

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF  
INDOCHINESE REFUGEE POLICY CONCERNS

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Over one-half million Indochinese refugees have come to this country since the downfall of the American-supported Republic of Vietnam in April 1975. The majority are Vietnamese, with smaller numbers of Cambodians (Khmer), lowland Laotians (ethnic Lao), and highland Laotians (mostly Hmong). In addition to being ethnically diverse, these people come from widely varying lifestyles which range from educated urbanites to rural farmers. They bring a variety of resources and problems to their adjustment to the United States. Since their initial migration, subsequent resettlement has occurred as the refugees have been attracted by better employment and social service opportunities, have sought to reunite families, or have been drawn to ethnic enclaves. As a result, the population and attendant responsibility for refugees has been spread throughout the United States, bringing a considerable number to Kansas. This report serves as an introduction to the Indochinese refugee issue and relevant materials. The focus is on the national level with attention drawn to issues of interest specifically in Kansas. Recommendations are given on areas of interest for research at the state level.

#### **Indochinese Refugee Resettlement and Assistance**

The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees estimates that by 1984 over 700,000 Indochinese refugees entered the United State (UNHCR 1985). The pattern of this migration over time is divided into two distinct waves. The first, in 1975, brought 130,000 refugees from predominantly urban backgrounds. These arrivals and those up to 1978 were well-educated, brought

resources which aided in adjustment, and were well-sponsored by private organizations. The second wave, beginning in 1978 and characterized by the "boat people," brought 53,000 initially and in subsequent years increased by over 25,000 per year. These refugees were from predominantly rural backgrounds; they were poorly educated, young, and brought little or no resources with them (Strand and Jones 1985:35).

The present distribution by states is difficult to determine. The federal government has not provided census figures for Indochinese refugees as a whole, nor has the state of Kansas done a general accounting. In the most recent refugee study, figures from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) are used to show the state of primary migration with a breakdown by year and ethnicity (Strand and Jones 1985:149-159). By totaling these figures, we find that Kansas was the state of primary migration for 7,911 refugees from 1975 to 1982. This does not account for secondary migration, however, and there has been no statewide survey to provide accurate comprehensive figures.

Initially, the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 allocated funds for the movement and resettlement of refugees. Support services were provided through Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), with the requirements relating to family composition waived. Low-income refugees who were dependent because of old age, blindness, or disability received assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Needy refugees who

were ineligible for AFDC or SSI received Refugee Cash Assistance or Refugee Medical Assistance.

"Parole" authority (initial funding responsibility was vested in state-level social service agencies with 100 percent federal reimbursement through the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP). These federal funds were distributed through two channels. The first, Title II programs, were those social services already provided to state residents. The second were funded through Special Projects from the Department of Health and Human Services. These projects were focused on fostering self-sufficiency through technical assistance and English as a Second Language (ESL) training. This channel was expanded to include all projects related to employment. Great concern was felt for creating a "welfare mentality" among the refugees (see United States Congress 1980); therefore, all federal aid was contingent on the refugee applicant accepting employment within 60 days.

The passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services to oversee state-administered delivery systems. To foster self-sufficiency, a time limit of 36 months was established on federal reimbursements to the states. This effectively created an applicant eligibility limit of three years. In March 1982, new regulations reduced this limitation to 18 months and rescinded an exemption of \$30 plus one-third of applicant income from determination of eligibility. In addition,

eligibility for cash assistance was removed from full-time students.

Two subsequent developments in the resettlement of refugees have increased problems in the implementation of these federal assistance programs at the state and local levels (Strand and Jones 1985:42-3). First, refugees have clustered within certain regions of the country. Second, many "time-expired" refugees continue to require and receive support from state and local agencies. These two factors have placed the burden of responsibility on the states and localities where clustering occurs, and the imbalance of this distribution worsens with time, complicating the implementation of federal and state policies.

#### **Federal Policy Concerns**

During deliberation on the Refugee Act of 1980, a report prepared by the New TransCentury Foundation was submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee (Taft, North, and Ford 1979). This report, an overview of refugee issues on the federal level, is the clearest statement of federally recognized policy concerns on refugee resettlement. It provides the focus for later research on refugee policy through 56 recommendations. Generally, the report finds that the problems of federal policy center on an improper view of refugees as dependents rather than as temporarily unemployed persons in need of assistance. To show the weakness of the existing approach, the report discusses appropriate services in three areas: economic adjustment, health needs, and social adjustment.

First, the report finds that the federal government is actually increasing costs and the prospect for dependency by an improper focus of aid. It recommends a primary emphasis on job training through improved ESL training, vocational counseling, placement assistance, and incentives to employers. Second, the report finds that refugees, institutionally pressured into low-income jobs, do not benefit from work-related health programs and must rely on "welfare-style" aid, thereby fostering dependence. Recognition of health care as essential in the adjustment process leads to the recommendation that eligibility for medical assistance be separated from welfare so that such aid is not strictly available as part of the dependent's package of social services. In addition, improvements and expansion of care to include special services (i.e., dental care) is recommended. Lastly, the state-federal funding relationship is found to have created gaps in the funding of support services for social adjustment. Funds should be targeted toward cross-cultural orientation, mental health programs, translation services, and assistance for self-help groups. Such funding should be carefully distributed by the federal government directly so as to reduce the effects of clustering.

