EXPRESSING ETHNICITY: A VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN KANSAS

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I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, majoring in Anthropology.

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Robert Lawless, Committee Chair

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

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DEDICATION

To my parents and sister

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempted to establish the usefulness of the sociologist Joane Nagel's approach to the study of ethnicity within the discipline of anthropology. While others within the field of anthropology have acknowledged Nagel's view, its application has been few. By reviewing the primordialist and circumstantialist debate over ethnicity within anthropology, the foundation will be laid to access the applicability of Nagel's approach for resolving issues about ethnicity that still remain years after the debate. Considering that Nagel's approach places importance on both the individual and those with whom the interaction takes place, the issue of transnationalism or continuation of multiple ties with another nation will be addressed when applying Nagel's perceptive to a Vietnamese community in Kansas.

The conclusions of this study revealed that Nagel's approach to ethnicity does serve as a satisfactory model for understanding ethnicity, and transnationalism was found to be present among the Vietnamese community in Kansas.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Approximately thirty years have passed since the first refugees from Vietnam entered the United States. This movement was in direct response to the transfer of power in South Vietnam to communist North Vietnam. These first refugees were followed by subsequent groups of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants who chose to leave Vietnam for economic, political, and personal reasons. Kansas became home for some of these Vietnamese refugees and immigrants.

Given the importance of the situation in the circumstantialist approach to ethnicity, the Vietnamese and any ethnic group who relocates from their native country to a foreign country will undergo changes in terms of their ethnicity. Indeed, ethnicity is not static no matter what the circumstances, but the presence of a contrasting environment accentuates differences. The purpose of this study is twofold: 1.) to investigate how ethnicity is expressed and negotiated among the Vietnamese living in Kenton, a pseudonym for the city in Kansas 2.) to assess the degree of transnationalism that is present among the community and Vietnam. This data is pertinent for two reasons. First, differences in opinion among generations, recent and past immigrants, and others in the community in what constitutes Vietnameseness (the ethnic boundaries) may explain possible misunderstandings among the community. Second, while Fredrik Barth's approach to ethnicity emphasizes the role of the subjective (what individuals themselves think), Abner Cohen's approach to ethnicity emphasizes the objective (outward expressions and the "other's" perceptions). Joane Nagel is able to reconcile the differences underlying Barth's and Cohen's approaches thereby offering a very plausible model for ethnicity. However, this model is not prevalent within anthropology. The applicability of Nagel's approach to ethnicity will be tested through investigating how ethnicity is expressed and

negotiated among the Vietnamese in Kenton in order to illustrate the grounds for its acceptance

as the answer to the primordial vs. circumstantial debate in anthropology over how ethnicity

should be viewed.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS ETHNICITY?

So what exactly is ethnicity? The answer to this question is not as simple as a person might expect. A brief look into the history of the term *ethnicity* in anthropology reveals that the related term *ethnic group* entered into use in the 1950s (Keyes 2002:1169). According to Charles Keyes (2002:1169), the adoption of this term developed out of the inadequacy of the term *tribe* and dissatisfaction with evolutionary theory. Furthermore, an upsurge in the study of ethnicity followed in the 1960s paralleling the civil rights and feminist movements (Espiritu 1992:12). Ethnicity is not a synonym for culture, but rather culture and identity comprise ethnicity (Nagel 1994:153). Within the realm of research on ethnicity, two main approaches exist: primordial and circumstantial. Closer investigation into these two camps reveals there exists a blurring of the division on a few points.

Primordialists

In general, primordialists view ethnicity as innate, connected to blood ties. According to Richard Thompson (1989:53), the beginnings of primordialism can be traced to the sociologist Edward Shils and his work with comradeship among WWII soldiers and the importance of this and other relationships with family and friends for good performance. Shils focused next on the relationship between family members and found that something deeper existed than continual contact to form the intense bond, and Shils identified this something greater as 'tie of blood' (as quoted in Thompson 1989:55). Thus, descent stands out as a basic tenet within primordialism for defining ethnicity. However, descent can be interpreted biologically or figuratively.

Thompson (1989:54) points out that the primordialist approach can be divided into two camps: sociobiological and political-historical. Advocating the sociobiological position, Pierre

van den Berghe postulates that ethnicity arose out of the extended kin group, and while ethnicity

has now expanded beyond kin groups, individuals' "decisions" to assimiliate depends on "the

centripetal force of kin selection and the maximization of fitness through other means"

(1981:217). Thus, when maintaining a certain ethnicity would be most beneficial to the

perpetuation of an individual's genes than that serves as the main determining factor in ethnicity.

Yet, van den Berghe clearly and accurately makes the point that there is no biological basis for

race (1981:31). In addition, van den Berghe (1971 as cited in Thompson 1989) acknowledges

that various levels of ethnicity exist and the selection of which level to associate with depends on

which options offer the most benefit to the individual.

　　　Thompson classifies Clifford Geertz's position on ethnicity as the political-historical

category of primordialism. Geertz's (1973:259) often-sited definition of primordial attachment or

ethnicity refers to this attachment as "…stem[ming] from the 'givens'" the commonalities of

"blood, speech, custom." While there is a definite implication of a biological basis for ethnicity,

Geertz (1973:259, 309), through drawing on the work of Shils, points out that because of the

clashes of individual identity (i.e. ethnicity) with the national support needed by the state,

ethnicity serves as the foundation for political action against the pressures of a new government.

In addition, Geertz (1973:259) points out that "a more circumstantial tracing of the stages

through which their [state and ethnicity] relationship to one another passes" is required. Thus,

according to Thompson (1989:54), Geertz grounds ethnicity, based on primordial ties, within a

political-historical context.

　　　With the emphasis on blood ties, how would ethnicity change within the primordialist

model? Diachronic change of the ethnic group through the various stages of struggle with the

state might be inferred from Geertz (1973:309), but Charles Keyes (1981) specifically addresses

how changes in ethnicity may take place within the primordialist approach. For Keyes (1981:5), "ethnicity derives from the cultural interpretation of descent." Like Geertz, Keyes (1981:14) sees ethnicity as a means to insure the well-being of the group within the larger society. This is not a sociobiological selfish-gene position. Keyes and Geertz do not reduce ethnicity down to the level of the gene, and moreover Keyes (1981:6) states that an individual may be a member of multiple ethnic groups. For Keyes (2002:1170-1171; 1981:27), considering that the state influences not only the interactions between groups but also the distinguishing factors of a group than significant changes in the state/political realm will evoke changes in ethnicity. According to Keyes (1981:15), these changes usually take place over the span of at least one generation and thus he offers a view of synchronic change. Also, in terms of diachronic change, Keyes (1981:27) states that the makeup of an ethnicity and its specific function fluctuates. The primordialist viewpoint comes back into play because individuals will realign how they trace descent and the commonalities held with their forbearers in order to legitimize the adjustments to ethnicity (Keyes 1981:18, 27).

Nevertheless, there are some major shortcomings in defining ethnicity in terms of primordialism. The sociobiological approach in and of itself is reductionalist and deprives individuals of true agency. Moreover, Edna Bonacids points out that while commonalities of blood and custom may form the basis of group cohesiveness and ties with the past, these commonalities are not innate, prepackaged attributes of the group (as sited in Thompson 1989:58). There is no reason why descent must be a distinguishing feature of ethnicity. This is further supported by the statements of Anya Royce in her 1982 book *Ethnic Identity*. Namely, Royce (1982:184) points out that an ethnic identity may be adopted by an individual who lacks

blood ties into the group, and individuals with legitimate blood ties may decline to acknowledge membership within an ethnic group.

Circumstantialists

Circumstantialists would agree that although ethnicity may be defined in turns of common ancestry, it is also situational and ongoing within the daily lives of the individuals and continues throughout their lifespan. Identity arises out of shared and patterned beliefs and behaviors, but variation between cultures does not necessary translate into a basis for distinguishing ethnicity (Thai 2002:59; Espiritu 1992:9). An ethnic group develops out of a cultural group as the differences between cultures are asserted for particular reasons, and a group identity is recognized (Espiritu 1992:9). In addition, basing ethnicity on being from a particular country is insufficient (Espiritu 1992:7). While agency is important, some type of regularity in outward behavior is necessary in order to allow those within and outside the group to assess which ethnic group an individual belongs as well as facilitate daily interactions between and within ethnic groups (Royce 1982:2, 30; De Vos 1975:374). Likewise, members have a higher, more refined standard than nonmembers for assessing membership in a particular group based on behavior (Royce 1982:185). According to Royce (1982:187), the assessment of ethnic signaling, which refers to the particular action-markers of ethnic identity, may leave a person estranged from a particular ethnic group yet placed within that same ethnic group by nonmembers' evaluations.

Among circumstantialists, varying opinions exist as to how much emphasis should be placed on the subjective feelings and the perspective of individuals/members within a group and the objective, observable actions and the viewpoint of those outside the group when it comes to the formation of ethnicity. The circumstantialists that speak of ethnicity in terms of feelings held

by individual members and the group at large as a "consciousness of kind" do not leave the concept hanging in cognitive limbo but rather also point out that these feelings take root in the concreteness of cultural characteristics, shared histories, space, and language (Conzen et al. 1985:23; Fenton 2003:194; Woon 1985:535; Royce 1982:18). Still, those leaning more towards the subjective postulate that what is crucial in the ongoing process of ethnicity is the way members both on the individual and group level edit and understand their shared past (Takezawa 1995:212). Yet, this revision process does not occur in a vacuum; motives arise out of the present situation and future hopes to stimulate and influence the edits, and moreover, parameters to ethnic identity are imposed from inside and outside the ethnic group. Ethnic identity then depends on both the subjective viewpoint of the individual and the objective appraisal of the other (De Vos 1974:374).

Royce (1982:11) points out that sometimes too much focus is on behavior, and cognition is taken as a uniform constant, or behavior is seen as being directly correlated with cognition whereby a person changes one, the other will change. Yet simply changing the way a person dresses or the language a person speaks does not automatically change the person's self-conceived identity nor does the decision to identify with a different ethnicity necessarily change the ethnic signals that an individual expresses. Likewise, ethnic change in terms of the private (subjective-inward self) and the public (objective-outward appearance/actions) does not occur at the same rate (Cronin 1970 as cited in Muzny 1989:14; Royce 1982:23). The public ethnic change often occurs first due to job requirements and the relative ease of adjusting this aspect compared to adjusting how a person conceives of self (Cronin 1970 as cited in Muzny 1989:14-15).

So to what degree does the objective side, i.e. the "other" or in the case of immigrants, the host society, play in affecting change? Damien McCoy (1992:249) proposes that the "host society both strengthens ethnic consciousness and forces change in ethnicity." The outcome, according to Yancy et al. and Castles et al., depends less on the ethnic group's characteristics and more on the host society (as sited in McCoy 1992:248). Thus, this line of thinking postulates that the identity of each incoming ethnic group will be affected the same way (Lee 1998:6). However, McCoy (1992:249) points out a certain homogeneity would then be expected among various ethnic groups within a host society, and this is not the case. Rather, the direction of change is negotiated by the characteristics of the ethnic group with the pressures put forth by the host society (McCoy 1992:249). The saliency the host society gives to ethnic cues, those immutable characteristics of an ethnic group such as skin color, in turn establishes the options available for ethnic identity (Royce 1982:211). Another item to consider is that the host society and/or other ethnic groups perception of another ethnic group needs to also change as the identity of the other undergoes reformation in order that conflict be prevented (Manderson 1990 as sited in McKenzie 1999). At the same time too, the ethnicity of the other will also be affected by the interaction, and the other's reassessment of identity will in turn affect the ethnic group's identity (Conzen et al 1985:24). Negotiation of ethnicity is not strictly one-way although the pressures exerted by each may differ and therefore the impact each has on one another. The case for the saliency of the subjective vs. the objective is best represented by Fredrik Barth and Abner Cohen who represent the two main perspectives within the circumstantialist approach.

Fredrik Barth and Boundaries

In Barth's (1969a:11) edited work, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Culture Difference*, he summarizes the common anthropological concept of the *ethnic group* as

1.) largely biologically self-perpetuating
2.) shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural factors
3.) makes up a field of communication and interaction
4.) has a membership which identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

While Barth (1969a:14) does see "ascription as a critical feature of ethnic identity," he places emphasis on the boundaries, the demarcations between ethnic groups, as the key factor in perpetuating ethnic identity. However, he is explicit in distinguishing between an ethnic group's cultural characteristics and its boundaries; the two are not equivalent (Barth 1969a:14, 15). For Barth (1969a:11), ethnic identity brings about a sense of mutual characteristics held in common. Thus, because ethnic identity does not arise out of common cultural material, the material can change without erasing the boundaries and causing the ethnic identity to become obsolete (Barth 1969a:21). Barth (1969a:13) reasons that cultural characteristics can not be the basis of ethnic boundaries because these factors are affected by the environment and such processes as diffusion. Furthermore, an increase in cultural similarities between ethnic groups does not reduce the saliency of the ethnic groups nor does it suggest a flaw in preserving boundaries (Barth 1969a:33). The cultural characteristics of an ethnic group, the boundary markers, and the internal structure of the ethnic group may all change without discontinuing the "us" and "them" distinction (Barth 1969a: 14).

So what are the criteria by which certain cultural characteristics are taken up as markers of ethnic boundaries? Barth (1969a:14) believes that the

features that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant.

Therefore, this statement reveals that Barth's perception of ethnicity emphasizes the subjective aspect of ethnic identity. He goes on to state that it is difficult to say exactly what objective differences will be chosen by the ethnic group since

ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different social-cultural systems (Barth 1969a:14).

According to Hicks (1977:3), the use of the subjective viewpoint as a means to determine ethnic identity goes back to Max Weber's 1922 work on ethnic groups, but Barth's application of it in terms of ethnic boundaries diverged from previous studies on ethnicity.

Barth (1969a:10) also concentrates on relations among ethnic groups. He points out that the idea of ethnic boundaries does not preclude interaction among ethnic groups, and interactions do not blur ethnic boundaries but on the contrary help to maintain boundaries (Barth 1969a:9). In addition, an ethnic group maintains different types of relations, i.e. competitive, symbiotic, with other ethnic groups (Barth 1969a:20). According to Barth (1969a:19), relationships, such as symbiotic, do not result in the fusing of two ethnicities because the relationship is ultimately grounded on generalized, perceived differences among members of various groups. To summarize, Barth's focus on boundary maintenance for ethnic study can be translated into a two-part methodology involving the investigation of the subjective viewpoint of the individual and member involvement in the community (Woon 1985:535).

So is Barth's approach the best way to study ethnicity? Some have taken issue with Barth's definition of boundaries. For instance, Peter McKenzie (1998) believes that ethnic boundaries are actually more fluid than the vessel analogy given by Barth. McKenzie (1998) prefers to use the imagery of Michael Tassig with boundaries 'swimming in and out of focus.'

More specifically, individuals hold multiple memberships in ethnic groups and choose to associate with a particular ethnic identity according to the circumstances. George Hicks (1977:17, 18) also agrees with this more fluid view of ethnicity and introduces the broker to the equation of interactions. In addition, Lee (1998:178) feels that ethnic boundaries do not exist on their own but are in a constant flux of formation; the outcome at any moment being the result of history and the interaction between two or more groups.

This difference in perception of boundaries could stem from the fact that Barth in comparison to McKenzie and Lee are viewing ethnicity on different levels. Barth's boundary formation, while resting on the subjective viewpoint of the members, is looking at the situation in terms of the collective group whose members have a consensus that they all share something in common. For instance, Barth (1969b) discusses ethnic boundaries among the Pathan of Afghanistan and Pakistan in terms of the group and does not refer to Pathan individuals' personal perceptions. On the other hand, McKenzie's and Lee's studies and conclusions focus on individual experiences and their perspectives on belonging to a certain group at a particular time. For example, they incorporated several direct quotes from Vietnamese individuals on the issue of ethnic identity. Thus, on the more inclusive level of group identity, the collective can negotiate its defining characteristics but cannot as a whole appeal to another group identity in its entirety as both are on the same level, especially within a synchronic time frame. Indeed, the collective exists precisely because it differs in some perceived way with the other groups on that level. The individual, though, falls under the inclusion of the group and thus has the ability to associate with multiple ethnic groups. Indeed, Royce (1982:185) states that Barth's concept of the continual process of ethnic boundary maintenance can also be applied to the individual level.

