case, respondents were recruited specifically for intensive in-depth interviewing. An interview guide identified topics to be covered but the format of the discussions was flexible. The nature of the interviews varied according to the rapport between the researcher and the respondent, the situation in which they occurred as well as the stage of the research project.

Participant Observation. The researcher has been associated with both refugees and organizations providing services to newcomers since beginning research for her

master's thesis more than nine years ago. For example, she spent considerable time as a participant observer at the Canadian Southeast Asian Recreation Centre. This centre, operated by the Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg, Manitoba, was a recreation centre for refugee youths. It was here, while collecting data for her master's thesis in 1984, that the researcher first came to know newcomers from Southeast Asia. She observed and interacted with them as they dropped in to play table tennis or talk. She learned more about their lives by participating in their activities including numerous field trips and social events. In this way, she became well-acquainted with the participants and the staff, most of whom were newcomers as well. As discussed in Chapter 2, the author conducted a research project with this group to determine how refugee youths perceive their resettlement (Copeland, 1984). Most of the 45 respondents were teenagers from Vietnam. After three to five years in Canada, most continued to experience language barriers, low socio-economic status and friendship patterns which favoured their own ethnic group. They encountered some difficulties with loneliness and indicated that they needed to learn more English, become more familiar with their new environment and find some Canadian friends. As a result of these contacts, many personal and professional relationships were formed which continued over several years.

The researcher also spent time working in an

organization operated by former refugees who provide sports, recreation, educational, cultural and social services to other newcomers. This organization, which was known as the Southeast Asian Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, has recently been renamed the Immigration and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba. Opportunities for participant observation by the researcher were numerous. For example, she assisted in developing courses to help parents cope with familial responsibilities in their new environment. Through these courses, parents learn to recognize the similarities and differences in parenting attitudes and behaviours between this culture and their own and are better able to achieve a compromise that works for them.

Additionally, the researcher assisted in developing and implementing an alternative form of supportive housing for refugees in their first year of residence in Canada. This project provided a 67 unit apartment complex, known as IRCOM House, together with social programs to assist newcomers in comprehending the process of transition, coping with the stresses inherent in resettlement, resolving identity crises, dealing with the political, social, economic and cultural realities in Canada and maximizing the benefits of resettlement. The goal of this organization is to enable newcomers to feel comfortable and confident in their new environment and to enjoy a sense of well-being experienced

by Canadians in general.

While participating in community activities such as these, the researcher developed close friendships with several families who opened their homes to her and continue to include her in special family celebrations. These special relationships provide an intimate glimpse into the daily lives of refugee families. Experiences such as these, where the researcher has been an active participant observer over an extended period, have provided invaluable opportunities for becoming familiar with refugees from Vietnam and their communities and for developing an understanding of the issues involved in the resettlement process. Additionally, they have served to build trust and credibility within the refugee population and have allowed her access to that population for in-depth interviewing.

In-depth Interviewing. In this study, in-depth interviewing was done to collect and validate data about refugees' perceptions of the resettlement process. The interviews consisted of guided conversations with respondents about their perceptions. Specific conversations varied according to the circumstances. At times, the interviews began with an immediate discussion of successful resettlement. At other times, demographic data were collected first as a means of warming up to the topic. Some interviews were more spontaneous and free-flowing than others. Some required more probing. Questions were posed

in a conversational style, phrased to best capture the respondent's point of view. Examples of this format include the following; (a) Tell me about..., (b) What do you think about..., and (c) What are some of the things that....

The structure of the interviews was designed to allow the respondents to introduce material that may not have been anticipated by the researcher. To help clarify general areas of discussion, however, an interview guide (see Appendix B) was constructed with the assistance of two former refugees who were well-known to the researcher. Based on advice from the informants, the researcher's experience, questions explored in other studies and gaps identified in the literature, a brief topical outline was generated. Topics included in the outline were demographic information, definitions of success, levels of adaptation achieved and personal and household information.

Items included under demographic information were ethnic identity, time in Canada, reasons for leaving, flight information, levels of education attained and anticipated, language ability, employment history and socioeconomic status. In some cases, this information was volunteered by the respondents. In others, the information was solicited by the researcher at some point during the interview.

Several probes were generated to assist in exploring definitions of successful resettlement. These included the meaning of success for respondents, components of success,

explanations as to why some people seem to achieve success more easily than others, the time required for success to occur, and characteristics associated with those who are successful.

In exploring the levels of adaptation achieved by respondents, probes referred to respondents' perceptions of their achievements, whether they felt satisfied with them, what changes were required in order to feel satisfied, strategies for achieving their desired levels, things that made resettlement easier or more difficult and whether they made any advance preparations for life in a new environment.

Under personal and household information, probes related to differences in the composition of their households in Vietnam compared to Canada, financial matters, such as whether they were able to meet their current financial needs, leisure activities and volunteer work.

#### The Interview Process

Data were gathered from more than 100 hours of in-depth interviews conducted with 24 men living in Winnipeg, Manitoba who were refugees from Vietnam. The reason only males were interviewed will be discussed later. Interviews, which lasted about two hours, took place between October 1989 and November 1990. Although many respondents were interviewed only once, about a third were interviewed more than once. Additionally, the researcher met frequently with three respondents who served as key informants. The purpose

of the interviews was to have refugees share their experiences and perceptions of successful resettlement with the researcher.

For purposes of this study, sampling was restricted to the city of Winnipeg. No effort was made to locate Vietnamese refugees living in other parts of the province. This criterion eliminated the costs associated with travel. Although there were no limits placed on the time of arrival, the ability to communicate in English was a limiting factor in a few cases which are described later in this chapter. By including both early and late arrivals, the researcher was able to examine perceptions at various stages of resettlement. There were no limits placed on age. Socio-economic status was not a limiting factor except in the sense that a wide range of levels was sought.

Respondents were required to be Southeast Asian refugees; specifically ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. A common understanding of the term refugee, as described by Rogge (1987), was adopted. That is, refugees are persons who have fled their homeland and sought refuge elsewhere because of perceived threats to their well-being.

These Vietnamese respondents were identified as ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Chinese because of distinct historical differences within the national group. Historically, most Chinese who came to Vietnam did so to make money through

commercial ventures. By contrast, most Vietnamese were traditionally rural people engaged primarily in agriculture or fishing. Although the Chinese were tolerated in Vietnam, they were considered outsiders. They dominated the commercial economy and some foreign trade, but were excluded from political power. After 1975, many Chinese were forced to seek refuge elsewhere. Three factors in particular forced them to flee. First, economic hardship, prevalent in Vietnam at that time, made doing business difficult. Second, as a result of political changes, commerce was nationalized, businesses were expropriated and many Chinese were sent to new economic zones. Finally, as relations between Vietnam and Cambodia deteriorated, the Chinese were suspected of being enemies because China supported Cambodia against Vietnam (Willmott, 1980). As a result of these historical differences, it is possible that resettlement differences exist between the two groups. This study made an effort to uncover these differences.

Purposive sampling was used in all cases. Initially, respondents were selected by opportunity sampling; persons known to the researcher were asked to participate. This was followed by snowball sampling; those respondents already interviewed and persons from agencies and organizations involved in the resettlement process were asked for names of other potential respondents. All requests were received positively although not everyone provided contacts.

Some gave names at once while others preferred to check with their contacts first. Several times, while meeting with respondents in a local Vietnamese restaurant, they introduced the researcher to other patrons in the restaurant and invited them to speak with her and participate in the study. Most contacts agreed to participate although three or four refused because they were too busy or felt uncomfortable with the prospect. The researcher declined to interview one potential respondent because she felt uncomfortable about meeting him at his home.

In the beginning, all available contacts were investigated. Later, as the research took shape, judgement sampling was used to select respondents according to specific characteristics. Attempts were made, for instance, to ensure a balance in the number of ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese respondents. As well, considerable effort was made to include persons from a range of socio-economic levels. It was difficult, however, to reach those in the lower socio-economic levels. A few were hesitant to discuss their lack of success with the researcher and declined to speak with her. Of those from the lower socio-economic levels who were interviewed, most had poor command of the English language, some were inarticulate not only in English but in their first language. Several respondents had psychological problems which hampered their ability to converse in an articulate way. In several cases, the

researcher had worked closely with the respondents for several years and this experience enhanced the researcher's understanding of the situation and made it possible for them to be included in the study.

The sampling procedure outlined was efficacious because the researcher was known in the community, having already established working relationships with many members. It was useful to have access to community leaders because they were acquainted with many community members, had knowledge of community issues and were influential in encouraging participation.

Initially, the intent was to interview both males and females and to communicate with all members of the respondent's household. This idea was unsuccessful for several reasons. First, the majority of contacts were male. Females were hard to access as they were less visible, tended to defer to males and had more limited English skills. Second, many of the male respondents were either single or had not yet been reunited with their families. Although they frequently shared accommodation with others, it was very difficult to arrange interviews with these other persons. When interviews were conducted, they were seldom productive. Even when respondents had family members living with them, it was difficult to interview them as they were usually female; either a spouse, a mother or mother-in-law, with limited ability to communicate in English. When

attempts were made to communicate with some of these persons through other family members, they let the male answer for them. As a result of these problems, the focus of the study was restricted to male respondents.

This experience is similar to the problems encountered by other researchers such as Shaffir (1974) who studied chassidic families in Montreal. It points out the necessity of conducting research specifically designed to allow invisible persons such as refugee women, opportunities to tell their stories. Only in this way, will the current gender imbalance in the literature be addressed. The best way to access this population would be to work with key informants, that is, females who are respected within the community and could introduce the researcher (a female of course) to other women in the community. In this way, trust could be developed between the researcher and the potential respondents. Ideally, the researcher should speak the languages of the women but not be a member of their community. Alternatively, the researcher should work closely with interpreters who speak the languages and have experience interpreting but who do not belong to the community in question.

Interviews were conducted in person by the researcher. Most interviews were conducted individually although three were conducted with a third person present in the room. In all cases, this was the person who facilitated the contact.

Most interviews took place in respondents' homes although some were conducted in restaurants, coffee shops and offices.

Each interview began with a brief introduction during which the purpose and nature of the study were explained. The background of the researcher and her interest in refugees were described. Respondents were assured that their responses would be held in confidence and that their identity would be concealed in any written reports. Care was taken to ensure that respondents understood that their participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. It was emphasized that respondents should interrupt for questions or clarification whenever necessary. Permission to take notes during the interview was asked of all respondents and all agreed (see Appendix A for Ethics Approval).

At the end of the interview, respondents were given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher and most respondents did so. While the questions varied, they were generally about the researcher, the research project or about political issues. Most respondents indicated they were pleased to be able to speak with the researcher because it gave them a chance to practice English, they had an opportunity to get to know a Canadian-born person or they liked to trade political opinions. In some cases, special cakes were prepared for the occasion. Before leaving the

interview, the researcher left her name and telephone number so respondents could contact her if they wished.

Respondents always thanked the researcher for spending time with them and showing interest in their experiences.

Written notes were taken during interviews and rewritten in detail as soon as possible afterwards, often in the researcher's car before she left the location. Respondents were identified by a code number only and a list of respondents was kept entirely separate from the transcripts. Only the researcher had direct access to both the list and the transcripts. As the problems associated with tape recording of interviews were considered to outweigh the benefits, this procedure was not used. First, transcribing interviews with persons whose first language is not English is very difficult especially if the transcriber is not the interviewer. Second, the problems associated with refugee fears that the information will get into the wrong hands is exacerbated with this procedure.

As the interviews proceeded, new information was often uncovered. When this occurred, the new information was checked with other respondents. In some cases, earlier respondents were contacted again in order to consult with them about this information. As the process continued, the researcher tried to include respondents similar to and different from those already interviewed. This allowed the researcher to further develop or contrast information which

was emerging from the data.

#### Methodological Problems Related to Refugee Research

Several methodological problems relating specifically to refugee research had to be dealt with in this study. One had to do with the language of the study, as the first language of the researcher and the respondents was different. In resolving this problem, interviews could have been conducted in the languages of the respondents if the researcher was able to speak the languages in question. In this case, that would have required expertise in several languages including Vietnamese, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects. Alternatively, interviewers skilled in those languages could have been employed or translators could have been engaged at the time of the interviews. Aside from the cost, there are inherent problems with this approach. For instance, respondents are often reluctant to reveal personal information in the presence of someone from the same ethnic community, whereas, they often will disclose the same information to an outsider such as the researcher (Hurh & Kim, 1979). This hesitancy to reveal information to an insider occurred in another project in which the researcher was involved. In that case, even though a Vietnamese interviewer was used with Vietnamese respondents, they were reluctant to discuss some issues for fear that the information would circulate in the Vietnamese community. In addition, an interpretive approach to research is more

difficult if the interpretation flows through a middle person rather than directly between researcher and respondent.

Another alternative is to use a questionnaire in the language of the respondent. This changes the nature of the inquiry and results in a situation where conceptual ambiguities cannot be clarified. This problem was encountered by the researcher in her adolescent study in which a question was asked about religious affiliation. Many respondents required clarification of meaning from a translator. Others left the question unanswered. Apparently, respondents did not associate their philosophical orientation with religion and were unable to answer the question.

Another alternative is to conduct the interviews in English. In this case, some potential respondents are ineligible due to their restricted ability to communicate in English. After considering the implications of these alternatives for this study, the researcher elected to interview respondents directly in English. Through her experience interacting with this population in the past, she was sensitive to the problems and was skilled in communicating with Vietnamese-English and Chinese-English speakers. As discussed, the most serious problem related to language occurred when attempting to interview women. In addition to this problem, two potential respondents could

not be interviewed because they were very recent arrivals and had only a minimal grasp of English. In two other cases where potential respondents declined to be interviewed, language may have been a factor. Otherwise, the language of the interview did not seem to pose unusual difficulties.

Obtaining written informed consent is another problem frequently encountered when conducting research among refugees. Respondents will often participate only if they are not required to sign their names to documents of any kind. Hence, an ethical practice intended to protect human research subjects may inadvertently cause them concern because of previous political, social or cultural experiences (Yu & Liu, 1986). In research with Korean immigrants in the United States, Hurh and Kim, (1979) found it virtually impossible to obtain written consent before conducting interviews. This researcher encountered the same problem in her earlier research with adolescents. On the basis of this experience, no attempt was made to obtain written consent in this study. Instead, the researcher described to each respondent the purpose of the interview, the procedure, how their identity would remain confidential and offered to answer any questions they might have.

Because many refugees have had negative experiences with oppressive governments, they are often afraid that their responses in an interview situation may bring harm to them or their families (Yu & Liu, 1986). To counter this

fear, the researcher emphasized that the purpose of this study was simply to understand how refugees perceive successful resettlement and that the research was not motivated by any government interest. To increase their confidence, written notes were used rather than tape recordings.

Respondents often have unrealistic expectations for immediate change as a result of participating in research projects (Hurh & Kim, 1979; Yu & Liu, 1986). When this problem occurred, the researcher explained to the participants that any potential change takes time. For example, some respondents expected their personal or economic conditions to change as a result of participating in the study. Some thought that the researcher could get them into an education program, get their relatives into Canada or find jobs for them. The researcher explained to them that while she had no special powers and could not make miracles happen she was willing to assist them in resolving their problems whenever possible. Requests for help were varied and frequent. For example, the researcher accompanied one respondent to an unemployment insurance office in order to assist him in understanding the advice given to him by an employment counsellor. In another case, the researcher provided information about how to appeal a decision made by a university professor. Advice was frequently given about the rights of landlords and tenants.

Another problem is that refugees tend to respond (as do many non-refugees) according to what they perceive to be appropriate responses. In some cases, they did not want to appear ungrateful for being admitted to Canada, while in others, they did not want to appear deviant. This problem was best resolved by developing trust and rapport between the researcher and the respondents and by being knowledgeable about issues that might generate this kind of response. For instance, in talking about problems encountered in resettlement, some respondents were reluctant to criticize Canadians because they were afraid of offending the researcher. When this occurred, the researcher assured the respondents that she would not be offended by their comments and that it was important to speak openly. As well, the researcher was able to overcome this problem through the use of probes or by prefacing questions with a comment such as, "Some newcomers have found the policy of the Canadian government makes it difficult to.... Have you found this?".