In addition to these findings, the report recommends the strengthening of institutions on the federal, state, and local levels, and suggests that attention be drawn to determining the most effective means of administering services.

## **Policy Concerns in Kansas**

In Kansas, refugee assistance is controlled by the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, presently through Philip Gutierrez, Refugee State Coordinator. The state follows the guidelines of the ORR in determining policy concerns as given in the National Discretionary Activities Plan, FY 1985 (Appendix A). This plan outlines the activities and initiatives which can be funded through the National Discretionary Funds (NDF) program. It lists seven objectives for the fiscal year and continues with specific activities and programs to be funded by NDF funds. These address the objectives by providing assistance to the states to find new and alternative resettlement and service approaches. The objectives provide the clearest list of state-level policy concerns, and the report is an excellent example of the types of activities which are recognized for funding.

## **A Review of Relevant Research**

A large amount of research has been generated by the rapid influx of Indochinese refugees. Studies vary from analyses of the status of refugees nationwide to detailed ethnographies of the interaction of refugees and host groups on the local level. This section provides a descriptive overview of selected materials published from 1978 to the present. Each piece represents clear analysis of policy concerns from different perspectives. The references were selected because of their importance to the field, as indicated by their widespread citation.



Aside from ORR and CDC statistics, there are several excellent compilations and analyses of the status of Indochinese refugees on a national level. Robert E. Marsh (1980), writing for the Social Security Administration, provides a good summary of statistics on the economic progress of refugees up to 1980. He describes the characteristics of the refugees with respect to time of entry and finds evidence of a self-sufficiency gap between the different waves of migration. Most of the early immigrants have achieved independence, while the characteristics of those arriving after 1978 suggest more difficulties and higher resettlement costs. In a much more detailed analysis, Darrel Montero (1979) presents statistics from the "wave reports" done for the ORR by Opportunity Systems, Inc. Very detailed charts are presented on income, age, household composition, and federal assistance. Particular attention is given to household costs and income from employment in order to chart the progress of refugees in their first three years. He finds that in general the refugees have experienced initial downward occupational mobility but are assuming greater self-sufficiency. These two pieces represent early cumulative analyses of the characteristics of the Indochinese refugees.

More recent statistical analyses are generally problem-specific and project-generated. State governments have taken on greater levels of responsibility, and, indeed, federal responsibility for direct funding has successively "time-expired." Attendant to this change is a closer focus on statistical

reporting, usually on a state level or with a problem orientation. Paul J. Strand (1984) considers employment statistics in a 1984 study on the barriers to economic self-sufficiency. Using a multivariate approach, he compares labor force participation, employment status, utilization of job skills training, and utilization of job placement services to length of residence and ethnicity. His careful analysis from a broad base of variables shows that employment predictors for the refugees are language skills, health care, and access to transportation. Strand establishes the primary importance of ESL training to the finding of adequate employment as well as the vital roles of health, transportation, and employment services (i.e., job skills training and placement).

General studies of refugees in Kansas have yet to be done; however, project-generated research is hopefully ongoing. One such report is provided by Michael Broadway from a survey done in June 1984 in Garden City (Appendix B). He looks at the general characteristics of the Indochinese population of secondary migrants, drawn to the area by employment opportunities in the newly expanded meat-packing industry. He demonstrates this cause of migration and calls for consideration of the social problems of the predominantly single male refugee population. His report is a good example of an initial local-level survey of characteristics necessary for the determination of needs and the formulation of policy. There is a clear need for similar studies elsewhere in the state.

Another major area of research is the review of federal and state policies in comparison with refugee resettlement needs. The most important early study was that of the New TransCentury Foundation on the effects of federal policy before the passage of new legislation in 1980 (Taft, North, and Ford 1979). Paul J. Strand and Woodrow Jones, Jr. (1985) provide the best critical overview of refugee policy since 1980. Of special interest is their analysis of state-level policy for California, Texas, Washington, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Minnesota. They trace the effects of clustering to show that as the states have been increasingly burdened with the responsibility for the costs and implementation of resettlement programs, a broad divergence of true support has developed in the services provided. In their final analysis they recommend returning to a higher level of federal support and assistance, while focusing on participation of the refugee population and host community in local planning and implementation. They strongly emphasize this localized approach as a means of addressing refugee needs more effectively while fostering integration of the refugee and host populations.

A review of federal policy by David W. Haines (1982) focuses attention on the need for understanding the interaction of the refugee culture and the resettlement process. For example, he identifies three core policy issues where kinship must specifically be considered. First, the importance of joint strategies by kinship groups is vital to facilitating economic self-sufficiency. Second, attempts to control the geographic

distribution of refugees come in conflict with the social dynamics of secondary migration. As a result, clustering must be expected and policy must be developed in this context. Third, the importance of ethnic enclaves and self-help organizations is recognized; however, essential to such collectives are kinship links which must be taken into account in policy. He establishes a need for emphasizing cultural factors in the development of policy, an emphasis clearly of interest from the federal to the local level.