Abner Cohen

The second main way of approaching ethnicity within the circumstantialists approach is Abner Cohen's approach to ethnicity as represented in *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa* (1969) and *Urban Ethnicity* (1974). Cohen (1974:x, xi) defines ethnicity as

> the degree of conformity by members of the collectivity to these shared norms in the course of social interaction…It is essentially a form of interaction between cultural groups operating within common social contexts.

The social framework plays a very important role for Cohen in terms of designating ethnicity because he sees ethnicity, based on cultural commonalities, arising from political and economic circumstances as a means to lobby for group influence (Cohen 1969:190). This type of 'political' ethnicity occurs when other bases for organization are not possible (Cohen 1974:xvii). Ethnicity is not a power tool on an individual basis but rather on the level of the ethnic group (Cohen 1974:xiii). True, individuals have options of choosing which ethnic identities to associate with and receive benefits from membership in a particular ethnic group, but in return the group expects the individuals to be active members thereby subscribing to the symbols and interacting (Cohen 1974:xii). When the social context of the ethnic group changes, additional markers of ethnicity may be adopted and tied to the previous symbols, or the current symbols may be reworked or prioritized (Cohen 1974:xiv). Ethnicity takes second seat when other forms of organization, such as along class lines, splits an ethnic group (Cohen 1974:xxii). However, class differences can also serve to demarcate ethnic groups when one group generally falls within the haves and the other in the have-nots (Cohen 1974:xxii).

However, Cohen is not discounting the importance of boundaries for boundaries are a necessity; he places emphasis on "what people do" rather than on "what they subjectively think or what they think they think" (Cohen 1974:x). Cohen (1974:xiii) considers Barth's approach

teleological following the premise that perceived identity influences conduct, and the researcher knows what the identity is by the actions and statements of the individuals. Unlike Barth, Cohen (1969:190,192) adds an explanation for why subsequent generations would continue maintaining an ethnic identity, namely the ethnic group fills an economic and political function that would not be filled based on other characteristics. Marcus Banks (33) in the 1996 book *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* also comes to this same assessment of Cohen's work. Moreover, Cohen (1974:xiv) feels that erroring on the side of the subjective, as Barth does, overshadows the fact that ethnicity for one ethnic group means something totally different from that of another ethnic group; thus, ethnicity is a "matter of degree" for what ethnicity means to someone embroiled in genocide differs greatly from someone who indicates a particular ethnic identity on a scholarship form.

Yen Le Espiritu and Panethnicity

Panethnicity refers to the broad encompassing level of ethnicity under which its members may be divided into various subcategories. While Ivan White's (1981:71) conceived of ethnicity in terms of ethnic scope involved increasingly encompassing levels of ethnicity that individuals could associate with depending on the circumstances, and Van de Berghe (1971) also made reference to various levels of ethnicity, Yen Le Espiritu's panethnicity differs on the point of membership. Namely, panethnicities were generally defined by outsiders and imposed upon the individuals who became its members (Espiritu 1992:6). Categories such as African American, Latinos, and Asian Americans were created as a means to organize groups of people (Espiritu 1992:6). Nevertheless, members of panethnicities can actively use these enforced categories to their own advantage (Espiritu 1992:7). Political and economic incentives help to perpetuate panethnicity, yet as interactions take place within and outside panethnicities, the markers of a

panethnicity undergo reassessment and adjustment rather than remaining constant (Espiritu 1992:7,11). According to Espiritu (1992:9), the common thread which holds such a large group of people together under a panethnicity is spun from the groups past experiences with suppression and is expressed symbolically. For Espiritu (1992:11), "group consciousness" arises out of this commonality and serves to maintain a panethnicity even though panethnicities originate from political and economic conditions. Thus, he gives credit to the role of the subjective in ethnic identity. In addition, groups such as new immigrants both renew ethnic identities and create conflict between old and new members by highlighting differences within the group (Espiritu 1992:14). The broader category of panethnicity also provides more options for its members in terms of identities and may help to reconcile individuals' internal struggles with more specific ethnicities, such as Vietnamese vs. American (Takezawa 1995:207).

Conceiving of ethnicity in terms of scopes or layers or levels begs the question of when, why, and how do people associate with one rather than another (Cohen 1978:389) To begin with, having a panethnicity does not necessarily overshadow an individual's other ethnic identities, but the prominence of a panethnicity to a person can vary throughout their life (Takezawa 1995:207). Royce (1982:84) points out that a ranking system for ethnic identity might only come into play when two or more identities became salient at the same time. The answer to the when and why portion of the question, involves, at least partly, the context of the interaction and to what level of ethnicity it applies (Smith and Guarnizo 1998:21). As an ethnic group enters into contact with a broader range of other ethnic groups, the greater the options will be (Royce 1982:99). Advancement of status may be a reason for identifying oneself with one level instead of another (Royce 1982:188-189). Individuals associate with a particular ethnic identity by exhibiting appropriate symbols, but these must receive acceptance by the ethnic group to which

membership is being claimed. Otherwise, the claim is not validated. In addition, Royce (1982:188-189) explains that permanent switching between ethnicities, such as Zapato to Mexican, puts the actor in a precarious place, as failure may void acceptance into the mainstream of either ethnic group.

In terms of Asian American panethnicity, Lee (1998:99) sees it as arising out of a need to counter stereotypes as well as influencing the development of more refined internal group divisions such as Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese. A greater awareness among Asian Americans to exert their subgroup ethnicity is evident in their actions to have nine Asian subgroups added to the 1980 census (Espiritu 1992 and Lee 1993 as cited in Nagel 1994:160). A reason behind this push lies in the economic benefits of being recognized as a separate group for government funding (Espiritu 1992 and Lee 1993 as cited in Nagel 1994: 160). According to Espiritu (1992:14), a feeling of unity and connectedness across the various ethnic groups subsumed under the panethnicity of Asian American is lacking. Furthermore, adding to Espiritu's and the circumstantialists ideas that ethnicity serves a function, either to maintain differences or gain assess to economic/political assets, which in turns depends on some group in which to contrast with, Lee (1998:77) points out that Asian immigrants did not think of themselves as Asian until they relocated to the United States. While Trueblood is not referring directly to panethnicity, she sees initial mutual struggles to survive and gain acceptance or at least coexistence within the host community as binding together immigrants, and once recognition into the host society is reached, then the process of distinguishing oneself from the larger group begins (as cited in Royce 1982:134).

Joane Nagel

Joane Nagel's circumstantialist conception of ethnicity blends the best of Barth's and Cohen's models. For Nagel (1994:153), ethnicity is "a dynamic, constantly evolving property of both individual identity and group organization." According to Nagel (1994:153), ethnicity arises out of identity and culture. Thus, Nagel believes that ethnicity is constructed the same way that identity and culture are formed. For Nagel (1994:154), identity is the result of "what you think your ethnicity is, versus what they think your ethnicity is" and is akin to ethnic boundaries. Factors influencing the selection of identity include the perceived opinion of the ethnicity held by others, the advantages of the ethnicity, and its appropriateness in the particular context (Nagel 1994:155). Thus, the other and external forces i.e. economic, political play an important role in identity formation while the role of individual and the group is given more primacy in choosing the manifestations of culture through the adoption of new practices, the maintenance of old practices, or revival of past practices (Nagel 1994:161).

Being components of a single ideological entity, ethnicity, means that culture and identity must agree with one another. As previously discussed, ethnic cues, beliefs, behaviors, and cultural material witness to the claimed identity and place limits on its acceptability. Therefore, metamorphosing Barth's vessel analogy into a shopping cart, Nagel (1994:162) sees identity or ethnic boundaries as the brand or model of the cart, and culture as the groceries placed in the cart by members of an ethnic group. History, that is past and present experiences, stock the supermarket in which individuals and groups shops (Nagel 1994:162). Thus, the history of an ethnic group is important but is not *the* determining explanatory factor for the current state of an ethnicity. Nagel (1994:162) points out that this shopping cart analogy also draws on the "cultural

toolkit" metaphor postulated by Swidler 1986, and such a dynamic process of identity formation is akin to Eric Erikson's continual formation of self based on past and present experiences .

Origin of Ethnicity

While primordialists see ethnicity as originating from true or perceived blood ties, what gives rise to ethnicity under the rubric of the circumstantialist approach? Espiritu (1992:4) suggests that "intergroup competition" is the condition under which ethnicity arises. Considering that diversity exists between and within ethnic groups despite cohesiveness and "consciousness of kind", Jae-Hyup Lee (1998:76) asks a very poignant question, how does a individual know what real ethnicity is? (Fenton 2003:195). The answer would have to be more than what the members of the ethnic group think it is because ethnicity is more than just the subjective, and moreover, Lee (1998:76) notes that all the members do not hold the same perception of their ethnicity. Nevertheless, as stated above some sense of consistency must exist in order to hold together the group. For Barth, the answer may be sought in the maintenance of boundaries. Likewise, Royce (1982:12) reports that ethnicity is often viewed in terms of 'us' and 'them' and "what we are not that derives from our experience of what others are and how we differ."

How then did ethnicity originate? If it is simply the presence of the other that stimulated it, how did recognition of the other take place if ethnicity did not develop out of the commonalities in materialization of culture as Barth states? Barth feels that people perceived that a difference existed and maintained boundaries based on what they saw differentiating themselves from the other, but on what grounds did they perceive that difference. Because Barth does not directly answer this questions, Thompson (1989) has accused Barth of maintaining a primordialist approach. Horowitz 1985 (as summarized by Espiritu 1992:9) statement that "culture is used to define a boundary and in other cases it is a product of boundaries" can be seen

as one possible solution to the question. Likewise, Lee (1998:178) proposes that recognition of ethnicity develops out of social stratification and the disparaging position certain groups of people find themselves in. Moreover, Basch et al. (1994:33) return to the important role of interaction and write that

> Whether or not they share unspoken life ways or distinctive and celebrated customs, once people find themselves conceptualized and come to conceptualize themselves as bound together with a common situation or identity, distinctiveness does indeed arise.

The primordialists see ethnicities as always existing while circumstantialists see ethnicities as more situationally dependent and developed from a need to serve a particular function which implies that ethnicities were not always present. But could the two groups be missing one another if the basis for ethnicity (i.e. differences in cultural beliefs, practices, material) is always there in the background, but not cognized as differences and brought to the forefront until a need arises? Thus, ethnicity would not be observed in everyday actions until some situation elicited its manifestation. If ethnicity rests in the boundaries like Barth reports than the lack of an "other" or as with Cohen, a lack of a reason to distinction oneself from an "other" then ethnicity would not always be present. The deciding factor then reverts back to the definition of what is ethnicity, blood ties, the cultural items and practices that one group has and the another doesn't, or the recognition that differences exist, using variation in cultural items and behavior in support, prompted by an advantage to such an assessment.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT IS TRANSNATIONALISM?

This research adopts Basch et al. (1994:7) definition of transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." According to Basch et al (1994:7), these connections may be any combination of "familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political", and the individuals living outside the home country are referred to as transmigrants. In a later work, Glick Schiller (1999:96), one of the authors of Basch et al (1994), explains that in order to classify individuals as transmigrants, both the immigrants and the states of residence and origin, should consider themselves/them as members. Thus, immigration is the act of relocating from one state to another; transnationalism refers to the maintenance of ties between the regions; and transmigrants refer to those immigrants who sustain interaction among the host and home countries. Schiller (1999:95) points out that transnationalism is not a recent event, but rather had been overshadowed by the assimilationist model of immigration.

However, Mahler (1998:77-78) raises several important questions about what degree and types of interactions are necessary to classify the relationship as transnationalism. For instance, Mahler (1998:77-78) poses questions about the degree to which continual immigration between the states is essential for the development of transnationalism, whether continual contact in the form of phone calls and emails and the sending of money and commodities would suffice, or a combination of factors. The answers to these important questions still remain open, and most likely will be found through cross-cultural comparisons of a wide variety of situations including reasons of immigration, cultural models of both nation-states, class status, and generation

(Mahler 1998:83). In the meantime, the presence of multiple relationships will determine the designation for the existence of transnationalism.

Transnationalism differs from globalization by grounding the focus of study between specific states (Kearney 1995:548). This does not mean that studies of transnationalism ignore factors of globalization. As factors of globalization, technological advances in travel (i.e. airplanes), communication (i.e. cell phones, email, instant messenger), shipping (i.e. FedEx overnight delivery from China to Kansas), and global banking also enable transnational ties to be sustained over diversely economical and geographical areas and across classes. However, Goldring (1998:166) cautions that these simply support and do not cause transnationalism to take place. Yet, cultural responsibilities and family ties serve double roles as sufficient explanations for transnationalism and supportive factors of it (Goldring 1998:166). In addition, political and economic advantages attached to maintaining transnational ties may serve as incentives for transnationalism (Goldring 1998:173). Moreover, Larissa Baia (1999) feels that the specific situations in the origin and host countries as well as the larger picture of globalization must both be incorporated into the study of transnationalism.

Transnationalism is intertwined within the investigation of ethnicity. With a link between the home nation and the nation abroad, will immigrants maintain the same identity, appeal to a more inclusive panethnicity, or merge ethnicities? According to Andrea Louie (2000:25), researchers can not assume that maintaining contacts will preserve the ethnicity of the immigrant. While the time spent in each state and degree of participation in each may be factors influencing the direction ethnicity will take in the new state, Mahler (1998:86) also points out that the degree and type of interaction between transmigrants and their countries of origin, such as amount of return visits, represent additional factors in considering the affects of

transnationalism on ethnicity. In addition, Louie (2001:369) states that the same type of contact

holds different meanings for various generations as was the case among first through fourth

generation Chinese living in the United States. Likewise, the same form of contact may have

varying affects on ethnicity depending on individual interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

THE CASE STUDY

Methodology

Data for this research was collected through library research, interviews, and participant observation. Fieldwork was conducted from January to April 2006 in Kenton, Kansas where a significant population of Vietnamese resided. A pseudonym is used in place of the real name of this Kansas city in order to protect the confidentiality of those who participated. Participant observation took place at a Catholic church and a Buddhist temple, Vietnamese New Year celebrations, and Vietnamese stores and restaurants. While most of the interviews were conducted in person, some of the interviews were conducted over the phone and through email. In the latter cases, the investigator either had previously met with the interviewee, or the interviewee had been referenced to contact the interviewer through a mutual acquaintance. Thus, in no case where the interviews were conducted over the phone or by email is there any reason to believe that the individuals were not in fact Vietnamese. The medium of phone and internet were used largely to accommodate the schedule of the interviewee. The in-person interviews were conducted by the researcher in English with the exception of one interview which was conducted partially in English and partially with the help of a translator. The open-ended questions were also administered as a questionnaire to two groups of individuals. In one case, the questions were administered to a group without the interviewer being present. In another case, a group was verbally asked, through a translator, some of the questions listed on the questionnaire, and their answers were then translated into English. The researcher was present for the latter group. Because of the difficulty in noting the contribution of individual participants, the group's numbers were not included in the totals of the sample.

The format of the questioning was open-ended and focused on four sections: background, contact with Vietnam, everyday activities, and ethnicity. In addition, a list of Vietnamese, Catholic, Buddhist, and American holidays was presented, and the interviewee was asked which they celebrated and how. The complete listing of questions can be found in Appendix A. The list of Vietnamese holidays was taken from the work of McLeod and Dieu 2001 and Tran 2002. In addition, a list of Vietnamese and American stores (i.e. grocery, shopping centers) as well as Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Mexican, Italian, Greek, American steakhouse, barbeque, buffet, and fast food restaurants were given to interviewees, and they were asked to identify places they frequented. The restaurants on the list came from those given previously by individuals in open-ended questions, another researcher's work in the area, and the phone book. The list of shops and restaurants was not included in the appendix because they would disclose the location of the fieldwork. Also, the interviewees were asked to identity from a list which Vietnamese newspapers and magazines they read. The list also included the local English newspaper. Lastly, the interviewees were asked to identify the types of high school, college, and professional sports they watch or played. The list included a local Vietnamese soccer team.

