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## **Beyond "Boat People": A Literature Review of Vietnamese Resettlement in Canada**

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### **Introduction**

Canada's Vietnamese population stood at a meagre 1,500 on the day before the fall of Saigon to communist North Vietnam (Dorais, 2000). Standing at 150,000 people as of a 2001 census, 70% of Vietnamese Canadians at this time were first-generation immigrants, with 44% arriving between 1981 and 1990 (Statistics Canada, 2007). An estimated 300,000 people of Vietnamese descent now reside in Canada, many of whom can traced back to the 60,000 Southeast Asian refugees Canada admitted a few years after the 1975 conclusion of the Vietnam War. As the first Indochinese population to arrive in Canada, Vietnamese people transformed Canada's immigration policy and enhanced the nation's multicultural landscape. In fact, Vietnamese ranks among the top 25 most commonly spoken languages within the Canadian home (Dorais, 2000; Ngo, 2016). Vietnamese people's cultural impact is not restricted to any one locale in the country. Given that a modest 37% live in the culturally diverse cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, the Vietnamese population shows a substantial degree of dispersal across the nation (United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2017). Vietnamese Canadians' troubled experiences of war, state persecution, and forced displacement, as well as their geographical distribution, present an array of nuanced resettlement experiences and challenges worth grappling with on a broader scale.

Vietnam's Second Indochina War, wherein Western allies such as the United States aided capitalist South Vietnam in fighting the North, caused immense devastation nation-wide. American bombs caused significant physical damage in North Vietnam, rendering half of the

Vietnamese in the South homeless (Beiser, 1999). While as many as 5 million lives were lost immediately, America's chemical warfare against communist revolutionaries ultimately harmed millions of civilians and continues to produce deadly health outcomes such as cancer and birth defects among successive generations (Morris, 2016). The end of the war in April of 1975 – when North Vietnamese forces defeated South Vietnamese forces with the capture of the southeastern City of Saigon (now called Ho Chi Minh City) and unified the country – marked the beginning of a refugee crisis that spanned two decades (Ngo, 2016).

North Vietnam's victory was followed by a series of national changes (Dorais, 2000). Over 1 million Vietnamese were imprisoned in trại học tập cải tạo, or re-education camps, wherein North Vietnamese personnel imposed hard physical labour and abuse to quell the capitalist and Westernized ideals of perceived reactionaries. Additionally, an estimated one million people were forcibly moved from cities to sparse mountainous regions under the xây dựng các vùng kinh tế mới, or the New Economic Zones Program (Koh, 2016). During the 1970s when floods and droughts hindered the production of rice, the government's solution was to relocate merchants to these desolate zones where they were re-educated and later reintegrated into the agricultural sector (Beiser, 1999). To escape brutal state repression and scarcity, approximately 1.5 million Vietnamese fled the country between 1975 and 1990 (Koh, 2016).

It is important to preface that the terminology used to refer to those involved in the exodus between 1975 and 1985 is highly contested and complex. Some contend that “Indochinese” is a French colonial descriptor used to group the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians together. The term “Southeast Asian,” on the other hand, is more popular, yet is too general, given that Southeast Asia includes many other nations that were not affected by the Indochinese exodus (Molloy, Duschinsky, Jenson, & Shalka, 2017). Because it is more precise,

the term Indochinese will be used henceforth to refer to the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese people displaced during the exodus. For added context, the term Sino-Vietnamese refers to Vietnamese people with Chinese ancestry traceable to the Chinese occupation of Vietnam or recent Chinese immigrants; Sino-Vietnamese people experienced distinctive kinds of state persecution by virtue of their ethnicity, as will be discussed later (Molloy et al., 2017).

### **Vietnamese Canadians in Literature**

There exists a wide variety of geographically-specific literature on the settlement history of Vietnamese refugees in Canada. Detailed accounts of Vietnamese resettlement in British Columbia, Toronto, Quebec and many other Canadian regions have been contextualized in Vietnam's history of political unrest (Beiser, 1999; Dorais, 1991; Dorais, 2007; Ngo, 2016). However, there is a dearth of literature that provides a comprehensive account of the Vietnamese refugee experience across Canada, particularly that which documents their unique adaptational challenges and intragroup tensions, as well as their contributions to Canadian society. A comparative geographic analysis of the Vietnamese Canadian experience provides insights into the impact and extent of collective trauma resulting from war, the challenges and limitations of private sponsorship, as well as adaptation and integration generally. A comparative analysis reveals the complex ways in which refugees' past and present geographic and social context shape the immigration experience. While scholarship emphasizes the successes of Canada's private sponsorship program in Vietnamese refugee resettlement, it is equally important to critique Canada's role in the exodus, discuss the flaws of Canadian immigration policy implemented after the war, and point to areas of improvement for future refugees. This paper will open with a contextualization of Vietnam's war and destabilization, the subsequent exodus,

and Canada's resettlement efforts, followed by an examination of the nuances of the Vietnamese Canadian experience in different regions.

### **At a Glance: Destabilization and Emigration**

The repression, destruction, and uncertainty in post-war Vietnam gave rise to two distinct waves of emigration. The first emigration wave, beginning in 1975, was mostly comprised of politicians, military personnel, and white-collar professionals. The second wave was triggered by Vietnam's post-war economic troubles and China's response to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978. After China militarily intervened to quell Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, Vietnam retaliated by declaring 2 to 3 million Sino-Vietnamese *personae non gratae* and forced 745,000 of them to leave (Beiser, 1999; Dorais, 2000). Consequently, the second emigration wave of 1978 predominantly consisted of ethnically Chinese Vietnamese. The use of shabby boats as a means of escape during this period gave rise to the descriptor, boat people, which has since been applied generally to the Vietnamese refugee experience. Writing on Vietnamese immigrants in British Colombia, Beiser (1999) problematizes the use of "boat people," noting that those displaced during the second wave originated from the entire peninsula and the majority fled their countries overland, instead of water. Despite the misuse of the term, overcrowded boats were, indeed, a dangerous reality for many Vietnamese; those who braved the grueling weeks-long journey to refuge over sea risked death by drowning, storms, starvation, or pirates (Dorais, 2007). In fact, as many as 150,000 of the 900,000 that left Vietnam in boats perished (Beiser, 1999). Vietnamese refugees' sea voyages typically concluded in Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, or Hong Kong, depending on the seasonal wind currents (Beiser, 1999). Naturally, many first claimed asylum in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) refugee camps located in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Dorais, 2000).

One refugee named Tran Van Ha characterized the refugee camp experience in bleak terms, explaining that it was like living, "without meaning [or] hope. You can't work [or] do anything" (Beiser, 1999, p. 27). During their stay in temporary host countries, many Vietnamese emigrants received UNCHR referrals which enabled them to leave their camps and permanently resettle in countries such as America, Australia, the U.K., France, and Germany (Beiser, 1999; Koh, 2016).

### **The Impetus to Emigrate**

The Vietnamese state, which was evidently one of many push factors in both emigration waves, shaped the lives of Vietnamese people in intricate and distinctive ways that cannot be captured quantitatively. Aside from outright exile, the government's expropriative and punitive measures caused many Vietnamese people to feel that emigration was their only means of attaining safety and security. Indeed, with the new government's introduction of post-war socialization campaigns across central and southern Vietnam came destabilization en masse. The government seized the assets of upper-class and, later, middle-class citizens and deployed an array of repressive tactics on potential dissenters (Keung, 2005; Koh, 2016). Examining interviews with Vietnamese immigrants in Ottawa, Koh (2016) provides a nuanced account of how the Vietnamese revolution upended the lives of civilians.