Prevalent in the literature are case studies of refugee programs and problems in a limited context. One such study by Kay Elgie and Hulene Montgomery (1985) looks at the effectiveness of the community-development approach in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. This approach focuses on local-level involvement in the planning and implementation of services. They find that the remarkable success of the local refugee programs was due to the involvement of the local Board of Education, Multicultural Centre, religious community, and social service volunteer organizations. The programs were overseen by a local Refugee Coordinating Committee under the guidance of a national-level liaison officer. Within three years all services were locally controlled. The study demonstrates the reduced likelihood of dependence on federal aid from such an approach.

There are many case studies regarding local public policy and refugee employment. Michael Orbach and Janese Beckwith (1982) offer an analysis of the conflicts caused by the influx of 1,500

Indochinese refugees into the fishing industry of Monterey Bay, California. They find the causes of the conflicts with local government policy in differing cultural perspectives and value orientations. Paul D. Starr (1981) uses ethnographic analysis to understand the conflicts between Vietnamese fishermen and the fishing industries along the Gulf Coast. He emphasizes the need for greater community involvement in refugee resettlement to lessen the potential for conflicts. Christine R. Finnan (1981) provides an ethnographic study of refugee involvement in the electronics industry of Santa Clara County, California. She explains the difficulties of downward occupational mobility associated with refugee resettlement and demonstrates how refugees adapt to their new occupations.

Numerous studies on special topics (i.e., education, mental health) have emerged, far too many to describe here. The most comprehensive review of these studies has been provided by the ORR (1981) in the form of an annotated bibliography. It provides an accounting of refugee materials in general with special focus on the adaptation of refugees in the United States. It is directly indexed to such topics as education, employment, health, housing, language, mental health, and social services.

#### **Conclusion: Recommendations for Research in Kansas**

Kansas hosts a sizeable number of Indochinese refugees, yet very little is known about this population or the problems it faces. There are clear gaps in the literature ranging from demographic overviews to case studies of specific refugee groups.

Initially, research should address demographic issues, specifically refugee location and status. Second, a needs assessment is vital to understanding relevant issues on the state level. An excellent example of a needs assessment survey questionnaire is provided by Strand and Jones (1985:160-7). In addition, a review of state and local policy is needed, including the effects of clustering and "time-expired" refugees. In looking at planning, a community-development approach is recommended. Given the nature of secondary migration to Kansas, special focus on employment is needed. Case study opportunities clearly exist on established employment-related issues such as ESL, health, and transportation.

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APPENDIX A

FY 1985 NATIONAL DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES PLAN  
OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

December 14, 1984

DEC 27 1984

NATIONAL DISCRETIONARY FUNDS PROGRAM AND RELATED ACTIVITIES  
FY 1985

NDF OBJECTIVES:

This purpose of the National Discretionary Funds program is to support activities and initiatives requiring a national direction, whose scope is beyond the responsibility of individual States and local programs. Seven objectives in keeping with this principle will be pursued in FY 1985:

1. To improve the resettlement of Highland Lao refugees by testing new and alternative resettlement and service approaches for purposes of eventual incorporation into the regular refugee program.
2. To assist States to develop performance - based management systems for employment services programs.
3. To strengthen the capability of MAAs nationwide.
4. To improve the quality of services to refugees through the provision of technical assistance.
5. To enhance and improve the effectiveness of the refugee program through information dissemination.
6. To leverage mainstream program funds for refugees from other agencies by using NDF funds as the stimulus.
7. To reduce impact.

FY 1985 DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE: To improve the resettlement of Highland Lao refugees by testing new and alternative resettlement and service approaches for eventual incorporation into the regular refugee program.

ACTIVITY: 1. Reception and placement demonstrations to resettle Highland Lao new arrivals anticipated in February, 1985, in which different strategies would be used to maximize their adjustment and enhance their resettlement prospects.

Rationale: With an estimated 1500 new Highland Lao refugees scheduled for arrival in February, 1985 and the traditional difficulties that have confronted Highland Lao refugees in their attempts to adjust to American society, special assistance is required to facilitate their adjustment and assimilation into American society. If current resettlement patterns prevail, the February arrivals will locate in areas where sizeable Highland Lao communities already exist. While this factor will in some measure assist with their adjustment, these areas are also those already experiencing the stress of Highland Lao populations whose adjustment to American society has been slow and difficult. Thus additional support for the resettlement of new Highland Lao refugees is needed.

Mechanism: Noncompetitive urgent need grants in selected sites.

OBJECTIVE: To assist States to develop performance based management systems for employment services programs.

ACTIVITY: Continuation of the development and analysis of performance measures and standards.

Rationale: ORR in FY 1984 began a major initiative with the National Governors' Association to assist States to develop performance - based management systems for employment services programs. NGA has organized a National Advisory Committee and a Technical Workgroup consisting of representatives of key States, volags and local refugee programs. These bodies have designed a glossary of terms for refugee employment services, performance measures and a national validation process. Two consultations, involving almost all State refugee coordinators, have resulted in voluntary agreements from about 35 States to participate in the testing and validation process.