In addition, the interviewees were shown a list of various ethnic, regional, religious and social terms and asked to identify all of the following which they would use to describe their identity, or put another way, complete the sentence: I am _____. Next, the interviewees were asked to name their top three identities from the list, and then they were asked to identity their top choice and why. In addition, the interviewees were asked whether the identity they most associated with changed depending on who they were with or where they were. Fourthly, they were asked which identities from the above list their parents would identify with. Fifthly, they were asked to name which identities non-Asians have used to refer to them.

These questions and format directly follows the methodology used by Rogelio Saenz and

Benigno Aquine (1991) to study Mexican ethnicity in Oklahoma. The list of terms and questions

given to the Vietnamese interviewees is included in Appendix B. The various Vietnamese ethnic

groups included on the list were taken from Table 3 in Charles Keyes 2002 "Presidential

Address: 'The People of Asia'-Sciences and Politics in the Classification Ethnic Groups in

Thailand, China, and Vietnam" and represented some of the more common ethnic groups in

Vietnam.

Sample

Forty individuals, fourteen males and twenty-six females, were interviewed during the

course of the research. These individuals ranged in age from one individual in his late teens,

fourteen in their twenties, nine in their thirties, seven in their forties, five in their fifties, two in

their sixties, and one in her seventies. Using the periods of Vietnamese emigration outlined by

Thai 2002 as groupings, three had come to the United States prior to 1975, three during 1975,

seven between 1978 and 1982, three between 1983 and 1989, twelve in the 1990s, and ten in the

2000s. The ages of the individuals at the time they left Vietnam ranged from ten who were

eleven and younger, five in their teens, fourteen in their twenties, three in their thirties, one in his

forties, and one in her fifties. Twenty-seven individuals were from South Vietnam, one from

North Vietnam, and three from Central Vietnam. Only one individual was born in the United

States, and two individuals were born in other Asian countries. In Vietnam, their occupations

ranged from teachers, military, small business owners, and factory workers. Nine had attended

college in Vietnam.

Seventeen of the females and eight of the males were married, and nine females and six

males were single. All those in the sample could speak and read Vietnamese and English to

varying degrees as well as such languages as French, Spanish, and Mandarin. In the United States, their occupations ranged from small business owners, service jobs, state employees, insurance, aircraft, accounting, and medical field. Twenty individuals had attended college in the United States.

CHAPTER 5

VIETNAMESE HISTORY

Following Nagel's approach to ethnicity and applying the shopping cart analogy, the starting point to understanding why and what the Vietnamese place in their "shopping carts" and thus how ethnicity is composed first involves investigating the available selection. As previously stated, history is the chief supplier; thus, it is important to begin an analysis of Vietnamese ethnicity by first over-viewing the history of the Vietnamese people both in their native country and in the United States.

Vietnam

According to Vietnamese origin myth, the Vietnamese people were the product of Au Lac, a fairy princess, and Lac Long Quan, a dragon king (Tran 2002:20). Lacking a common heritage, the couple were forced to split, and the king went south with fifty of their children and the princess went north with the remaining fifty children (Tran 2002:20). From this union came the first Vietnamese ruler Hung Vuong (Tran 2002:20; Freeman 1996:8). Likewise, a yellow dragon, yellow being the color of monarchs, serves as the national symbol for Vietnam (Rutledge 1985:123).

The strategic location of Vietnam along the Gulf of Tonkin and the lack of major natural fortifications for invaders may explain why conquest and war are common themes in Vietnam's history (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:2). In fact, the first written reference to the area of Vietnam can be traced back to the Chinese, who in 221 BC were involved in forcefully expanding their territory (Muzny 1989:37). Beginning in 111 B.C., the Chinese gained power over Nam Viet, the northern area of what is today Vietnam, and remained in control until 939 A.D. when the Chinese were defeated. A series of six dynasties (Dinh, Le, Ly, Tran, Le, Nguyen) followed for

900 years (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:6). Nevertheless, peace did not continue throughout this period. During the 13th century, the Mongols invaded the area but were defeated. However, the Chinese did regain control of the area for a brief span of two decades during the 15th century. Also at this time, expansion into the central and southern regions of what is today Vietnam took place under the Le dynasty (Tran 2002:25). These lands were already occupied by the Champa in the central and the Khmer in south, and these groups were subsequently subsumed under the Le dynasty by the late 18th century (Tran 2002:25; McLeod and Dieu 2001:8). Confrontations over the control of the newly enlarged area resulted in the area being divided in the 17th century into a north controlled by the Trinh clan and the south by the Nguyen clan (Tran 2002:25).

Beginning in the 19th century, the French began settling in the south, and colonization was complete by 1884 (Jamieson 1993:5; Tran 2002:27). At this same time, many Chinese entered Vietnam to escape hardships in China (Burling 1965 as cited in Richardson 1985). Under the French, Vietnam was split into three regions, Cochinchina colony in the south, Annam protectorate in the central, and Tonkin protectorate in the north, and the French undertook a project to make the southern swamp lands more inhabitable (Jamieson 1993:5). Discontent with Vietnamese ruling class continued under French rule, and in 1930 Ho Chi Minh founded the Indochinese Communist Party (Tran 2002:27). Between 1940 and 1945, the Japanese took control of Vietnam and put into place a dummy government (Duiker 1995 as cited in Freeman 1996:18). In 1941, the Viet Minh came into being and announced the independence of Vietnam in the 1945 August Revolution (Freeman 1996:18,19). The French Indochina War subsequently ensued from 1946 to 1954 (Tran 2002:28). In May 1954, the Geneva Accord resolved the French-Indochinese War, required the French to give Vietnam independence, and set boundaries at the 17th parallel for the division of Vietnam into two countries (Freeman 1996: 19). Each

country was suppose to have an election, but considering that the communist party would be running for election, the United States refused to grant approval (Freeman 1996:19). Nevertheless, the communist party maintained control of the north. This resulted in almost one to two million North Vietnamese fleeing to the south for religious, political, and economic reasons (Freeman 1996:20). In the south, Ngo Dinh Diem was president until his assassination in 1963 (Tran 2002:30). In December 1960, the National Liberation Front or the Viet Cong was formed. As a precaution against Viet Cong infiltration, the southern government instituted the Strategic Hamlet Program in 1962 to gather villagers into fortified hamlets, but by 1964 it was clear that the plan was not successful (Hickey 1964:54)

North Vietnam military entered South Vietnam in 1964, and the United State became actively involved in the conflict the same year (Freeman 1996:21, Henkin and Nguyen 1981:8). Four years later, the north's surprise attack during Tet signaled the beginning of the end for the United States military involvement in Vietnam (Tran 2002:30). In January 1973, a cease fire agreement was reached between the United States and North Vietnam, and northern forces took control of Saigon on April 30, 1975 (Freeman 1996:21). Shortly thereafter, border conflicts ensued between Vietnam and China in 1979, and Vietnam invaded neighboring Cambodia for ten years (Freeman 1996:21). During the border dispute with China, the Chinese living in Vietnam, who made up a good portion of the business sector and had a history of residing in the country for over 400 years, became targets of persecution (Freeman 1996:33). Also at this same time, the Vietnamese government implicated a policy to transfer all businesses in the south to the state (Whitmore 1985 and Zolbery et al 1989 as cited in Freeman 1996:33). In addition, the Vietnamese government created reeducation camps, i.e. prison-work camps, in 1975 and sent former members of the south military, south politicians, or dissenters to these camps (Tran

2002:34). Family members of these individuals were also blacklisted and denied access to such things as schooling and jobs (Tran 2002:35).

In 1986, important economic changes took place in Vietnam with the introduction of the *doi-moi*, economic policy which sought to revitalize Vietnam by allowing foreign investors, including those from the West, into Vietnam. This new policy had far-reaching effects on Vietnamese culture, such as more leeway for printed media, a more openness toward religion, more flexibility in terms of entrepreneurship, as well as bringing challenges to the current entertainment establishment with the influx of Western entertainment and goods. Furthermore, discussions of the affects of materialism, played out for instance in Vietnamese TV, resulted from the implementation of doi-moi (Drummond 2003). In 1994, the United States removed its restrictions on trade with Vietnam (Freeman 1996:21).

United States

Estimates place the population of Vietnamese living in the United State before 1975 at no more than 20,000 (Haines et al 1981:95). However, these demographics quickly changed in 1975 following the American pull-out from Saigon on April 29 and 30. While some Vietnamese had begun fleeing South Vietnam in 1969, approximately 50,000 Vietnamese left South Vietnam during these last two days in April equaling the estimated 50,000 who had left during the previous six years (Tran 2002:42; Nguyen and Henkin 1982:101). The United States airlifted over 5500 Vietnamese out of Saigon (Freeman 1996:2). While any employee of the American government or companies, military or political personnel, or possessed knowledge of sensitive information was eligible for American evacuation, about 100,000 of such individuals and family members and an additional 1.5 million South Vietnamese military were left behind (Muzny 1989:59; Freeman 1996:2). By the summer of 1975, a total of over 130,000 Vietnamese refugees

had escaped and were in camps at Guam, Wake Island, Subic Bay, and Thailand; many were later temporarily relocated to Camp Pendleton, CA; Fort Chaffee, AR; Eglin Air Force base, FL; or Indiantown, GA before being transferred to other cities in the United States (Nguyen and Henkin 1982:101). Many had no idea that their end destination would be the United States until they arrived at one of the bases (Takaki 1989:29). The four relocation bases in the United States were only intended to be temporary, and the program was discontinued at the end of 1975 (Nguyen and Henkin 1982:101). The first group of Vietnamese refugees to come to Kenton, Kansas arrived in 1975 (personal communication as cited in Richardson 1985:23).

Because communist forces controlled the airports and runways after April 30, 1975, the only option for escape became by boat or foot (Tran 2002:44). Another 21,000 Vietnamese managed to successfully escape in 1977 (Takaki 1989:452). However, the number of Vietnamese escaping by boat drastically increased in 1978 to over 100,000, and this trend continued with 150,000 refuges in 1979 (Takaki 1989:452). This group has been referred to as the "boat people" because of their method of escape. Almost half of these refugees were ethnic Chinese who were fleeing Vietnam as a result of deteriorating relations with the government following border disputes with China (Takaki 1989:454). ORR 1983 estimates that for every person who escaped successfully by boat, another died trying (Muzny 1989:69). Conditions on the boats, such as overcrowding, exposure, lack of food or water, bad weather, and pirates all caused deaths. Survivors recount that pirates ruthlessly raped women and bound and threw men overboard (Takaki 1989:452). By the end of this "wave" of escape, approximately 450,000 Indochinese, most of whom were Vietnamese, had successfully entered the United States by 1981 (Haines et al 1981:95).

Parole powers allowed Vietnamese refugees to enter the United States during from 1976

through 1978 (Freeman 1996). Under the 1979 Orderly Departure Program, the United States

and Vietnam allowed individuals, who were living in Vietnam but had family in the United

States, to emigrate to the United States (Takaki 1989:460). Up to 20,000 people a year could

come to the United States under this program (Takaki 1989:460). Other sources list the

maximum number at around 50,000 (Barkan 1998:473). Furthermore, the 1980 Refugee Act

replaced the set limit of refugees who could enter the United States each year with a figure which

would be determined annually by the President and Congress (Tran 2002:34). In 1982, children

living in Vietnam who had Vietnamese mothers and American fathers were able to come to the

United States with the help of a US sponsor under the Amerasian Immigration Act; however,

their mother and siblings could not accompany them (Freeman 1996:117-118). This last

provision was reworked with the Amerasian Homecoming Act in 1987 which did allow the

family of Amerasians to relocate with them to the United States until 1994 (Freeman 1996:35).

Through this new policy, 40,000 Amerasians a year were allowed to enter the United States

which was well above the actual number of requests submitted (Freeman 1996:35). In addition,

the 1989 Humanitarian Operation Program enabled former and present attendees of reeducation

camps and their families to enter the United States (Tran 2002:34-35).

Many Vietnamese came to Kenton during the period of 1979 to 1980, and immigration to

this city continues into the present (Richardson 1985:23). The close proximity to Fort Chaffee

base in Arkansas, job opportunities, sponsorship by the Catholic diocese and other individuals

and groups all served to influence settlement in Kansas. While previous literature did not

indicate that the Vietnamese living in Kenton encountered negative reactions by the larger

community, Ku Klux Klan demonstrations occurred in Texas, and Latinos in Denver became

angry when the newly arrived Vietnamese received first priority with housing (Rutledge 1985:70). Inadequate availability of housing was also a problem in San Francisco (Rutledge 1985: 70).

Not all of the Vietnamese living in the United States intended to remain, some held out hope that they would one day be able to return to Vietnam (Takaki 1989:455). However, after about five years, the situation in Vietnam still was not conducive, and many Vietnamese in the United States began the process of becoming United States citizens when such a possibility was made available to them in 1981 (Barkan 1998:474). From 1981 to 1993, a little over a quarter million Vietnamese became United States citizens (Barkan 1998:474).

CHAPTER 6

VIETNAMESE CULTURE

The previous chapter began the analysis of Vietnamese ethnicity in Kansas by first examining the historical background or the "suppliers" that provide the selection individuals and groups may pick from in maintaining ethnic boundaries. In continuing to follow Nagel's approach to ethnicity, this chapter seeks to look at what has already been placed in the "cart" of those Vietnamese who have immigrated to the United States. Namely, the following is an overview of Vietnamese culture: their religion, social structure, education, holidays, traditional medicine, food, traditional dress, language, and recreational activities. The role of the "suppliers" will readily become apparent as the reader peers into the "shopping cart" of the Vietnamese in Vietnam.

Religion

Currently, the Vietnamese government views religion as central to defining Vietnamese culture; thus, the state manipulates religion by appealing to religious tradition as a means for counterattacking Western influence while at the same time renouncing superstitious practices and monetary support of temples and churches as these were seen as undermining the desired persona of modernity and loyalty to the state (Soucy 2003:154). The three main philosophies traditionally held by the Vietnamese were Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (Hickey 1964:55). Other religious beliefs now followed in Vietnam include Catholicism, Protestantism, and Cao Daism.

Confucianism

The Reverend Master K'ung Fu Tzu, or better known as Confucius, lived between 551 and 479 BC and is the founder of Confucianism. Although Confucius believed that humankind

was fundamentally good, he felt that individuals had drifted away from this innateness because of a lack of knowledge of the virtues (Rutledge 1985:29). According to Confucius, the two main ethics are benevolence (Jen) and tolerance (Shu), and in order to cultivate the virtues, individuals need to look to and follow their ancestors and reflect on the classics to achieve balance (Thuy 1976:9; Rutledge 1985:29). Thus, filial piety is an important part of Confucianism. Men have five virtues and three obligations while females have four virtues and three obligations (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:12-14). However, Vuong Thuy (1976:9) points out that Confucianism is more a moral code than a religion. Confucianism advocates that individuals take their lives in their own hands and not rely and pray to deities for help (Thuy 1976:9). By maintaining balance and gaining wisdom, individuals will be able to help society regain that status of perfection which originally existed under the Nghiêu-Thuân society (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:39). Thus, altruism and moderation are also core parts of Confucianism (Rutledge 1985:24). The two main texts of Confucianism are Wa Ching (Five Classics) and Shu Shu (Four Books), the latter being composed by past followers (Rutledge 1985:26).

This main philosophy of Vietnamese philosophy originally came to the region in the 11th century through Chinese influence (Rutledge 1985:24; Muzny 1989:39). This is not surprising given that the Chinese often imposed their culture on those conquered and the history of Chinese rule in Vietnam. While the influence of Confucianism in the form of Neo-Confucianism, which is based on a new explanation of Confucian texts in the 11th century, peaked in Vietnamese society between the 15th and 19th centuries, Confucianism's influence still remains present among the Vietnamese today (Jamieson 1993:11). Namely, Confucianism, which originated from the "other", in turn influenced a quintessential aspect of Vietnamese culture: respect for elders. In addition, it is also linked to the traditional social hierarchy prior to French colonialism.

Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautama, a prince born circa 624 BC, gave rise to Buddhism after reaching supreme enlightenment at age thirty-five (Rutledge 1985:31). According to Buddhist teachings, individuals are reincarnated after they die, and this process continues until enlightenment is obtained. By gaining enlightenment, Buddha (Gautama) learned of the ways in which people could reach Nirvana (Rutledge 1985:31). The Middle Path or the way to Nirvana is grounded in the Four Noble Truths that "life is suffering," desires produce suffering, controlling desires through detachment of self from the world will end suffering, and the means to control desires is through the Eight-Fold Path (Ashby 1955 as cited in Rutledge 1985:32). The Eight-Fold Path involves maintaining "right views, right aims or intentions, right speech, right action, right livelihood, self-discipline, self mastery, and contemplation" (Rutledge 1985:32). According to the Law of Cause and Effect what a person has done in the past affects the present, and what a person does in the present affects the future (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:10). Buddhism's main text is the Tripitaka which is divided into three baskets (Rutledge 1985;32). These baskets are "Vinaya (monastic rules), Sutra (Buddha's teachings), and Adhidharma (metaphysical commentaries on Sutra)" (Gard 1962 as cited in Rutledge 1985:32).

Buddhist clergy consist of monks and nuns. After Buddha died, the sangha, a religious community, was created (Rutledge 1985:31). Members of this religious order must wear yellow robes, shave their heads, practice prayerful contemplation daily, and follow Buddha, the doctrines, and embrace the ten negative precepts (refrain from alcohol, killing, stealing, being untruthful, adultery, entertainment, money, fancy clothes/jewelry, spacious sleeping accommodations, and breaking fasts during certain times) (Parrinder 1964 as cited in Rutledge 1985:32) There are two sects of Buddhism: the newer Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) and the more

traditional Hinayana or Theravada (the Lesser Vehicle). Mahayana Buddhism is more common in northern Vietnam and to a certain degree in central Vietnam while Theravada Buddhism is more common in the south. The main difference between the two sects is that only monks and nuns are seen by Theravada Buddhists as being able to successfully reach Nirvana as compared to Mahayana which view all members as begin able to reach Nirvana (Thuy 1976:8). In 3 BC, monks from India introduced Theravada Buddhism to what is now Vietnam, and Mahayana Buddhism entered Vietnam through interaction with China (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:8).

Taoism

Lao Tzo, who was born in 604 BC, is the founder of Taoism or Daoism (Rutledge 1985:30). Taoism is naturalistically grounded and concerned with balance. Tao is seen as the premier, omnipresent force which gives life to all, but Tao is not a single entity nor has a tangible manifestation. The ying and the yang is a familiar symbol associated with Taoism with the yang represented masculinity, hot, dry, and lightness and ying femininity, cold, wet, and darkness (Rutledge 1985:30). Taoism like Buddhism has religious clergy or priests, and the main text written by the founder is the *Tao Teh Ching* (Rutledge 1985:30).

Like Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism was introduced to Vietnam by the Chinese; however, the form Taoism took in Vietnam was more a moral code than a religion as the structure of priests and religious and formal ritual did not accompany the belief system into Vietnam (Brown 1981 as cited in Rutledge 1985:26). The principles of ying yang and Taoism in general directly influenced traditional Vietnamese medical practices as well as guiding principles of daily life. These guiding principles include a desire to gain resolution between opposing forces, and an outlook that values resilience over pure strength and power no matter if this seemingly entails contradictory elements. Neil Jamieson (1993:20) points out that a core aspect

of Vietnamese culture is the dichotomy between *nghia* (moral, social obligations) and *tinh* (impromptu passion) and the struggle for balance between the two.

Catholicism

The roots of Catholicism are found in Judaism. Catholics believe in the Trinity (three Persons in one God), the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The main text is the Bible. Catholics believe that humankind was originally created perfect (free from sin) and instilled with a soul and free will. Because the first parents succumbed to temptation, sin entered the world, and the gates of heaven were closed. Consequently, all individuals are born with this original sin on their souls, but the death and resurrection of Jesus freed people from the bonds of sin and opened the gates of heaven.

However, individuals still have free will to choose God or sin. Regular participation in the sacraments, such as Holy Communion and Confession, help individuals to grow stronger in their faith. In addition, Catholics draw on the communion of saints as role models and ask for their intercession and help in following Jesus' teachings. Both personal devotion and community worship are seen as important as Catholics believe that all members makeup the body of the Church. Furthermore, the Catholic Church has a rich history of ritual and symbolism which help to direct the minds and hearts of its members to the Father in heaven.

Roman Catholicism came in the 16th century to what is today Vietnam via Portuguese Franciscan missionaries followed by Spanish Dominicans, and then Portuguese and French Jesuit missionaries (Rutledge 1985:26; Fox 2003). The missionaries were instrumental in creating the alphabet used today by the Vietnamese and also in influencing the structure of education (Vuong 1976 as cited in Richardson 1985:98). In the late 18th century, Catholics were severely persecuted in Vietnam, and hundreds died for their faith. It was during this time that Mary, the

Lady of Vietnam, appeared to those who were sentenced to death, and a great devotion, comparable to the appearance of Mary in Fatima, exists among many Vietnamese Catholics today. Catholicism was freer to flourish in Vietnam under French colonization, and by 1950, there were estimated to be 17 million Catholics in Vietnam, but the majority of Vietnamese in Vietnam practice Buddhism (Rutledge 1985:26).

Cao Daism

Ngo Minh Chieu founded Cao Daism in 1926 in Vietnam for the purpose of reconciling some the major religions of the world. Thus, it combines the precepts found in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Catholicism, as well as some religious beliefs from India (Hickey 1964:55). The supreme being is Dao, God the Father who like the Catholic God the Father and Taoist Dao is omnipresent and creator of all. Cao Daism adopts Confucian virtues and duties, Buddhist negative precepts, the three Buddhist refuges of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, reincarnation and Nirvana, Taoist five elements of mineral, wood, fire, water, earth, Taoist three jewels of life energy, life matter, and soul, and the Catholic hierarchy structure of clergy including a pope (Cleary 2001). The archbishops are limited to three, one for Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and there are two sets of archbishops, one to handle the laws and the other spirituality (Cleary 2001). The main text is the two volume work *Thanh Ngon Hiep* (Compilation of Divine Messages). After Chieu, who had previously been pope, stepped down to live a life of solitude and sacrifice, Cao Daism split in two and several sects such as Danang, Ban Chinh Dao, and the original group Chieu Minh Tam Thanh remain today (Cleary 2001; Oliver 1976:115,128). The French restricted and discouraged the Cao Daist religion as does the current government in Vietnam (Cleary 2001).

Protestantism

Christian Protestantism and what Rutledge (1985) calls Buddhist Protestantism are both present to a lesser degree in Vietnam than the other religions and philosophies presented above. Christian and Buddhist Protestant religions encompass a lot of diversity, and for brevity rather than any disregard for the distinctiveness of the Protestant sects, some of the main theological points will be generalized. The Buddhist Protestant faiths derived from Buddhism. Buddhist Protestant faiths, such as Phat Giao, Hoa-Hao, prefer to pray and worship on an individual basis rather than attend the temple and participate in rituals. Christian Protestantism developed out of Catholicism. Unlike Catholics, Protestant religions believe that Holy Communion symbolizes the Body and Blood of Jesus rather than the actual Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus, and Christian Protestants do not acknowledge the authority of the pope. In addition, various Christian Protestant religions do not believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, remained a virgin, and some Christian Protestants disprove of the rich decoration of Catholic churches, priestly garment, and rituals and stress the Bible over oral tradition (Rutledge 1985:39).

Summary of Religions

This overview of the main religions present in Vietnam is meant to only familiarize the reader with the main tenets of each and by no means exhausts the depth of each religion. Like Cao Dai, the only religion "native" to Vietnam, the Vietnamese people in general have been open to combining principles of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism despite some apparent contradictions (Tran 2002). The influences of religion extend into almost every aspect of Vietnamese social life, from social structure, language, education, traditional medicine, and diet (some Buddhists refrain from eating meat and also Catholics during certain periods) to make up what the Vietnamese and others point out as characteristically Vietnamese values such as filial

piety (thankfulness and respect to parents, elders, ancestors), stress on family cooperation and individual selflessness, and the importance of education and respect for teachers (Thomas 2003: 194; Tran 2002:130; Thuy 1976:15). Thus, following Nagel's analogy, characteristics of the "other" has been adopted and added to the shopping cart or culture without the need to switch to a different cart model or identity.

Social Structure and Education

Traditional Vietnamese social class was shaped by Confucianism into the four classes of intelligentsia, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants with the intelligentsia being the most prestigious and the merchants the least (Rutledge 1985:24). With the social and family hierarchy combined, the ranking began with the King as the highest and proceeded to teacher then father (Rutledge 1985:24). To become a member of the intelligentsia was traditionally extremely challenging given the very rigorous and difficult tests administered to individuals seeking high degrees and the very few individuals who actually passed (Jamieson 1993). Thus, unlike other societies, class in Vietnam traditionally depended on individual skill rather than inheritance or money (Vuong 1976:15). The Vietnamese believe that everyone is born equal and good, but due to family, environment, and education differences some people have different roles which must be respected and followed (Henkin and Nguyen 1981:30).

French influence changed this social system founded in Chinese Confucianism principles as it restructured the education system, and although favoring those who knew French, did not distribute jobs based on final test performance. French and English have been offered as electives in grades sixth through ninth beginning in 1950 (Henkin and Nguyen 1982:106).

Family

Although the number of nuclear families is growing in Vietnam due in part to Western influence and the affects of war on the demographics, extended families traditionally and currently still are common, especially in the north (Jamieson 1993:5; Henkin and Nguyen 1981:20; Freeman 1996:92). Thus, a household in Vietnam may consist of a mother, father, children including grown children with their spouses and children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins. In addition, the deceased and unborn are generally still considered members of the family as is evident by the fact that the ancestor altar represents family unity (Jamieson 1993:22; Liem 1987:105). James Freeman (1996:88) points out that Chinese influence shaped the Vietnamese traditional family

Both James Freeman (1996:88) and Neil Jamieson (1993:23) point out that traditionally a person's identity was defined largely by his/her identity within the family. The father is the leader and head of the family and responsible for providing for their economic and educational needs (Tran 2002:122). The wife takes care of the house and her family as well as the family finances (Tran 2002:120; Truy 1976:27). Out of gratitude for their parent's sacrifices, children are to be obedient and respectful to elders (Tran 2002:122). Older siblings are obliged to set good examples and watch out for their younger siblings (Tran 2002:123). Traditionally, the males did not cook; the daughters helped out with meal preparation. Sons, particularly the oldest, were expected to reside with their parents after marriage, and all children stayed with their parents until they were married (Muzny 1989:42).

The ideal roles of family members in Vietnam today are similar to the traditional roles. However, economic conditions today in Vietnam often necessitate that women work outside the home; often they run small businesses. One way children can fulfill their filial responsibilities is

by getting an education and doing well in school (Tran 2002:122). Children generally still live with their parents until they marry unless a job requires that they live in another city. Because of the obligations to family, working family members living in extended family households may combine their incomes rather than each keeping separate bank accounts, and place requests for funds from the family for personal purchases (Muzny 1989:42).

Marriage

Traditionally, marriages were arranged by family members with a mediator facilitating the arrangement. The potential couple's horoscopes would also be reviewed concerning the suitability of the match (Hickey 1964:100). Marriages for love were seen as selfish and going against filial piety. Thus, as Vietnam became more exposed to Western culture during the early years of French colonization, the rebellion for marriages based on love created a lot of turmoil within Vietnamese society. This is evident through the debate which took place within Vietnamese literature of that era (Jamieson 1993). For the traditional marriage arrangements, if both families agree, they and the potential couple will meet on a day determined by an astrologer (Hickey 1964:101). If all goes well than the *le hoi*, or engagement party, takes place at the bride's house. The groom will arrive by foot with his family in single file behind him carrying gifts, typically of food, for the bride's family, and the groom will also have gold earrings for the bride (Hickey 1964:101; Tran 2002:138). Upon entering the house, the groom would pay homage to the ancestor altar then present his family's gifts to the bride's parents, and a dinner hosted by the bride's family would follow (Hickey 1964:102). In advance, the bride's parents would have consulted with astrologer concerning an appropriate day to have the wedding, and the date would be announced during the engagement party (Hickey 1964:102). Traditionally, deaths of close family members delayed marriages. For instance, a parent's death required that

the children remain single for the following three years; death of a spouse or sibling warranted a waiting period of one year (Rutledge 1985:122).

On the day of the wedding, the groom and his family would again process to the bride's house. It is the groom's family who furnished the red wedding dress and a round hat. The groom's family would again bring food gifts, such as betel leaves, areca nuts, and gold earrings. Betel leaves and areca nuts, like the gold ring in Western culture, symbolize the marriage union because these two plants commonly grow together (McLeod and Dieu 2001:129). The mediator would greet the bride's parents first, offer them alcohol, the betel leaves, and areca nuts, and then ask for their final approval to proceed. Prayers would be said at the ancestor altar. Then the groom would give respect to the altar and family of the bride and take the wedding dress to the bride for her to put on. Next, the couple and both families would leave for the groom's house. At the ancestor altar, the mediator would inform the ancestors of the union, the couple would bowed three times before they proceeded to pay the same respect to all the guests. Gifts were given to the couple and a banquet followed, but the couple was not allowed to partake of the goodies, talk with each other, or appear happy. The couple would eat later in the night after the bride's family left, and after three days, the marriage was consummated. The bride would keep her own last name (Rutledge 1985:121). For Catholic weddings, the same general format was followed except the groom and couple prayed before the a shrine, received counseling from the priest before the wedding, and on the wedding day both sides came to the church for Mass before going to the groom's house (Hickey 1964:102-106). Divorces generally were not an option for couples in Vietnam, and domestic abuse was handed internally by the family (Muzny 1989:129; McCoy 1992:263).

Traditional engagements and weddings still take place in Vietnam and follow about the same format. However, brides can now be seen wearing Western-style wedding dresses. Many Vietnamese living in other countries will return to Vietnam to marry as family may still reside in Vietnam. In addition, one male informant stated that some Vietnamese males return to Vietnam in hopes of finding a wife. Through mutual friends, their parents, or their parent's mutual friends, a young man in the United State may be introduced to a young woman in Vietnam. Today, marriages in Vietnam are not generally arranged. However, one male informant in this study stated that sometimes "fake" marriages are arranged between a Vietnamese male from the United States and a female in Vietnam so that the female can come to the United States. The male and female would live in the same house but not as a married couple. In addition, the informant pointed out that a male or female might "marry," in legal terms only, a family member in Vietnam in order to speed up the sponsor time from a decade to one or two years. In three years, the "couple" would be free to divorce, and the spouse from Vietnam would be free to stay in the United States. Overall, these types of arranged marriages are the exception rather than the rule.

Funerals

Like weddings, traditional funerals took place at home, and astrologers were consulted to see when the funeral rites should be held (Muzny 1989:44; Hickey 1964:123). Three offerings of food are made to the altar in honor of the deceased, and the deceased's spouse, children, and family wear bands or veils on their heads as signs of mourning (Hickey 1964:125). A vigil followed, and the mourning family served food and drink to the guests (Hickey 1964:125; Tran 2002:150). Upon burial, prayers were said at the graveside by a monk, and once home, the family offered prayers at the ancestor altar that the deceased's soul may return to the altar (Hickey 1964:127). For Catholics, a priest was called, if possible, to give the Anointing of the

Sick to the individual before he/she died, and a rosary was said at the vigil (Hickey 1964:128). On the anniversary of the individual's death, family members would gather together and honor the deceased (Muzny 1989:44). These remembrances reinforced family unity as well as gave family members a chance to reflect on their obligations to the deceased (Jamieson 1993:24; Tran 2002:141).