The Phuong's family's experiences during the socialization campaigns of the late 1970s capture the intensity of the Vietnamese government's revolutionary campaigns. While the state initially obligated the Phuong family to share their home with the military, it later expropriated their house and the family's bicycle business to facilitate wealth redistribution. The state's socialization campaigns dispossessed the Phuong family of vital assets and earnings (Koh, 2016).

Lan Ho's family also fell victim to the government's redistributive measures. A child of Ngan and Nam Ho, houseware business owners, Lan witnessed her parents' attempts to protect

her family by quelling government officials with financial bribes. Lan Ho stated that the government, “thought we ripped off the poor people. They assumed that. When they took over, they went after the very rich, then the level down. They took your house and kicked you out of the house.” When the family's bribery money ran out, they realized they could not longer protect themselves from the will of the state and prepared to leave. The Ho family set out on the Pacific Ocean aboard a small boat with 60 other refugees and landed in a Malaysian refugee camp after being rescued by an oil tanker. After gaining acceptance into Canada, the family reunited in Thunder Bay, Ontario (Keung, 2005).

The Le family, in central Vietnam, was similarly unsettled under the new government. Mr. Le was imprisoned for 18 months and released only after his wife, Mrs. Le, bribed state officials. Shortly thereafter, the father of 7 was once again separated from his family and sentenced to 18 years in a re-education camp despite a lack of incriminating evidence against him (Koh, 2016). In her husband's absence, Mrs. Le used her income from the family business to meet the needs of Mai and Chi and her other five children. What ultimately pushed the Le family to leave Vietnam was the Le children's inability to access higher education, given that the state linked their parents to reactionaries, and the family's concern that the older Le children would be subjected to military service or agricultural work far away. Mrs. Le's eldest son and his uncle fled in 1978 and were sponsored to immigrate to Canada two years later. Twelve-year-old Mai and fifteen-year-old Chi emigrated next. Chi's best showcase the emotional toll of the emigration dilemma: "...It was [difficult] for parents to send their children off on the boat, to split up the family like that... It broke my mother's heart...But that was the only way for us, for the family to survive.” (Koh, 2016, p. 12) When faced with the option to stay and remain in Vietnam together under extreme state persecution or leave and separate for the betterment of the family, the

desperate situation that the Le family was under compelled them to make emotional compromises and material sacrifices.

Like the Le family, a former teacher in Vietnam named Nhung held similar fears of state persecution, but on the grounds of her beliefs, rather than her relationships:

I learned that the communist dictum 'One for All and All for One' was a scam... The majority of the population were impoverished... I saw how morally corrupt and inept the new regime was... Worst of all, we had no right to complain... My mother worried that someday I would burst out and be arrested for my 'reactionary' thoughts and actions. (p. 11)

At the same time as Nhung's family worried about the consequences of dissent, Nhung's brother lived under the threat of the military draft. The risks and dangers imposed by the new government prompted Nhung and her family to flee Vietnam in search of safety and security. Nhung's parents ultimately lost a great deal of money to migration scammers, leaving them with enough funds to only cover the emigration of Nhung and her brother. In 1980, Nhung and her brother began a nearly week-long journey atop a crowded boat, surviving two typhoons along the way (Koh, 2016).

Other refugees' experiences prove Nhung's fears to be well-founded. The state subjected Dung – whose Buddhist family despised the communist government because it required them to abandon their religious practices and clothing and avow atheism – to repressive and exploitative measures based on her beliefs and relationships. Dung's proficiency in English and her social capital, which extended to Westerners in Saigon, made her a target for state surveillance. Dung was also forced to share her home with communist soldiers who she described as, "dishevelled and malnourished...They were also unfamiliar with modern sanitation...They used the toilet bowl

to wash their clothes. We were completely flabbergasted when they took our family dog to cook and eat!” (Koh, 2016, p. 10)

### **Impetus for Canadian intervention and the Cold War Ideology**

The fulfillment of obligations under international law and the preservation of Canadian humanitarianism related to displaced and persecuted people were the goals of the *Immigration Act, 1976*, which clearly defined Convention refugee, outlined the refugee determination process, and established the PSR program (Casasola, 2016). Before the implementation of the *Immigration Act, 1976*, Canada used a case by case system to admit refugees because refugee acceptance was an exception to traditional immigration standards (United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2017). While Canada’s intentions were honourable on the surface, the motive behind the government’s benevolence and broadened immigration policy during the Indochinese exodus is worthy of a deeper analysis. According to Ngo (2016), Cold War epistemology focuses on the role that imperialism, colonialism, and the Cold War have played in nation-building projects. The ideological divisions that characterized the Cold War period not only gave rise to military conflicts between communist and capitalist factions but engendered the reframing communist states as rogue dictatorships against the apparent benevolence and saviourism of capitalist states. Given this, it is important to note that the capitalist state of Canada did not play a neutral role in the Vietnam War; although Canadian military personnel did not engage in battle, Canada was America's main weapons supplier. The Cold War epistemology is helpful for understanding Canadian intervention in Vietnam as a means of “containing communism” (Ngo, 2016, p. 10) and quelling the ideological threat to the global liberal order.



Ngo (2016) contends that the Canadian government, “construct[s] the Vietnamese refugees as not only being saved by democracy in gaining refuge into Canada but Vietnamese refugees were in fact trying to save their own country with democracy.” (p. 75) Ngo (2016) adds that contemporary anti-communist discourse around Vietnamese settlement in Canada, “...locates the Vietnamese refugee as democratic, as the subject who tried to fight off their Others (communist North Vietnam) alongside the U.S. and its allies.” (p. 74) In the continuous decontextualization of the Vietnam War, construction of Vietnamese refugees as a people victimized by a rogue state, and the demonization of the communist enemy, Canadian officials effectuate the purification of the nation’s capitalist image into which a monolith of anti-communist victims are neatly incorporated. During a debate in spring of 2014, Senator Thanh Hai Ngo stated, “the Republic of South Vietnam courageously fought to defend freedom and democracy for over two decades in order to prevent the spread of communism.” (Ngo, 2016, 74). As state discourse emphasizes Vietnamese people's realization of freedom, democracy, and prosperity within Canada's capitalist system and, at the same time, facilitates the erasure of Canada’s historical role in the Vietnam War the fall of South Vietnam, Canada’s complicity in the tragic events surrounding the Vietnam War become peripheral to the problem of communism. Ngo (2016) concludes that such discourse serves to maintain Canadian myths of innocence by erasing the nation's oppressive history and xenophobic immigration policy. Using Ngo’s (2016) conceptualization of the relationship between Canada and Vietnamese refugees, it is reasonable to infer that the Canadian government sought to assimilate Vietnamese refugees into the capitalist order and reinforce Western ideals about the supposed evils of communism by exploiting their experiences of loss and tragedy and juxtaposing it with the benevolence of capitalism. Indeed, the institutionalization of these shared experiences, as well as

many Vietnamese Canadians' anti-communist beliefs, is evident in Vietnamese mutual aid associations across the country, which will be discussed shortly. In fact, Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark's integral role in the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in Canada inspired some Vietnamese Canadians to join the Conservative Party (Trinh, 2015). The shedding of Vietnamese's stereotypical communist identity and assimilation into Canada's capitalist political institutions is indicative of the successes of Canada's illusory project of white saviourism and benevolence.