Mechanism: Cooperative Agreement with NGA-supplement.

Supplements to participating States' social services administration budgets.

OBJECTIVE: To strengthen the capability of MAAs

ACTIVITY: 3. (a) MAA practitioner workshops to bring MAA grantees together to share information about effective MAA social service delivery practices and experiences. (b) On-site technical assistance to MAAs in making linkages with local private sector resources such as United Way.

Rationale: MAA development has been a priority goal of ORR for several years. The result of past support to MAAs has been the emergence of considerable organizational expertise within the MAA community itself. In order to capitalize upon this, practitioner workshops will be organized regionally to permit the sharing of expertise among MAAs as a means of further extending the agency's support of refugee organizations as key actors in the resettlement process.

Mechanism: Regional Office initiatives, supported by a national contract.

OBJECTIVE: To provide technical assistance to improve the quality of services to refugees.

ACTIVITIES: 4. Development of Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) technical assistance materials; provision of MELT technical assistance and training to States and practitioners; development of ELT standards; dissemination of MELT products.

5. Provision of technical assistance and training to States and practitioners in the use of Vocational English Language Training (VELT) materials; dissemination of VELT products.

Rationale: In Fiscal Years 1983/1984, ORR funded seven Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) demonstration projects to field test, refine, and validate the Basic English Language Test (B.E.S.T.), the Student Performance Levels (SPL), and the competency-based Core Curriculum Guide. The results to date from these projects are validated versions of the following:

1. The B.E.S.T., a standardized competency-based proficiency ESL test which measures four different oral/aural skills and tests reading and writing in real life situations.

2. The Student Performance Levels (SPL) document which describes ten levels of language ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, ability to communicate with a native speaker and readiness for employment.

3. The Core Curriculum Guide, a product of a curriculum adaptation process which included the refugee curricula used in the U.S. as well as the overseas regional curriculum guide.

Current plans call for combining the above products into a technical assistance package for dissemination to States and service providers. Technical assistance and training as a dissemination mechanism is viewed as essential in promoting understanding and efficient usage of the MELT package as well as implementation of the to-be-developed ELT standards. Consultation with States and providers is also proposed to develop ELT standards and to prepare a standards package for dissemination to States for implementation in Fiscal Year 1986.

In Fiscal Year 1984, ORR funded a contract to develop a Vocational English Language Training (VELT) Resources Package for use by refugee English Language Training and employment services providers and State refugee agencies. The package will contain practical procedures to plan, implement and evaluate VELT programs and best practices, a bibliography of proven VELT materials, complete glossaries of VELT terminology and a listing of VELT resource individuals and agencies. Dissemination of the VELT Resource Package will be conducted through the provision of technical assistance and training to States, ELT and employment services providers to promote understanding and efficient use of this package.

Mechanism: Contracts

6. Agricultural technical assistance workshops in small farm planning, production and marketing in 2-3 regional areas.

Rationale: Refugee farm projects have cropped up all over the country, some with ORR assistance. In many instances projects have experienced difficulties with failed crops, lack of sales, unrealistic magnitude, and naive expectations due to lack of knowledge. Some of the pitfalls cited above can be avoided through technical assistance in the planning stage to provide a

reality base. The Highland Lao Agricultural Workshop sponsored by ORR and the Ford Foundation last Spring, for example, was instrumental in influencing a number of nascent farm projects to change their plans from a large scale operation to small scale farming. The provision of agricultural technical assistance through 2-3 small regional workshops at a modest cost is a cost effective way of helping to reduce the degree of trial and error in refugee farming ventures.

Mechanism: Contract

OBJECTIVE: To enhance and improve the effectiveness of the refugee program through information dissemination.

ACTIVITIES: 7. Continuation of the Refugee Materials Center (RMC).

Rationale: The Kansas City Materials Center has served as ORR's reproduction and distribution point for all related refugee materials. Since there continues to be a steady increase in these products as well as an increasing demand for them, it is appropriate to support the continuation of the Materials Center in FY 1985. RMC has agreed to reproduce a bibliography and resource materials related to non-Southeast Asian refugees.

Mechanism: Interagency Agreement with ED.

8. Identification and dissemination of orientation materials and effective ESL and employment strategies for non-Indochinese refugees.

Rationale: The Refugee Program has understandably been focussed on Indochinese refugees; but beginning in 1982, the number of non-Indochinese arrivals has constituted an increasing share of America's new refugee population. However, orientation materials for this population as well as general awareness of their special service needs have been lacking. Therefore, ORR should undertake to identify and disseminate needed materials.

Mechanism: Contract

OBJECTIVE: To leverage mainstream program funds for refugees from other agencies by using NDF funds as the stimulus.

ACTIVITIES: 9. Continuation of the current planning process with NIMH and PHS to develop a refugee mental health program strategy involving mainstream mental health authorities.