Holidays

One of the major holidays celebrated in Vietnam is the Chinese New Year (Tet Nguyen-dan). Preparations begin a week early with the Le Tao-quan celebration where an offering would be made to the ancestors at the altar, and the ancestors would leave the altar and return on New Year's Eve (McLeod and Dieu 2001:157). Also, houses will be cleaned and decorated in preparation for Tet. On New Year's Eve, a celebration takes place to welcome the ancestors' back into the altar. (McLeod and Dieu 2001:157). Incense is burned to appeal to the ancestors, and firecrackers are set off to scare away the evil spirits (McLeod Dieu 2001:157). In addition, a bamboo tree is planted outside to entice the ancestors, and wind chimes are placed on the tree to discourage evil spirits. On New Year's Day, individuals arrange for lucky people to be the first ones to greet them, and older individuals give out red envelops (Lucky money, Li-xi, or Hong Bao) containing money to younger kids, and adults exchange the envelops among themselves along with wishes of good luck and fortune for the upcoming year. People may wear red on this day to deter malicious spirits (personnel communication January 2006; Miller 2006). Buddhists generally will go to the temple and Catholics to church on this day. Especially delicious and delicate dishes are consumed during Tet which can be celebrated for one to two weeks. *Banh chung*, a stuffed, square rice cake wrapped in banana leaves, and *mut*, fruit and coconut candies, are staple holiday foods during Tet (McLeod and Dieu 2001:128). At the end of Tet, a paper fish

is hung on the bamboo tree, and paper money is given to the spirits to assist the ancestors in their return. (McLeod and Dieu 201:156-157).

Probably the second most celebrated holiday in Vietnam is the Mid-Autumn Festival (Tet Trung-thu). Legend states that a Chinese emperor met a Taoist saint one night during a full moon and took the saint's offer to travel to the moon. When the emperor got back, he commemorated his experience with a festival, the Mid-Autumn festival (McLeod and Dieu 2001:160). This festival is generally celebrated by children who go out after sunset with animal/geometric-shaped lights and dance (McLeod and Dieu 2001:160). Round and square rice cakes are made on this day to symbolize the moon and earth respectfully (Tran 2002:142). For adults, the Mid-Autumn festival signifies the fleetingness of life (Tran 2002:142).

Another holiday that some Vietnamese families celebrate is Longevity Birthday, or the birthday of someone in their seventies (Tran 2002:144). The One-Month Birthday, the day an infant turns one-month-old, is also celebrated as is the baby's first birthday (Tran 2002:145). One male informant explained that when the baby is born generally only the immediate family sees the baby, but these birthday celebrations are extended to friends. Also, the informant pointed out that traditionally these birthdays were survival milestones. There is also the Hung King celebration which celebrates the extensive rule of the Hung dynasty (Tran 2002:142). Anh Tran (2002:142) states that it is "one of the most traditional holidays in Vietnam."

Buddhist holidays include the day Buddha was born, the day of his enlightenment, and Le Vu-lan, which is day in which mothers both living and deceased are honored. Generally, Buddhists will visit the temple on these days (McLeod and Dieu 2001:161). State holidays in Vietnam include February 3, the day the Communist party was founded; Sept 2, National Day; May 19, Ho Chi Minh's Birthday; April 30 Liberation Day; and May 1, International Worker's

Day (McLeod and Dieu 2001:161-162). The celebration of Christmas and Western New Year is more prevalent among people in Vietnam, and Valentine's Day saw its debut in 2002 (Drummond 2003:3).

Food

Probably one of the most popular Vietnamese dishes is pho, a noodle soup often containing beef, chicken, fish or a combination thereof, bean sprouts, and herbs such as mint. Pho can be eaten for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Pho was introduced to the South Vietnamese staple diet of fish, rice, vegetables and fruits in 1954 by those leaving North Vietnam (Tran 2002:135). Although pho may well be a marker of Vietnameseness, it is not native to Vietnam and was introduced to the north during the Mongol invasion (McLeod and Dieu 2001:117). Likewise, some of the curry and other spices used in Vietnamese dishes today originated from exposure to the Cham, Khmer, and other cultures living in the central and south during their expansion into these regions in the 17th and 18th century (McLeod and Dieu 2001:117). Moreover, Chinese rule resulted in the adoption of soy sauce, bean curd, noodles, stir-fry, and chop sticks to the region of Vietnam, and Western colonization brought peanuts, potatoes, corn, and tomatoes (McLeod and Dieu 2001:117-118). However, common native fruits eaten in Vietnam include jackfruit, bananas, citrus fruits, duran, papayas, guavas, persimmons, and mangoes (McLeod and Dieu 2001:120; Tran 2002:134). Common vegetables consumed in Vietnam include soy, convolvus, eggplant, sweet potatoes, onions, and shallots (McLeod and Dieu 2001:120). Flowers are also used to make teas or oils (McLeod and Dieu 2001:120). Not a lot of meat is generally consumed in Vietnam compared to the amounts consumed on average in the United States, particularly because of less availability and Buddhist prohibition on eating meat (McLeod and Dieu 2001:122). Of the meat eaten, common types are pork, chicken, fish,

beef, and duck, and more of the animal is utilized in cooking (McLeod and Dieu 2001:122). Last, the Vietnamese generally do not consume dairy products due to digestive difficulties (Tran 2002:125).

An average meal in Vietnam will consist of rice, soup, stir-fry, and meat (Tran 2002:125). Dessert, if served, typically entails fruit, tea, or even pudding; likewise, beverages either precede or follow but not accompany meals (Tran 2002:125; McLeod and Dieu 2001:126). Rice is the staple food in Vietnam, but poor families will sell rice and use corn instead (McLeod and Dieu 2001:120). In addition, staple condiments in Vietnam include fish sauces (McLeod and Dieu 2001:125). Common breakfast dishes include rice gruel, pho, and steamed rice with coconut or meat, and some French flavors added to the breakfasts of middle-class adults include iced coffee with condensed milk and for children, bread, butter, and sandwich meat (McLeod and Dieu 2001:131). Following the humoral principle of balancing hot and cold, warm breakfast foods are desirable especially during cold weather because they help to maintain proper body temperature (Tran 2002:125). Lunch is the main meal in Vietnam and is typically followed by dessert and even a nap (McLeod and Dieu 2001:132). While it generally resembles breakfast for those living in rural areas, lunch for those in the city may be purchased from vendors and eaten in a restaurant, resembles that of the average meal described above, and might include such dishes as steamed ravioli or barbequed meat (McLeod and Dieu 2001:132). Most Vietnamese do not go out to eat for dinner, but instead stay home with family, due in part to the high cost (McLeod and Dieu 2001:132). Mark McLeod and Nguyen Dieu (2001:132) point out that more urban families are adopting Western kitchen tables and chairs in place of mats or the shorter tables. In addition, imported beers are catching on more than in Vietnam as well as coffee shops (McLeod and Dieu 2001:127).

Medicine

As mentioned previously, the yin yang principle guides traditional medicinal practices in Vietnam, and the merit placed on herbal remedies, especially by older Vietnamese, is reflective of Taoist beliefs (Tran 2002:144). Based on Taoism and humoral system, the five elements of metal, water, wood, fire, earth are linked to the five main organs lungs, kidney, liver, heart, and spleen as well as five secondary organs, sensory organs, tastes, colors, directions, and seasons (Craig 2002:47). Outside stimuli that disrupt the balance of the five organs relate to "wind, heat, cold, dampness, and dryness" while stimuli within a person include "sadness, fear, anger, happiness, worry" (Craig 2002:47). Other causes of imbalance include possessing "too much life force", blockages, and inherent weakness (Craig 2002:47). Thus, treatments strive to return balance to an individual's system, and one method may be through consuming more yang foods which are hot and warm and yin foods which are cool and cold (Jamieson 1993:11). In addition, massage, especially for blockages, may also help to restore normal flow, and herbal remedies, the recipes being guarded secrets, were also used to correct imbalances (Craig 2002:74-75). The circulation, digestion, nervous, and reproduction are the four main systems concentrated on in assessing health (Craig 2002:74-75).

In Vietnam today, self-diagnosis and the over-the-counter availability of prescription drugs are the norm (Craig 2002:68). There is a growing reliance on pharmaceuticals in the place of traditional medicine, especially in the cities, but the issue is not a simple one replacing the other in the minds or actions of the people (Craig 2002:103). David Craig (2002:106) reports that the dichotomy between Eastern and Western medicine is entangled in the struggle of the Vietnamese in asserting a national identity where there is an appeal to the traditional ways as a means to maintain ethnic boundaries; yet, this is coupled with the desire to gain a place in the

global market. There is a common belief in Vietnam that pharmaceutical medicine produced in Vietnam is not as potent as that produced outside the country, and this suspicion is also extended to former communist countries (Craig 2002:130). In addition, certain traditional medications are offered in a more potent form outside Vietnam. For example, two informants, a male and a female, recounted that green oil, a traditional menthol-based medicine, is offered in a more potent form in the United States at a lower price compared to its weaker, more expensive version in Vietnam.

Body and Dress

The traditional dress of Vietnamese women is the *ao dai*. The ao dai consists of three pieces: slacks, a long tunic shirt with slits up the sides, and a round, "sailor-like" hat (Leshkowich 2003:79). Its history stretches back to the 18th century when the Chinese discouraged Vietnamese women from wearing the Vietnamese traditional attire of halter top and skirt and impressed upon them the ao dai (Rambo 1987:119). This new introduction, while accepted somewhat better in the South than the North, still was not eagerly adopted (Rambo 1987:119). Thus, the ao dai of this time period was not the fitted, floor-length form that it is today. The tunic of the Chinese ao dai of the 18th century was loose fitting and not floor or even shin length, the length having grown over the years (Rambo 1987:119).

The more fitted ao dai was introduced in the 1930s by a Vietnamese designer Nguyen Cat Thong who based the design on the current style of the French upper class (Leshkowich 2003:90). The new fitted ao-dai became a status marker for elite Vietnamese women, but a majority of Vietnamese saw this intrusion of French influence and the emphasis on body features as a direct attack on Vietnamese culture (Rambo 1987:119). Gradually though, the fitted ao dai was accepted by the middle and lower classes only to be discarded (its looser form being used

for celebrations) in the North in 1954 for its connection to colonialism and impracticality in daily use (Leshkowich 2003:91). However, the ao dai in the South underwent alterations and innovations, such as the addition of a taller collar (Leshkowich 2003:91). By the 1970s and 1980s, not many women in Vietnam wore the ao dai, and it appeared that the ao dai interest had switched to the Vietnamese overseas who were now incorporating Western trends into ao dai style, such as the 1980s' big sleeves (Leshkowich 2003:107).

Nevertheless, the popularity of the ao dai surged in Vietnam in the 1990s when ao dai ranked Best National Costume in the 1995 Miss International Pageant (Leshkowich 2003:79). The ao dai in Vietnam still enjoys its regained popularity into the 21st century. While the ao dai pants were typically either white or black; now they are offered in a wide array of solid colors to match the plethora of tunic patterns and colors (Leshkowich 2003:101). The ao dai tunic and pants are even a common uniform for high school girls, government workers, and those working in the tourist industry (Leshkowich 2003:79).

CHAPTER 7

IDENTITY: MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

Nagel used the analogy of the shopping cart mainly to explain culture construction. While identity may be seen at any given moment as the features of the cart, identity according to Nagel (1994) is situationally created, a result of the negotiation of self between individual and the ethnic group and between the ethnic group and society. Ethnicity arises from that interplay between identity formation and culture.

To extend the analogy further in order to illustrate identity, the store that people find themselves shopping in can be likened to a cart parts store. As people meet and interact with other shoppers pushing carts, the shoppers simultaneously emphasize certain attributes of their cart, change out, or add additional features to their carts from what is already in their baskets as a means to successfully agree upon the cart model, or identity, that each has. This can be likened to ethnic boundary maintenance. Both shoppers already hold cognitive models based on past experiences of what particular cart brands and model designs are. On what level the conversation of cart type begins or remains, i.e. brand, model, or model number, is based on the appraisal of the other's knowledge of the cart, the shopper's concepts of their own carts based on past interactions, reassessment of these positions as the interaction continues, and the economic, political advantages of identifying with a particular level. Thus, panethnicity might be likened to cart brand, national ethnicity to the model, and regional ethnicity with the model number. This research also seeks to look at the affects of those accompanying the shopper, the aisle the shopper is in (location), and how the items contained within and used in constructing the two parties' carts affects the level at which ethnicity remains and identity created.

Cultural Boundary Markers-Ethnic Symbols

As the previous chapter illustrated, the cultural material placed in the cart changes and is influenced by history; yet groups possess agency, i.e. through resistance or adoption with modification, over what goes into the cart as do individual members who do not have to place everything in their cart that is on the shopping list given to them by their cultural group (only enough of the essentials to legitimize acceptance). This cultural dynamicity is not new to anthropology and is in fact one of the seven characteristics of culture. Similarly, the cultural items selected from the cart to illustrate identity, i.e. the cultural boundary markers or ethnic symbols, change through time both on the ethnic group level and for individuals (Royce 1982:147). For instance, the ao dai's form changed through time as did its use as a cultural boundary marker. Moreover, what is employed as ethnic symbols will vary depending on whether the other is a member of the ethnic group and on what level (Royce 1982:7). Nevertheless, cultural symbols are essential in enabling ethnic groups to remain set apart from others and in serving as the unifying base for the variation within the ethnic group (Royce 1982:7; Conzen et al 1985:24). Thus, in order to understand how ethnicity is expressed, what is important to note is why and how particular cultural characteristics come to be used as boundary markers.

Language

Language is a fundamental ethnic symbol that is often postulated as carrying the most weight in maintaining cohesion within and distinctiveness of ethnicity (Lee 1998:114: Spicer as cited in Royce 1982:48). Indeed, language is key to accessing culture as well as transmitting culture and is broad enough that most members can possess language skills without having to agree on specific cultural practices or beliefs. In fact, the United States government requires

Native American groups to prove the current existence of their native language before they are officially recognized. In addition, a Vietnamese female informant in her sixties stressed the importance of language in the maintenance of Vietnamese culture among the younger generations, and a male informant in his twenties also reaffirmed the importance of language for learning more about Vietnamese culture; however, he also pointed out that "the importance of knowing how to speak Vietnamese depends on the individual; some people are comfortable and do not feel they need to know Vietnamese in order to be Vietnamese (paraphrase)." The importance of the situation in establishing the primacy of language is evident in what encouraged this young male to learn more Vietnamese. When his family sponsored a family from Vietnam to come live with them, this contrast with the "other" directed him to reassess his language proficiency and prompted him to increase his knowledge of the Vietnamese language.

Therefore, despite the prominence of language as an ethnic symbol, possessing language fluency of any degree is not always necessary for individuals to consider themselves members, but challenges and conflicts to this view may arise when it is disputed by other members who do consider language an essential cultural symbol. In addition, the identity may be reaffirmed in other situations by family members and friends who hold the same opinion as well as by outsiders. Furthermore, being able to speak the same language does not necessary guarantee acceptance either. Yuen-Fong Woon (1985:550,551) pointed out that in the case of Sino-Vietnamese living in British Columbia, they are not accepted as members of the local Chinese community even though they speak the same language and have the same heritage, and some do not even speak Vietnamese or use symbols associated with Vietnam. Similarly, the Sino-Vietnamese are not accepted into the local Vietnamese community either. Nevertheless, the Sino-Vietnamese have identified themselves as 'overseas Chinese' or 'Vietnamese refugees'

when circumstances favor such identifiers, and they do feel nostalgia and longing for Vietnam (Woon 1985:552). Yet, the term Vietnamese rather than Sino-Vietnamese is used by northern Sino-Vietnamese in British Columbia, but this researcher wonders if it is due in part to a lack of familiarity with the term Sino-Vietnamese, and Woon (1985:538) points out that the Sino-Vietnamese are often subsumed under the category of Vietnamese by aid organizations. Thus in this case, past treatment in Vietnam, current perceptions by outside groups, and economic assistance to Vietnamese refugees may all be factors contributing to the association with a particular ethnicity.