### **Vietnamese Refugee Resettlement in Canada**

#### *The Sponsorship Process*

Under the *Immigration Act, 1976*, Canadian visa officers can initiate the public or private sponsorship process by determining that an individual is eligible for resettlement (Molloy, 2016). An eligible individual may be a Convention refugee who, in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention, cannot return to the country from which they fled due to the risk of state persecution (Casasola, 2016) or a member of a protected group who the officer deems capable of adapting to Canadian society – during the exodus, the Canadian government streamlined Vietnamese resettlement by listing Indochinese immigrants as a designated class (Molloy, 2016). After the initial determination, an eligible individual must pass criminal, security, and health screenings to maintain eligibility. Once screenings are passed, private sponsoring groups may indicate which refugee applicant they would like to support or request an applicant referral from a visa officer (Molloy, 2016).

#### *The Role of Refugee Programs in Vietnamese Resettlement*

Of the 1.5 million displaced during the Indochinese exodus, Canada accepted 60,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the late 1970s. While 25,958 arrived through the

public government-assisted refugees (GAR) program, as many as 32,281 were privately sponsored. The remainder were sponsored by family members (Molloy, 2016). Canada's private sponsorship of refugees (PSR) program was established in 1978 – almost concurrently with the Indochinese exodus – with numerous Canadians stepping up to help when the media publicized people atop boats toiling through dangerous waters in search of refuge (Molloy, 2016). Under the PSR program, sponsorship agreement holders, groups of at least five community members who reside in the resettlement community, and community sponsors (i.e. organizations, associations, community groups, or corporations) situated in the resettlement community can privately sponsor refugees (Molloy, 2016). After the fall of Saigon, religious groups were among the first to sign sponsorship agreements with the government to resettle refugees. Ultimately, the PSR became a staple in Canada's immigration system and significantly increased the state's capacity to resettle refugees; Canada admitted 180,000 displaced people between 1979 and 2002 through private sponsorships alone (Molloy, 2016).

Although both programs played a key role during the Vietnamese exodus, the capacity and provision of support for government-sponsored refugees (GSR) and PSRs differ. Government resettlement agencies provide GSRs with basic necessities (i.e. transit to temporary shelter, assistance with accessing social services and long-term housing options, and life-skills training) for only a few weeks after arrival, but supplement this comparatively short-term support with a one-time allowance and monthly financial support for up to one year. Conversely, private groups are expected to materially support the applicant (i.e. helping to secure shelter, adapt to Canadian society, utilize social services, and financial support) for a minimum of one year, or as many as three years if a visa officer requests extended support. Given that privately sponsored Vietnamese refugees resided in the same community as their sponsors, the personal support

mandated under the PSR program was conducive to their integration into Canadian society. Government funds are not provided to sponsoring groups during this period, and accordingly, sponsoring groups must demonstrate their financial capacity to manage the costs of integration. Lastly, while the Canadian government sets an annual quota for admitted GSRs and makes annual projections for the number of private sponsorships, the number of private sponsorships is ultimately at the whim of groups committed to supporting refugee resettlement – notably, an advantage of the PSR is that it made possible the acceptance of Vietnamese refugees who would not have been accepted otherwise due to limited GSR quotas. Given that the majority of the Vietnamese refugees initially accepted during the exodus entered through the PSR program, the collaborative effort between the public and private sector was effective in resettling an unprecedented number of refugees in such a short period of time (Casasola, 2016).

### **Vietnamese Integration by Community**

A wide array of scholarship attempts to capture complex and varied experience of Vietnamese Canadian integration, the challenges of which depend on different factors in the area in which they settled.

#### ***Ottawa***

Ottawa, Canada's capital, lead by example in private resettlement efforts by establishing a well-structured PSR project, which subsequently influenced resettlement efforts in other cities.

Ottawa – now home to 9,000 Vietnamese people – spearheaded an innovative initiative to welcome a significant number of refugees after the war, an effort which was made possible by the mayor and local private groups proactively stepping up to respond to the mass displacement of people after the war. Moved by the media reports of boat people seeking safety following the fall of Saigon, Ottawa mayor Marion Dewar coordinated a meeting with local religious, business,

and community leaders to determine how the city can support the resettlement of refugees. The outcome was the 1979 establishment of Ottawa's Project 4000, a \$25,000 municipal commitment to fulfill half of the federal government's resettlement quota by allocating funding to local private sponsorship groups. Following the project launch, a local company donated office space to staff, numerous people established sponsorship groups, the Ottawa Citizen connected interested sponsors to families, thousands of community members donated to the project. Staffed by 4 people, the project created 6 volunteer committees to individually support newcomers' needs, namely housing, employment, education, healthcare, fundraising, and media relations (Carrère, 2016).

The organizational efficacy of the project was influential in resettlement efforts beyond Ottawa. The project created a ripple effect, as the national number of private sponsorship groups subsequently grew to 7,000. The success of the project also persuaded the Canadian government to raise the country's resettlement goal to 60,000, according to cabinet minister Flora McDonald. As many as 2,000 Vietnamese newcomers were sponsored through the new PSR program and 1,600 were sponsored through the GSR program by the time the project ended in 1983. (Carrère, 2016).

As soon as 1980, even before the completion of the project, Ottawa's Vietnamese population politically organized themselves with the formation of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF). Headquartered locally, the VCF expanded into an umbrella organization for anti-communist mutual aid associations within the locale, Gatineau-Hull, Montreal, Sherbrooke, Quebec City, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, and Halifax. Utilizing ideological divisions to promote collective goal setting and solidarity across multiple Vietnamese communities, the VCF managed to gain recognition as the

representative of Vietnamese Canadians. The trajectory of the VCF demonstrates that, even as new Vietnamese Canadians attempted to integrate into Canada, the salience and reification of the past through intracommunal organization along war-based political lines persisted (Dorais, 2000).

### ***Montreal***

Chan & Lam's (1983) study with 25 Cantonese-speaking Vietnamese refugees in Montreal provides insights into the nature of their relationships with sponsors, their dream contents and their psychological implications, and the challenges presented by the persistence of past experiences and trauma.

#### *The Role of Ethnicity and Identity on the Sponsor-Refugee Relationship:*

Drawing on discussions with interviewees, Chan & Lam's (1983) first explored the quality and dynamics of the sponsor-refugee relationship. The majority of respondents characterized their sponsor-refugee relationship as positive, although private sponsors were considered more nurturing, intimate, and involved than government sponsors. Privately sponsored refugees, who generally believed the PSR program to be superior to the GSR program, noted the benefit of having frequent sponsor visits and holiday gatherings, adequate assistance with basic necessities such as housing and seasonal clothing, as well as their sponsor's social and human capital, which gave them an advantage in the job search process. However, respondents noted that their communication with sponsors became less frequent during the final 6 months of sponsorship, which compelled refugees to become more independent (Chan & Lam, 1983).