Rationale: ORR's 1984 regional consultations as well as other forums have strongly addressed the importance of greater attention to the mental health needs of refugees. This interest has been developed further with the realization that an increasing number of refugees from Vietnamese re-education camps may be included in future caseloads of Indochinese refugees. ORR, in concert with NIMH, has formed a national workgroup to develop an ORR mental health strategy. In formulating this strategy, it has been recognized that ORR can only strategically intervene in the problem in a limited way: namely through State mental health programs and selected training and technical assistance efforts. Initiatives will be proposed to respond to these objectives.

Mechanism: To be determined

OBJECTIVE: To reduce impact.

ACTIVITIES: 10. Continuation of Planned Secondary Resettlement (PSR) activities

11. Continuation of Favorable Alternate Sites (FASP) activities

Rationale: for PSR and FASP: ORR is committed to initiatives which will ameliorate the impact of refugee concentrations in major resettlement locations. Both the Planned Secondary Resettlement and Favorable Alternate Sites Programs represent ongoing efforts to support the objective of reducing impact and offering more appropriate resettlement alternatives to refugees. PSR supports the relocation of refugees from impacted areas while FASP provides resettlement opportunities for newly arrived free-case refugees in areas with good resettlement prospects.

Mechanism: Standing Announcement-Grants to States



## 12. Continuation of the Highland Lao Initiative

Rationale: Preliminary evaluation findings indicate that the Highland Lao Initiative is working: Hmong job placements have increased significantly while welfare rates have declined in a number of communities. Initial reports also indicate that migration patterns have begun to reverse in some communities with more in-migration than out-migration occurring in the past year. This is attributed in large measure to the increased community stability that has resulted from the funding of Hmong MAAs through the Highland Lao Initiative. While substantial gains appear to have been made under this special initiative at a relatively modest investment, the magnitude of need is such that a one year initiative is not sufficient to meet the need. It behooves ORR to maintain the momentum started in many of these communities through special Highland Lao funding by continuing the initiative another year in communities that show such need.

Mechanism: Grants Supplements

### FILLING CRITICAL SERVICE GAPS

In the past, one purpose of the National Discretionary Funds Program has been to fill critical service gaps which States have not been able to address adequately through the refugee social services program, by funding service projects such as health training, enhanced skills training and secondary wage earner projects. These are service needs that do not require national direction and which can be handled at the State level. This year such service needs will be treated as an initiative distinct from national initiatives and outside of the National Discretionary Funds Program.

Funds would be made available to States for specified service needs through a competitive grants announcement. That announcement will be developed early in 1985.

APPENDIX B

The Characteristics of Southeast Asia Refugees  
Residing in Garden City, Kansas\*

by

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\*Not to be quoted without permission of the author.

The Characteristics of Southeast Asia Refugees  
Residing in Garden City, Kansas

Abstract

Since 1975, the United States has admitted over 700,000 Southeast Asian refugees. Within Kansas, the opening of two beef packing plants in Finney County provided the impetus for a large-scale migration of Southeast Asian refugees to Garden City in 1982. This paper describes the results of a survey of the Southeast Asian population undertaken during June 1984. The beef packing plants employ over 80% of adult refugee males. The initial group of refugees who moved to Garden City were married; since then an increasing proportion of young single males have moved to the town, resulting in a major imbalance between males and females. This imbalance suggests that there may be considerable social adjustment problems for the young male population.

The Characteristics of Southeast Asia Refugees  
Residing in Garden City, Kansas\*

Between 1975 and the end of 1984, the United States admitted over 700,000 Southeast Asian refugees (U.N.H.C.R., 1985). Under the resettlement program, the refugees were dispersed throughout the country. However, widespread secondary migration has since taken place, with California being the principal destination of these secondary migrants. Various factors have been suggested to explain this phenomenon, and they include the following: employment opportunities, the pull of an established ethnic community, more generous welfare benefits, better training opportunities, reunification with relatives and a congenial climate (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1984).

Within Kansas, the largest number of Southeast Asian refugees is located in Wichita. Since 1982, Garden City has felt the impact of an influx of Southeast Asian refugees, from Wichita and other parts of the country. The attraction for the refugees to this community, situated approximately 210 miles west of Wichita in Finney County, has been an abundance of jobs at area beef processing plants. In 1982, Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) opened one of the world's largest beef processing plants at Holcomb, approximately seven miles west of Garden City. Val Agra, another beef processing company, has since located another plant about two miles east of Garden City.

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\*I am grateful to the following persons for their assistance in completing this paper: Ken Erickson, Coordinator, Refugee Services, Garden City, Kansas; Vinh Nguyen, Executive Director, Southeast Asian M.A.A., Garden City; and Norman Tillotson of Wichita State University.

In June of 1984, a survey of the Southeast Asians residing in Garden City was undertaken by the refugee community. The survey was sponsored by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Its goals were to enumerate the refugee population and to assess the need for English language assistance. The purpose of this paper is to report the major demographic findings of the survey and provide some preliminary analyses of the survey data.