Dress

Dress communicates something about the individual to the group, but what it means to the individual may be different from how it is interpreted by the group (Hansen 2004). Likewise, S. Woodard (2005) points out that the way the group interprets the dress and the circumstances of the situation in turn influences how the wearer perceives the meaning that the dress conveys (Hansen 2004). According to T. Turner, dress's ability to do this comes from its closeness to self and visibility to the other (as sited in Hansen 2004). Because of the give and take, dress can serve as a medium for working out discrepancies and changes in identity (Leshkowich 2003:81; Hansen 2004).

In the case of the ao dai, this international icon of Vietnameseness serves to negotiate the precarious position of Vietnamese identity and Western influence. Via fashion magazines sent to relatives in Vietnam, fashion trends in the United States (perhaps just among Vietnamese living in the United States) are incorporated into current ao dai designs by small business owners in Vietnam and become selling points to Vietnamese customers (Leshkowich 2003:82). Yet, care must be taken to not overemphasize the American characteristics to the detriment of the

Vietnamese qualities (Leshkowich 2003:104). This balancing act of exhibiting Vietnameseness over the influence of the "other" is characteristic of overall Vietnamese identity, according to the historian David Marr, and this researcher feels that this observation can be extended to the Vietnamese-Americans as well (as cited in Leshkowich 2003:89). While Leshkowich (2003:97) found that many informants stressed the nativeness of ao dai design, the fact that this quite "other" influenced dress has been adapted into a symbol of Vietnameseness serves to support Marr's observations, and Leshkowich (2003:82,98) sees the ao dai's history as fitting for its current role in identity negotiation between Western and Vietnamese.

While attending religious and Tet celebrations, this researcher noted that some of the women ranging in age (estimated) from twenties to sixties wore the ao dai. Female informants also noted that they generally wore their ao dai to temple, church, weddings, and other celebrations, but only two mentioned that they wore the ao dai for more every day activities, i.e. shopping at the mall or the Vietnamese market in Oklahoma. Partially, the restrictive nature of the ao dai makes such usage unfeasible, and a common reason given by informants for no longer wearing the ao dai was that they gained weight. Another reason may be that there is not a perceived need, i.e. no direct challenges to Vietnamese ethnicity, to use this symbol to communicate their Vietnameseness to the community at large. Thus, the wearing of the ao dai serves more to reinforce the ethnicity to self rather than the outside community. Furthermore, the wearing of the ao dai may also serve to communicate to the inside group the wearer's awareness of her Vietnameseness. One female informant reported that she wore the ao dai on special occasions to remind herself, her children, and other people of Vietnamese culture. The influence of the other in the perceived appropriateness of when to wear the ao dai and its role as a marker of Vietnameseness is evident in another female's reason for not wearing the ao dai, namely that

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she did not really associate with the Vietnamese community and thus had no place to wear the ao dai.

Nevertheless, the use of the ao dai, like language, is not seen as essential for identifying oneself as Vietnamese. For example, the six women who no longer preferred to wear the ao dai all stated that they were either Vietnamese-American or Vietnamese. In addition, while the male counterpart to the ao dai does exist, it is rarely worn, and even then only at weddings by the groom or maybe the best man. While dress is not necessarily a cultural boundary marker for all individuals, it predominant use among females and almost absence among males suggests differences along gender lines in how ethnicity is expressed (Jay Price, personal communication).

Other items of dress, such as jewelry and mementos of Vietnam, can also serve as reminders, reinforcing an individual's self-perception of Vietnamese identity. When asked about mementos, one male informant in his seventies recalled that some women and, to a lesser extent, men will wear bracelets or rings to remind them of Vietnam. In addition, one female informant who had recently been to Vietnam stated that she wore jewelry given to her by friends in Vietnam which reminded her of them and Vietnam, but she did not wear them everyday. Likewise, one male informant who had also been to Vietnam fairly recently reported that he generally wore a piece of jewelry that symbolized both Vietnam and his religion. Mandy Thomas (2004) reported that some young Vietnamese-Australians created and wore T-shirts with 'I love pho' on them, but this researcher did not observe this type of dress among the Vietnamese in Kenton possibly due to the lack of contact with Vietnamese teenagers.

Religion

Jae-Hyup Lee (1998:114) views religious rituals as resilient ethnic symbols. Not only do rituals have the ability to exert a multiplicity of meanings, but rituals also serve as a basis for community (Lee 1998:114;126). Community formation in turn supports ethnic identity and provides a format for leadership (Lee 1998:126; Baia 1999). Furthermore, Paul Rutledge (1985:9,23) proposed religion to be a main ethnic symbol for the Vietnamese in Oklahoma city due in part to religion's influence in Vietnamese culture. Indeed, religion has had a major influence on Vietnamese traditional medicine, language, and social structure which in turn influenced family and education. For Rutledge (1985:52), religion has the dual function of providing a way to associate and show comradery with the larger community and still preserve individual and group ethnicity.

For example, Vietnamese Catholics who attend Mass are able to relate to the non-Vietnamese there on the basis of religion and in turn the non-Vietnamese also have a commonality on which to relate to the Vietnamese members. There may be no regular interaction, but still a feeling approaching that of communitas can be extended. In addition, where a larger number of Vietnamese Catholics are able to attend Mass together and even worship under the direction of a Vietnamese priest in Vietnamese, not only do they have a common starting point with non-Vietnamese Catholics, they are also partaking in an activity that is strengthen their Vietnameseness. The same is also true of Buddhist and Baptist Vietnamese. Even where the religion of the Vietnamese individual or group may be in the minority, the fact that the religion stands as an important element in the life of a Vietnamese individual or group can provide common ground on which another religious person or group of a different faith may relate. Thus, a religious celebration provides Vietnamese with the opportunity to express their

Vietnameseness either through dress, language, or community interaction and also their Americanness through dress, language, and community interaction. Therefore, Rutledge (1985:74) likes to view religions as a "bridge" in its role in negotiating ethnicity and states that the situation determines whether the bridge is transversed, and the individual/group generally always comes back across once the situation is finished.

The city in this study contained one Catholic Vietnamese church, three Buddhist Vietnamese temples, and at least one Vietnamese Baptist church. While the researcher unfortunately was unable to speak with members of the Baptist church, the researcher attended the Catholic Vietnamese church and spoke with members of the Buddhist temples. In addition, several of the Catholic informants indicated that they attended Catholic churches where the Mass was said in English, and one of these individuals, who spoke Vietnamese, indicated that she actually preferred the English Mass. The question was posed to four females and one male, representative of Catholics and Buddhists, if they felt that being part of a religious community helped them adjust to living in the United States, and all but one stated that it had not, but half proposed that it might for others. While this sample is too small to summarize any conclusions, the role of religion may be more individually dependent. Three of the females asked did place their religion in the top three identifiers of self so this does not reflect on individual spirituality but rather perhaps the interpretation of the question.

This researcher feels that the Catholic churches and Buddhist temples do reinforce Vietnamese culture and community. This is consistent with the research done by Anh Tran (2002) on a Vietnamese community in Kansas. For example, Vietnamese New Year's was celebrated in Vietnamese at these places of worship and the traditional dinners and dragon dances which followed took place at and were organized by the religious community. In

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addition, local Vietnamese businesses, through sponsoring printing costs, were advertised on the back of the Vietnamese Catholic bulletin. In terms of bridging between the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese community, a joint Mexican/Vietnamese Dinner was hosted by a local Catholic church as a fundraiser thus bringing together various ethnically diverse individuals. In addition, several articles about the Vietnamese New Year appeared in the local Catholic newspaper, and this same newspaper ran an invitation in Vietnamese and English inviting those in the community to the Vietnamese New Year's Mass.

Furthermore, the Buddhist temples invite non-Asian, non-Buddhists to their New Year's celebrations every year, thereby introducing others in the community to their culture, and on special occasions an English translator may be present. Members of a temple eat together at the temple following services thereby providing a means to create a Vietnamese community (Tran 2002:133). Moreover, Anh Tran's research of a Vietnamese community in Kansas proposed that the presence of temples, both the physical architecture and communal body, served as a "critical anchor in preserving ethnic identity" (2002:108). This situation differs from that in Oklahoma where Rutledge (1985:63-64) reported that Vietnamese temples altered both their physical structure and their inner setup to more resemble that of a Christian church for the purpose of fitting into the larger community. Of the few individuals who did identify leaders in the community, Buddhist monks and leaders of church committees were the more common suggestions, thereby reinforcing the role of religion in maintaining community and Vietnameseness.

While religion can serve as a bridge between two groups of the community, this researcher also was interested in whether differences in religion could also divide the Vietnamese community. Paul Rutledge (1985:62) reported such a division among the Buddhist

and Catholic Vietnamese community in Oklahoma. In order to see how much interaction takes place among Vietnamese of different religions, the informants were asked if they had Vietnamese friends who were Buddhist, Catholic, or Baptist. Out of the twenty-five people asked, about half stated that they had friends of different religions other than their own. Thus, this sample did not indicate any major divisions between the two primary religions, Buddhist and Catholic, at least on a personal level. In addition, no one made comments hinting to any disagreement among Baptist, Buddhists, and Catholics. However, one male informant did mention that conflicts do arise over religion when a couple plans to get married but are from two different religions, i.e. Buddhist and Catholic. This in some cases has resulted in the break-up of engagements, but accommodations can also be made. For instance, one female informant stated that her mom kept two altars/shrines in their home, one Buddhist and one Catholic. Another informant stated that she attended Catholic Mass with her family but also burned incense in remembrance of deceased family and took her family to the temple on special days since her side of the family was Buddhist.

Organizations

Following the work of Stephen Fugita and David O'Brian, organizations such as churches, temples, stores, and committees for cultural events, and contact among the ethnic community serve to counterbalance influences from American society through reaffirming ties with Vietnamese culture (Takezawa 1995:209). Charles Muzny's (1989:101) study among the Vietnamese community in Oklahoma revealed that few joined American organizations unless it was associated with work. As mentioned above and in agreement with McCoy (1992), religious groups help to maintain Vietnameseness within Kenton. There are also several other organizations, such as two former military associations, a Vietnamese soccer team, two

Vietnamese college organizations, and three other Vietnamese/Asian associations in Kenton. Individuals were asked if they were involved in these various organizations in order to see how much effect these organizations had on ethnicity. Of the thirty people asked, one-third was involved with these organizations, and four were involved with church and other local committees.

In addition, there are almost ten Vietnamese/Asian grocery stores and various other Vietnamese businesses such as video stores. Haines et al (1981:97-98) report that stores provide more than just goods; they serve as loci for business advertising, sell Vietnamese newspapers and magazines, and facilitate communication. Thus, the stores provide the means of maintaining cultural boundaries. Retired Vietnamese, for instance, have met at one of the local Vietnamese stores to talk, and this same store carries a good selection of Vietnamese music and videos which enables individuals to stay connected with Vietnam. All of the individuals indicated that they shopped at least at one the Vietnamese/Asian stores.

Family

McCoy (1992:250), McKenzie (1999), Thai (2002:59) consider family to be an essential part of Vietnamese identity as it supplies a means to resist change from the surrounding community, passes on Vietnamese identity, and provides the arena in which to work out struggles over identity. Indeed, Lee (1998:178) reports that "what holds us together is not some common traits or characteristics but the relations we have." Like Nagel, this places emphasis on the process of interaction; the cultural characteristics serve then to signify a particular ethnic identity. Haines et al. (1981:97) also reiterates the importance of "relationships" when studying the Vietnamese living in the United States. Indeed, the family rather than the individual is the focus within Vietnamese culture.

In the Vietnamese language, the same word, *nha*, is used to refer to family, house, and spouse (Haines 2002). Both Muzny (1998:15) among the Vietnamese in Oklahoma and Lee (1998:97) among three Asian communities in Philadelphia observed a dichotomy which formed between life outside and inside the home in terms of ethnicity. Work and school create pressures to conform to and adopt customs of the larger society; thus, the outside life changes quicker than the private life and more resembles the larger community (Cronin 1970 as sited in Muzny 1998:15). Nguyen and Henkin (1982:113) point out that the adoption of other customs does not necessarily mean that it was a welcomed change. The different rates of change creates disjuncture between the public and private life. For example, Freeman (1996:68) quotes one adult who came to the United States at age twelve, "At the office, I'm an American, but at home and deep inside me I remain Vietnamese." This also illustrates the role the interaction with the "other" has in perception of individual ethnicity.

This dichotomy manifests itself also in terms of internal struggles with identity, especially for teenagers and college-aged individuals. For example, Thai (2002:61) reported that Vietnamese second-generation informants often felt like their were pressured to 'act white' and really did not feel like they fit in with their Vietnamese community or with their non-Vietnamese friends. Emphasizing family over individualism was one method employed by Thai's informants to cope with the pressures from society (Thai 2002:61). This especially came to the forefront when these informants entered the college years and post-graduation first jobs when American society emphasizes striking out on one's own; consequently, this intensified their assessment of their ethnicity (Thai 2002:66). Also, college provided the opportunity to discuss the issue of ethnicity as well as meet other Vietnamese individuals via Vietnamese student organizations

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(Thai 2002:67). Thus, the Vietnamese family structure can serve as a boundary marker of Vietnamese ethnicity and aid in the process of ethnicity formation

This same situation was also found to be true for most of the individuals in the sample from Kenton who had come to the United States before age eighteen. Seven out of the nine (three males and four females) experienced this struggle. Some of the specific issues these individuals had to deal with were pressure from family to be Vietnamese but feeling more American, confronting stereotypes of Asians as gang members or top academics, reconciling liberal views with conservative viewpoints of Vietnamese and Americans, and being singled out by classmates on account of physical differences. Another male informant related that while he did not experience the dichotomy personally he had friends who did and felt the struggle depended on the person and their family and faith background. Likewise, another male stated that his faith helped him the most, religion serving as the grounding point from which to work. In addition, a female reported that talking with family and friends of all ages helped her to deal with the struggle. Two informants, a male and female, reported that the solution involved taking the best from both cultures, and one of the informants of McKenzie (1999) commented that this was '…the Vietnamese way: adapting, bending, finding our balance.'

Yet, outside influences also affect the internal structure of the family, such as when the female works outside the home, and compensation in terms of changes in food choices and assignment of household duties occur. In addition, the physical structure of houses in the United States is not designed to accommodate extended families nor does the mobility required of some jobs (Muzny 1998:72). In order to see how living in the United States affected the household structure of the Vietnamese in Kenton compared to their household in Vietnam, informants were asked, if appropriate, who lived with them in their house in Vietnam, who cooked the meals, did

the shopping, washed the clothes, cleaned, and took care of the children. These same questions were posed to the informants about their households in the United States. The influence of time period should not be significant considering that the year of reference ranges from 2006 to 1973 in terms of when informants were last living in Vietnam. Out of the twenty-four individuals who answered about their household in Vietnam, eight reported that they lived with/next door to extended family such as aunts, uncles, or married siblings and their families. This is compared to the ten out of thirty-two who reported living with extended kin in the United States. Only two people who had lived with extended kin in Vietnam indicated that they lived with extended kin in the United States. Thus, for this sample approximately the same percentage of households with extended kin exist among the Vietnamese community in Kenton and Vietnam. Moreover, most of the single adults in the sample remained in their parents' households, following more of the Vietnamese expectations of the family structure than the American.

In Vietnam as well as the United States, women traditionally were seen as the chief caretakers of the home. Moreover, cooking was especially seen as a female domain and Vietnamese daughters, not sons, were encouraged to help their mothers with food preparation. In looking at whether males or females performed basic household chores, the author found that while only one household reported that a male helped cook in Vietnam, eleven households in the United States reported that one or more males helped cook, sometimes exclusively of their wives. These are out of a total of twenty-four household in Vietnam and thirty-two households in the United States. In terms of shopping, five households reported that males helped with the shopping in Vietnam compared to the seventeen households in the United States who reported that males helped with the shopping. Males helped with laundry in four of the households in Vietnam while fifteen households reported that males did the laundry in the United States. Males

helped with cleaning in six of the households in Vietnam compared to eighteen households in the

United States. Finally, roughly the same percentage of males was involved in child care in

Vietnam and the United States, nine and thirteen households respectfully. Thus, males are more

involved in household chores in the United States.