While perceptions around the quality of the sponsor-refugee relationship were overwhelmingly positive, especially for those accepted under the PSR program, the dynamic between sponsor and refugee caused challenges. Because some refugees lacked full proficiency

in English or French, language barriers adversely affected the sponsor-refugee relationship and frustrated interactions. Still, respondents felt that their sponsors generally understood them and, oftentimes, fulfilled their needs. Broader cultural differences and a lack of familiarity with each other's backgrounds also caused tension between sponsors and refugees. Canadian officials provided basic information regarding the country's culture and institutions to those in refugee camps prior to their resettlement, but Canadians' understanding of Vietnamese people was limited to, often sensationalized or monolithic, media portrayals. As such, coming to mutual understanding about the objectives, guidelines, and norms and expectations on which the sponsor-refugee relationship was based proved challenging. Respondents sometimes struggled to articulate their needs to their sponsors and tended to flag issues only once they became more pressing. The struggle to ask for more assistance was partly rooted in refugees' contentment with assistance provided, as well as their gratefulness for, and feelings of indebtedness to, their sponsors, which translated into their aversion to ask for more help. More specifically, the respondents' Vietnamese-Chinese identity, historically associated with public welfare dependency pre-resettlement, gave rise to refugees' feelings of humiliation (Chan & Lam, 1983). Motivated to dispel negative ethnic stereotypes, respondents attempted to prove that they value independence and personal responsibility, which sponsors may have inadvertently perceived as an ungratefulness for their offerings and assistance. Chan & Lam's (1983) findings suggest that the past identity refugees assumed in their country of origin is preserved in their present-day psyches and behaviour. Respondents' interviews also indicate how challenging it is for refugees to shed the negative associations attached to their identity while integrating into a completely new environment and unfamiliar community, causing them to make premature assumptions

about how they are perceived by others and alter their behaviour accordingly to disprove stereotypes.

### *Dream Contents: Reimagining and Reliving the Past*

Dreams, in which relationships and traumatic experiences were salient themes, were another point of continuity for refugee respondents. Interviewees who emigrated with their significant family recalled having dreams set in Vietnam of family, friends, and neighbours, but struggled to remember in detail the contents of their dreams. Other interviewees who left significant family members in Vietnam or refugee camps recalled having recurring dreams with strong affective elements and memorable events and people. One such respondent reported having recurring dreams set in Vietnam and Canada where she engaged in activities with her sibling and parents, with airplanes in the backdrop. Some respondents reported dreaming of family and friends soon after they received mail from Vietnam or after they saw news reports on incoming refugees in Canada. Another participant recalled a dream wherein her brother wrote her from Vietnam and, on the next day, she flew to Vietnam alone to hand him a care package. While the terror of returning to Vietnam in her dream jolted her awake, she was quickly calmed by the calming realization that she was in Montreal. Evidently, this respondent's concern for the brother she left behind manifested in a dream wherein she was able to support his basic needs despite living in another country. Chan & Lam (1983) theorize that these dreams are refugees' subconscious engaging in optimistic re-conceptualizations of the past wherein participants are capable of embarking on a well-organized, inclusive, and voluntary emigration from Vietnam or, at least, fulfilling their distant family's needs.



In addition to reimaginings of the past wherein events that refugees would have liked to occur play out, particularistic memories of traumatic experiences in Vietnam were another important feature of respondents' dream contents. Among respondents with a history of trauma, particularistic and repetitive dreams were a common theme. A former Vietnamese prisoner reported dreaming of barbed wire and dark tunnels, as well as a pronounced fear of prosecution and indefinite detention. Another respondent dreamed of swimming frantically in treacherous waters, pursued by motorboats and ships manned by pirates and military personnel. A third respondent who was abused by police officers upon landing in a Hong Kong refugee camp reported dreaming of being physically assaulted on several occasions. Respondents with trauma-based dreams recalled waking up afterwards and feeling the emotions, such as fear and anxiety, that characterized their past. According to Chan & Lam (1983), respondents with trauma,

...Were obsessed with their inability to come to terms with and to accommodate an experience which was so tumultuous and psychologically degrading that images of these past experiences were making repeated appearances in the unconscious...The degree of specificity of dream contents then seems to be a direct function and consequence of the level of stressfulness of past experiences encountered and the nature of personal meaning attached to...Them. (p. 8)

Importantly, the stress that past events caused refugees spilled over into present-day events that occurred in their new environment. Two interviewees noted having violent dreams triggered by the Quebec's 1980 May Referendum in 1980, which evoked memories of Vietnam's divided government and fears of re-experiencing refugeehood in the event of Quebec's independence from Canada. Given respondents' powerful emotional responses to the past and the occurrence of trauma triggers despite general feelings of safety and security in the present,

Chan & Lam's (1983) findings highlight reconciliation with the past as an area of focus for social workers supporting Vietnamese Canadians who were forcibly displaced.

### *Past Experiences as a Barrier to Integration*

Indeed, failing to reconcile with the past adversely affected refugees' ability to integrate into Canada. Self-acknowledgement of the past as a barrier to their own progress was a particularly compelling finding in the study; respondents declared that emotions of guilt and shame evoked by the past impeded their integration, as well as their preparation for their future, in Canada. One respondent admitted to knowing under 8 French words, despite having attended 5 months worth of French language sessions, which was a result of her tendency to daydream about her past in Vietnam. A second respondent who worked as a sewing machine operator noted that invasive thoughts about pre-resettlement experiences created a disconnect between her mind and body, which presumably diminished productivity. Another respondent disclosed that he would sit alone in his home while the streets were silent and imagine his past in Vietnam, namely moments on the boat and in refugee camps. Vividly replaying scenes from the past in his mind caused the respondent to disassociate from the present and believe he was physically outside of Canada.

According to Chan & Lam (1983), the salience of the past was partly rooted in a profound sense of "...loss of and a forced departure from a familiar milieu within which one was born and raised, and from which one developed and consolidated a sense of personal and ethnic identity, an adequate sense of competence, self-sufficiency, and self-esteem." Borrowing from

Chan & Lam's (1983) line of thinking, immaterial losses manifest in material ways in the present, which is indicative of how powerfully significant and deeply meaningful the intangible things that refugees left behind continue to be, even years after departing from them. Concrete losses, such as assets, earnings, and savings, similarly engendered affective outcomes, such as a loss of pride and sense of accomplishment. Additionally, social losses, including distance from family, neighbours, and friends, eroded social networks and emotional well-being with adverse financial consequences. This is evidenced by older respondents reporting a deeper preoccupation with the past and a deeper sense of loss than their younger counterparts, which Chan & Lam (1983) attribute to the extent of their rootedness in Vietnam (i.e. career, children or partners, lifelong friends. Emotional and economic losses for older respondents were seen as irreplaceable and disrupted their ability to concentrate during daily tasks.

The preservation of the past is evident in sponsor-refugee relations, refugees' goals of family reunification in Canada or ensuring the well-being of loved ones, and processing of current events, which points to the lingering psychological challenges Vietnamese refugees continue to grapple with as they attempt to integrate into Canadian society.

### *Religion*

While Chan & Lam (1983) focus on the psychological challenges Vietnamese refugees in Montreal grappled with, Dorais' (2007) research, which draws mainly from data collected from Vietnamese refugees in Montreal, pinpoints religion as a key coping mechanism which provided Vietnamese Montrealers with a sense of continuity of the past during their precarious experience of emigration and resettlement.

For many Vietnamese respondents, the arduous journey to safety strengthened their faith or motivated them to adopt the faith of the deity they found solace and salvation in during

turmoil. For one formerly Buddhist family, the treacherous voyage by boat was tempered by prayer to a Christian deity. The family became increasingly pessimistic after observing looting, sexual assaults, and 19 deaths and decided to pray to the Holy Virgin for rescue. A few days later, pirates discovered them and used their boat to save them. Attributing their good fortune to the Holy Virgin, the family converted to Catholicism thereafter.

A Buddhist woman similarly found comfort faith while wading on perilous sea water alongside 56 passengers:

For two days on end, on the open sea, we met Thai pirates. And miraculously, on both days, we were safe and sound. When they saw the monks [on our boat] standing on the deck and chanting Buddhist prayers, the normally very dangerous pirates did not bother us. (Dorais, 2007, p. 60).