In other cases, the phenomenon of face-saving sometimes temporarily blocked the flow of information. Often in asking about decision-making within the household unit, for example, respondents initially indicated they were the primary decision-makers. After probing they would admit, often with a sheepish grin, that their wives actually made many of the important decisions. While the phenomenon of

face-saving is common among people from Vietnam, the researcher's familiarity with the members of the community frequently allowed her to circumvent this barrier.

#### Data Analysis and Model Construction

As outlined in the section describing the process of grounded theory, data collection and analysis proceeded concurrently. After each interview, the transcript was typed and analyzed. Information from each new interview was compared and contrasted with that from earlier interviews. Any new information or any differences regarding information already collected was checked by collecting further data. Attempts were made to confirm or disconfirm the differences by seeking new respondents and interviewing some former respondents again. In this way, constant comparative analysis was used to compare, contrast and verify information emerging from the data. Finally, when new data only confirmed the information already collected and no new information was generated, the sample was considered saturated.

For further analysis, the data were subdivided into discrete parts, sentence by sentence and compared for similarities and differences. Patterns identified in the data were coded and grouped together. Newly coded data were constantly compared with previously coded data. When new patterns emerged, previously coded material was re-examined for the new patterns. As coding progressed, descriptive

codes were collected and collapsed into more abstract codes. Gradually, categories were refined and relationships among the categories identified and developed. Preliminary analysis guided later data collection and the search for more examples which fit into key categories. Eventually, new examples failed to provide new information. At this point, the pattern was considered saturated.

As the analysis progressed, a conceptual model of the resettlement process was developed based on respondents' definitions of success, levels of adaptation achieved and satisfaction with those levels. In developing the model, the author also incorporated existing literature, particularly, ideas from Dosman's (1972) work on aboriginal persons who move from reserves to cities and the concept of well-being developed by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1984). Existing literature, as well as data from the interviews and notes from the participant observation were used to identify variables which were considered important in explaining the differences between categories in the model. These variables are described in detail in the next chapter.

The process of data analysis and model building was facilitated with the computer software program, The Ethnograph (Seidel, Kjolseth & Seymour, 1988). This program assumes the "cut and paste" procedures of data analysis; it does not think or analyze. The researcher was responsible

for the interpretive tasks such as identifying meaningful segments of text, comparing segments, revising analytical schemes and making theoretical sense of the data (Seidel, Kjolseth & Seymour, 1988).

### Summary

As the intent of this study was to explore the resettlement process from the refugee's point of view, a qualitative approach was adopted. With this approach, the researcher works back and forth between respondents' accounts and the emerging conceptual scheme in order to develop an understanding that rings true at the respondents' level while conforming to accepted sociological expectations (Denzin, 1978). Grounded theory, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), provided the framework for this approach.

The method of grounded theory differs from the more common verificational approaches. Data collection does not proceed according to a rigidly pre-determined formula and pre-conceived hypotheses are not tested. It does, however, provide a rigorous, orderly framework for conducting research while at the same time permitting maximum flexibility. Using a systematic inductive strategy, the method of grounded theory involves the generation of sociological concepts from successive encounters with data collected in field research. As the concepts emerge from the data, they provide direction for subsequent data activity. In this way, grounded theory provides a

conceptual understanding rather than performing quantitative analyses to verify hypotheses. Although grounded theory can generate both substantive and formal concepts, the goal in this study was a substantive understanding of the resettlement process, an area identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as being appropriate for this methodology.

Data collection techniques included both participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Twenty-four men living in Winnipeg, Manitoba who were refugees from Vietnam were interviewed over a period of one year. Both ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese persons were included in this group. Details of the data analysis and the conceptual model which was developed from these data and from the relevant sociological literature are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

## Data Analysis and Model Construction

This chapter begins with a biographical profile of the respondents in the study. This is followed by a discussion of refugees' definitions of success. After this, categories representing levels of adaptation are presented and explanations for varying levels of adaptation.

Biographical Profile

Respondents interviewed for this study constitute a cross section of the male Vietnamese refugee population in Winnipeg. Much like the rest of the community, the males in this sample arrived in Canada between 1975 and 1988. This means that some had resided here for 15 years, others for only two or three. The majority came from Saigon or from small cities or villages surrounding the city. Only two respondents were from Central or North Vietnam. Most were ethnic Vietnamese (16), and the balance identified themselves as ethnic Chinese (8).

Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 50 years. There was some confusion, however, regarding the calculation of ages. As one respondent put it, "in Chinese age, babies are already one year at birth". Another respondent, who gave his age as 28, later admitted that this was a false age and that he was really 30. He explained that the discrepancy dated from when "my father wanted me to be too young for the army". Since then, he has used the younger age.

Almost half (11) of the men were married and living with their spouses, who were either ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Chinese except one who was a Canadian-born Caucasian. One respondent was waiting to be reunited with his spouse and children who were living with his mother in Vietnam. This man had been trying to get his family to Canada for over three years. Another was cohabiting with a female partner and had done so since they met in a refugee camp. Although he was legally married, his wife left Vietnam while he was in a re-education camp and currently lives in another province with their children.

As expected, most respondents were here without their extended families. With very few exceptions, these particular refugees reflect the general profile one usually associates with such populations, that is, they are a group that has been separated, usually involuntarily, from their kin. Frequently, grandparents, parents, spouses, siblings or children are located in different countries or even on different continents. For example, one respondent had close family members living in Vietnam, the United States, Holland, Australia and France. Another had relatives in Germany and Switzerland. Many had family members in the United States, particularly in California where there is a large Vietnamese population. The exceptions included a respondent who arrived in Canada with his "parents, older sister, five younger brothers and wife". The manner in

which this respondent identified those who accompanied him is interesting because it reflects a cultural tradition that emphasizes the family of orientation over the family of procreation and a patrilineal order within the family.

Most respondents indicated considerable concern regarding the well-being of absent family members, particularly those left behind in Vietnam and many felt obligated to provide significant economic support for them. It was not uncommon for respondents to send several thousand dollars to their families each year, without knowing whether the funds would be received. To avoid confiscation by government officials, money was often sent in creative ways. American dollars, for instance, were hidden inside small toys or rolls of tape and written messages contained code words indicating the location of the money. As well, small gifts (or bribes) for the officials were included in parcels to ensure they would arrive at their destination.

Although it was common for respondents to live in extended families in Vietnam, their households in Winnipeg were more varied. Some lived in extended family units involving three generations. Others lived in nuclear family units consisting of couples with or without children. A number lived in survival units structured to facilitate the sharing of resources with non-family members and a few lived in single units.

Specifically, three households were extended family

units. In two cases, respondents' mothers lived with the couples and their children. These women acted as caregivers for their grandchildren while the parents worked. In the third case, a mother-in-law and sister-in-law, recently arrived from Vietnam, were staying with the respondent and his family. There were nine nuclear households. Except for two without children, the others had between one and four children each. One young couple had no children although they had discussed starting a family and a cohabiting couple had no children living with them. The others had children ranging in age from newborns to young adults. For instance, one household consisted of parents, an infant daughter and two sons aged seven and nine. Another household included parents and four children between one and one-half and 10 years of age. Although several of these families exceeded the average Canadian family in size, most were smaller than they would have been in Vietnam.

Nine respondents shared their accommodation with others, either for companionship or to reduce costs. These men were all single except for one who was waiting to be reunited with his family. Most lived with siblings or friends although two lived with acquaintances. One of these men indicated he seldom went home because he shared "with one white guy, he's crazy". Neuwirth (1987) calls these households survival units; they stay together to survive emotionally or economically. Only three respondents lived

by themselves either because they preferred privacy or they could not work out mutually agreeable arrangements with others.

Six respondents owned the houses in which they lived and one lived above his business. Two of these houses were located in relatively new, moderately priced subdivisions; the others were in old neighbourhoods near the centre of the city. Most of the homeowners had made remarkable gains in a relatively short time. One respondent discussed the fact that they did not live in a Vietnamese community. When they first arrived, he said, there was no Vietnamese community and they did not feel the need to live in one now. Another respondent, who lived in a recently built side-by-side house in a suburban housing development, said:

We were the only Vietnamese. Later a few came. The school close to my house so I pick this place. I learn from people who already bought house what to look for. It's quiet neighbourhood. School close to my house, just over there.

One man who lived with his spouse and two children in a modest house in an older area recently retired his mortgage. In another case, the respondent not only owned the house in which he lived but two others that he rented; one to "white welfare" and the other to "a refugee, the government pays". His residence was in a mixed neighbourhood. The house was older but updated and well-maintained. The respondent who lived above his business owned the building in which it was located. He recently moved into this suite to be closer to

the business and sold his house for more than \$100,000.

These homes were generally modest and inexpensively furnished except for the electronic equipment. Typically, they contained large, brand name televisions (usually Sony), video-cassette recorders and expensive stereo equipment. One house was particularly notable because almost everything in it was covered with plastic; windows, floor near the door, remote control for the television, even the speakers for the stereo.

The respondents who did not own houses lived, for the most part, in very modest centrally located apartments. For example, the cohabiting couple lived in a very small apartment in the downtown area. They selected this apartment because the rent was reasonable (\$300 per month) and they were able to save money. Although it was old, the apartment was well-kept, clean and tastefully decorated. A large television and other electronic equipment dominated the small living room. It was interesting to note the presence of a small Christmas tree and a shrine to a female, Buddha-like figure together in the living room.

Another couple with two young children lived in an apartment on the second floor of a large, low-rental complex situated in an older suburban area. They selected this location because there was "less vandalism and bad things happening" than in their previous central location. The building and grounds were not well-maintained and looked

unattractive. The rent was \$320 for two bedrooms. The apartment was small but tidy. The kitchen and living areas were essentially one room. Two small bedrooms were off a small hallway. The living area contained a large television and a lot of stereo equipment. Other furnishings were adequate, certainly not luxurious. There was no rug on the floor, for instance. Although the couple considered this accommodation satisfactory, they found it hard to keep the children quiet and the tenant below complained. Consequently, they had applied for government housing and hoped to get a townhouse for approximately \$340 per month. For them, buying a house was more like a dream than a possibility.

Another family with four small children lived in a new apartment block built specifically for Vietnamese residents. The three-bedroom apartment was sparsely furnished. A large television unit sat in the living room. The place was tidy but there were crayon marks on the walls. The oldest child used a storage closet as a bedroom. The children were well-behaved but shy. The older children looked after the younger ones and they all congregated in the "closet bedroom" playing a portable electric organ while the respondent spoke with the author.

One of the single respondents paid \$255 per month to rent a small one-room apartment in a three story walk-up. The room was bare. It contained one chair, a table used as

a desk, a bed, one dresser and a ghetto blaster. There was no television. A calendar with a picture of a Vietnamese woman hung on the wall. A blackboard was mounted on the wall and was used for homework. The apartment was very clean and tidy. The neighbours were primarily Filipino and the respondent was the only Vietnamese tenant. This apartment was typical of the situation for many single men.

Education levels varied considerably. Most received at least some of their education in Vietnam. As discussed in the first chapter, this included some post secondary (7), high school (11) and elementary (6) education. Half the respondents (mostly younger persons) received some education in Canada. One took some high school, two were currently completing high school at an adult education centre, four had completed high school and four were studying in the fields of social work, engineering or electronics. One graduated recently from business administration at Red River Community College and another from social work at the University of Manitoba. According to the author's experience in the community, increasing numbers of newcomers are attending post-secondary institutions. Popular fields of study are social work, pharmacy and computer sciences. While education is highly regarded by most persons from Vietnam and is considered the most fruitful route to success, most newcomers over the age of 30 consider themselves too old to return to school.

The sample was occupationally stratified. Most respondents were employed as blue collar workers. They were assemblers, bakers, cleaners, cooks and machine operators. One worker received social assistance to supplement his employment income. A few respondents worked in white collar occupations. One man, who was an architect in Vietnam, worked as a draftsperson, the others held supervisory positions in the food industry, a service organization and an engineering firm. One respondent was the proprietor of a restaurant. One of the white collar workers also owned a business that his parents operated. Of the seven respondents who were students, two worked part-time to support themselves and the others received some financial support from family members. Most had student loans. Three respondents survived on social assistance.

Among the spouses, seven were employed full-time; some in white collar jobs such as community workers, data analysts, day-care workers and pharmacy assistants; others in blue collar jobs as sewing machine operators. One worked with her husband in business and four were not employed. Although none of the men in this sample held what could be regarded as high status or professional positions in Winnipeg, there are a few doctors practising in the community. One or two others are participating in a recertification program for refugee doctors and several more are waiting (some for several years) to be accepted to the

program.

Annual household incomes ranged from \$3,600 to more than \$50,000. The highest incomes were reported by business-owners and dual income couples. Most single income earners reported low incomes. Students and persons on social assistance had the lowest incomes.

Respondents also spoke of their economic status in Vietnam. In discussing this, it was necessary to clarify whether they were referring to conditions before or after 1975. Many respondents experienced drastic reductions in status after the fall of Vietnam. For some, this meant depending on support from family members outside Vietnam for survival. As one respondent put it, "we were rich before 1975 and poor after". At the time of their departure from Vietnam, some respondents reported being poor while others indicated living very well. In the words of one respondent, "My father died when I was 10 years. I was selling candy. We were poor in Vietnam". Others said, "we weren't rich, about middle money" or "economic position was so-so or about average". According to another, "I would say that we never had a hard day in Vietnam".

Most respondents were relatively young, some as young as 13, when they left Vietnam. Many were students at the time of their departure or had their studies suspended by the war. When these respondents were asked what type of career they would have followed in Vietnam, most indicated

they would likely have worked in a family business. For instance, one respondent replied, "I had no idea of a career in Vietnam. My parents built a business, a family business. I would have been in the family business". According to another, "In Vietnam I would be married. My parents would give me money to live. I would not have to get a job". Another wanted to be a journalist but probably would have gone into business with his mother producing and selling wine and liquor. Another would have worked with his family "collecting, drying, packaging and selling tea leaves".

Most of those who were not students at the time of their departure, worked in family businesses that ranged from very small operations to very sizeable ones. According to one respondent, his "family had a little company, take cover off rice". Another was the "owner of bus that takes people". In contrast, another worked with his parents who owned two large factories in addition to two other businesses. Others were engaged in the army or navy, two were teachers and one was a farmer.

In terms of current status, the respondents who owned businesses in Winnipeg probably topped the socioeconomic scale. It is interesting to note that both conducted businesses in Vietnam and both are ethnic Chinese. However, one came from a wealthy family and had not yet recovered his former status while the other came from a poor family and had exceeded his. Most of the other respondents had not

recovered their former socioeconomic status although some enjoyed a higher standard of living than in Vietnam. Some younger respondents, especially those who are currently students may have the opportunity to do so once they develop their careers.

Respondents identified three major reasons for fleeing Vietnam. The first and most paramount involved their fears regarding a communist regime. According to one, "I hate communist government". Some spoke of a lack of freedom. They liked the "idea of freedom party instead of communist". Others objected to the military draft. As one respondent put it, "I was very young. My family sent me. I guess to avoid the army and war". Some left for economic reasons. One young man summed it up this way, "When you graduate you go to rural area. Pay not good. They sent my family to new economic zone so future is not good for me". Another said, "In Vietnam, work seven days, not enough food. No choice to leaving country".

Although escape experiences varied, most respondents reported experiencing trauma and hardship prior to arriving in Canada. Some described having to change their names to hide from government officials, others reported harrowing escapes and some recalled difficult conditions in the refugee camps. For some, departures were spontaneous. For instance, one respondent reported:

On April 30, 1975 at noon, I was still in the army but I heard on the radio that something was going

to happen...I tried to get information from my commander but no one answered. I didn't know what to do but thought I better run. A group of us left in two small boats and went to the ocean. We landed in the Philippines. I thought everything was O.K. in Vietnam and I wanted to go back right away. I wanted to go home. I was married and spent one week with my wife then I had to fight for six months. My wife, mother, brother and sister were in Vietnam. I had to take care of them. An American I knew in Vietnam advised me not to go home, that it would be too dangerous. I was angry. I wanted to go home. They told me they couldn't send me home.