The family serves as the prime preserver of the Vietnamese language. All of the

informants spoke Vietnamese at home. Sometimes English is spoken if the Vietnamese word

does not come to mind. Also, English is sometimes spoken to the children because they do not

understand all of the Vietnamese terms. For example, one female informant stated that children

learn shapes in English at school so they do not know the Vietnamese word for the shape.

Communication problems thus arise when Vietnamese-speaking grandparents try to talk with

their grandchildren who know only a little Vietnamese. Although realizing the necessity of

learning English, Vietnamese is the preferred language at home, and the adults in this sample

generally stated that they would speak to their children in Vietnamese unless they knew their

children did not know certain words. According to Muzny (1989:108), the Vietnamese

community in Oklahoma City also preferred to speak Vietnamese at home.

Food

Following Mary Douglas'(1966:115) proposition that "the body is a symbol of society",

food, that is, what individuals place inside their body, provides a means to express and negotiate

ethnicity and thus serve as an ethnic symbol. Indeed, efforts in the early 20th Century to alter the

nutrition of incoming immigrants to match the American diet just like the emphasis on language,

that is speaking English, were seen as means to acculturate immigrants in the United States

(Kalčik 1984:41). This indicates the prominence of food as a boundary marker or at least a

boundary marker within the American folk model. Mandy Thomas (2004) finds this to be the

case among the Vietnamese living in Australia. According to Thomas (2004), the barbeque, which is taken to be a boundary marker of Australianess, is also the vehicle by which the two cultures are merged, namely through the use of Vietnamese seasonings within the social setting of the Australian barbeque. Likewise, Vietnamese food also becomes altered as side dishes, such as meat, become main courses, and main courses, such as rice, become side dishes in Australia (Thomas 2004).

Nagel's theory of ethnicity as a process involving both the subjective and the other fits well with Kalčik (1984:41) statements that second and third generations retention of cultural identifiers, i.e. food, depends not only on their concept of self but also on the larger community's opinions of the ethnic group and cuisine. This helps to explain why certain foods may not be consumed despite availability of ingredients. In addition, another reason for retention of certain foods relates to whether these foods are "core, secondary core, or periphery foods" of the culture according to Herbert Passin and John Bennett (Kalčik 1984:40-41). Thus, core or staple foods, such as rice, would be least likely to change while other periphery foods, perhaps fruits, may be substituted for.

Furthermore, food's ability to transcend class, but also serve as a class marker explains its usefulness as an ethnic symbol. For example, in Vietnam, the French wanted to maintain distinctiveness from the Vietnamese through such cultural markers as food, yet Vietnamese elites used food as a means to exert and subvert French power (Peters 2001:24-25;28). Peters (2001:24) reports one situation where an elite Vietnamese father served only the finest French cuisine at his daughter's wedding thereby illustrating a connection with the French, both challenging French attitudes and showing incorporation of French culture. On the other hand, another Vietnamese elite served the finest Vietnamese cuisine to his French distinguished guests

thereby reasserting his ethnicity through the use of the framework of the "other's" view (Peters 2001:24). Furthermore, food's ability to reaffirm the bonds of society, even transcending death, is reflected in the practice of offering food for the dead (Kalčik 1984:49). Kalčik (1984), for instance, points out that Buddhist Vietnamese will place favorite dishes at the altar of loved ones on the anniversary of their death.

Thomas (2004) also points out that just as eating a traditional meal in the home helps adjust to a foreign world so too the practice of eating fast food legitimizes and forms identity as part of Western culture. When one retired male informant was asked whether he felt Asian, Asian-American, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-American, or American when eating at a American-style restaurant, he admitted that he sometimes felt American, but then went on to explain that he was Vietnamese-American because, for example, when he comes home, they eat rice. Fast food is also consumed in Kenton out of convenience, personal preference, and because the children like it.

Likewise, the consumption of another's ethnic cuisine, whether that is Americans eating at Vietnamese restaurants or Vietnamese eating at American-style buffets, serves as symbols of embracing the other ethnic group (Kalčik 1984:61). At a local event to celebrate Asian culture, the prime means used to introduce the public to various Asian cultures, including Vietnamese, was food. This was by far the most common cultural item available for sale although some decorative arts were also available. Kalčik (1984:55) points out that cultural diversity in food is part of the folk model of Americanness, and this is seen to be promoted during prosperity, but attitudes towards such diversity turn to focused enmity during periods of uncertainty. A recent prime example is the French fries turned Freedom fries. Yet, Kalčik (1984:59) notes that the blending of cuisines generally has not been the outcome of this diversity of food. Ethnic cuisines

may be adjusted to accommodate the palates of the wider American audience, but there is no real combination of ethnic food styles. Thus, according to Kalčik, this reaffirms food's ability to serve as a cultural marker of ethnicity. This is evident among the Vietnamese community in Kenton. Thirteen out of the twenty-seven people asked, ranging in age from late teens to early seventies, male and females, ten to thirty-three years in the United States stated that they did combine Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese food at the same time, but such combining was indicated to be on a limited basis. All but three indicated that they were Vietnamese-American.

A particular food dish may even symbolically represent ethnic identity. Nir Avieli (2005) has researched the symbolic meaning of banh chung or banh Tet, a Vietnamese square rice cake filled in the center with meat and wrapped in banana leaves. It is a staple during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, and historically Tet takes place between the last harvest and before the next planting of rice (Avieli 2005). According to Avieli (2005), the shape of the banh chung symbolizes the earth and the crop it supplied. Since the majority of the cake is rice, this represents the significant role rice plays in the Vietnamese diet as well as representing togetherness. In addition, the method of cooking, i.e. boiling, preserves the cake (Avieli 2005). While Avieli (2005) speculates that the banh chung may actually have a Chinese origin, Avieli feels that this does not detract from it as a national symbol of identity because the use of banh chung is Vietnamese. Namely, because banh chung kept so well, it was carried by Vietnamese soldiers in war and signifies the "endurance" of the Vietnamese people (Avieli 2005).

Medicine

Like food, medicine is internalized within the body, and the choices of treatment reflect individuals' perceptions of their bodies as well as potentially communicate their cultural background. Vietnamese traditional medicine takes a holistic perspective seeing the root cause of

illness in physical and emotional imbalances (Craig 2002; Thomas 1998). While individuals do

not have to subscribe to Vietnamese traditional medicine to be Vietnamese, the retention of

traditional usages as a mean to reassert Vietnamese identity in Vietnam in light of increasing

Western influences does warrant investigation into whether such practices have been continued

in the United States. This research found that Vietnamese in Kenton do use certain traditional

medicines. One female informant in her sixties stated that she used to have to order herbal

medicine directly from Vietnam; now there are suppliers in California but not Kansas. Earlier on

in the research, several individuals, both male and female, were asked if they shopped at any of

the health food stores in the city, but only one said yes. In addition, considering that Vietnamese

traditional medicine is closely related to Chinese medicine, a few individuals were also asked if

they went to a local Chinese school of medicine, but no one had.

Those who participated were asked if they used traditional, prescription, and/or over-the-

counter medication when they were sick. Of the thirty-four individuals asked, twenty stated that

they did use traditional medicine. Only two, one male and one female, indicated that they used

solely traditional medicine and both considered themselves to be Vietnamese (male also listed

Asian), and they had come to the United States in the last two years. In addition, of the thirty-two

who used traditional and another form of medication, all but three stated that they were

Vietnamese-American and the years in the United States varied from one to thirty-four. One of

the popular Vietnamese treatments used in Kenton is green oil. Informants stated that it worked

well for colds, headaches, and nausea. In addition, the sweating out of impurities and inhalation

of a steam mixture of herbs and flowers were also used by two females in their middle twenties

and early thirties for illnesses such as headaches. Also, one of the female informants in her

thirties stated that a coin may be rubbed across the body, such as the back, until the area is red in

order to "take the wind out, meaning the cold" and a male in his thirties also reported that he rubbed a coin across his back to help release toxins. Thus, the perception of the body among the sample of Vietnamese living in Kenton is consistent with the traditional Vietnamese view of the body.

Holidays/Celebrations

Holidays and celebrations provide an opportunity to step back out of the business of everyday life and reinforce family and community ties as well as serve as platforms to reassert connections with a person's culture. Which holidays a person celebrates and how they celebrate them may all be statements about how individuals conceive of themselves in terms of their ethnicities. Thus, holidays serve as potential boundary markers.

The most commonly named holiday that was celebrated is the Chinese/Vietnamese New Years. Of the thirty-four individuals (twelve males and twenty-two females), twenty-seven individuals (eleven males and sixteen females) indicated that they celebrated the Chinese/Vietnamese New Year. The method of celebration commonly involved getting together with extended family and wishing each other good luck for the next year, exchanging lucky money/red envelops, and eating special foods, such as banh chung, fruit candies, and other delicacies. Some also said that they attended temple at midnight or church that day, wore new clothes (the color red for luck), played games with friends, and cleaned the house beforehand in preparation for the New Year. While these all correlate with the way Chinese/Vietnamese New Year is celebrated in Vietnam, two informants did report that a few differences also exist. Since Chinese/Vietnamese New Year is not a United States holiday, Vietnamese individuals either will save their vacation for this week-long celebration or collapse it into one or two days. Many of the individuals were asked if they incorporated American food into the celebration, and all reported

that they only fixed Vietnamese food on that day. However, one male individual stated that the young children would be given pizza, hamburgers, or hot dogs, but the adults would not eat this type of food. Two females and one male did offer that they also celebrated the American New Year like other Americans, i.e. going out and drinking, thereby suggesting that the Chinese/Vietnamese New Year celebration serves as a means to maintain Vietnamese ethnic boundaries given its forum of consuming Vietnamese food and wearing Vietnamese traditional dress, and viewing Vietnamese traditional and modern music and dance in a group setting via New Year presentations.

For example, the Dragon is a staple figure of the Chinese/Vietnamese New Year almost like Santa Claus is for Christmas, and little children as well as adults will go up and give the Dragon lucky money. While grade-schoolers took turns operating the Dragon costume at one of the celebrations, it was observed at other celebrations that middle-school to college-age males performed the Dragon dance and incorporated acrobatic feats into the dance. The Dragon also visited a local Asian grocery store. Female performers wore the ao dai and performed butterfly, fan, and hat dances to traditional music at the New Year celebrations.

This is not to say that elements of the American part of the Vietnamese-American ethnicity are missing from these New Year presentations. At a community organized Chinese/New Year celebration, the United States National Anthem and the Vietnamese National Anthem were played during the opening. In addition, at a local event to celebration Asian cultures, the opening of the program began with the United States National Anthem; music being the mode to express an aspect of identity. While the presentation and introductions were conducted mostly in Vietnamese, the program at the community New Year's celebration was available in both English and Vietnamese. In addition, there was an equal balance of traditional

dances to traditional music using traditional costumes to contemporary, modern dance choreographed to American pop music with the performers wearing contemporary dress. One dance group even incorporated glow-sticks into their dance. Vietnamese pop music and rap were also used. It was interesting that in both of the comedy skits presented at the community New Years celebration, cross-dressing served as the comic relief but the first was presented in English and the second in Vietnamese. Also, the community New Year's presentation included a fashion show of traditional dress from various Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, China, and Vietnam and stands to illustrate the incorporation of the Asian panethnicity into the presentation. In addition, the comedy skit at another New Year presentation dealt with the theme of the importance of family within Vietnamese culture. Acted out in Vietnamese, the general synopsis of the story, translated by a member in the audience to the author, involved a family whose father was not into family reunions nor acted very responsibly, i.e. letting his baby son drink beer, and the father was consequently brought up before a judge for his apathy toward his family.

So does the New Year celebration in the Kenton serve as an unifier for the Vietnamese community? One male informant in his late twenties felt that the degree of cohesiveness created by everyone celebrating this day in Vietnam is missing in Kenton and contributes some of this to the lack of a unified community. For instance, he stated that the New Year celebration at a local cultural center was attended by only a couple hundred individuals. Indeed, rather than one big celebration comparable to the Fourth of July in the United States, smaller independent celebrations took place around the city, hosted by different religious and community organizations. Also, both at the religious and community celebrations attended by the author, the presentations and even the moderation was generally in Vietnamese. While all of the informants in this study spoke Vietnamese, this is not representative of the Vietnamese population in

Kenton. For example, the author noticed that a group of teenage Vietnamese boys attending the community New Year celebrations repeatedly grumbled that the people on stage speak English. While other actions of this group seemed to indicate that they had a genuine interest in the Vietnamese presentations, the language barrier alienated them from becoming fully engaged, and they often talked amongst themselves rather than paying attention to what was going on on stage during long periods of uninterrupted Vietnamese conservation. Despite this, the Chinese/Vietnamese New Year celebration does bring large groups of Vietnamese individuals together and thus provide a community atmosphere and a forum for sharing Vietnamese food and wearing Vietnamese traditional dress.

The second most celebrated Vietnamese general holiday was the one month and first birthdays with sixteen individuals (five males, eleven females) indicating that they celebrated it. This was close to the expected second-most-celebrated holiday, Mid-Autumn Festival. According to McLeod and Nguyen (2001:160), Mid-Autumn Festival is ranked as the second most popular celebration in Vietnam. Thirteen individuals, six males and seven females, stated that they celebrated the Mid-Autumn festival. The lower numbers for the Mid-Autumn Festival may be due in part to the fact that this holiday is celebrated more by children than adults. Not many informants recognized or celebrated Hung King celebration, what Tran (2002:142) considered "the most traditional Vietnamese holiday." Two males (Vietnamese-American) and one female (Vietnamese) indicated that they celebrated this holiday. Six individuals, three males and three females, celebrated longevity birthday.

In terms of the religious holidays, two individuals (female and male) indicated that they celebrated Buddha's Birthday by going to the temple with family, and the same female also celebrated the Day of Enlightenment. The most commonly celebrated Buddhist holiday among

the Vietnamese sample is Le-Vu-Lan which honors living and deceased mothers. On this day, individuals go to the temple and light incense for their deceased mothers. Nine individuals, seven females and two males, acknowledged this holiday.

Christmas is celebrated in Vietnam and the United States, and individuals, despite their religion, participate. Twenty-four individual (eight males and sixteen females) indicated that they celebrated Christmas. The Catholic Vietnamese often go to midnight Mass as a family and then eat a big meal together before going home. Three reported that they served American food such as turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, and corn while three others reported that they ate Vietnamese food. One female noted that she fixed ham with Vietnamese side dishes. Gifts are also exchanged. Buddhist Vietnamese celebrated Christmas, the day not the religious principle behind it, through the exchange of gifts and getting a Christmas tree. A female informant in her mid-twenties explained that her family follows American customs because this is where they live. This adoption of certain customs even extended to attending a religious service as one female Buddhist informant stated that her immediate family would go to the temple on Christmas. Those who celebrated Easter did so more with their immediate family and may or may not eat anything special. The female who noted that she cooked ham and Vietnamese side dishes for Christmas did the same for Easter. While Easter egg hunts are not done in Vietnam and the celebrations are also low key, if at all, in the United States, both Catholic and Buddhist respondents said that their children did do Easter egg hunts.

As other authors such as Tran (2002) noted, the American holiday of Thanksgiving is widely celebrated by Vietnamese in Kansas. Of the twenty-three individuals who said that they celebrated this day, eight said that they ate a traditional turkey dinner with all of the sides while four others indicated that they combined American and Vietnamese food at the Thanksgiving

meal. In particular, one male in his sixties stated that turkey may be ground up and made into egg rolls thereby illustrating a synthesis of the two cuisines. Duck and chicken appeared as substitutes for turkey. All of the individuals who stated that they incorporated all or some of the elements of a traditional Thanksgiving dinner considered themselves to be Vietnamese-American, but there was not a clear association of food choice and ethnicity as only two of the six who considered themselves Vietnamese ate only Vietnamese food on Thanksgiving.