In addition to the emotional and psychological benefits that Vietnamese refugees' faith provided, engaging in religious practices such as prayers and chants was a protective and preventative measure that, in their view, quelled material threats. Indeed, in moments of desperation, religious deities, even those outside of their belief systems, became a source of optimism, solace, and protection.

Religion not only shaped Vietnamese refugees' understanding of their displacement and departure, but also their settlement experience and sense of belonging in Canada. Numerous refugees believed that their immigration to Canada was made possible by divine intervention, with one Buddhist woman stating,

Thanks to the benevolent soul of my late husband, we were finally able to witness this day when the entire family was reunited after having been scattered for many years through North and South Vietnam, under two different political regimes and without any

hope of seeing each other again. Paradoxically, it is in Canada, a country so distant, that this became possible, exactly like a miracle (Dorais, 2007, p. 60).

Similarly, a Catholic Vietnamese Canadian who worked for the South Vietnamese government prior to the fall of Saigon, yet averted imprisonment in a re-education camp, credited his faith for his freedom and eligibility for refugee status and family reunification in Canada (Dorais, 2007).

While religious practices evidently buttressed refugees' morale, resilience, and rationale during their plight, it is important to acknowledge that the invocation of faith was not merely an outcome of moments of desperation and hopelessness. Rather, Dorais' (2007) research proves religion to be a core part of many Vietnamese Montrealers' identities. The case study of Buddhist Vietnamese refugees in Montreal demonstrates the diversity of beliefs within the Vietnamese community – even among those who practice the same religion – and the impressive ways in which newcomers leverage their social capital and financial resources to fulfill religious obligations. The summer after the fall of Saigon, affluent Buddhist Vietnamese newcomers congregated to discuss how to organize their religious life in Canada (Dorais, 2007). By the fall, they created the Lien Hoa group of Buddhist flowers, which met weekly at a school space, provided by the principal, for prayers. In 1982, Buddhists fundraised enough money to purchase a synagogue and transform it into a Buddhist temple. However, the group split when the resident monk created a new place of worship in the heart of Montreal. As a result of more divisions driven by the community's varying perspectives on the proper way to practice Buddhism, Vietnamese Buddhists established 8 temples and 3 meditation centres by the 1990s (Dorais, 2007). Vietnamese Montrealers' establishment of several Buddhist and Catholic religious institutions, such as the ethnic parish called Mission of the Holy Martyrs of Vietnam, proves

religion was not only an invaluable part of their escape from Vietnam. Rather, the continuity of religious practices – especially the coordination of and investment in separate institutions to enable particularistic religious practices – signifies the immense importance of faith after resettlement.

### *Quebec City*

#### *Economic Community Formation*

The Province of Quebec is culturally distinct from English-speaking Canada, given that 83% of Quebec's province-wide residents and more than 93% of Quebec City's residents are of French descent and speak French fluently. Comparatively, the Indochinese – without French or English ancestry – accounted for 10% of Quebec City's population, with Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese immigrants outnumbering Cambodian and Laotian newcomers. To get a better sense of Vietnamese civilians' interaction with French language and culture in recent history, it is also worth noting that the Western belligerents in the Vietnam War were predominantly English-speaking nations. Writing on the estimated 2,000 Indochinese residing in and around Quebec City in 1991, Dorais (1991) offers insights into ethnic community formation, social integration, and community development.

Quebec City welcomed 232 Vietnamese refugees in 1975. Many of these newcomers had family in Quebec and were affluent, well-educated, and fluent in French. Between 1979 and 1980, Quebec City accepted 660 more Vietnamese refugees, many of whom were ethnically Chinese, less educated, unable to speak French or English, and without nearby relatives. Owing to these disadvantages, the second wave of emigrants struggled to integrate into the local labour market. Quebec's economy at the time relied heavily on the tertiary sector, namely skilled areas like public administration and healthcare, and was less industrialized (Dorais, 1991).

Consequently, many of the 660 second wave newcomers left for Toronto or Montreal where industry was more prominent. Those who were successful job applicants in Quebec City became unskilled service employees, precarious agricultural workers, or machine operators (Dorais, 1991). Overall, the most common occupations among Vietnamese immigrants, including those who identified as ethnically Chinese, in Quebec City were in professional, government, and entrepreneurial areas. In contrast, the highest-ranking occupations for Cambodians and Laotians were in the farming and service sectors respectively (Dorais, 1991).

### *Social Integration*

In addition to their relative prosperity in integrating into Quebec City's skilled job market, Vietnamese newcomers demonstrated a strong degree of social integration. Quebec City's Vietnamese population valued the formation and preservation of social connections, locally and abroad. Many frequently communicated with their sponsors, colleagues, and school peers and regularly utilized social services. Maintaining close contact with relatives in their country of origin via telephone and mail was especially important, as many aimed for family reunification. More broadly, Dorais' (1991) findings indicate that Indochinese newcomers' formation of intimate intracommunity friendship networks alleviated the linguistic and cultural disparities that would have otherwise given rise to social isolation among non-immigrant Canadians (Dorais, 1991). In fact, Vietnamese people in Quebec City comprised up to 15 overlapping social networks, each of which included at least 5 households.

### *Community Development*

With a small population of 800, Vietnamese people in Quebec managed to organize themselves into as many as 9 ethnic associations serving religious, political and service-based needs and interests. They independently established religious networks, with Buddhists from

Vietnam meeting bi-weekly in self-established communal spaces and Catholics from Vietnam appointing their own refugee chaplain. Religious associations included the Bo De Buddhist Group and the Quebec City Vietnamese Catholic Community. Vietnamese refugees who were displaced after 1975 comprised the majority of the anti-communist association, Quebec City Vietnamese Community (QCVC), which was recognized by the federal and provincial government as the exclusive representative body of the local Vietnamese population (Dorais, 1991). Vietnamese people also developed social associations, such as Vietnamese Scouts and Guides and Lac Long Soccer Club. Some Sino-Vietnamese joined distinct social associations. For example, the Quebec City Chinese Association, mainly comprised of immigrants from Hong Kong and China, boasted 100 Sino-Vietnamese members (Dorais, 1991). With the material support of the Canadian and Quebec governments, Vietnamese people in Quebec City used their social capital and community organizations, such as the QCVC, to maintain cultural continuity.

### ***Toronto***

While several scholars have discussed the ways in which Vietnamese Canadians used religion, ethnicity, and even politics to organize themselves based on similarities and maintain a sense of community, research based in Toronto identifies geographical and ideological background as divisive communal classifications. Unlike religion, however, Vietnamese people utilized each other's geographical background and presumed ideological leanings as a divisive and exclusionary means of social organization, which impeded integration into Canada.

Toronto is home to a relatively substantial Vietnamese community. The 2011 National Household Survey recorded 70,725 residents of Vietnamese descent within the Greater Toronto Area and a municipal report one year later recorded 45,270 within The City of Toronto, half of whom identify Vietnamese as their mother tongue (Ngo, 2016). Ngo's (2016) analysis of 28



interviewees from North, Central, South Vietnam reveals the nuanced experiences of Toronto's Vietnamese population.