In another case, the respondent had a brother in the navy and it was through him that he and his family were able to leave suddenly. As he tells it:

We left April 29, 1975 one day before the fall of Vietnam on a navy boat with 2,700 others. I worked preparing food for the others during the trip. We arrived in the Philippines a few days later. We had to remove all insignia and identification from uniforms and from boat. Also our flag. This was very emotional for the group. We were transferred to a big ship carrying 5,000 and sailed to Guam. There we were held in a refugee camp. After only a few days we were interviewed and accepted by Canada. We arrived in Montreal and were sent to Winnipeg arriving May 16, 1976.

In other cases, plans to escape were made and revised many times. One young man tried 14 times before finally succeeding. At one point his whole family was caught and imprisoned for two months. Another respondent who left with his parents, sister, five brothers and his wife tells this story:

There were 153 people on our boat. It was 15 metres. We spent three and one-half days on the boat. We went to Malaysia. We spent five months in Malaysia refugee camp and one month in transition camp. I worked in the camp community.

We brought \$10,000 U.S. and 40 grams of gold but they took it in Malaysia. They gave us a certificate to say they took it and we would get it when we left. After five years we finally received it.

According to another respondent who was 14 at the time:

My family paid gold for our passage. We couldn't bring any money or gold with us. We encountered pirates who plundered, ripping jewellery off refugees. One old lady died during an attack. When we realized we couldn't make our destination of Hong Kong or Australia, we headed for Malaysia instead. Malaysian officials did not want us to come ashore so we had to jump into chest deep water and run for shore. Because we agreed to go to Canada or Australia instead of the U.S., we were accepted to Canada after only four months. In Canada, we had a choice of going to Morden or Winnipeg. There were no Southeast Asians in Morden, this was too scary so we went for Winnipeg instead.

One young man who was 13 when he escaped with his older sister recalled:

I went to Thailand refugee camp by boat. I spent four months in this camp. It was a very harsh camp. We have relatives in the United States who were there before 1975. We were going to go there. But it seemed to be too difficult to get to U.S. so we agreed to go to Canada. The very next day we received notice that we could go to U.S. but my sister was afraid if we changed our mind we would not get out at all.

Another respondent told this story:

In December 1985 I left in a small boat with 29 people. It was terrible on sea. Six days on sea. I am pilot. I bring my boat to Malaysia camp. I was in Malaysia camp for one year. In camp I work for piracy information. After two months the Canadian delegation accept me so I went to other camp where I was chief of education system.

One respondent who left by boat with his sister and her daughter recalled:

We arrived on small island in Malaysia called Kuku and lived there in a tent for three months. Then we were transferred to Galong, the biggest camp in Indonesia. We remained there from August 1982 until April 1983. The camp consisted of barracks and refugees were separated according to the intended country of resettlement. The population of the camp was approximately 4,000.

According to another respondent:

From Saigon we went to Malaysia and stayed there for three months. We worked together to build an office and keep busy. There was a market and we did a little bit of selling. Mostly we used our head thinking about surviving. But we had to move before. My father lived in China and had to move from the communists to Vietnam.

A former captain in the navy spent ten years in a re-education camp in North Vietnam near the China border.

After escaping, he spent another 20 months recovering his health in a refugee camp in Malaysia.

As discussed later in this chapter, these different escape experiences affected the resettlement process.

Generally, refugees who had financial resources available to them and were able to retain those resources throughout the flight and camp experiences and those who faced only limited trauma and hardship were best able to cope with the effects of their flight. Among those refugees who experienced considerable trauma during the course of their escape, some were able to deal with it and others could not.

The early experiences in Canada involved two major hurdles. These were the language barrier and finding suitable employment.

Prior to their arrival in Canada, most respondents knew

little or no English. Some reported learning a little bit in high school. Only one reported fluency in both English and French before leaving Vietnam. Although they were exposed to some English in the refugee camps, most reported that learning for them was not effective at that time as they had to concentrate on survival and deal with the effects of trauma. On arrival, most respondents attended language classes for five or six months although a few reported being denied the opportunity. In the words of one respondent, "I wanted to study but government told me have to looking for job".

When asked to evaluate their English ability at the time of the interviews, almost all respondents reported some problems. The following are examples of their comments:

"Everyday language O.K. Unusual is hard. Hard to read and write."

"My English not very good. Feel nervous when speak English."

"I have no trouble with normal dealings and with business...no trouble except perhaps with a lawyer."

"I think I speak about first year university level. Write about Grade 8 to 10 level and read about Grade 10 to 11".

"Spelling, pronunciation and understanding still hard".

"English is O.K.. No problem with daily conversation or newspaper. Problem with expert subjects".

"Speak so-so. Read and write O.K. but vocabulary is my weakness".

All respondents stated they needed to improve their language skills. One respondent summed up their feelings when he said, "Need to improve. Simple English is not enough. You don't feel comfortable when English is low".

One of the biggest barriers to improving language skills is lack of time. As one respondent put it, "If I have time, I go to school to improve". Another barrier came to light in casual conversation with numerous individuals. This was a lack of opportunity to practice conversational English. Typically, opportunities for engaging in conversation with persons for whom English is a first language are limited. For instance, opportunities at work are often limited because coworkers are also learning the language and many jobs held by refugees do not permit much conversation. At language classes, English conversations are conducted with others who are just learning. Most respondents speak their first language at home and few have English-speaking friends. An important benefit of participating in this research project, according to several respondents, was the opportunity to engage in conversation with an English-speaker.

Most respondents shared similar employment histories on arrival in Canada. Jobs were found through friends, government employment agencies or advertisements in the newspaper. They were entry-level jobs, usually in factories or restaurant kitchens. One respondent worked for a funeral

home building caskets. Others worked in a fibreglass plant making garbage containers. According to one man, this was "very smelly, make you sick". One young man was sent to a hospitality training program by his counsellor but was unable to find a job in that field after eight months of training. Most respondents stayed at their first jobs for only a short time. A few were fired after a day or two because they could not communicate. Some were laid off after a few months. Others left because "no chance to learn English, no chance to move up, not enough money". A few respondents were still at their original places of work at the time of the interviews because, as one respondent put it, "good place even though money not exactly machine shop money".

In summary, this sample consists of ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese men who arrived from Vietnam between 1975 and 1988. They fled Vietnam primarily to avoid communism and the effects of war. About half were married and lived with their spouses. Most of the others were single. Almost all had been separated involuntarily from extended family members and were very concerned about their well-being. These men lived in a variety of household types including extended family, nuclear family, survival and single units. Although several respondents resided in houses owned by them, the majority lived in modest apartments in the central area of the city. Most homes were modestly or sparsely

furnished but typically contained expensive audio-visual equipment. Most were employed as blue collar workers; only a few had white collar jobs. Incomes were modest in most cases and most were unable to regain their original status, although a few exceeded it. Escape experiences varied but most suffered some degree of trauma and hardship. Very few respondents knew any English on arrival. Even though many respondents attended language classes on arrival, almost all were concerned about their current level of language skills. Major problems were both lack of time and opportunity for practising English.

These biographical profiles are in keeping with the diversity found in such studies as Neuwirth et al. (1985) and Nguyen and Dorais (1979). Additionally, they are similar to data from Statistics Canada (White, 1990).

#### Definitions of Successful Resettlement

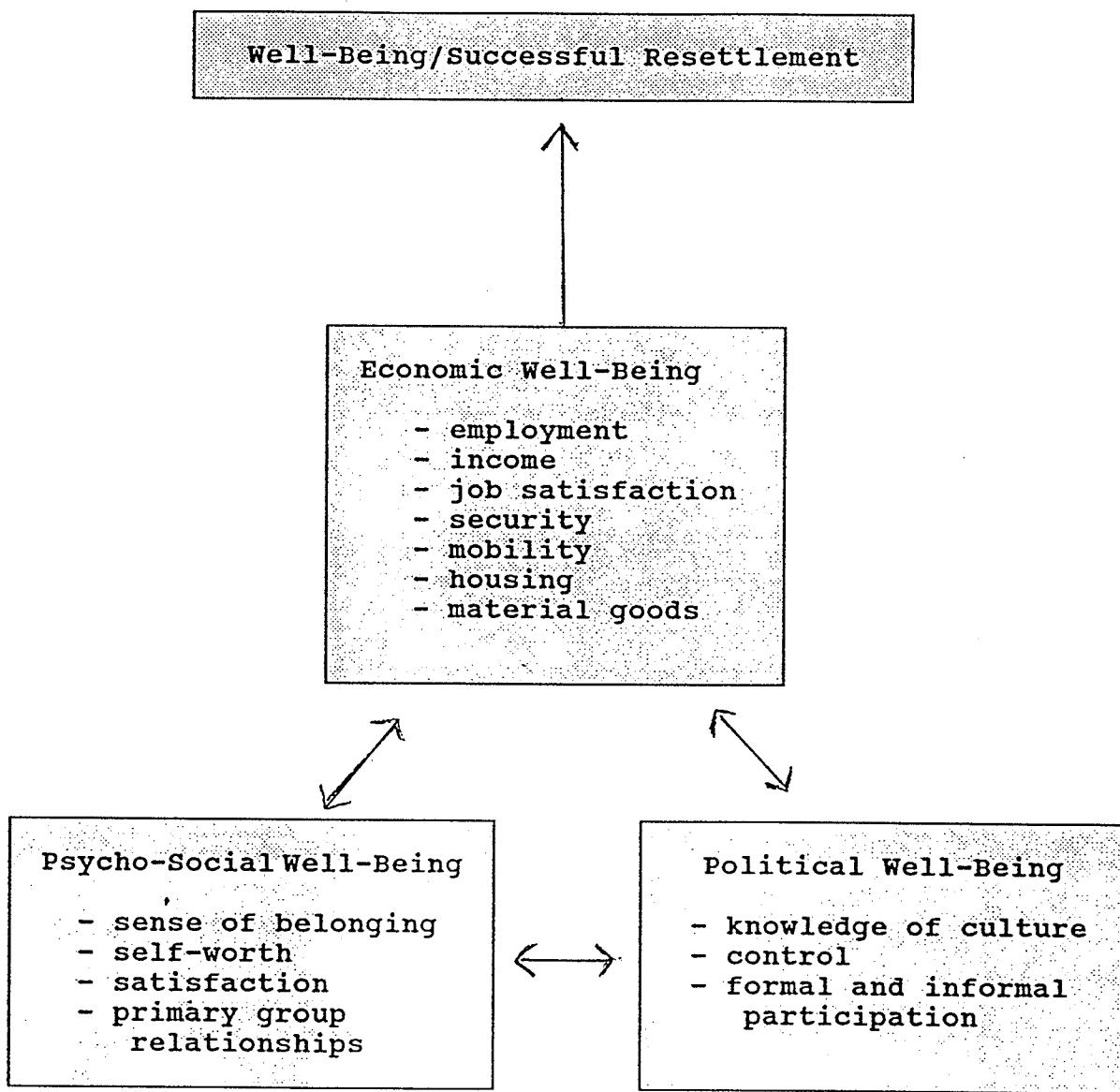
As indicated in the methods section, respondents were asked to define successful resettlement. The results from these interviews and the participant observation suggest that refugees, males at least, considered success as the continuation of life in a new environment. The findings suggest that definitions of success are couched in, or interpreted through their traditional culture as well as in response to their immediate environment. For instance, refugees frequently referred to aspects of Vietnamese culture to explain what success meant to them in Canada.

According to the data, refugees defined success not solely in terms of economic factors, as suggested in the refugee literature (e.g., Finnan, 1981; Samuel, 1987) but also in terms of general well-being much like the concept well-being developed by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1984).

A schematic representation of the model as it relates to successful resettlement is shown in Figure 3. In this model, successful resettlement is equated with well-being and consists of three inter-related dimensions; psycho-social, economic and political. To experience a positive state of general well-being, each of the dimensions must be experienced positively. Although each dimension contributes to and is necessary for the over-all state of well-being to occur, emphasis is placed on the economic dimension as found in the immigrant and refugee literature. For instance, Neuwirth (1987, 1988) and others note that economic adjustment is critical to the resettlement process and leads to success in other areas.

#### Economic Well-Being

Economic well-being requires a suitable source of employment, adequate income, some degree of security and opportunity for advancement. Most refugees considered employment a basic requirement for success. Student informants, in particular, emphasized the importance of employment. They were concerned that many of their friends



**Figure 3.** Schematic view of well-being according to refugee definitions. Adapted from Not enough: The meaning and measurement of poverty in Canada. (p.9) by Canadian Council on Social Development, 1984, Ottawa: CCSD.

and acquaintances had difficulty finding jobs and left Winnipeg to seek employment in Toronto or Vancouver.

While employment is necessary for economic well-being to occur, it is not enough in itself. Employment must suit a person's skills and abilities and offer some sense of security. It is well documented, for instance, that satisfactory employment contributes to positive self-esteem and increases the probability that people will participate in the social and political spheres of society.

In discussing employment, many respondents clearly indicated that the nature of the job was more important than the income it generated. While recognizing that a certain level of income was necessary for success, it was more important that the job meet their needs in other ways. Combinations of physical, psychological and social criteria were used to judge the suitability of their jobs. According to respondents:

Success is a good job, not lots of money but not work too hard. Work with head, not hands.  
Vietnamese are not strong. Many work too hard.  
To be successful, a person would have to have a job, be happy with that job and the job would have to fit with that person's qualifications.

A similar comment indicating the importance of job satisfaction to most refugees was made by a young man who said, "I don't want to make too much money but enough to support wife and future children. Health is the main thing. I need to do something that I enjoy...use my brain".

According to Samuel (1987), earned income represents

power to participate in all aspects of society. However, most refugees have limited earning power and similar to other low-income groups, seldom have the opportunity to participate to the same extent as higher income groups.

The income generated from employment must be sufficient to support a reasonable or adequate lifestyle and permit refugees to accumulate some of the material goods they desire. Refugees agreed that economic success included some degree of material achievement. Most were modest in their expectations for acquiring material goods. For example, several mentioned buying a small house with a garden. Others expressed materialistic expectations similar to many North Americans. For them, success meant not only a good job with an adequate income, but material possessions that indicated elevated status as well. As one young man put it, "success is money to buy car, tv, stereo. You need these things to get girls". An older man indicated similar ideas about how material goods demonstrate wealth and status. He said:

If you own a car, stereo or house you have class or status. If you are well-known in the community people think you are rich. If you own a house people think you are rich. Without these, you are still underclass. If you have money, you own something, a car maybe. Having audio and video equipment is the first step. Having a television, inviting friends for a drink of beer if you are a man. Having jewellery if you are a woman. It should be real gold, the heavier the better or jade. In Asia gold is like money.

For persons with a materialistic perspective,

possessions indicate the owner has achieved some degree of success in resettlement. The importance of these things as indicators of success is evident in a practice common among some newcomers; that is, some have their photograph taken beside a shiny, new car which may belong to a friend or even a stranger. Then, the photograph is sent home to family members in Vietnam as evidence of their success.

Security was another factor identified as relevant by refugees. For instance, one young man elected to train as an accountant because "the opportunity for accountants looks good. All businesses need accountants and the future looks good". For other respondents, success meant "a stable and good income. Not laid off and moving around". According to another, security was "three meals per day, a house, car, children have good education, some money in bank account, some money for old age".

Another important aspect of well-being involved prospects for advancement. If possibilities for advancement are lacking, which is often the case in low-paying, entry-level jobs, this may result in feelings of hopelessness and may have a negative impact on well-being. Refugees made reference to occupational mobility, that is, promotion and advancement. Comments reflected the notion of getting ahead and improving oneself in the work place. Education was considered an important tool for achieving this goal. The following comment indicates the importance of getting ahead

for refugees, "If you think you can study, go to school. If you can't, get a job. Concentrate on job as your future not your social life. Can't fool around. Job is your future". For some respondents, being self-employed was a good route to get ahead. As one young man explained, "if you have business you can be more successful, be your own boss. Better than technician. You have to work for someone else. You can't get ahead if you work as technician". Along the same lines, lack of opportunity for advancement was frequently mentioned as an appropriate reason for leaving a job.

Fourth, for refugees who had good positions in Vietnam, success meant returning to the same relative status in terms of wealth, power and prestige. As one respondent from a wealthy family said, "Success is back to the old position. When I get back to that it will be success". Neuwirth (1987, 1988) argues, regaining former status or achieving occupational adjustment is pivotal; all other dimensions of well-being depend on it. To date, only a few professional or higher status persons have been able to achieve this. If it is pivotal, as she suggests, perhaps this group is at risk in terms of their expectations.