### Survey Methodology

The survey was completed during the period beginning June 18 to June 27, 1984, under the supervision of Dr. Gerald Lewis, Director of the English as a Second Language program in Garden City. Trained surveyors from the refugee community (8 Vietnamese, 1 Cambodians and 1 Laotian) were each assigned a quadrant within Garden City and conducted a door-to-door survey of the residents in each district. Table 1 lists the data obtainable from the survey forms. In order to facilitate the cooperation of the refugee community in completing the survey, the plans for the survey were announced on the local Vietnamese television program. In addition, signs announcing the survey and requesting that those persons not contacted by the surveyors contact the English as a Second Language Office were placed in local Vietnamese stores and the IBP and Val Agra plants. All participants in the survey were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that none of the information they provided would be made available to any governmental agency.

### Survey Results

A total of 942 refugees were enumerated: 854 Vietnamese, 45 Cambodians, and 43 Laotians. After these results were announced, there was widespread concern that the survey had undercounted the total number of refugees. The local head of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services estimated the number of refugees in the area to be between 2,000 and 3,000 persons, while the head of the English as a Second Language Program estimated the number of refugees in Garden City at 1,250 (personal conversations with the author, 1/10/84). The possibility of an "undercount" can be explained in part by the areal extent of the survey and the time at which the survey was undertaken. For example, between July and September of 1984 Val Agra doubled its number of employees. An analysis of Val Agra employee records in October indicated that the company employed 191 Southeast Asians, compared with a total of 27 employees in the June survey. Furthermore, of the 191 Southeast Asians, 25% lived outside of Garden City. The remainder lived inside the town. Thus, the survey data can be regarded as providing an accurate assessment of the refugee population residing in Garden City in June 1984.

### Origin Characteristics

The majority of the Southeast Asian refugees who have moved to Garden City entered the United States during the 1980-82 period (Table 2). Nationwide, these refugees were recognized as being less educated and having fewer marketable skills than the "first wave"

of refugees who arrived during the 1975-77 period (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1984). The first groups of refugees were considered to have comparatively high educational and occupational status backgrounds and a greater knowledge of English (Bach, 1980). An examination of the previous occupational status of Vietnamese refugees in Garden City, broken down by year of entry into the United States, provides some support for the nationwide pattern (Table 3). For example, 15% of the 1978-84 group worked as fishermen, a traditional activity in a developing country. In contrast, members of the first wave of refugees contained no fishermen at all. The small sample size of the 1975-77 group prevents any valid statistical inference from these data.

Additional support for there being a difference in socio-economic background between the two groups is provided by an examination of the two groups' religious adherence. Over 50% of the 1975-77 group were Catholic, compared with a figure of 16.5% for the 1978-84 group (Table 4). Conversely, over 50% of the late arrivals were Buddhist as opposed to 15.4% for the earlier group. Furthermore, the later arrivals had a higher percentage of ancestor worshipers.

The sizeable proportion of converts to Catholicism from the traditional Southeast Asian religions in the first wave of refugees indicates that these people had had considerable contact with Westerners and their culture in Vietnam. Conversely, the latter group of refugees has largely retained their traditional religions, suggesting that this group originated in more rural areas away from the Western cultural influence in urban areas.



### Age and Sex Structure

The Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugee groups are all characterized by a high proportion of young people (Tables 5, 6, 7). Sixty-eight percent of the Vietnamese population was under the age of 25 in 1984; the equivalent figure for the Laotians was 69%, and for the Cambodians was 66%. By comparison, before the influx of refugees into Finney County in 1980, only 47.5% of the county's population was under the age of 25. The extreme youthfulness of the refugees will create important demands upon the delivery of social services within Garden City, particularly in the area of education. For example, at the time of the survey there were 218 Southeast Asian children 5 years old and under, and 200 school-age children.

The overwhelming majority of Vietnamese refugees above the 11-13 age cohort are males (Table 7). In the 16-20 cohort, there are almost three times as many males as there are females, and between the 21-25 to 46-50 cohorts there are approximately twice as many men as women. A similar pattern is noted in the 21-25 cohort for Laotians (Table 6). Only the Cambodians have an equal distribution of males and females. The implications of this imbalance between males and females will be discussed in the following section.

### Marital Status

Migration theory would predict that single males would be the first to move to an area where there was employment. They would then remit money back to the family, eventually enabling them to move to the area as well (Hagerstrand, 1957). An examination of

the sex and marital status of adult refugees moving to Garden City over the 1975-84 period refutes this theory (Table 8). The majority of initial settlers in Garden City were married couples or married people with spouses still in Southeast Asia. Since then, single males have come to dominate the immigrant flow. However, it is unclear to what extent these single males will encourage the migration of other family members to Garden City, since there are no data on these migrants' family members. Without some modification of the present imbalance between males and females, Garden City is unlikely to have a large stable refugee population, since the opportunities for young males to have a normal social life are almost nonexistent. If the imbalance persists, the refugee community may evolve into two separate groups: those who have ties to Garden City and those who view Garden City as a temporary work place.

#### Previous Residence of Migrants

Diffusion theory would predict that information regarding employment opportunities would follow a distance decay pattern, with the rate of immigration to an area decreasing as the distance from the destination increased (White and Woods, 1980). In this case, it is hypothesized that the majority of migrants who moved to Garden City would have previously resided in Kansas. An examination of the previous residences of the different migrant groups provides some support for this hypothesis (Tables 9 and 10).