### *Stereotypes Attached to Geographical Background as a Cause of Social Exclusion*

Ngo's (2016) analysis draws attention to the prevalence of divisive regional and ideological stereotypes in Toronto's Vietnamese community, with Central and South Vietnamese people regarded as having legitimate refugee claims and North Vietnamese delineated as an outcasted communist minority without legitimacy. These pronounced divisions necessitate the disclosure one's background, which can be easily determined based on distinctions in regional dialects. The detectability of the geographical background from which ideological conclusions can be drawn engenders barriers to integration. For example, a North Vietnamese respondent named Xuan, recalled having a Vietnamese Canadian government employee interrogate her about her political allegiance in Vietnam while attempting to access public services. This particular form of microaggression, where the line between the personal and professional spheres become blurred, runs the risk of compelling North Vietnamese people to reduce their help-seeking behaviour. Despite the unification of Vietnam that occurred decades ago, Xuan's experience proves that war-based regional stigmas ensure continuity of the past, making it challenging for Vietnamese refugees to socially and culturally – and in Xuan's particular case, materially – integrate, not only to Canadian society, but Vietnamese Canadian communities. Xuan added, "I was curious and didn't know what so-call the day [National Grief] April 30th in City Hall is about...I found out [in newspapers] that people...Come to the Vietnamese embassy with their slogan against Communists."(Ngo, 2016, p. 24) Previously unbeknownst to Xuan,

perhaps due to her alienation from the broader diasporic community, some Vietnamese immigrants mark the yearly National Grief day, which falls on the day Saigon was captured, by pressuring the Canadian government to sanction Vietnam. The passionate condemnation of Vietnam's government by anti-communists, who are partly informed by their experiences with the state's past wrongdoings, manifests in similar denigrations of North Vietnamese immigrants in Toronto.

Among some respondents, their experience of stigma based on regional origin was compounded by classism. Indeed, class divisions that characterized the two migration waves affected Vietnamese refugees' adaptation to life in Toronto and integration into the local Vietnamese community. Because South Vietnamese refugees who once comprised a wealthy elite were relegated to a lower class after facing dispossession during the revolution, classism proved to be salient issue across both regions. Hung, one of the boat people, explained,

When I just came to Canada, Vietnamese people who had come before 1975 by airplane looked at us with different eyes. They said, 'The slow buffalo has to drink muddy water.' They said those who came late did not get the benefits like those who came earlier nor ... were [they] as rich and well-educated times in public. (Ngo, 2016, p. 25)

Given that the wave in which refugees immigrated into Canada is detectable by way of social capital and ethnic markers, much like regional background, intracommunity classism was another prevalent mechanism of social exclusion among respondents.

### *The Importance of Identity Suppression as an Integration Strategy*

Furthermore, ideas about North Vietnamese Torontonians shape expectations about how they should behave. Another respondent named Phu, originally from South Vietnam, contends that North Vietnamese are expected to conduct themselves in a way the suppresses [the

detectability of] their North Vietnamese culture and avoids drawing attention to themselves in order to integrate into the Vietnamese Canadian community. A young North Vietnamese woman's labour market experience is indicative of the consequences of non-conformity: "When I got a job in the community, some colleagues told me that I am a Northern girl (cô gái bắc ky). I knew that they were teasing me with that term, they were joking, but just half-joking. After all, I knew that they were discriminating against me. Anyway, I ignored it. I kept working on my own." (Ngo, 2016, 25) Once again, the line between the personal and professional blur in this respondent's workplace and impede her ability to built important professional relationships with colleagues and expand her social network, relegating her to independent work. The stories that North and South Vietnamese respondents shared demonstrate the prevalence and power of social exclusion based on regional background and class, identifiable through verbal communication, in Toronto's Vietnamese community.

### *Vancouver*

Beiser (1999) extensive writing on the Vietnamese refugee experience in British Columbia offers many important insights on refugees who settled in Vancouver, such as their experiences of racism as a barrier to labour market integration. In the 1980s, British Columbian fisherman lodged a complaint against licensed Vietnamese fishers in Vancouver, alleging that their aggressive fishing practices were depleting Vancouver Island's oyster population. Beiser (1999) attributed this to the narrowing of the job market and resources that followed the 1982 recession, which engendered the scapegoating of Vietnamese newcomers. Beiser (1999) also offered reflections on the dilemmas Vietnamese newcomers grappled with in refugee camps, recalling the story of a family who employed agency in their escape from Vietnam. Initially selected for resettlement in Quebec, French-speaking former refugee Tran Bang's excitement for

his future in Canada diminished when his peers at a Malaysian refugee camp warned him that the extremely cold climate in eastern Canada restricted people to their homes for half of the year. Ha's brother Bang, who also lived at the Malaysian camp, watched orientation films that depicted Canadian winters as gloomy, lifeless, and desolate and later advised Ha against disclosing his proficiency in French to avoid placement in Quebec. Now Vancouverites, Bang and Ha reflected on their resettlement experience in Vancouver with gratitude, believing the Western weather to be more comfortable and familiar than that of Montreal (Beiser, 1999). The brothers' experience is one example of how Vietnamese refugees strategized and maneuvered throughout the immigration process in ways that would allow them to land in a setting with characteristics similar to Vietnam's. Nevertheless, Vancouver shares many similarities with Montreal and Toronto, given that all cities are, historically, densely populated and relatively culturally diverse; in 2001, Vancouver recorded up to 23,000 Vietnamese residents, a number comparable to Montreal's 26,000 and Toronto's 45,000 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

### *Victoria*

Conversely, the compelling case of Vietnamese refugee resettlement in Victoria – B.C.'s capital which is separated from Vancouver by 107 kilometres of water – is unique insofar as the degree of cultural, social, and physical isolation that new arrivals were met with. By 1983, the City of Victoria welcomed 405 Vietnamese people, the majority of whom were non-Chinese Vietnamese (Stephenson, 1995). The small population size of Vietnamese Victorians made community organization efforts more challenging. In 1981, Vietnamese Victorians established an ethnic association that ceased activities less than 5 years later, leaving one small Buddhist and one small Catholic group as their only spaces to gather as a community at the time. Additionally, the majority of Vietnamese Victorians were unsuccessful in their search for Canadian positions

that were similar to their jobs in Vietnam due to deskilling (Dorais, 1991). Given that this paper provides an account of Vietnamese community organization and economic integration in different regions, it is worth examining a relatively small Vietnamese population's help-seeking behaviours in the social service sector.

Stephenson (1995) conducted a study of 25 Vietnamese Victorians and local healthcare professionals to analyze Vietnamese refugees' use of social services. Religious values in rural areas of Vietnam, Stephenson (1995) found, adversely affected help-seeking behaviour. Rural Vietnamese people tend to believe that their fate, such as their wellness or illness, is shaped by their horoscope, or the brightest star at the moment of their birth. According to this belief system, alignment with the universe engenders wellness, whereas misalignment gives rise to revolution, or illness. Natural disasters, poor health, and war, for example, follow misalignment. Accordingly, many Vietnamese view the Vietnam War as an outcome of misalignment. Rural Vietnamese people tend to believe that 12 souls and spirits sustain one's well-being, and the loss of any one can be physically and mentally detrimental or fatal, which warrants the intervention of a traditional healer equipped to facilitate the return of the lost souls and spirits. Two respondents disclosed that Vietnamese people fear surgery due to the risk of amnesia after undergoing anesthesia. One respondent, while recalling a recent surgery, perceived the loss of consciousness after anesthesia was administered as the potential departure of any one of his souls (Stephenson, 1995). Emotions thought to cause souls to leave the human body include fear, loneliness, and depression due to familial separation or loss, all of which capture the experience of – and are therefore significant to – the average refugee. Symptoms of spirit or soul loss include weight loss, appetite loss, loss of pigmentation, chronic fatigue, and poor sleeping habits, all of which can be attributed to many types of illnesses (Stephenson, 1995).