Fifth, some refugees discussed future prospects in terms of better opportunities for their children. For many, this was an important reason for leaving Vietnam. A few refugees, who were finding resettlement difficult,

considered their best opportunity for success rested with their children. This view reflects traditional cultural values of filial piety and family responsibility. These values dictate that children, particularly first-born males, are responsible for their parents well-being. From this perspective, if the children do well, the parents will share in that success. Examples of these values were numerous. For instance, one respondent said:

Children are raised to take care of parents. They are raised to look after parents when they are old. It is their duty. They feel some of the same responsibility in western country...I am oldest son and responsible for the family.

A similar sense of responsibility for the security and well-being of parents was reflected in comments by refugees about their perceptions of the North American emphasis on individualism and independence at the expense of family responsibility. A comment frequently heard was, "Why old people here live in nursing home? Feel alone. Why don't kids look after him? Oldest child has to look after parents".

While economic well-being is a necessary condition of general well-being, as defined by refugees, it is not a sufficient condition by itself. Most refugees also included a number of non-economic factors which fit into the psychosocial and political dimensions. These, however, are more difficult to identify and translate into objective terms. This may explain why the economic dimension has received

more attention in the literature compared to the psycho-social and political. As Samuels (1987) said, employment and income are frequently used as indicators of adaptation because they are easily measured.

#### Psycho-Social Well-Being

Psycho-social well-being, which affects and is affected by economic well-being, involves a sense of belonging, self-worth and satisfaction. For refugees to achieve well-being, they must feel comfortable in their new environment and good about themselves. Almost all respondents in this study included psycho-social aspects in their definitions of well-being.

Many referred to happiness as an important factor in success. Happiness meant "satisfaction, both physical and mental satisfaction". According to one man:

Happiness is the main thing for success. If you are happy with what you are doing. If you get married and are happy that is successful even if minimum wage. If you feel happy, family feels happy, that is successful. Success is to be happy with yourself.

Respondents also spoke of self-satisfaction or "being comfortable with who you are and where you are and what you are". They frequently made reference to "peace of mind and heart".

In terms of a sense of belonging, respondents couched this in terms of affiliations and primary group relationships. For many, it was important to be reunited with family members. It also meant being able to help

others, here in Canada and back in Vietnam. Several respondents indicated that getting along with others was an important part of success. A typical comment about this aspect of successful resettlement was:

Get along well with everybody. Make new friends and help each other. Able to help family in Vietnam. Not worried about money. Able to get along with everybody here. You like it here.

These comments about getting along reflect the traditional culture and represent the general views of the community. Throughout the period of participant observation, the author held many conversations on the value of traditional culture and its relevance to successful resettlement. Many refugees defined this aspect of the psycho-social dimension within the context of their own culture. As described in Chapter 2, cultural values in Vietnam are based on a combination of Ancestor worship, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. A code of ethics for daily living, for instance, comes from Confucianism. Accordingly, the sun, moon, stars and seasons as well as human relationships within the family, between family and state and within society should operate in harmony. Confucian thought says that if individuals improve their conduct, family life improves; as family life improves community life improves and so on until national and global levels of improvement are achieved.

This guiding belief was pointed out by one respondent who said:

There is a Confucian saying - first, you have to correct yourself, then manage your house and then care for national issues. There has to be harmony between wife and husband.

Most people from Vietnam accept the idea that harmony with nature and other humans is very important. They stress compromise, moderation, tolerance and the maintenance of family and social order. These values are evident in comments by refugees about getting along with others, feeling happy and peaceful and relate directly to the idea of psycho-social well-being.

Respondents identified other complexities attached to successful resettlement in the psycho-social domain. These included being open to new things, being able to integrate the past and present and to conquer fear and loneliness.

For instance:

The individual must be open to hear, listen, see new things and also critical thinking to look back at their own experience, to ratify past experience, um, delete or modify, um, maintain as well as new experience. You need to integrate the two experiences. Enhance the past experience into the new one. It is hard. There are strong feelings of fear, of being lost, denied and rejected in new environment and former community.

#### Political Well-Being

Political well-being refers to participating in the decision-making spheres of society. Well-being in this dimension refers to a sense of control over one's life in private and public areas such as housing and neighbourhood activities. It also involves knowledge about society and its institutions, in Gordon's (1964) terms it refers to

acculturation. Feeling sufficiently confident to actively participate in society is important as well. Political well-being affects and is affected by the economic dimension.

For refugees, political participation meant knowing how the system works, how to use it to advantage and how to feel in control so as to be able to function independently and with confidence. One respondent described it this way:

A person who is successful is one who understands how to function independently, knows exactly what they want and the process to get it.

Additionally, it meant knowing about taxation, spending and saving. As one individual put it:

We need to know how to budget money, how to manage. They think they will make a lot of money and that is successful. We need a lot of experience with work and a job, how society works. We need to be able to live with confidence.

To some, political participation also meant knowledge, not only of the system but of oneself in that system. For instance, one respondent talked about how important it was for refugees to know themselves, to learn who they were and who they are now. Other respondents spoke about understanding society in the context of its political history in order to develop a sense of attachment to it.

For example:

How you understand and know the history of the new environment where you are. For example, you need to know the history of Winnipeg, the 1919 general strike, major events in the political history of Canada. For example when \_\_\_\_\_ was here, I took him to know the history of the North End, Selkirk,

Main Street, the political conflict between north and south in the city. If you don't know history you don't feel attached but rather alienated. You can't be successful if you feel alienated. There is lack of attachment.

Formal education was interpreted as a tool for acquiring knowledge, power and control. One respondent talked about how important learning was to acquire knowledge in order to be able to function independently. He said knowledge about the institutions in Canada helps refugees to function independently in their new environment. Referring to the role of education in political participation, a representative comment was:

Success is education. Any country needs a lot of educated people to make country go up, make it nice, richer, beautiful. Not important to have lots of money. Money important but not as important as education. If no education, you can't know clearly everything in country, can't make country growing up, help anybody.

Finally, political well-being involves the behavioral dimension, that is, it requires participation in the institutions of society. It is what Gordon (1964) calls structural assimilation. This takes time and may never occur completely across all institutions. Evidence that this is a slow process, as Reitz (1980) has suggested, can be seen among refugees from Vietnam who are only beginning to feel sufficiently comfortable in the larger society to make demands and seek action to meet their needs.

Only a few of the respondents in the sample referred to political participation in the formal sense of voting,

running for political office or lobbying power brokers for change of any kind. However, data collected through observations indicate that many refugees are Canadian citizens and exercise their right to vote. Some have been directly involved in supporting political campaigns. They are also involved in a number of ethnic organizations such as the Indo-China Chinese Association, the Free Vietnamese Association, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) and the Vietnamese Seniors Association. According to Bernard (1973), this is evidence that these newcomers have become a working part of society.

Some members of the community have been involved in lobbying political representatives at the municipal, provincial and federal levels for resources to support their interests. One example of refugees taking political action is a small but vocal group who have met with the government to make their views known regarding programs for learning English as a second language. For newcomers, this is a big step because they find it intimidating to speak to government representatives about their concerns. For many, speaking out against government ideas is the reason they had to seek refuge in the first place. Refugees are not only inhibited by their language skills. Often, they are concerned about appearing ungrateful towards the government that admitted them. Additionally, they frequently feel vulnerable and worry about possible ramifications if they do

make their concerns known.

One respondent, who came from a wealthy business-oriented family in Vietnam, indicated that he was working on a number of ideas which involved lobbying government officials. He explained:

I just met with the city councillors and told them that newcomers need more time for language. I am working on an idea to help the community. Sometimes our people have \$10,000 to \$20,000 in the bank. If we put that together in a credit union it would be easier to get money. Also, I want to start to import components to be assembled in Winnipeg to help my community. Also, I fight with my management [at work] because they don't hire or fire fair.

Another respondent was instrumental in organizing a community meeting for input to the Spicer Task Force on the constitution.

In summary, based on the findings in this study, it is apparent that refugees have definite ideas about success which influence their expectations for life in Canada. These definitions are based on a holistic understanding of successful resettlement that equates success with well-being and includes economic, psycho-social and political dimensions but where the economic dimension forms the critical base for a sense of general well-being.

#### Categories Representing Levels of Adaptation

Respondents were asked to assess their resettlement progress. Although they shared a common definition of what constitutes success with other members of the community, many believed they had not achieved their goals. A small

proportion of the refugee population were satisfied. Others indicated they were only somewhat satisfied and a few were not satisfied at all with their resettlement progress.

Refugees arrive with certain expectations for their life in Canada and develop others as they begin the resettlement process. In assessing their progress, refugees compare their expectations with their achievements. If their expectations and achievements are consistent, they feel satisfied with the results and consider their resettlement successful. On the other hand, if their expectations and achievements are only marginally congruent, they feel only somewhat satisfied and consider their resettlement only partially successful. Finally, if their expectations and achievements are incongruent or the level of achievement is inadequate to support a basic level of well-being, refugees feel dissatisfied or indifferent and consider themselves to be unsuccessful.

Expectations are a key factor in how refugees assess their resettlement progress. An example of their importance is the comments of a young man who said:

Trouble with expectations. You think that to get a job and make money will be easy. Things happen different and you feel frustration. Some people have a good job and life in Vietnam. Here, they get a job and compared to Vietnam, they feel like - they don't feel comfortable. They've gone down, they feel frustration.

Although refugees may share similar achievements, they do not necessarily assess them in the same way. For

instance, refugees who aim to obtain adequate jobs with secure incomes and, in fact do that, experience congruity between their expectations and achievements and feel satisfied with their progress. Conversely, refugees who expect to recover their professional status but end up doing manual labour are dissatisfied even if they have adequate and secure incomes. Additionally, refugees who experience psychological or social problems that contribute to distorted expectations or serve as barriers to achieving expectations are not likely to experience successful resettlement however it is defined and feel a sense of dissatisfaction or even indifference about their condition.

Patterns identified in both the observations and interview data suggest that expectations for resettlement are formed according to the level of well-being remembered in the country of origin, the amount and accuracy of information known about both the country of resettlement and the process of resettlement and the attitude toward resettlement, that is, whether resettlement is considered as a positive or negative opportunity. As a result of the influence of these factors, one of three expectations is formed. Refugees may expect to recover their former level of well-being. They may expect to achieve a compromised level, or they may expect to surpass their former level of well-being.

Based on the information that respondents gave

regarding the assessment of their resettlement, three categories were constructed to represent the varying levels of adaptation (see Figure 4). Specifically, these categories were based on how refugees perceived the congruency between their expectations for resettlement and their achievements in this regard. Accordingly, settled persons have met their expectations, experience a positive level of well-being, are satisfied with their achievements and consider their resettlement successful. Marginals have not been able to fully mesh their expectations and achievements to date and their level of well-being is ambiguous. While they may be satisfied with some aspects of their progress, they are not fully satisfied with their resettlement overall and consider it only somewhat successful. Finally, the unsettled are those who have not been able to achieve what they expected. They are dissatisfied with or indifferent towards their achievement (or lack thereof) and consider their resettlement not successful.

Each of these categories is discussed below in terms of characteristics pertaining to the varying levels of adaptation. The data from the sample as well as from the observations provide ample evidence of many successes as well as problems and frustrations involved in resettlement.

#### The Settled

This category comprises a small proportion of males in

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Distinguishing Characteristics	<u>Categories of Adaptation</u>		
	Settled	Marginals	Unsettled
<hr/>			
Individual Assessments:			
fit between expectations and achievements	congruent	marginally congruent	incongruent
level of satisfaction with resettlement	satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not satisfied or indifferent
<hr/>			
Level of Well-Being:			
economic	good	fair	poor
psycho-social	positive	mixed	negative
political	positive	mixed/ ambivalent	negative/ absent

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Figure 4. Categories of adaptation during the resettlement process and distinguishing characteristics.

the refugee community. Both ethnic groups are represented. These are persons whose achievements are congruent with their expectations. In other words, they have achieved a satisfactory level of well-being as defined by them. They represent individuals who have either regained their former status, lowered their expectations to match their potential for achievement or are better off in Canada compared to Vietnam. The settled are people who are "doing O.K.". As one young man explained, doing O.K. literally means:

that breakfast is rice soup. According to Vietnamese tradition, this is how rice is extended in hard times. It is humble expression of success. For instance, if business person replies "doing O.K." he or she is having a lot of customers.

In terms of economic factors, the settled are employed, earn sufficient income and are able to purchase the material goods they desire. Their occupations are mostly working class, for example, machine operators or assemblers. A few are in white collar positions but these are the exception. It is often easier for refugees from lower status groups to recover or even exceed their former levels of well-being than it is for those from higher status groups. This may relate to the barriers higher status persons face in recovering their former professional or business positions.

For the most part, the settled are employed in positions which give them the opportunity to use their education, skills and experience. In the words of one man, "I felt proud at [place of employment] because I could use

my skills and ability". Another man who was satisfied with the level of resettlement he had achieved explained, "My job is related to my career. It fits me well. I am satisfied with my work and my work responds to how hard I work. I mean that the harder I work the more money I can make". For some, it is important to resume former careers or to secure positions similar to those they held in Vietnam. One man explained it this way, "Some people earn more money and move up the ladder even to the top...but they still don't have the job they want or they did something else in Vietnam".

Several respondents indicated it was important that the job fit the person not only in terms of education and skills but physically as well. As Vietnamese men are often small in stature compared to Canadians of European ancestry, they feel disadvantaged in jobs which are physically demanding. As one respondent put it, "Hard labour doesn't fit with Vietnamese because of their body. They get tired quickly and suffer hardship".

In addition to having jobs which suit them, the settled also have a sense of security in their jobs. They are able to maintain them over a period of time without undue concern about being laid-off or fired. A number of respondents indicated that some opportunity for advancement is also important. Generally, the settled expect to get ahead in their jobs, usually in terms of responsibility or challenge.

The income of the settled is not necessarily high but

it is adequate to meet their needs. As previously discussed, a lot of money is not an important factor as long as there is enough to support an adequate lifestyle. The settled often share income-earning responsibilities with a spouse. Just as Canadians in general, many of the settled live in dual-earner families and this provides them with increased income as well as a sense of security in the case of job loss.

The settled are able to buy the material goods they desire. Most live in comfortable homes which they own. According to one respondent, "for Vietnamese, house has special meaning, it gives a sense of belonging". They live in "nice neighbourhoods", usually away from their ethnic community. This may be an older established neighbourhood near the centre of the city or a newer housing development in a suburban area. Their homes are usually modest but well-maintained. One respondent who considered himself successful, purchased a house in an older neighbourhood after only one year in Canada. This was possible because he was able to bring gold with him when he fled from Vietnam. After 11 years, he purchased a larger house in a new subdivision.

Almost all of the settled own cars. In fact, cars are one of the earliest purchases they make along with electronic equipment such as stereos, televisions, video cassette recorders and cameras. In some cases, the settled

are able to afford visits to Vietnam. This is usually a very costly venture because visitors are expected to bring considerable sums of money and numerous gifts for relatives and friends. As one respondent explained, "If you live overseas and go home to visit you must have lots of money. The financial demand is very high. They assume people overseas who go home must be successful".

In terms of psycho-social factors, the settled have a strong sense of pride and self-worth. They are confident and experience a sense of belonging. They understand themselves and are comfortable with that. As one successful person said, "I know and understand who I am". Another respondent put it this way, "you can function anywhere, function independently wherever you are with you as a whole and part of the environment where you are". The settled are able to integrate the past and the present in order to approach the future. One man explained it this way, "You need to integrate the two experiences. Enhance the past experience into the new one".

The settled have some understanding of the social and political institutions. They know where they fit in society and adjust their expectations accordingly. As one respondent put it, "A person who is successful is one who understands how to function independently, knows exactly what they want and the process to get it". They are realistic and feel in control of their lives.

Most are integrated in a community, either the ethnic one or the larger society. Some are active participants, particularly in ethnic organizations. Those who volunteer in the community seem to become established quickly. By volunteering, they have an opportunity to become aware of important contacts and resources. They also become aware of the obstacles to success and how to overcome them. On the other hand, some of the settled are not actively involved in community activities. As they explained, "No time, if people want something they can ask".