Approximately 58% of Cambodian migrants lived in Wichita before moving to Garden City, compared with a figure of 36% for the Vietnamese

and 22% for the Laotians. If other areas within Kansas are included along with Wichita, the figures are 58% for Cambodians, 46% for the Vietnamese and 25% for the Laotians. In the latter's case, Illinois provided as many Laotian migrants as Kansas! This anomaly and the highly dispersed nature of their previous residences suggest that this group shares an extensive interpersonal contact network through which information regarding employment opportunities is circulated. The dispersed origins of the Vietnamese community reflect an equally extensive interpersonal contact network. These extensive networks are due in part to the resettlement dispersal policy. However, the size of the Laotian's network is surprising, given that only about 140,000 of them have been admitted into the U.S. (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1984).

#### Employment

The importance of the beef packing plants as a source of employment is indicated by Table 11. Over 70% of Vietnamese adults work for either IBP or Val Agra. This figure is increased to 84% if only adult males are considered. The equivalent figures for Laotians and Cambodians are 77% and 81% respectively. Clearly, without the beef packing plants, the size of the refugee community would be greatly reduced. Indeed, prior to the opening of the IBP plant in 1982, the Southeast Asian community numbered only 115 (Table 12); after the plant was opened, the Southeast Asian population quadrupled.

### Conclusion

The presence of the beef packing industry in Garden City provides the raison d'etre for the Southeast Asian population in Finney County. So far, there has been little diversification away from this industry by the Southeast Asian population, which indicates that their presence in Garden City is primarily tied to the fortunes of the beef packing industry. The majority of migrants lived in Kansas, primarily in Wichita, before moving to Garden City. The large imbalance between males and females suggests an unstable population, with large numbers of single males moving to Garden City for a short period of time before returning to their community of origin. This imbalance also suggests possible social adjustment problems for these males. Indeed, this topic is currently the focus of an ongoing research project in Garden City.

TABLE 1

Data Obtainable from the 1984 Survey of Southeast Asians

Sex	Country of birth
Religion	Date entered the U.S.
Date of birth	Year of move to Garden City
Employer	Place of last residence
Occupation in home country before 1975	Spouse's residence

TABLE 2

Origin of Southeast Asian Refugees Residing in Garden City,  
by Year of Entry into the United States

Year	Country of Origin		
	Vietnam	Cambodia	Laos
1975	41	0	0
1976	2	0	0
1977	10	0	0
1978	38	0	4
1979	56	6	19
1980	109	3	5
1981	252	23	12
1982	98	0	0
1983	39	2	0
1984	24	5	0
TOTAL	669*	39*	40*

\*Excludes children born in the United States.

TABLE 3  
Occupations in Vietnam of 1975-77 Entrants\*  
vs. 1978-84 Entrants\*

Occupations	1975-77 Group		Post-1978 Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
Armed Services	8	30.9	49	27.1
Student	4	15.4	38	21.0
Homemaker	2	7.7	27	14.9
Fisherman	3	11.5	27	14.9
Businessman	0	0	16	8.9
Doctor/Nurse	0	0	2	1.1
Policeman	0	0	3	1.7
Seamstress/Tailor	1	3.8	5	2.8
Mechanic	0	0	2	1.1
Secretary	0	0	1	.6
Driver	0	0	1	.6
Farmer	2	7.7	0	0
Priest	1	3.8	0	0
No Response	5	19.2	10	5.5
TOTAL	26	100.0	181	100.0

\*Only persons 18 years and older in 1975 were included.

TABLE 4  
 Religious Affiliation of 1975-77 Adult Vietnamese  
 vs. 1978-84 Adult Vietnamese Entrants\*

Religion	1975-77 Group		Post-1978 Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
Buddhist	4	15.4	104	57.5
Catholic	15	57.7	30	16.5
Atheist	2	7.7	0	0
Ancestral Worship	1	3.8	11	6.1
Confucianism	0	0	2	1.1
Baptist	0	0	4	2.2
No Response	4	15.4	30	16.6
TOTAL	26	100.0	181	100.0

\*See note for Table 3.



TABLE 5

## Age and Sex Structure of Cambodian Refugees, 1984

Age	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-5	6	25	4	20
6-10	4	16.6	4	20
11-15	2	8.3	3	15
16-20	1	4.1	0	0
21-25	2	8.3	2	10
26-30	3	12.5	2	10
31-35	1	4.1	2	10
36-40	3	12.5	2	10
41-45	2	8.3	0	0
46-50	0	0	1	5
51-55	0	0	0	0
56-60	0	0	0	0
61-65	0	0	0	0
> 65	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	24	99.7*	20	100.0

\*Does not equal 100 due to rounding of figures.