According to Vietnamese and medical respondents, language barriers were the most prevalent obstacle to accessing healthcare. The lack of quality interpreters compelled respondents to compromise on their healthcare utilization or provision. In fact, in hospital settings, interpretation and food were two common issues that interviewees identified. Many respondents noted that they were fearful of being perceived as ungrateful for refusing unfamiliar and nauseating hospital food, but opted not to eat (Stephenson, 1995). Medical professionals could have interpreted this behaviour as a loss of appetite or ability to digest food, and consequently deduced that their patient was showing symptoms of an illness when the issue is a lack of culturally appropriate food options.

Vietnamese patients' proclivity for familiar Vietnamese staples such as rice dishes, which tend not to be offered in traditional healthcare settings in Canada, is showcased in one respondent's surgical experience: "I had the operation. about two years after I came, so I had not adjusted to the food that they had in the hospital, especially the jello. I could eat the soup and the fruit, but other than that I could only eat the rice soup that my wife brought every day." (Stephenson, 1995, p. 1635) Another respondent's experience demonstrates how a lack of cultural competence interrupted the length and quality of their treatment, "when I had the operation I only stayed there for a week when I was supposed to have stayed longer. I could only eat a few things from the tray and so the nurse got so sick of sending my full tray back to the kitchen every day that she said that she was sending me home so that I could eat my food. I lost a lot of weight when I was in the hospital." (Stephenson, 1995, p. 1635) One such nauseating food item was jello, an important staple for patients restricted to liquids which was a fixation among many respondents. Putting it at odds with Vietnamese cuisine, jello is cooked, yet eaten cold, prepared using animal products, yet fruit-flavoured, and takes on an unusual texture.

Furthermore, Vietnamese conceptualizations of health render hot and cold an important binary. When unwell, people believe they should refrain from eating cold foods. A cold, or influenza, for example, is understood as a cold state which can be alleviated with hot foods (Stephenson, 1995).

One respondent, a former physician in Vietnam, pointed out the cultural disconnect present even in interactions between English-proficient Vietnamese patients and local healthcare providers: "...They are afraid that they will say the wrong thing or that they cannot fully express what they want to say, so they don't say anything...They are [also] not used to the way doctors cure illnesses." (p. 1635) The disharmony between patients' needs, desires, and anxieties and the traditional provision of healthcare reveals Canadian language proficiency/interpreter utilization and accent, as well as cultural competence, to be important components of interpretation and therefore accessibility of healthcare services.

Stephenson (1995) concludes that Vietnamese people are not well-integrated into Canada's healthcare system, given that they were more likely to seek herbal medicine in informal settings and less likely to seek medical professionals unless emergencies compel them to. Vietnamese people's poor help-seeking behaviour is compounded by their feelings of isolation in the City of Victoria. None of the respondents had friends outside of the Vietnamese community, except for work colleagues who did not engage with the respondent outside of work, meaning that Vietnamese refugees' social networks were restricted to fellow Vietnamese refugees. Given that social isolation can adversely affect health, this is an important area for more detailed research.

## **Conclusion**

The Vietnamese Canadian experience, complicated by a history of war and displacement, cannot be captured by research in one locale. Vietnamese Canadians' history and dispersal across the country give rise to a wide variety of unique experiences and challenges, some of which were partly exacerbated by the structure and underlying motivations of the PSR program. However, a common theme among studies of Vietnamese Canadians who immigrated after the fall of Saigon is Vietnamese Canadians' inadvertent preservation of the past or longing for the continuity of the positive aspects of their former lives in Vietnam. The formation of the influential anti-communist VCF in Ottawa signifies a revival of the ideological conflict that divided Vietnam. Although not an explicit intention, the creation of organizations with identifiable ideological underpinnings reinforces Westerners' monolithic perception of the Vietnamese community by ostracizing and erasing dissenters. Furthermore, representative organizations such as the VCF and QCVC in Quebec City necessitate the exploitation of people's tragic and often traumatizing past experiences of displacement to reify intragroup divisions. These powerfully affective means of classification impede relationship-building within the community and broader Canadian society. The psychological implications of refugees' revival of the past through contemporary social organization in Canada, as opposed to the promoting of self-healing and community solidarity, is a compelling area for future research.

In Montreal, refugees' relationships with their sponsors were informed and adversely affected by constructions of their identity in Vietnam. The capacity for refugees to relate to others outside of their own community without reverting back to, and inadvertently being restricted by, ethnic stereotypes and cultural beliefs that are less pervasive in Western contexts is yet another area worth exploring in more detail. Additionally, powerfully affective dreams and invasive thoughts of the past indicate Vietnamese refugees' discomfort with how the past played



out and inability to heal. Because subsequent environmental triggers and persistent psychological distractions disturb the process of integration, this is a pressing area for social work and psychological research alike.

One positive way in which refugees preserved the past was in the continuity of their religious practices, particularly new belief systems that they picked up as a result of their displacement. The faith that afforded refugees protection, comfort, and strength during their plight remained deeply valuable in relatively secure and safe contexts. In fact, the strength of some Vietnamese Victorians' religious beliefs caused them to reject Westernized forms of healthcare in favour of traditional forms of healing compatible with their religious teachings. Indeed, religious beliefs and congregation proved to be an important means community development and cultural continuity for Vietnamese Canadians. It is worth noting that the case of Quebec City also showcased the salience of ethnic histories in community development, with some Sino-Vietnamese refugees joining Chinese associations.

Vietnamese refugees also demonstrated a desire for or achievement of occupational continuity. Many first wave Vietnamese refugees in Quebec City successfully secured jobs in the public and business sectors, which demonstrates alignment with their occupations in Vietnam. Conversely, in both Quebec City and Victoria, restrictive job markets pushed many second wave Vietnamese refugees into jobs they did not want, given that they were incompatible with the qualifications they earned in Vietnam and/or dissimilar to the positions they held in Vietnam. Second wave refugees in Quebec City went as far as to uproot themselves once more to find industrialized jobs that better suited their skillset.

Research on intragroup tensions in Toronto arguably presents one of strongest examples of the continuity of the Vietnam War. Vietnamese refugees recreated regional, class-based, and

ideological divisions formed in Vietnam in their new context, with material consequences, according to respondents' stories. The consequences proved to be powerful enough to warrant behavioural changes and identity suppression. Further research is required to understand how tangible experiences of war and trauma shape how refugees perceive themselves, as well as their discriminatory perceptions and treatment of others, even after materials threats are no longer.

Finally, the longing for the continuity of cultural practices is showcased in Victorian Vietnamese refugees' inability to stomach Canadian foods and the lengths they will go to in order to fulfill their desire for cultural cuisines.

The past proved salient in many aspects of Vietnamese Canadians' lives. In some cases, the reproduction of the past translated into emotional and social benefits and in other cases, the preservation of history manifested in discriminatory and exclusionary practices. This finding presents important implications for future immigration policy and social work approaches, both of which can find ways to strengthen continuity and community bonds and alleviate the adverse consequences of continuity.

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University of Toronto Press.

Focusing on Vietnamese refugees in British Columbia, this article provides a detailed account of the challenges that refugees faced and the progress they have made in their integration into Canada. The book is used to briefly examine the Vancouver resettlement experience and add historical context to the paper.