Some refugees suggest that the most successful people distance themselves from those who have not reached a similar level of achievement. As one respondent explained, the most successful people get out of the community. "They isolate themselves from other less successful people. They consider others not civilized. They definitely move away from the ethnic community. They don't share their experience with newcomers. They don't even want to talk to newcomers". Another said, "Successful people have success with money, with knowledge and with a good job. They see themselves as being better than the others. Successful people are educated for etiquette".

In summary, the settled category consists of a small number of males who are satisfied with their level of resettlement. Some have recovered their former level of well-being. Others have reduced their expectations to match

their achievements and a few have surpassed their former level. Their expectations are congruent with their achievements. They consider their jobs and their incomes to be adequate. Most own modest homes and enjoy a working class lifestyle. They are able to purchase the amenities they desire such as cars, televisions and stereos. Most of the settled live in stable family situations. They have a positive self-image and a strong sense of identity. The settled feel comfortable in either the ethnic community or the larger society and some function well in both. They have been able to achieve their expectations through strong motivation, hard work and in many cases, a certain amount of luck. This concurs with findings by Anderson (1974) and Neuwirth and Clark (1981) that motivation and chance are the variables most strongly correlated with success.

#### Marginals

Most refugees belong to the marginal category. As a group, they have had some success but not to the extent they desire. Much like Dosman's group of anomic aborigines, they are suspended between the settled and the unsettled. For many reasons, they have not been able to fully realize all their expectations. For instance, they may not have recovered their former status. Perhaps, they have not yet come to terms with lowering their expectations to match their achievement potential. In some cases, they may simply have not had enough time to achieve their expectations.

Some marginals are married with families in Canada. A few are recently married without children. Others are young single men whose families are usually absent.

Within the marginal category, there are three different groups. These are: (a) students, who have not achieved their expectations but anticipate fulfilling them in the future; (b) those who have not yet recovered the level of well-being they enjoyed in Vietnam such as professionals, for instance, who dream of resuming their careers; and (c) a small number who would like to surpass their former level of well-being. People from both ethnic groups and all socio-economic levels are represented here. Some people in these groups are actually doing well and would be considered successful by objective standards. Certainly, they would be successful according to researchers such as Yu and Liu (1986), Samuel (1984) and others who consider refugees successful if they are earning enough to support themselves and their families in reasonable comfort. However, refugees in this category do not consider themselves successful.

At the economic level, with the exception of students, marginals are employed and usually self-sufficient. The nature of their jobs, however, does not always satisfy them. In many cases, marginals consider themselves underemployed compared to the positions they held in Vietnam. This is particularly true for former professionals. For instance, a former navy captain repairs starters for cars. He describes

the work as boring. He would like to return to his career as a ships captain but recognizes it is impossible in Winnipeg. He thinks there may be a possibility if he moved to Vancouver. A young man, who is the manager of a fast food restaurant says, "as a manager I get good pay but it's not my future. It's too hot, too hard and too fast". He would like to develop a career in photography. In some cases, their jobs may be insecure or offer limited opportunity for advancement. For instance, one young man is a cleaner on the night shift at a chicken factory. He feels there is no future in this job but cannot find another one.

In the case of students, most depend on student loans and bursaries. Some receive help from family members and a few are employed in jobs similar to those held by students in the dominant groups. This includes pumping gas and waiting tables in restaurants. Most students, however, find it difficult to combine studying and working because studying in a second language requires considerable time for reading and lesson preparation.

In terms of income, some marginals are satisfied with the amount they earn. Others are not. In these cases, the income may be considered insufficient for either physical or psychological needs. For instance, one man reported earning \$50,000 last year, but for him that was not enough. Another man indicated, "the money is not exactly machine shop money but I like the place, it's a good place". In the case of

business people, profits may be low or the business not as large as they would like. For instance, one business owner said, "family has nice living, children can go to school but still need to develop business and contribute to country". Although most students have very low incomes, often at or below poverty levels, they accept this as a temporary situation.

Marginals may own their homes or rent apartments. Most live in their ethnic communities in the centre of the city, although some are scattered in the suburbs. One business person, for instance, sold his house in a suburb and moved into a suite above his business because it was more convenient and his family could see him more often. Although the size and quality of the housing varies considerably, students in particular, usually live in very modest apartments close to their places of study. Most share their apartments with others; some merely to save money, others for companionship as well. With the exception of some students, most marginals have considerable electronic equipment in their homes including televisions, stereos and video cassette recorders. While some own cars, others do not for economic or personal reasons.

In the psycho-social dimension, marginals experience some success but often suffer from episodes of self-doubt and discouragement. Prior to arrival, many felt that things would be easy in Canada, that jobs and money would be easy

to get. In most cases, it turned out to be far more difficult than they expected and it takes time to adjust to the gap between expectations and reality.

In many cases, marginals manage adequately until they encounter a particular problem. Then, they seem to have trouble functioning in most dimensions. For instance, a bright young man indicated he was so frustrated with bureaucratic procedures associated with being admitted to University that he felt he could not function at work. He had to take a week off "to get away". During this time, he felt so "worried" he could not even settle down to write a letter to his family in Vietnam. This example is not uncommon among refugees. In another case, a man in his 30's requested three weeks leave from work after being in the job for three months. He said he was suffering from pressure. Perhaps as the result of the refugee experience, some refugees are like an elastic band that is stretched close to its limit. Further stretching causes the band to snap or, in the case of refugees, this is what they call "too much pressure".

Marginals often feel isolated from the larger community, especially if their language skills are not well-developed. Many have difficulty making friends with more established Canadians. One respondent spoke about how he felt isolated at school. "I did not feel comfortable and others did not feel comfortable with me. We were scared of

each other. What kind of joke should I tell them? I was afraid I would offend them so I said nothing". Some have strong feelings of fear, of being lost, denied or rejected in their new environment. As one respondent explained:

They don't know what will happen to them in the future. They are very insecure. Politically they are insecure, economically they are also very insecure, psychologically also. When they come here, resettlement is a vague concept because fear of loss pulls them back to where they were, a strong opposite force affects their efforts to integrate. Like, in physics, the theory of force, it pulls in two different directions.

Marginals participate in the political dimension in varying degrees. Many are Canadian citizens and exercise their right to vote. Even the most active, however, continue to feel somewhat ill at ease. As one respondent explained, "Up to now, I feel I'm involved with a lot, even politics, but sometimes I don't feel this is my home yet. When I look back I don't see that my country is my home either".

Some marginals compensate for the isolation they feel through active involvement in their ethnic communities. Through ethnic organizations, they often work with those who are less successful. They seem to get along with them in a way that some of the settled do not; they want to help but they also want to learn how things work and how others live. To some, ethnic organizations offer an opportunity to learn more about the institutions in society and how they can function in them. Although they want to provide support and

backup for their people, they also want to get training through volunteering. They see this as a way to gain knowledge, recognition and Canadian experience.

In summary, the category of marginals represents the largest of the three groups. It includes students, those who have not yet recovered their former level of well-being and those who wish to exceed it. Many are doing well by objective measures but marginals do not see it that way. While most are employed, they are often not satisfied with their jobs or their income. They are developing confidence in themselves and their ability to recover, but they often suffer from self-doubt and discouragement. Many feel isolated from the larger community. Some are active in ethnic organizations either as compensation for their feelings of isolation or as a means of increasing their knowledge and understanding about their new society.

#### The Unsettled

The third and smallest category, numerically speaking, is composed of the unsettled. People in this group cannot reconcile their expectations and achievements or cannot achieve a basic level of well-being. Some will not adjust their expectations, others cannot recover despite adjusting their expectations. Most have tried without success. Some have psychological or social problems relating to their experiences as refugees which prevent them from succeeding. For others, their problems may have been socially

constructed in Canada, however, this cannot be determined from this study. In addition, it is likely that some people in this group may have been unsettled in Vietnam although this is very difficult to determine with any certainty.

The unsettled belong to both ethnic groups and all socio-economic levels. The majority are young, single men in their 20's and 30's. Many arrived in Canada alone, having been sent from Vietnam by their families in order to avoid the war or to improve their families economic positions. In most cases, they have not been reunited with family members, often because the young men have not been in sufficiently secure positions to qualify as sponsors. As one respondent said, "Single persons have the most problems. They have no secure job, they often have unemployment. They feel hopeless to bring their family. They say what the heck, why not spend money, gamble and drink". Another respondent indicated how important it is for young men to have their families with them. He said, "It helps if you have family for support. Decisions are affected by family. Family wants the best for you. They can make wiser decisions". Similarly, another said, "Come alone, no family, this makes them sad, unhappy. They don't know anything...don't know how to get something they want". The importance of family as indicated here has been well documented by other researchers including Chan and Lam (1983), Indra (1980) and Neuwirth and Clark (1981). In

addition to not having family members with them, many have difficulty finding suitable marriage partners. There are two main reasons for this. First, more males than females came as refugees. Second, it is easier and more acceptable for Vietnamese women to marry non-Vietnamese men than it is for the men to do likewise. As one man said, "There are 100 men to 10 girls".

In terms of economic factors, most of the unsettled are unemployed and depend on social assistance. Some may be employed part-time or intermittently. One young man, for instance, was employed from time to time as a dish-washer in a Country Kitchen restaurant. Another worked for a tannery company for six years before becoming ill. As he explained it, "Too hard, too many bosses. Only have two hands not four....It makes me sick". A small number are employed full-time but cannot earn enough to survive without some social assistance. For example, one respondent, who raised chickens on a small farm in Vietnam, works full-time but earns only minimum wage. He is married with four children. His wife is not employed. She does not speak English and stays home with the children. In order to make ends meet, they receive an income supplement. A very small number engage in what is called "tricky business", that is, they are involved in illicit activities such as gambling or sharing a social insurance number to get unemployment insurance illegally.

Most of the unsettled live in the core area of the city and move frequently. Some live in low-cost apartments. Others, particularly those who are post-psychiatric clients, live in group homes. Regardless of the type of accommodation, it is poorly furnished and maintained. A few reside with siblings and receive some guidance and support from them although these relationships are sometimes subject to friction and disputes.

In terms of psycho-social factors, the unsettled often have negative or low self-esteem. Many are frustrated and give up. For some, their only success is surviving day to day and staying out of trouble. According to respondents, "quite a few are sad with the present situation; what is in the past is a nice and beautiful memory, what is in the present is painful one". Some are overcome with feelings of hopelessness and despair. These symptoms are typical of those identified by Nguyen (1982), Berry and Blondell (1982), Chan and Lam (1983) and others who have investigated mental health problems among refugees. A few unsettled are angry and lash out in socially inappropriate ways. For instance, a small number are involved in gangs. This offers them a sense of belonging, comrade and an opportunity to participate socially and politically. As one respondent explained, "They look for a place to belong. When someone in the group does something negative, they support that person because it's part of belonging".

A small number of the unsettled have serious psychological problems involving extensive medical treatment and extended periods of hospitalization and will never recover sufficiently to become independent. However, some are able to function at a basic level as long as they take their medication. Others are frequently in and out of hospital and a few have spent extended periods in psychiatric institutions. Some others may recover with adequate support and guidance but this is difficult because of cultural barriers. For instance, most mental health programs are based on western culture and delivered by service providers who belong to the dominant groups in society. There are almost no ethnic-based services available and service providers seldom speak the same language as these clients.

Concerning the political dimension, the unsettled typically have little sense of control and lack knowledge about the social institutions. However, some are very skilled at using the welfare system to their advantage. For instance, one young man, with a history of psychiatric problems, frequently leaves Winnipeg for places such as Toronto. When he has been away long enough, he turns up at the psychiatric ward of a hospital and convinces them to fly him home.

Frequently, the unsettled are alienated from their ethnic communities and seldom participate in the larger

community. According to people in the community, the unsettled stand apart. For instance, "They have long hair, their clothes are not nice. Also the way they act, not polite, maybe sloppy or messy. They don't know work etiquette, their clothes, they wear whatever. They don't listen and get into trouble, break the law". Others say, "those who have trouble don't care, they just do anything, they don't decide what to do, they don't know where to go for help". Similarly, "they are on welfare, looking for a job. They travel around a lot. They are considered useless and looked down upon". One respondent gave an example of a friend who is not successful. "\_\_\_\_ has lots of family pressure. He is quiet and lonesome. His family requests money indirectly. The workplace noise and pressure is too much. He has a non-stable income. He is not productive, has no drive".

The unsettled often congregate in downtown malls where they share companionship, coffee and cigarettes with others in similar circumstances. Malls have a busy atmosphere reminiscent of Saigon streets where people go for coffee and mill about to visit. Those who gather at malls usually have a network of acquaintances in similar circumstances. They do not talk much among themselves but seem to get some measure of comfort and companionship from being together. Most display nervous tension often the result of medication. Their hands and feet jiggle and they have trouble sitting

still. The unsettled such as these can only concentrate for short periods of time. They are often distracted by the task of getting cigarettes from each other. They laugh and fool around and come and go. One of these young men described his routine as follows, "Sleep in, get up, visit at friends house, go to Portage Place, buy coffee, smoke and visit with friends, go home, sleep".

In summary, the unsettled are those who experience incongruity between their expectations and achievements or who do not enjoy a minimum level of well-being. Most are young single men without family support. They are usually unemployed and depend on social assistance at least part of the time. They live in poor quality housing in the centre of the city. Some have psychological or social problems which interfere with the resettlement process.

#### Explanations for Variations in Levels of Adaptation

Several explanations can be offered for variations in levels of adaptation in the resettlement process. The discussion begins with the structural conditions in the host society. As Kallen (1982) and others have shown, conditions in the host or receiving society are of paramount importance in providing an explanation for a lack of general well-being among minority populations. In the case of Vietnamese refugees under consideration here, government policies, racism, the state of the economy and job transferability all play a part in facilitating or inhibiting the adaptation

process.

The discussion also identifies the relevance of class of origin and ethnic variation as well as conditions of exodus which influence the ease and speed with which refugees adapt within the confines and the horizons of the host society. Finally, family and individual characteristics are discussed. How family culture and composition, for instance, contribute toward resettlement and how individual characteristics interact in the adaptation process need to be identified in order to understand the full complexity of resettlement.

These variables are discussed below as they have been observed during the course of the study (see Figure 5). Reference is made to their relative impact on the adaptation process and their apparent relevance for variations in this process. The relationships are not discussed in any specificity. As indicated in the conclusion of this study, much more research, both qualitative and quantitative, needs to be conducted before a comprehensive model of the process of adaptation can be identified. The intent of this study was to develop the parameters of a model which would contribute toward developing a more comprehensive model.

#### Conditions in the Host Society

The attitudes of government and those of the general population determine the context in which resettlement occurs. Government policies and public support for cultural

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### Variables Affecting Levels of Adaptation

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#### Conditions in Host Society

Government Policy  
Racism  
Economic Conditions  
Job Transferability

#### Class of Origin and Ethnic Variation

#### Conditions of Exodus

Flight  
Trauma

#### Family Characteristics

Culture  
Composition

#### Individual Characteristics

English Language Proficiency  
Marital Status  
Age  
Personality

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Figure 5. Variables affecting levels of adaptation.

and racial diversity determine the extent to which refugees are permitted to participate in the larger society. While Canada's Immigration Act recognizes the important role of refugees in Canada, not all Canadians hold a positive attitude towards newcomers, especially those who are visibly different from the dominant groups. Similarly, while Canada's multicultural policy should facilitate the participation of refugees in Canadian society, the attitudes and behaviours of many Canadians impede it. There is, for example, ample evidence that systemic racism exists in Canadian society and that it affects the well-being of refugees and other newcomers (Canadian Task Force, 1988).

Government policy is reflected not only in the numbers and types of refugees accepted and the source countries from which they come but also in their integration into society. Policies relative to education, training, documentation and employment can facilitate or impede the process. The host society's reaction to refugees responds to the existing economic environment, the employment situation and the provision of public services as well as prevailing attitudes about newcomers. It is the interplay of these factors that serves to facilitate or impede the process of resettlement.

The data from this study indicate that government policy regarding programs is a critical factor in some resettlement differences. For example, some respondents in the marginal category indicated that it was very difficult

for them to get into government sponsored training programs. A service-provider explained, "They become frustrated with the narrow criteria of available programs. They want to get into subsidized affirmative action programs because they provide an income and training is seen as a way to get out of low level jobs".