TABLE 6

## Age and Sex Structure, Laotian Refugees, 1984

Age	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-5	1	3.3	1	8.3
6-10	2	6.6	1	8.3
11-15	4	13.3	1	8.3
16-20	2	6.6	3	25.0
21-25	12	40.0	2	16.6
26-30	3	10.0	0	0
31-35	0	0	1	8.3
36-40	3	10.0	0	0
41-45	0	0	1	8.3
46-50	1	3.3	0	0
51-55	2	6.6	2	16.6
56-60	0	0	0	0
61-65	0	0	0	0
> 65	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	30	99.7*	12	99.7*

\*Does not equal 100 due to rounding of figures.

TABLE 7  
Age and Sex Structure, Vietnamese Refugees, 1984

Age	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-5	90	17.7	83	27.3
6-10	48	9.4	44	14.4
11-15	31	6.1	19	6.3
16-20	63	12.4	24	7.9
21-25	103	20.2	46	15.1
26-30	80	15.7	43	14.1
31-35	48	9.4	25	8.2
36-40	19	3.7	6	2.0
41-45	13	2.5	6	2.0
46-50	8	1.6	3	1.0
51-55	1	.2	0	0
56-60	2	.4	1	.3
61-65	1	.3	0	0
> 65	1	.3	4	1.3
TOTAL	508	99.9*	304	99.9*
Missing Cases = 42				

\*Does not equal 100 due to rounding of figures.

TABLE 8

Sex and Marital Status of Adult<sup>1</sup> Vietnamese  
Refugees Entering Garden City 1975-1984

Year	Male				Female			
	Marital Status							
	Single		Married		Single		Married	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1975-80	6	33	6*	33	1	6	5*	28
1981	14	25	23*	41	2	3	17*	31
1982	38	23	66*	42	4	2	52*	33
1983	40	43	22	24	8	7	22	24
1984	54	54	21	21	4	4	21	21

<sup>1</sup>Adult defined as 18 years or older at time of entry into Garden City.

\*Number of males and females does not coincide because some spouses are residing elsewhere and some spouses failed to complete survey form.

TABLE 9

Previous Residence of Laotian and Cambodian  
Adult<sup>1</sup> Migrants to Garden City

Previous Residence	Laotians		Cambodians	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Wichita	6	22.2	11	57.9
Kansas*	1	3.7	0	0
California	1	3.7	0	0
Illinois	7	25.9	1	5.3
Michigan	3	11.1	0	0
New Mexico	1	3.7	0	0
New York	1	3.7	0	0
Ohio	0	0.0	1	5.3
Texas	1	3.7	0	0
Washington	2	7.4	0	0
Wyoming	1	3.7	0	0
Unavailable	3	11.1	6	31.6
TOTAL	27	100.0	19	100.0

<sup>1</sup>See note for Table 8.

\*Excludes Wichita.

TABLE 10

Previous Residence of Adult<sup>1</sup> Vietnamese  
Migrants to Garden City

Previous Residence	Number	Percentage
Wichita	158	36.2
Kansas*	45	10.3
Alabama	4	.9
Alaska	2	.5
Arizona	1	.2
Arkansas	4	.9
California	35	8.0
Colorado	15	3.4
Connecticut	2	.5
Florida	3	.7
Georgia	3	.7
Hawaii	7	1.6
Idaho	2	.5
Illinois	11	2.5
Louisiana	2	.5
Massachusetts	2	.5
Michigan	2	.5
Minnesota	4	.9
Mississippi	2	.5
Missouri	1	.2
New York	11	2.5
North Carolina	2	.5
Oklahoma	16	3.7
Pennsylvania	3	.7
Tennessee	1	.2
Texas	20	4.6
Virginia	2	.5
Washington	2	.5
Wisconsin	2	.5
District of Columbia	4	.9
No Response	69	15.9
TOTAL	437	100.0

<sup>1</sup> See note for Table 8.

TABLE 11

Employment of Southeast Asian Adults<sup>1</sup> in Garden City

Employer	Vietnamese		Cambodian		Laotian	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
IBP	296	67.7	10	52.6	13	48.1
Val Agra	22	5.0	2	10.5	5	18.5
Kansas Beef	4	.9	0	0	0	0
Others <sup>2</sup>	24	4.7	2	10.5	4	14.8
No Response <sup>3</sup>	94	21.5	5	26.3	5	18.5
TOTAL	437	100.0	19	100.0	27	100.0

<sup>1</sup>See note for Table 8.

<sup>2</sup>Included in this category are the following employers: the Garden City School District, Kansas S.R.S., the Catholic Church, Panhandle Steel, Cessna, K Bob Steak House.

High rate of no responses attributed to females who are not working. If the employment of adult males is only considered, the no response rate for all three groups declines to 10%.

TABLE 12

## Year Entered Garden City, by Origin Group

Year	Origin Group		
	Vietnam	Cambodia	Laos
1975	12	0	0
1976	1	0	0
1977	1	0	0
1978	5	0	0
1969	5	0	0
1980	5	0	0
1981	86	0	0
1982	308	16	15
1983	166	21	21
1984 <sup>1</sup>	159	2	6
TOTAL*	748	39	42

\*This figure excludes those persons born in Garden City.

<sup>1</sup>1984 figure only refers to the first six months of 1984.



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