Carrère, A. (2016). *History and Legacy of Refugee Resettlement In Ottawa: A Primer*. Ottawa

Local Immigration Partnership. <http://cciottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/Myths-History-and-Stats.pdf>

This report seeks to situate Ottawa's contributions in Canada's responses to refugee crises throughout history. The report quantifies refugee resettlement in Ottawa, provides a historical overview of Ottawa's private sponsorship initiative, and Ottawa's impact on national refugee resettlement efforts. The report's findings are referenced to provide insights into the successes of Ottawa's resettlement strategy.

Casasola, M., & Treviranus, B. (2003). Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A

Practitioners Perspective of its Past and Future. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 4(2), 177-202.

This article seeks to examine the impact of the private sponsorship of refugees program on Canada's refugee resettlement efforts. The article contextualizes the program in Canadian history and international law and pinpoints shortcomings, such as procedural delays. The article is referenced to provide a detailed overview of the private sponsorship of refugees program.

Casasola, M. (2016). The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR and Canadian Resettlement Selection Policies and Practices. *Refuge*, 32(2), 41-53.

This article situates Canada's private sponsorship program in international law and outlines the explicit goals of the program. The article juxtaposes the UNHCR with Canadian immigration policy using the Vietnamese exodus as a case study. The article is referenced for a detailed explanation of the objectives and structure of the private sponsorship program.

Chan, K., & Lam, L. (1983). Resettlement of Vietnamese-Chinese Refugees in Montreal, Canada: Some Socio-psychological Problems and Dilemmas. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 1-16.

This article seeks to explore the socio-psychological aspects and challenges of refugee resettlement. The article focuses on sponsor-refugee relations, dreams, and thoughts of past experiences to uncover the consequences of past traumas and persistent worries. This article is referenced to examine the psychological adaptation of Vietnamese refugees.

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This article seeks to demonstrate the ethnic distinctions in the trajectory of Quebec City's Indochinese population, highlighting economic, social, and communal differences between Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian immigrants. The article juxtaposes the relative economic and social successes of Vietnamese refugees with that of other Indochinese newcomers and discusses differences within the Vietnamese community according to emigration wave. The paper is referenced to examine the degree to which Vietnamese refugees integrated into the local economy.

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This book provides an in-depth account of Indochinese resettlement in Canada. The book provides a significant amount of historical context and distinction between the three groups affected by the exodus. This book is reference to provide a detailed historical account of the Vietnam War and exodus.

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The article seeks to demonstrate the importance of religion in different periods of Vietnamese refugees' lives. The provides detailed accounts of religious affirmations that refugees received during their plight and analyzes religious community formation in Montreal. The article is referenced to analyze how Vietnamese Canadians utilized religion at different periods of their lives.

Keung, N. (2005, June 22). 'Canada is a promised land'; Vietnamese boat people braved open seas to escape communist regime and find a better life Teenager and her family fled country where officials 'just didn't like us,' writes Nicholas Keung. *Toronto Star*.

This article provides a detailed account of one Vietnamese family's emigration and resettlement experiences, as well as their reflections. The family's story is referenced to provide a more nuanced perspective of Vietnamese people's journey to Canada.

Koh, P. (2016). The Stories They Carried: Reflections of Vietnamese-Canadians 40 Years after That War. *Refuge*, 32(2), 9-19.

This article synthesizes the diverse experiences of six Vietnamese refugees who landed in Canada, narrowing in on the push factors that compelled them to flee, their experience of the



emigration process, and the transition to Canadian society. Each story reveals the dilemmas, push factors, and obstacles involved in survival-based emigration, as well as that of adaptation.

Honing in on storytellers' sense of belonging and conceptualization of home, the article aims to demonstrate the complex and ever-changing nature of the Vietnamese-Canadian experience and identity. The article is referenced to provide a detailed account of the factors that prompted Vietnamese refugees to flee the country.

Molloy, M.J., & Simeon, J.C. (2016). The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Launch of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program. *Refuge*, 32(2), 3-8.

This article provides an overview of research on Canada's private sponsorship program and steps of the program. This article is referenced to provide insight into the logistics of refugee resettlement.

Molloy, M., Duschinsky, P., Jenson, K., & Shalka R. (2017). *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

This book offers an in-depth look at the strengths and weaknesses of Canada's private sponsorship of refugees program using the experiences of Vietnamese refugees who arrived after the war. Public servants who played an integral role in refugee resettlement recall how they selected eligible refugees for resettlement and connected them with private sponsors across the country. The article is referenced to more accurately describe the populations affected by the exodus.

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This news article investigates the extent and longevity of the damage caused by America's bombing of Vietnam as a part of Agent Orange. The article is referenced to contextualize the exodus in the West's destruction and destabilization of Vietnam.

Ngo, A. (2016). A Case Study of the Vietnamese in Toronto: Contesting Representations of the Vietnamese in Canadian Social Work Literature. *Refuge*, 32(2), 20-29.

This article analyzes the interviews of 28 Vietnamese refugees in Toronto to highlight intracommunity tensions based on the Vietnam War and critique the omission of the nuanced experiences of Vietnamese refugees in social work literature. Using the respondents' recollections, the article demonstrates how Toronto's Vietnamese community members distinguish and organize themselves based on geographical background and presumptive ideology, class, and emigration wave. Distinctions in emigration wave and class were also apparent among Vietnamese respondents. In outlining the differences and complex sources of discrimination and alienation among Toronto's Vietnamese community, The article aims to challenge the monolithic portrayal of Vietnamese refugees as exceptional in social work literature and reify the connection between the contemporary challenges faced by Vietnamese refugees and the Vietnam War. The article is referenced to present intragroup tensions as an impediment into refugees' integration into Canada.

Ngo, A. (2016). Journey to Freedom Day Act": The making of the Vietnamese subject in Canada and the erasure of the Vietnam War. *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, 75, 59-86.

This paper seeks to contextualize the Vietnam War and exodus in the Cold War. This article analyzes and critiques the Journey to Freedom Day Act (2015), which memorializes Vietnamese immigration to Canada following the fall of Saigon, contending that its construction of a monolithic, anti-communist refugee community alludes to saviourism and obscures

Canada's role in the Vietnam War. The article is referenced to critically analyze the salience of political ideology in Canadian resettlement efforts.

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Stephenson, P. (1995). VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN VICTORIA, B.C.: AN OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE HEALTHCARE IN A MEDIUM-SIZED CANADIAN URBAN CENTRE. *Social Science & Medicine*, 40(12), 1631-1642.

This article seeks to examine the help-seeking behaviours of Vietnamese refugees in Victoria.

The article draws connections between traditional religious beliefs and poor help-seeking behaviours. The article also presents the cultural incompetence of Canada's healthcare system as an impediment to integration. The article is referenced to explore Vietnamese people's interaction with Canadian social services and cultural adaptation.

Trinh, J. (2015, September 11). Vietnamese boat people of more than 3 decades ago now thriving, proud Canadians. *CBC News*.

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This news article juxtaposes the tribulations of Vietnamese Ottawans during exodus with the progress they have made in Canada today, mainly through the lens of the author's family. The author's account of her family's assimilation into Canadian conservatism is referenced as an example of Vietnamese-Canadian political adaptation and integration into the nation's capitalist logics.

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research. (2017). *The resettlement of Vietnamese refugees across Canada over three decades*.

<https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/resettlement-vietnamese-refugees-across-canada-over-three-decades>

This report seeks to identify trends in Vietnamese refugee resettlement across Canada. The article draws connections between refugees' regional background and economic integration into Canada. The article is referenced to examine the process of refugee acceptance and the subsequent distribution of Vietnamese refugees across Canada.