Those who were able to access these programs have had more opportunities to realize their expectations. For instance, one young man in the settled category, who participated in a government sponsored refugee workers training program, subsequently received a university degree and became an administrator in an organization providing services to newcomers.

Students, who belong to the marginal category, were particularly concerned about the lack of jobs available for them and considered this a government policy problem. As one student said, "Need to make sure students get a job after graduate. Otherwise, they can't repay student loan and live without a job. Where is a job? What happens to us? Fifty percent can't get jobs and move to Toronto".

Racism plays an important role in the process of resettlement. It seems that communities which promote multiculturalism might be receptive to new ethnic groups especially visible minorities such as the refugees from Vietnam (Burnet, 1980). Winnipeg, with a strong multicultural heritage, might be expected to absorb this

refugee population more readily than more homogeneous communities. There is evidence of ambivalence and even negative opinion however, about accepting a large visible minority. In a poll conducted by the Winnipeg Free Press in January, 1986, more than half of 3,200 respondents wanted fewer immigrants admitted from Asia and Central America and indicated a preference for European immigrants who are less "visible". Although the reliability and validity of a newspaper poll can be questioned, it does indicate resistance to a multicultural philosophy and has implications for the resettlement success of refugees from Vietnam (Higgitt-Copeland, 1988).

Other studies at a more academic level support this position. For instance, in a study of 2,500 high school students in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Driedger and Mezoff (1981) found considerable social distance in the form of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. Approximately one-third of the sample, particularly persons who were Jewish, black or Asian, reported experiencing discrimination ranging from ethnic jokes to vandalism. In a study of university students in the same city, Dhruvarajan (1985) found that Asian students perceived prejudice and discrimination, particularly from white students, but, also from professors and administrators. Students reported feelings of being treated like strangers even when they wanted to integrate into society. More recently, Pankiw and

Bienvenue (1990) found evidence of ethnic harassment among children attending elementary schools in the same city. The targets for this discrimination were children categorized as belonging to visible minority groups.

Although respondents and others in the community could not always articulate their problems in this regard, some respondents did mention racism as a factor in adaptation. For instance, "Black hair makes it difficult to get job. Makes me worry". Another said:

Discrimination makes it hard. I have felt this. You can tell if someone discriminates because of their eyes. You can feel it. You can see in their eyes what people think. I feel discriminated when I talk to people sometimes. My drivers are white and not dressed like I am [in a suit] and they tell me how they are able to get out of a parking ticket. But not me.

While collecting observational data, the researcher witnessed examples of the racism to which some respondents referred. For instance, once while waiting to cross a downtown street with a small group of young, male refugees, passengers in a passing car shouted that the men should go back to where they came from.

The racism that respondents have reported acts to reduce general well-being in the resettlement process. For instance, in terms of economic well-being, respondents felt that they did not get jobs because of the colour of their hair or their physical size. In the psycho-social dimension, racism contributes to negative feelings of self and in the political, it inhibits or prevents refugees from

participating in community activities.

In addition to racism, economic conditions at the time of arrival are also significant factors in resettlement and play a part in how easily refugees are able to adapt. It is apparent, for instance, that refugees who arrive during better economic times are more likely to be successful in resettlement than those who arrive during difficult economic times. In this case, those who arrived in good times had less trouble finding and keeping jobs and experienced less discrimination compared to those who arrived when things were more difficult. As one respondent remarked, "Success is never easy. You need some luck. Opportunity has something to do with it". Another respondent explained:

What makes the difference is not choice. It is often chance, the chance of job placement by CEIC [Canada Employment and Immigration Centre]. They introduce you to a job. It is luck whether you get good pay or poor pay. The first job sets the tone for the future.

Job transferability is another important factor associated with conditions in the host society. Notably, it is not the professionally trained persons who are best able to transfer job skills, but those with trade skills. For instance, those who are familiar with machinery have been able to get satisfactory jobs in machine shops or with engineering firms, whereas, professional persons have had great difficulty in securing satisfactory positions and consequently, often belong to the marginal group.

Professionals have difficulty gaining recognition in

Canada, hence are frequently relegated to a marginal status. Their documents may not be available, their certification may be unacceptable or their experience may be discounted because it is not Canadian. As an example, medical doctors face enormous systemic barriers in resuming their careers. To do so, they are usually required to complete an internship in a recognized hospital. In most cases, they cannot gain acceptance to the required program because insufficient openings are made available to them.

Similarly, because the financial networks are different, former business owners may have difficulty securing the capital required to develop a business to the level they did in Vietnam. According to one respondent:

Finances are hard. In my country you borrow from friends and family. Not so easy here. You need to borrow from bank. You need collateral, you need money to get money.

#### Class of Origin and Ethnic Variation

As suggested earlier, class of origin and ethnic variation are important factors in the process of resettlement. They play important roles in socialization which in turn affects resettlement.

Refugees develop their values, goals, aspirations and expectations according to their social class, particularly their levels of education in Vietnam and this development is subject to the advantages and disadvantages associated with class variations. Expectations for life in Canada reflect these differences; whether refugees are primarily concerned

with achieving material wealth and status or regaining their professional careers is related to their socioeconomic status in Vietnam.

Social class is an important factor as refugees cope with the loss of their old familiar status and assume a new one. It also contributes to the tension they feel between the two. The case of a respondent in this study serves as an example:

This respondent is employed in an automotive parts factory. He repairs starters for cars and has worked there for 20 months. The pay is \$7.10 per hour. He describes the work as boring. It is the first and only job he has had in Canada. He knew nothing about this type of work when he first started. A friend helped him find the job. Several Vietnamese persons work at the same place. He would like to return to his career as a ships captain but recognizes it is impossible in Winnipeg. He thinks there may be a possibility if he moves to Vancouver. A friend reminds him that there is a big difference between a navy ship and a fishing boat and consequently it would be very difficult to secure such a position. He nods affirmatively, but it is clear from his facial expression that he really does not accept the reality of this position.

The French sociologists, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) incorporated the effects of class differences in their concept of cultural capital. As resources making up cultural capital; verbal ability, general culture and information about the social system are all highly influenced by class differences. It is variations in cultural capital that result in some people being better able than others to take advantage of opportunities for success. Bernstein (1971) also used this idea to

demonstrate how social class affects language skills. His research shows, for instance, that upper class individuals have an elaborate language code; that is, their vocabulary and grammar are complex whereas lower class individuals have a restricted code; their vocabulary and grammar are inadequate to express complex information or arguments.

Other researchers (e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1972) suggest that language codes affect problem solving and the ability to operate at concrete or abstract levels. Specifically, individuals with restricted language codes lack reference points to perceive objective reasons for their condition and to relate these reasons to the structure of society. On the other hand, a well-developed language code permits individuals to articulate clearly and to engage in more precise communications with others. It is the basis for analysis and abstraction.

These differences were evident from the data. For example, only a few respondents discussed systemic barriers to their resettlement. When this issue arose, it was usually raised by respondents who were articulate and understood both the existence and impact of such barriers. For instance, one particularly articulate man in the settled category spoke of how refugee policy and programs frequently operate to maintain the status quo, that is, to maintain refugees as dependent persons. He was concerned that service-receivers are seldom consulted by policy-makers or

service-providers. It is necessary, he said, to give newcomers the opportunity to develop their strengths, their self-confidence and self-image. Not only do newcomers need knowledge of what Canadian society is all about, more importantly, they need the opportunity to participate. This can be done, he said, by allowing newcomers to be partners in the resettlement process rather than passive recipients.

Others expressed similar ideas but in a much less articulate way. For instance, some mentioned how the clothes they receive on arrival are:

Funny, no mainstream person would wear them. It makes us stick out. We would rather have money to purchase what everyone else is wearing.

Other respondents were vague about such issues. In many cases, this vagueness seemed to relate to the differences in language codes discussed above. While they did not really understand the Canadian system and its inherent barriers, some of them may not have clearly understood the system in their own country either.

Language and patterns of socialization are potent factors in the process of resettlement by refugees. Possession of an elaborated code, for instance, allows individuals to reflect about their experiences in both societies and offers the potential for translating resources such as knowledge, skills and job experience developed in Vietnam into socioeconomic rewards in Canada. On the other hand, an elaborated language code and the factors associated

with it may cause expectations to exceed the potential for achievement resulting in dissatisfaction with resettlement progress. Possession of a restricted code, among some of the marginals for instance, may limit the expectations of individuals and the opportunities to achieve their expectations. Conversely, limited expectations may enhance the possibility of achieving them thus resulting in satisfaction with resettlement.

Education, either in Vietnam or Canada, is an important aspect of class. It facilitates well-being in all three dimensions, economic, psycho-social and political. For instance, education is positively associated with success in language programs and is considered a good route to success by refugees. As respondents indicated, "Success is education. With knowledge then you can overcome problems".

Ethnic variation plays a part in successful resettlement because of its influence on socialization, expectations and behaviour. As discussed in Chapter 4, the two major ethnic groups in Vietnam have different historical experiences which have, in many cases, influenced their resettlement in Canada. The ethnic Chinese in Vietnam assumed the role of the middleman minority, that is, they dominated the commercial economy but were excluded from political power. The ethnic Vietnamese, on the other hand, put more emphasis on formal education and dominated the political world. Because of these historical differences,

ethnic Chinese and ethnic Vietnamese refugees often seek different paths to successful resettlement in Canada. Ethnic Chinese newcomers frequently pursue business opportunities in Canada, opening restaurants, grocery stores and other small businesses whereas the majority of ethnic Vietnamese tend to seek post-secondary education in order to pursue professions such as pharmacy and social work.

Respondents referred to these differences. For instance, one man said:

I think there are two ways to success, one is to get a good job. The other is to invent jobs by meeting peoples needs. This way is faster than the educated way. Pure Vietnamese study harder to get a job in the system. Chinese Vietnamese go for business. They like to run a business.

In fact, the two business persons in this study were both ethnic Chinese and both indicated they were not yet successful (marginals in other words) because their businesses were not as large as they would like them to be.

#### Conditions of Exodus

The experience of being a refugee differs considerably among individuals and between groups. These differences reflect the conditions of exodus and influence the resettlement process. As discussed earlier, some respondents were able to leave Vietnam very quickly while others tried many times before successfully fleeing. In some cases, entire families left together, but more commonly, young sons were sent out of the country alone or with other siblings. Many experienced perilous flights.

Most spent at least some time in overcrowded refugee camps, often in very harsh conditions.

Although most respondents experienced at least some of these traumatic events, those in the settled group in particular have been able to put the events behind them and rebuild their lives. As one such respondent explained:

Some people don't look ahead to the future. They focus on the past. You can't forget the past but need to use it as experience.

Others have been less fortunate. Some of the marginal group experience ongoing problems associated with their exodus and are slowed by these problems but will recover with support and guidance. Many of those in the unsettled group, however, are unable to leave the past and move into the future. A small number have serious psychological problems and may not recover.

Before leaving, most refugees focus on survival but expect that resettlement will result in improved conditions for them. According to Stein (1981), refugees have high expectations, which are often romantic and unrealistic. For example, one respondent described his expectations as follows: "America, coca cola every day, drive luxury cars, make a lot of money". An example of the problems associated with expectations follows:

Trouble with expectations. You think that to get a job and make money will be easy. Things happen and you feel frustrated. Some people have a good job and life in Vietnam. Here they get a job and compared to Vietnam, they fell like - they don't

feel comfortable, they've gone down. They feel frustrated.

Those with previous experience as refugees are likely to hold more realistic expectations and this may facilitate successful resettlement. Some of the respondents in this study were refugees once before when they fled from North to South Vietnam in 1954. If this previous refugee experience helps to dispel some illusions about life in Canada, this group may have an advantage over those who are more unrealistic.

Camp experiences vary in terms of the location of the camp, time spent there and the conditions experienced but most provide poor facilities under crowded conditions with the result that refugees frequently feel incompetent, depressed and dependent. Some become apathetic, others aggressive (Stein, 1981). For some, this time is viewed as an opportunity to engage in productive behaviour, such as studying English or working in the camp and this behaviour may pay off in the resettlement process. Others merely survive during this time "midway to nowhere" (Kunz, 1973). According to the data, respondents who were able to work or study while in the refugee camps had a somewhat easier time in the resettlement process.

Research suggests that these different experiences affect resettlement behaviour. The trauma of flight, for instance, may result in residual psychological states that affect behaviour for years. Those who endure the greatest

hardships may experience guilt, invulnerability or aggressiveness. Guilt may be from leaving loved ones behind or, perhaps from not achieving success in resettlement. Invulnerability occurs when refugees believe they have survived the worst and that nothing else can be as bad. Aggressiveness is an outgrowth of these feelings. It may involve the displacement of guilt on others manifested by violent or criminal behaviour, or willingness to take risks manifested by positive ventures taken to rebuild lives (Keller, 1975).

The degree of trauma experienced by individuals has an initial impact on resettlement and eventually on economic and psycho-social well-being. Many of the unsettled, for instance are known to have had traumatic flight experiences. For instance, one man who has not been able to recover from the trauma of his escape referred to how a friend died in his arms as the result of a pirate attack. Some of the settled, especially those who left early, encountered fewer traumatic conditions. In fact, some early-leavers were able to bring considerable sums of money or gold with them, whereas, few late-leavers were able to do so. As one respondent explained:

Those who are able to bring gold with them are more successful. For instance, the Laotians have a short swim across the river. It's easy to go back and bring more resources. Also, the boat organizers, they sell tickets. They often open a grocery store with the gold. The boat people, even if they start with money, the pirates steal it.

Additionally, many of the early-leavers were able to bring their families with them and many of these belong to the settled group.

As described earlier, Kunz (1973) suggests how different flight patterns affect resettlement outcomes. For instance, those who were able to bring more resources with them become established more quickly, but they also tend to have higher expectations and often indicate that they are not yet satisfied with their achievements. On the other hand, those who were unable to bring many resources with them often require more time to become established but may have lower expectations for resettlement.

#### Family Characteristics

According to the general culture of Vietnam and reaffirmed in this study, family is the most important social structure. Members of the extended family often live together or nearby and they provide a network of support and social services to one another (Johnson, 1985). Family members do not act as individuals as much as members of the family unit in which they have specific roles. The family system supports individuals unconditionally and demands absolute loyalty in return. For those alone or with incomplete families in Canada the loss of this support can be profound. One respondent put it this way:

Most refugees come alone, no family. This makes them sad, unhappy. You can't learn because you are so lonely.

Decisions affecting family members are usually made by elders and young people have little opportunity to learn decision-making or to fend for themselves. Respondents indicated that this is problematic for many of the young single refugees who come to Canada because they often have great difficulty learning to make decisions without the support and guidance of their families. As one respondent put it:

In Vietnam, families are together even the next generation. Children think they don't have to worry. They don't think to plan for themselves how to build their own life. Canadian society is different. It is hard for them.

It is interesting to note that young Vietnamese in Canada often receive letters from home with detailed instructions about how to behave and decisions to be made. These letters often pose a dilemma for the new Canadians. By virtue of their cultural tradition, they feel obligated to heed the advice but it is frequently inappropriate in the Canadian context. For many, the reality of fending for themselves in Canada is difficult without benefit of having been socialized to make decisions and become independent.

Traditionally, families in Vietnam are patriarchal. Men have authority over women and elders over younger persons. Women are responsible for teaching moral values and for child rearing. They are expected to be virtuous and gentle. When entertaining, it is often expected that wives will leave the conversation to their husbands. These

cultural characteristics, together with poor English skills, made it difficult to interview women from Vietnam.

Ideas about how to raise children differ between the cultures and the different perspectives sometimes cause worry and concern as one respondent explains:

It's hard to understand the culture. Canadians and Vietnamese are different. Ideas about families are different. In Vietnam, father and mother take care of kids. When kids growing up they have to remember who takes care of them. If no father and mother how can they grow up? They need to take care of father and mother when they grow up. Parents have to teach kids. If they do wrong the parents have to do something, hit child. Here, if you hit child, police come and take child away. For me, no, wrong. Father and mother understand, they live together and understand kid. Outsiders don't understand. Have to hit to teach children to change and be good for when they grow up.

The degree of comfort refugees experience in their daily lives depends on how they are able to mesh their culturally-based ideas with the reality of the Canadian context. Those who are able to find a comfort level that works for them will experience a greater sense of well-being than those who do not.

Some refugees in this study were lucky to arrive in Canada with their families intact. These persons usually left before or shortly after the fall of Vietnam. Most had access to considerable wealth, usually in the form of gold, to pay the high cost of passage for the entire family. Many of these persons belong to the settled group. Others were not so lucky, especially those who left later. Frequently,

these families could afford to send only one or two family members, usually sons or younger sons accompanied by older daughters. More than half of the respondents in this study came to Canada by themselves or with siblings. As one respondent said:

Usually sons are sent out of the country because they are considered the best of the family because they carry the family name. Also because of the communist army. Their families don't want them to go to war.

Some young people who arrived without their families have encountered problems in resettlement. The unsettled for instance, are usually very lonely and suffer the loss of family support. As one respondent explained:

Single persons have the most problems. They have no secure job, they often have unemployment. They feel hopeless to bring their families. They say "what the heck, why not spend money, gamble and drink".

Although reunification of family members is desired, many believe that it is too difficult for those left in Vietnam to come to Canada, either because they are too old or they are already established there. For example:

I don't want them to be here. It is too hard and painful. It is too difficult to start all over again. It is like you are just born again, you have to live from a baby.

In some cases, the newcomers are not sufficiently settled in Canada to be eligible to sponsor them. Many respondents were worried about these persons however and felt obligated to send substantial sums of money on a regular basis for their support. This is a heavy financial burden for

refugees, especially those in the marginal and unsettled categories whose incomes are low and already stretched to meet their financial obligations here.

Life in Canada is usually easier if families are together. Feelings of loneliness and lack of direction are reduced when family members are present to offer emotional support and help in decision-making. Additionally, more family members means increased opportunities for earning income and sharing the resultant wealth. The data indicate that presence of family was an important factor for those in the settled group.

Refugees in this study whose families were intact or nearly so were more likely to belong to the settled or marginal groups than those without their families. They were likely to experience more emotional, physical and economic support. Additionally, the pressure to send funds to support family members in Vietnam was reduced or eliminated.

A respondent in the settled category who arrived with several members of his family explained how intact families can be a positive factor in resettlement. He said:

We worked together to survive in Canada. My wife, mother, sister, father and I worked when we arrived. We put our money together and lived together. We shared our money to get started.

Most of the settled live in stable family situations. They are usually married and often have children. Some of those who formed their families in Vietnam, escaped together.

Others left their families in Vietnam and then applied for reunification after they arrived in Canada. Some of the younger men married in Canada. Several respondents said:

Success is easier if supporting a family. You need to look after family and this is motivation to get ahead, do well for family.

While the presence of family is usually a positive factor in the resettlement process, family conflict can arise where family members do not share the same perspective about maintaining or adapting family roles. For instance, in cases where women want more equality such as they perceive in other Canadian families and men do not agree, tension and conflict arise resulting in a reduced sense of well-being for all members.

#### Individual Characteristics

Individual characteristics such as language proficiency, marital status, age and personality also influence successful resettlement.

English language proficiency is an important factor. Ability to use the language of the society in which a refugee lives has a pervasive influence on most aspects of the resettlement process. Without some ability in the majority language, refugees have trouble securing employment, understanding the cultural and social practices of the community and getting on with their daily lives. General well-being is jeopardized, for instance, if refugees cannot get adequate jobs, communicate in stores, make

medical and dental needs known or even calling a neighbour in an emergency (Higgitt-Copeland & Harvey, 1989).

An example of the limitations imposed on people who cannot function in the majority language is the situation of a respondent in this study. When at work, this man must call his wife two or three times a day to make sure that there are no problems because she cannot speak English well enough to summon help in an emergency despite having attended language classes for four months. Because of her poor grasp of English, this woman cannot go out by herself. If she must go out, she takes her nine year old son along to translate for her. Another respondent told the following story about a language problem that turned out well in the end:

A young boy in this block broke his arm at school. The mother did not speak English very well and consequently the workers blamed her for the accident and she could not fight back. As a result of this, she decided to improve her English and now is able to use coupons for grocery shopping and is very active in complaining to the landlord about problems in the block.

Although respondents in this study had a basic knowledge of English, most indicated they continued to experience problems in communicating even after more than ten years in Canada. Similarly, in the adolescent study, most young people indicated they found it hard to understand Canadians at least half the time and that they hesitated to speak to them because they feared not being understood (Copeland, 1984). Communication problems such as these can

certainly restrict active participation in the community at the political and social level, limit employment opportunities, jeopardize well-being and successful resettlement. In this study, the settled were relatively competent in English and were able to express themselves with some confidence. Most "planned to study English more" and admitted that they were weak, particularly in terms of vocabulary. However, they also said, "no time, too busy to learn more". By comparison, some of the marginals and unsettled had only minimal skills in English. Respondents with the weakest English skills were generally from lower social backgrounds and were more isolated from the larger Canadian community.

As the data in this study indicate, many newcomers from Vietnam have difficulty using English. In some cases, these difficulties relate to personal differences in education or ability to learn other languages. However, many of the problems relate to policy and the language programs themselves. In many cases, respondents participated in language programs but found them either inappropriate for their needs or of insufficient duration to develop a functional grasp of English. Some refugees were not given the opportunity to attend language classes at the time of arrival. They were sent immediately into the labour force instead. Women, in particular, were frequently not permitted or encouraged to attend language classes because

they were not considered primary income-earners by either government or private sponsors.

Marital status also plays a role in resettlement. As respondents indicated, being responsible for a spouse and children is a motivating factor in resettlement. According to one respondent:

Success is easier if supporting family. You need to look after family and this is motivation to get ahead, do well for family.

Most of those with families enjoyed a sense of stability and received both moral and economic support from them. On the other hand, those without partners, particularly the unsettled, missed those positive aspects. Although only one respondent in this study was without his spouse, many others in the community are in this situation and generally suffer negative effects as a result. The lack of potential partners is a serious problem for males from Vietnam. There seems to be an imbalance in the ratio of men and women and many respondents indicated how difficult it was to find suitable female partners.

Age at time of arrival also influences resettlement. Many refugees were teenagers when they left Vietnam. According to Erikson's stages of development, this is the period when a sense of identity is established as well as a sense of social roles (Lerner & Spanier, 1980). For young refugees, the search for identity requires confirmation of attitudes, beliefs and values at a time when these are in a

state of flux. For some, this can be problematic, especially if the expectations of the old society are inappropriate and those of the new society are not fully understood (Higgitt-Copeland & Harvey, 1989). Most young refugees are able to overcome these potential problems and move towards successful resettlement. A small number who cannot, sometimes engage in socially unacceptable behaviour. Some of those who are older on arrival face different problems. As one respondent explained:

Some aren't able to try hard. For instance age, if you are 40 or 45 years and were an engineer or doctor in Vietnam. To do same job you need to study again. Too hard or have family and can't study. Instead they get a job like cleaning. When you are old it is harder to learn the language.

Generally, younger refugees are more likely to achieve successful resettlement than older ones. They have more time to do so and fewer memories with which to deal. They are able to learn English more quickly and they become comfortable in the new society more easily. However, younger refugees are at risk if they lack family support. Whereas older refugees generally have spouses and children who arrive at the same time or are reunited with them later, younger refugees are usually single and flee alone or with a sibling. They often have difficulty in finding a potential spouse in Canada and some, particularly those in the unsettled group, have difficulty achieving a stable lifestyle.

Finally, personality is a factor in successful resettlement. Those with more determination, resilience, motivation and flexibility are more likely to be successful compared to those with less of these attributes. As one respondent from the settled category said:

Work hard...I take no holidays. Work overtime, no days off...also a little bit lucky is important too. You need to be thinking a little bit...what's good for future.

Similarly, another respondent who had just graduated from a community college and was about to begin a job with the federal government said, "It depends on your willpower, a commitment, what do you want to do. It depends on yourself".

#### Summary

Categories were constructed to represent the varying levels of adaptation. These were based on how refugees perceived the congruency between their expectations for resettlement and their achievements. The characteristics which make these types distinctive include the fit between expectations and achievements, quality of well-being experienced, attitude towards the level of adaptation achieved and assessment of resettlement progress.

Relationships between levels of adaptation and the distinguishing characteristics are as follows. First, the settled group are satisfied with their status, achieve a good fit between their expectations and achievements and experience well-being in all three dimensions. Second, the

marginals are only somewhat satisfied with their status, experience tension between their expectations and achievements and experience both positive and negative aspects of well-being. Finally, the unsettled are not satisfied with or indifferent toward their level of adaptation. They are unable to reconcile their expectations and achievements and experience negative well-being. Factors which account for variations in levels of adaptation include conditions in the host society, class of origin and ethnic variation, conditions of exodus and family and individual characteristics of the refugees.

## CHAPTER 6

## Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the process of resettlement from the refugee's point of view. The dissertation began with a discussion of the need to focus on the refugee experience as distinct from processes usually associated with the settlement of immigrants. Since refugees are involuntary migrants seeking refuge from perceived threats to their well-being, their conditions of resettlement differ from immigrants who voluntarily depart from their homelands in search of a better life.

Chapter 2 outlines the situation in Vietnam including the culture and social organization of the Vietnamese people. It also identifies the political and economic reasons for the flight of refugees from Vietnam. Such discussion is important if we are to understand the background and the cultural life of any refugee population. Too often, social scientists who study the adaptation of refugees assume that the life of these refugees begins in the area of relocation. From a sociological point of view, however, it is critical to realize that refugees arrive as socialized beings and that this reality plays a part in the adaptation process.

The history and patterns of refugee policy were also reviewed. This literature reveals a variety of policies, many of which have discriminated against certain groups

seeking entry to Canada. Additionally, there has been considerable ambiguity regarding the definition of refugees and their eligibility for admission into Canada. In many cases, admission policies have been either explicitly or implicitly biased.

Throughout the decades, as discussed by Dirks (1977), there has always been a concern regarding the selection of refugees and an interest in assessing their "success or failure" in adapting to life in Canada. While this applies to numerous groups since the advent of confederation, recent studies have focused on contemporary refugees, in particular the Vietnamese. To date, we have considerable information regarding the distribution of these populations across the country as well as their respective economic conditions (e.g., Neuwirth, 1987; Statistics Canada, 1988; White, 1990). While these kinds of data provide us with an empirical description, they do little to promote an understanding of the process and the variables involved in resettlement.

Attempts to go beyond the demographics of resettlement have been varied and often ambiguous. As discussed in Chapter 3 in the immigrant literature, Berry (1980) considered change by immigrants in terms of conflict reduction. Szapocznik et al. (1975) explored how immigrants make changes in the psycho-social dimension to fit into their new environment. From a structural perspective,

Gordon (1964) considered the entry of immigrants into institutions of the dominant society. Following this model, others have focused specifically on the economic dimension.

In the refugee literature, some researchers have focused on cultural change. Hurh, Kim and Kim (1980), for instance, studied how refugees modify their attitudes and behaviour to resemble the dominant group, that is, how they acculturate. In keeping with the immigrant literature, others have emphasized structural change, especially economic integration. For example, Bach (1988) and Neuwirth (1987, 1988) have emphasized economic and occupational adjustment. Only a few, such as Kunz (1973) and Scudder and Colson (1982), have developed typologies relating specifically to the process of refugee resettlement.

While these studies have been valuable, there are gaps which remain. For instance, it has been more than 35 years since Jones (1954) identified a need to be informed about the aspirations of newcomers, the extent to which they are realized and the way they respond when their aspirations are frustrated. To date, few researchers have addressed these issues. Except for Ferguson (1984), there has been no research on refugee resettlement from a subjective perspective. Similarly, almost no research exists that considers the systemic barriers faced by refugees nor how those barriers are maintained by members of the host society.

To address some of these gaps, this study relied on qualitative methodology, specifically, the method of grounded theory. The techniques of data collection included participant observation and in-depth interviews. The researcher was able to observe and participate in the lives of refugees and engage in intensive discussions with selected respondents. In this way, she was permitted a glimpse of the respondent's world and this allowed her to gain knowledge about the resettlement experience from the refugee's perspective.

Using the method of grounded theory allowed the researcher to explore dimensions not previously developed. For instance, rather than imposing an economic definition of successful resettlement on the community, this method allowed the respondents to define successful resettlement as they perceived it. By comparing case to case and concept to concept, the researcher became sensitive to differences and similarities in the experiences of different respondents and to what accounted for those variations among them. This process allowed for the development of a conceptual model of successful resettlement which remained faithful to the experiences as they became apparent to the researcher. In other words, the model emerged from observations of and interviews with the refugees themselves. Interestingly, this model coincided with an existing model in another body of literature.

The 24 respondents specifically interviewed for the study constituted a cross-section of the male refugee population in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Both ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese, who arrived from Vietnam between 1975 and 1988, were included. These men, who fled Vietnam as a result of the war, ranged in age from 22 to 50 years at the time of the interviews. Although their flight experiences varied, all respondents spent some time in refugee camps and experienced varying degrees of flight-related trauma. About half were married and living with their spouses. Most of the others were single. The majority of single men were separated from their immediate families and almost all respondents were separated from extended family members. Very few respondents knew any English on arrival. Most were employed as blue collar workers, a few worked in white collar occupations and a small number depended on social assistance.

Findings from the study indicate that refugee men define successful resettlement holistically. Contrary to much of the literature, they consider successful resettlement to represent a state of general well-being consisting of economic, psycho-social and political dimensions. Although the economic dimension is very important to them, they are also concerned with non-economic aspects of resettlement including feelings of self-worth and satisfaction, a sense of belonging, family support,

knowledge about Canadian society and the opportunity for active participation in national and local institutions.

On the basis of these definitions, successful resettlement was equated with general well-being and a conceptual model indicating the components of successful resettlement and the relationship among the components was developed. It was only during the process of data analysis and model development that the similarity between the data and the model developed by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1984) became apparent. Prior to this, there was no indication in the literature and only a suspicion on the part of the researcher, that refugees would consider successful resettlement in such a holistic manner. Without the method of grounded theory, it is unlikely that this discovery would have occurred. The current model also involved the development of categories representing varying levels of adaptation and the identification of variables that could explain this variation.

Specifically, general well-being consists of three interrelated dimensions; these are psycho-social, economic and political. Each dimension affects and is affected by the others. All are necessary and none is sufficient by itself; however, their influences are not equal. In this model, the economic dimension is considered to have the greatest influence. The logic is simply that economic well-being is fundamental to both psycho-social and political

well-being.

In terms of the economic dimension, most refugees considered employment a basic requirement for success. However, they clearly indicated that the nature of the job was more important than the amount of income earned. It was important that their employment be suitable and that they be satisfied with it.

Several criteria were used to judge the suitability of employment. For instance, it should suit them physically, that is, it should not require great physical strength or endurance. This criterion relates to the fact that many Vietnamese men are relatively small in physical stature compared to Canadian men of European ancestry. In some cases, their size actually makes the work difficult, but in other cases, Canadian employers are reluctant to hire them because they perceive their size negatively. Additionally, income from employment should be adequate for their desired lifestyle. In this regard, most refugees had modest expectations for material goods, for example, a small house, car and quality audio-visual equipment.

Another important aspect of employment is a sense of security. As most refugees have experienced considerable instability in the past, many are seeking stability now, both in their work and in their lives. It is also important that their employment offer opportunities for advancement. While refugees are grateful for the freedom they enjoy in

Canada, they also consider Canada a prosperous country and they want to share in that prosperity, not in purely economic ways necessarily but in the sense of enhancing their level of well-being.

Regarding the psycho-social dimension, refugees referred to a sense of belonging and feelings of self-worth and satisfaction. For instance, happiness was identified as an important part of success. Similarly, self-satisfaction in the sense of being comfortable with oneself was also stressed. A sense of belonging was important both at the primary or familial level and at the secondary level within society. Getting along with others was frequently stressed. This idea of harmony reflects cultural values which originate in religious and philosophical teachings. Additionally, refugees emphasized that it was important to integrate past and present experiences in order to develop a sense of wholeness within themselves.

As part of the political component, refugees referred to a sense of control, knowledge about society, confidence to participate actively in society and the opportunity to do so. In this regard, being successful meant knowing how the institutions operate in Canada and how to access them to their advantage. Additionally, it meant knowing where they fit in the system and feeling comfortable in that niche. As the findings indicate, refugees considered education as an indicator of success. Additionally, the data suggest that

active participation in the political dimension is an important part of successful resettlement. For instance, this might be in the form of voting or lobbying various levels of government for change or by participating in ethnic or non-ethnic organizations.

The emphasis on social or cultural aspects and economic or structural dimensions reflects Gordon's (1964) work on assimilation. As this literature suggests, newcomers must learn the patterns of their new society, then enter into group life. According to Gordon, stages of structural assimilation include joining organizations, identifying with the dominant group and interacting in an environment without prejudice or discrimination. As discussed in this study, refugees are joining organizations and beginning to identify with the dominant group. However, it does not seem possible that they will experience an environment free from prejudice or discrimination in the near future given the degree of racism and ethnocentrism present at both the individual and systemic levels in this country.

The second aspect of the model involves the development of categories representing levels of adaptation. Dosman's (1972) work was useful here. Just as he identified three distinct groups among aboriginal migrants, patterns identified in this study suggested that refugees also fall into three separate categories according to their level of adaptation. Many of the characteristics associated with

each category are also similar. For instance, the affluent category identified by Dosman consists of people who enjoy a comfortable and stable lifestyle much like those persons belonging to the settled category in this study. However, these data do not support Dosman's position that only the anomie or transitional group is affected by migration, that is, the other groups quickly regain their previous status. In this case, all groups are affected and only some of the settled are able to recover their former state of well-being.

Categories were derived from refugees assessments of their resettlement progress. The data indicate that refugees base their assessments on the extent to which their achievements match their expectations. According to the data, expectations play an important role in determining whether refugees feel satisfied with their resettlement progress. Findings from both the field work and the interviews suggest that expectations are formed according to the level of well-being remembered in the country of origin, the amount and accuracy of information known about the country of resettlement and the process of resettlement as well as the attitude toward resettlement, that is, whether resettlement is considered a positive or negative opportunity.

Refugees use the level of well-being they remember in Vietnam as a measure for assessing their well-being in

resettlement. As with any retrospective task, some memories are more accurate than others so that they may not necessarily be comparing what was but how they remember it. Additionally, most refugees refer to their well-being before 1975 rather than after this date. In almost all cases, their earlier level of well-being was greater than the level they experienced after 1975.

Using the data generated from the assessments by refugees and the work of Dosman (1972) and others (e.g., Anderson, 1974; Model, 1988), three categories were constructed based on the congruence between refugees expectations for resettlement and their achievements. Accordingly, the settled are persons who have met their expectations, are satisfied with their achievements and experience a positive level of well-being. Marginals have not been able to fully mesh their expectations and achievements. While they may be satisfied with some aspects of their progress, they are not fully satisfied overall and their level of well-being is mixed or ambiguous. Finally, the unsettled are those who have not been able to realize their expectations. They are dissatisfied with or indifferent towards their achievements (or lack thereof) and their quality of well-being is poor.

The third aspect involves identifying variables that could affect the levels of adaptation achieved. In this regard, findings from other studies proved useful. For

instance, Model (1988) found that socioeconomic status in the country of origin influenced the type and amount of resources newcomers brought with them, their expectations and their proficiency in English. Kunz (1973, 1981) indicated that conditions of exodus influenced resettlement. Those who anticipated their departure generally fared better than those who left under crisis conditions. He also suggested that the degree of trauma experienced during flight had a bearing on resettlement. According to Anderson (1974), conditions in the host society, particularly labour market variables were important. Ferguson (1984) found that personal characteristics such as age, motivation and presence of family members were important in determining levels of resettlement achieved. Using this literature in conjunction with the patterns identified in the data, variables which could affect the variation in adaptation were identified. These include background variables such as culture, family, class of origin and ethnicity. Also included are conditions of exodus such as the nature of the flight and the trauma associated with it. Conditions in the host society including economic conditions at the time, government policies, job transferability and discrimination by members of the host society provide the context and the limits of resettlement. Personal characteristics including age, marital status, personality and English language proficiency were also found to influence adaptation.

The model developed here is significant for a number of reasons. It points to the value of including the refugee's point of view. In doing so, the author was able to extend the definition of successful resettlement beyond the existing literature. As the data indicate, refugees have definite ideas about success that differ considerably from the objective measures used by others. Their definitions are based on a holistic understanding of successful resettlement that equates success with general well-being. By comparison, many definitions of success found in the literature tend to focus exclusively on economic aspects (e.g., Bach, 1988; Finnan, 1981; Samuel, 1987). This tendency to focus on economic factors is also found in the more general migration literature according to Currie and Halli (1989).

As the findings suggest, expectations for resettlement are important. This study uses this dimension as a critical factor in probing refugees perspectives and arriving at some understanding of what they consider to be satisfactory adaptation and how they justify their own assessments.

The incorporation of the well-being model by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1984), has provided a fundamental and dynamic principle which operates to distinguish one level of adaptation from another. Specifically, the relationships between economic factors and the psycho-social and political dimensions facilitate the

identification of characteristics pertaining to the settled, the marginals and the unsettled. To date, studies of adaptation by Neuwirth et al (1985) and others, do not rest on any particular relationship or inherent logic such as this dynamic and holistic approach.

Additionally, the variables identified here are useful in establishing the parameters of resettlement. These variables cover the life span of refugees from their background in Vietnam, the exodus, as well as factors relating to the receiving society. All of these are not only part of the logic of events, they are also validated here by the refugees themselves. In other words, the refugee experience as well as the literature is incorporated here in developing an explanatory model of resettlement. Several authors (e.g., Kim & Nicassio, 1980; Kunz, 1973; Model, 1988; Neuwirth, 1987) have identified most of these variables, but to date, they have not been generated from the grass roots level.

Additionally, this study includes a cultural component usually neglected in most sociological work. Participant observation and in-depth interviews facilitated the acquisition of knowledge regarding the culture, its philosophical, religious and family roots which are important in influencing the outcome of the resettlement process. For example, this study illustrates the importance of family for refugees. In particular, many of the

difficulties experienced by the unsettled related to the absence of family members who traditionally provide advice and guidance. Because decisions are traditionally made by elders, young people have little opportunity to learn decision-making or to fend for themselves and this puts them at a disadvantage when they are alone in a society which stresses independence at an early age.

According to Stark (1989), those who are able to transfer their skills and experience to the new environment have an advantage compared to those who must acquire new skills in the country of resettlement. In this study, the advantage rested with those who brought trade-related skills with them. Those who were disadvantaged in this sense, included professionals who were prevented from resuming their professions either because similar positions did not exist or because systemic barriers prevented recognition of their professional accreditation and experience. Additionally, those with few skills available for transfer were also disadvantaged. Many of these persons had multiple difficulties including learning English, obtaining job training and securing employment.

Finally, from a more applied or practical point of view, the results of the study bear on the need to reexamine refugee policy and practice. For instance, in the case of some policy-makers, immigration officials and service-providers, self-sufficiency appears to be the primary

indicator of success. As Johnson (1989) notes, self-sufficiency is defined in terms of earned income and independence from social welfare programs. Questions frequently asked about refugees in this regard are, "Do they have jobs" and "Are they still receiving assistance". Comments by an employee of a non-governmental organization that assists refugees to Canada are typical of this approach, that is, "successful resettlement is being invisible, no problems heard or seen".

Although self-sufficiency may be an objective indicator of success, it is too simplistic to assume that it is the most important factor in successful resettlement or that economic success leads to success in other aspects of resettlement. In order to facilitate an understanding of successful resettlement as refugees perceive it, it is necessary to consider resettlement holistically, that is, to consider refugees' definitions of success, the factors which influence their expectations for resettlement, the quality of well-being they achieve, the fit between their expectations and achievements and their attitudes toward achievements as this study has done.

In terms of the economic dimension of well-being, there is a need to reconsider policies regarding education, training and documentation of education and experience so that the skills and experience that refugees bring with them can be utilized. For instance, a more effective mechanism

is required to facilitate the recertification of professionals such as medical doctors and if some retraining or upgrading is required to meet Canadian standards, this should be made accessible. Additionally, more effective means are required to reduce the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination against visible minorities such as Vietnamese refugees. Despite affirmative action programs and human rights legislation, there is ample evidence of the effects these attitudes and behaviours have on employment and self-esteem for instance.

Regarding the psycho-social dimension, government policies on family reunification, for example, need to be reassessed with a view to facilitating the process by which family members are reunited. In many cases, the delays are long and the barriers great. As the findings in this study show, it is very important for families to be reunited so that individual members receive the support and guidance for which they have been socialized. As well, there is need for clarification regarding the apparent decrease in the number of refugees being accepted for resettlement. According to service-providers in Manitoba, for instance, only about half of the regular number of newcomers are being received. Although repatriation is one alternative to the problem of refugees, it is not appropriate in all cases and there is a continuing need for countries such as Canada to accept refugees for resettlement.

In the political dimension, findings from this study suggest that refugees need more opportunities to learn about Canada. They need more information about the society, its institutions and agencies of redress so that they are better able to partake in Canadian society productively and to their advantage. Although there are some provisions for this, in many cases the opportunities are limited or presented prematurely. For instance, refugees are provided with information about living in Canada within the first three weeks of their arrival, however, many refugees cannot deal effectively with this information at that time. In addition to these short orientation programs, progressive programs available over several years could be implemented.

Although the study focused on one particular group of refugees and the number of respondents was small, the understanding generated from it has contributed to the development of a conceptual model that will be useful to other researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. As with any research, however, there are limitations to this study. For example, more males than females were observed and only males were interviewed. Thus the findings cannot be generalized to women from Vietnam.

Additionally, the effect of a female researcher interacting with male respondents is not entirely clear. However, in working with this target population over a considerable period of time, it is obvious that men from

Vietnam interact effectively with Canadian women of European origin particularly when they are perceived to have the "respected status" of university lecturer.

Whether the results would have been different had the research been conducted in the language of the respondents rather than in English is also not known. It is possible that respondents would have been better able to express themselves in their own language and that subtle nuances would have been more easily picked up. On the other hand, it is the researcher's opinion that language was not an issue in most cases. While the researcher could speak only a few words of Vietnamese and none of the Chinese languages, her experience with this population made her familiar with many of the subtleties and allowed her to pick up at least some of them. Furthermore, it seemed that the ability to articulate one's thoughts in any language made the difference. In other words, those who were thoughtful and articulate in their first language were also thoughtful and articulate in English, whereas, those who had trouble articulating their ideas in English also experienced the same problems in their first language. This position was discussed with several key informants and confirmed. Nevertheless, future research could be conducted by a variety of people, including bilingual individuals who speak the languages in question.

### Future Research

The model is heuristic, that is, it gives rise to additional research which could expand, retest and validate the findings. At the qualitative level, life histories would add more in-depth understanding of changes that occur over time. As the method was selective in getting this information, more extensive life histories could validate the experiences and definitions generated in this study. As well, the data in this study suggest that problems faced by some refugees who fall into the unsettled category may originate in Vietnam. However, little is known about this and life histories could further this understanding.

Similarly, longitudinal studies which could identify the dynamics of adaptation would be useful in understanding how individuals move from one category of adaptation to another. It is obvious from this study, that some refugees, such as students, are able to move relatively easily, while others appear to be stuck at the marginal or unsettled levels and have difficulty achieving mobility. For instance, it seems that marginals who do well compared to others but are unable to regain their original status or to meet their expectations for life in Canada might be considered near-settled. Others who are less successful and struggle to maintain a foothold at the marginal level might be considered near-unsettled. Further research of these sub-groups could also provide more information regarding the

development of expectations and the conditions under which refugees adjust their expectations.

At the quantitative level, efforts could be directed toward the development of measurements for the definition of well-being and the various levels of adaptation. Efforts could also be made to explore the impact of explanatory variables to determine whether these act as independent or intervening variables and whether they have a direct or indirect effect on the outcomes of adaptation. With this kind of knowledge, the model could be expanded into a comprehensive theory of refugee resettlement at least as it applies to males. There is also a need to replicate the study in other locations and with other refugee populations in order to establish the generalizability of the findings and the model. In particular, it is necessary to establish the importance of structural versus cultural and individual variables, as it applies to all refugee populations.

Finally, it is important to note, again, that the model presented here applies to a male population. As such, it cannot be generalized to explain the experiences and aspirations of females. It is imperative that the experiences of female refugees be explored and recorded. In doing so, gender-related similarities and differences could be studied. We need to know, for instance, how gender relations, family patterns, occupational experiences and a dual minority status affect the female resettlement process.

Such concerns regarding the lives of minority women have been raised in other contexts (e.g., Dhruvarajan, 1991; Reid & Comas-Dias, 1990), however, very little research has been done in this regard as far as refugees are concerned.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study of refugee resettlement has been valuable in identifying a model which can contribute toward the development of a more comprehensive theory of the process of adaptation in refugee resettlement. The grounded theory method enabled the author to depart from conventional methodology, in order to incorporate the refugees point of view. It allowed the author to extend the definition of successful resettlement, to arrive at a model which identifies three levels of adaptation, and the variables which account for why some refugees adapt more satisfactorily than others.

This study contributes to a general understanding of the process of adaptation that is useful for government, service-providers and other researchers. In terms of government policy, for instance, the findings from this study suggest that under the present conditions, working class refugees who are able to reunite with other family members may have the greatest potential for adaptation in resettlement. Similarly, the results provide service-orientated agencies with an enhanced understanding of the resettlement process, particularly how refugees perceive it.

By enhancing their understanding of this process, they can be better able to meet the needs of their clients. The study also provides refugees with information about how other refugees perceive resettlement so that they may gain a greater measure of understanding about the process of adaptation. Finally, as a result of this study, other researchers have the opportunity to incorporate some of the subjective aspects in order to enhance more objective approaches.

In summary, this study contributes to the sparse literature on successful resettlement and provides a balance for the studies which focus on problems and pathology. It contributes to the development of a definition of successful resettlement and to the identification of significant variables associated with resettlement. Most importantly, it contributes to the limited information on the subjective dimensions of the resettlement process and addresses the need identified by Stein (1981), to consider the expectations refugees have for their resettlement because expectations have a large impact on behaviour during resettlement.

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**APPENDICES**

265

**APPENDIX A**



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**RE: Ethical Clearance for Dissertation Research**

All members of Nancy Higgitt's dissertation committee agree that she has met all ethical standards associated with social research in an ethnic community.

Rita M. Bienvenue  
Chair, Advisory Committee

APPENDIX B

## Interview Guide

### 1. Success in resettlement - general

- what does success in resettlement mean
- why are some people more successful than others
- how to decide if someone is successful
  - income/occupation/knowledge of system
- what are important things to do for success
  - several jobs, school
- what makes success easier
- what makes success harder
- how much time does it take

### 2. Success in resettlement - personal

- compared to other newcomers, how would you describe your success
- what was difficult/easy and why
- would you like to change your level of success
  - is it possible
  - how
- did you do anything to prepare for your new life

### 3. Demographic information

- North/South Vietnam
- urban/rural
- year of arrival in Canada
- alone/accompanied
- ethnic identity
- language at home
- age at last birthday (real/false)

### 4. Household information

- who lives with respondent
- is household composition different than in Vietnam
- family members still in refugee camps, in Vietnam
- will they join respondent

### 5. Education

- Vietnam/Canada
- attending school now
- future education plans
- Canadian education same/different field than in Vietnam

### 6. Language

- English/French on arrival/now
  - understand, speak, read, write
- is lack of language an impediment
- what have you done about it

7. Employment

- in Vietnam
- in Canada
  - type of job, time in job, satisfaction, advancement
  - training
  - number of jobs in Canada
  - time at each job
  - reason for leaving jobs
  - unemployment experience

8. Shelter

- type of housing
- neighbourhood
- type of tenancy
- satisfaction

9. Status in Vietnam

- education, occupation of self and parents
- describe status before 1975
- are things better in Canada or in Vietnam
  - education, employment, occupation, income
  - housing, material possessions, status

10. Income

- number of contributors
- sources
- approximate amount
- satisfaction

11. Financial management

- who makes decisions
- able to save some money each month
- bank accounts
- credit cards
- car
- able to meet current financial needs
- financial concerns or worries

12. Leisure activity

- entertainment
- vacation

13. Volunteer work

- any, type