When asked about the 4th of July, nineteen individuals (six males and thirteen females) said they did celebrate it, and over half indicated that they had a barbeque. One individual not included in this total stated that she celebrated the 4th of July because that was the day her grandfather passed away which brings up the issue of whether this day was interrupted as another holiday besides Independence day. Yet, only five additional individuals did not elaborate on how they celebrated the day, and the others stated that they got together with family for barbeque or fireworks so the author is confident that these individuals were celebrating the United States Independence day. It is interesting that four individuals barbequed using American seasonings while three used Vietnamese seasonings, one of whom also incorporated American sides. Two others noted that they switched between Vietnamese and American barbeque seasonings, and lastly one individual who considered herself to be Vietnamese stated that she fixed Vietnamese food.

A similar situation exists for Memorial and Labor Day. Ten individuals (three males and seven females) celebrated Memorial Day compared to seven individuals (two males and five females) who celebrated Labor Day. Except for one female, these individuals all celebrated the Fourth of July. While Memorial and Labor Day remain lower key than the Fourth of July among both the Vietnamese and the larger community in Kenton, a couple Vietnamese informants stated

that they would barbeque, one using American the other Vietnamese spices. Another informant stated that he placed a flag on a grave during Memorial Day. In addition, among those interviewed, twelve indicated that they celebrated Valentine's Day. Thus, American holidays are incorporated into the Vietnamese calendar in Kenton as well as the particular ways in which they are celebrated. Like food, holiday celebrations may be a way of demonstrating acceptance as well as belonging to a particular ethnicity.

Furthermore, individuals were asked about the following government holidays in Vietnam: February 3, Communist Party; Sept 2 National Day; May 19 Ho Chi Minh's Birthday; May 1 International Workers Day; April 30 the day North Vietnam took control of South Vietnam. While four individuals indicated that they reflected on April 30, the other state holidays were no longer celebrated in the United States. The most commonly mentioned day was May 1, with five individuals indicating that they had celebrated it, next was April 30 with four, September 2 with two, and May 19 with one. Four of the seven individuals who stated that they had celebrated one of these days considered themselves to be Vietnamese, and two of the remaining three who considered themselves Vietnamese-American reflected only on April 30. Several of the informants who had come to the United States when they were young were not familiar with these holidays, and others expressed their dislike for such holidays.

This incorporation of American practices into the Vietnamese social, family life illustrates Barth's point that the cultural characteristics contained in the vessel may change without necessarily affecting the ethnic identity of the individual. It is the process by which they are used that determines whether they are significant to ethnic identity.

<u>Recreational Activities</u>

  The activities individuals choose to participate in can serve as vehicles to negotiate ethnicity. Sharing the same appreciation for an activity and participating in it with others supports feelings of belonging. Also, such participation and feelings can be presented to or perceived by the "other" as a boundary markers. For example, baseball and being American are linked in the folk models of many Americans. This does not mean that all Americans should appreciate baseball and go to games nor does this mean that all people who enjoy baseball are American, but this sport historically has been a popular pastime associated with the United States. Stereotypes can serve as boundary markers because they are employed by the folk models which are brought to the interaction between individuals and the "other." Song (2003:50) feels that stereotypes are significant exactly because they promote boundary maintenance.

  Karaoke is a popular pastime in Southeast Asia and originated in Japan in the 1970s. Wong (1994) sees participation in and the production of karaoke as a means for Asian populations in the United States, including Vietnamese, to work out their identity of being Asian or Asian-American. While karaoke may be sung in the group among friends, it is not uncommon for karaoke screens to be playing in Vietnamese and Chinese restaurants. Vietnamese karaoke provides a means for individuals to socially exhibit the Vietnamese language in a group setting. In addition, Wong (1994) points out that the same song may be set to different images. Some of these videos are filmed in Vietnam by Vietnamese-Americans, and others are filmed on the West coast. The same song may be set to a traditional Vietnamese village background scene and to a scene from California (Wong 1994). Karaoke also provides a forum in which to learn the Vietnamese language for those who grew up in the United States. In Kenton, TV screens played Vietnamese karaoke at one of the local Vietnamese restaurants and another Vietnamese

restaurant appeared equipped for a similar set up. Similar to Wong (1994), this researcher noticed a common reaction of enjoyment and smiling when individuals were asked if they sang Vietnamese karaoke. Twenty-three of the twenty-six people asked said that they sung or watched Vietnamese karaoke, and fifteen sung or watched English karaoke. Most of the individuals, who considered themselves to be Vietnamese and not Vietnamese-American, did little or no English karaoke, thus reflecting the importance of language as an ethnic identifier.

Also, listening to music produced by Vietnamese artists in Vietnamese and watching the music videos provides a means to connect Vietnamese in all parts of the world. It can also serve to inform others of an individual's ethnic association. Only three of the thirty-eight informants asked about their listening preference stated that they did not listen to Vietnamese music. One of these individuals, a male, explained that he lived by himself and did not really care for Vietnamese music but would watch and listen to more Vietnamese entertainment if his family was present.

Common History

In introducing Roosens (1994, 1998) to the work of Barth, Maykel Verkeryten (2005:81) clarifies the potential to consider any social group with certain material commonalities as an ethnic group. For Roosens, a sense of shared heritage and common history serves to distinguish ethnic groups from common interest groups (Verkeryten 2005:81). Indeed, the American and Vietnamese folk models on ethnicity appeals to perceived ancestry for defining ethnic boundaries. For instance, several informants explained that they are Vietnamese because their parents are both Vietnamese, and they are Vietnamese "by root." Underlining the usefulness of such cultural markers as the ao dai and pho is the idea that they have a history of being aligned with the Vietnamese and used as cultural markers. When individuals successfully incorporate

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these markers during interaction, they gain alliance with perceived common history. However, particularly with hyphenated ethnicities, like Vietnamese-American, the American part is associated with the situational not with a perceived common heritage. For example, informants stated that they were American because they had American friends and lived here a long time.

CHAPTER 8

TRANSNATIONALISM AMONG THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY

In a 1992 article, Schiller et al. wrote that "a transmigrant perspective on ethnicity must be developed that includes an examination of culture and agency…" (17). Nagel's view on ethnicity does exactly this. Namely, it looks at how cultural and identity give rise to ethnicity as well as the affects the individual and larger society have on the end product, i.e. ethnicity. Thus, Nagel's approach to ethnicity may be applied to the expression of ethnicity among individuals living in their native country as well as immigrants living abroad, and moreover, this illustrates its usefulness for the study of ethnicity.

In order to gain an idea of the degree of transnationalism present among the Vietnamese in Kenton, and thus elicit whether the "other", the Vietnamese living in Vietnam, influences the ethnicity of the Vietnamese in Kansas, informants were asked questions about the number of times they had visited Vietnam and the reasons for the visit, the types of things sent to Vietnam, the types of items received from Vietnam, and the frequency and form of communication with individuals in Vietnam. Following Basch et al's (1994:7) observation that transmigrants tend to refer to their country of origin as 'home' despite long-term residence in another state, those interviewed were asked where 'home' was for them. This question also reveals to a certain extent whether individuals saw themselves as part of United States society and/or Vietnamese society.

Where is home?

The events that took place in Vietnam in the 1960s through 1980s impacted how informants answered this question. Whether they left Vietnam during this time or lived through the re-education camps and communist transition to power, these circumstances will have influenced how the question was answered and evaluations of the chances for return. Out of the

thirty people who answered this question, fifteen considered home to be in the United States and fifteen considered home to be both in the United States and Vietnam. No one stated directly that they felt that home was solely in Vietnam although one male indicated that he preferred to live in Vietnam because of the slower-paced lifestyle.

Age at time of arrival to the United States or the year an individual came to the United States did not correlate with whether an individual saw home as being in the United States or both. However, time spent in the United States and location of family seemed to be factors influencing whether home was in the United States or both. For example, two-thirds of those who came to the United States in the 1980s or earlier indicated that home was in the United States. No connection existed between the amount of contact with Vietnam and whether home was considered to be both in the United States and Vietnam or just the United States. Six out of fifteen individuals who identified the United States as home kept regular contact with Vietnam compared to the eight out of fifteen individuals who maintained regular contact with Vietnam and considered home to be in both places.

Common reasons given for calling the United States home included: raised here, feel more comfortable here, government is better, dislike of Vietnamese economy and weather, place where live for a long time, no close relatives in Vietnam, immediate family is in the United States, and Vietnam does not feel like home. The most common response given by 1/3 of the informants who thought of the United States as home was that they had lived in the United States for such a long time. Common reasons for calling both the United States and Vietnam home included: thinking about the United States but have memories of Vietnam, most of their relatives live in Vietnam but the person grew up in the United States, related more to American culture, both places are beautiful, lived in both places for a long time, have family in both, and very

young when came to the United States. The most frequent response actually involved three different reasons, namely, both places are beautiful, they lived in both places a long time, and they have family that lives in both.

Interaction with Vietnam

Following Basch et al.'s 1994 definition of transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement," the research on the Vietnamese community in Kenton revealed that such interactions were maintained. From the list of different types of multi-stranded relationships included in Basch et al. 1994, the multi-stranded relations present among the Vietnamese community in Kenton can be classified as familial, economic, social, and to a lesser extent religious. By far, the main reason for continued interaction with Vietnam centered on family and friends living in Vietnam. In fact, these family ties function as the reason for the transnationalism as Goldring (1998:173) suggests for causes of transnationalism. For instance, when individuals were asked why they did not call or send emails, money, or gifts to Vietnam, the explanation was that they no longer had family there any more. Outside of one female who stated that in general she sent clothes to Vietnam for those who could not afford it, no one indicated that they continued to send support when their family was no longer there. However, such activities might have taken place but were not mentioned or individuals not included in this study do participate in such actions.

Although one female reported that she went back to see her family almost every year, most informants had only returned to Vietnam once or twice with the earliest being in 1992 and the latest in 2006. The reasons given for returning included to visit with family and friends, vacation, weddings, and funerals. Family was by far the number one reason individuals returned

to Vietnam. Out of the thirty-seven who responded, twenty-six stated that they had gone back at least one time to visit Vietnam, and two, who had not gone back yet, planned to go back to visit Vietnam. This is not to say that some economic transactions do not also take place. One informant stated that individuals returning might bring cell phones and other electronic devices to Vietnam to sell. In fact, another informant stated the Vietnamese government limits the number of cell phones a person can bring into the country to one, but unofficial transactions can increase this number.

The economic connection between the Vietnamese community in Kenton and Vietnam is also evident in the items sent to Vietnam. While the items are sent to family members, this support serves to supplement the incomes of individuals living in Vietnam. By far, the most common item sent is financial assistance. Twenty-four of the thirty-five respondents stated that they sent money to Vietnam. Indeed, Drummond and Thomas (2003:9) report a 2001 Vietnamese news article that approximately two billion US dollars were sent to Vietnam over the span of that year by Vietnamese living outside the country. In addition, other common items sent to Vietnam by those in this study include clothes, toiletries, medicine, candy, pictures, and electronic devices. These are listed from more to less common. Five individuals indicated that they did not send anything to Vietnam. Money is often sent to Vietnam because it enables the recipients to buy whatever they may need. Although there is not a shortage of clothes or toiletries in Vietnam, a couple of informants explained that such items as perfumes, shampoo, toothpaste, and name-brand clothes are sent to Vietnam because the clothes and toiletries available in the United States are of better quality, and they are sold at a lower price. Drummond and Thomas (2003:11) adds that sending items to Vietnam serves also as a political statement against communism, a way of "fight[ing] communism with capitalism."

Given the economic hardships of family members living in Vietnam, the quantity of items sent to relatives in Kansas was reported to be less than that being sent from Kansas to Vietnam. Eleven informants indicated that they received food from people in Vietnam, such as candies, dried fish, and other food products they could not get in Kansas. The second most common gift received from people in Vietnam was decorative crafts and souvenir-type objects. A few female individuals indicated that they received clothes, such as the ao dai, from Vietnam, and one female stated that she was sent fabric. The clothes received were not solely for personal use as one female stated that her relative in Vietnam occasionally sent her clothes to sell in her store. People in Vietnam also sent Vietnamese music, family pictures, and letters to family in Kansas.

Other forms of contact with family and friends in Vietnam include phone calls and email. Among the individuals spoken with, calling appeared to be used more than email. This may be due to lack of access to the internet both for those living in the United States and Vietnam. Nevertheless, three out of thirty-one individuals stated that they used email to keep in touch with family and friends in Vietnam on a daily basis while four used email weekly and seven emailed every couple of months or so. Calls to Vietnam are expensive, and six out of thirty-three individuals stated that they called infrequently. Only one individual reported that she called Vietnam everyday. Eight individuals stated that they called one to two times a month, and four indicated that they called on a weekly basis. Overall, most of those interviewed contacted Vietnam every one to two months.

Smith and Guarnizo (1998:16) questioned whether transnationalism was present only among the first generation and proposed that it was not limited to immigrants. The data gathered from the interviews also supports their conclusions that transnationalism extends to the second

generation. Because no individuals from the third or subsequent generations were interviewed, the author is unable to determine whether these later generations also participate in transnationalism and the comparable degree to which they are involved. Like Thai (2002:56) and other researchers, this study defines the second generation as anyone who was either born in the United States to immigrants or arrived in the United States when they were eleven years old or younger. Of the eleven individuals (five males, six females) who are of the second generation, all but one had visited Vietnam at least once. Less than half called or emailed people in Vietnam, but over half sent financial aid to family living in Vietnam. In addition, over half received food and other gifts from Vietnam.

Thus, familial, economic, and social relations are maintained between first and second generation Vietnamese living in the Kenton and people living in Vietnam. Furthermore social relations include instant messaging and emailing friends in Vietnam as well as visiting Vietnam and maintaining long distance relationships. One male informant indicated that it is not uncommon for Vietnamese males in the United States to go to Vietnam and marry someone there. In fact, three females stated that their reason for coming to Kansas from Vietnam was because their husbands were from here. The tie facilitated by religion between Vietnam and the United States is not quite as prominent as that of the familial and social links. One female informant in her forties reported that she returned with her children to Vietnam in order to fulfill her obligations to honor a deceased loved-one. Furthermore, in the past Buddhist speakers from Vietnam have been sponsored by Vietnamese temples in Kansas to come and give talks to members of the temple (Tran 2002).

Thus, the criteria outlined by Basch et al. (1994) to identity transnationalism are present among the Vietnamese community in Kenton. Glick Schiller's later addition that

transnationalism involves membership being extended to individuals by both the state of origin

and residence as well as the acceptance by the individuals of membership in both is present to a

certain degree among the Vietnamese community in Kenton. To begin, Dorais (2005:178)

reports that Vietnam considers immigrants and their foreign born children to be citizens of

Vietnam. While individuals were not asked whether they were citizens of the United States,

thirteen of the thirty responded positively to whether they voted. This participation in the

government illustrates not only that they are considered citizens by the United States, but also

that they consider themselves members and showed this by choosing to participate in this

process. In addition, four were eligible to vote, and the status of the others was undeterminable.

However, difficulties arise in determining whether those interviewed considered themselves to

be citizens of Vietnam. If their response to "where is home?" can be used as an indicator than of

those who were determined to be citizens of the United States, five considered their home to be

in both the United States and Vietnam. However, if home rests on memories and the presence of

family, it may not necessarily translate into feelings of citizenship with a communist regime.

Considering then that transnationalism, at least to certain degree, is present among the

Vietnamese community in Kenton, the next question relates to the effect transnationalism has on

ethnicity. Of the five who were citizens of the United States and considered home to be in both

places, four responded to the question of ethnicity, and of these, three identified themselves as

Vietnamese-American. Of the six people who sent nothing to Vietnam, four stated that they were

Vietnamese but also added too that they were Vietnamese-American or Asian-American. The

one individual who considered himself American-Vietnamese had visited Vietnam and sent

money to Vietnam. While amount of contact does not seem to correlate directly with ethnicity,

given the situational and multivariate aspect of ethnicity, such findings do not completely reject

that continued ties with Vietnam have no affect on ethnicity. The souvenirs and wall-hangings received from Vietnam serve as constant reminders of the country and visiting with family and friends on a fairly regular basis keeps individuals current on the situation in Vietnam and reaffirms those living abroad of their connection and association with Vietnam.

CHAPTER 9

ETHNICITY AMONG THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY:
INFLUENCES OF PEOPLE, PLACE, FOOD, LANGUAGE

In order to assess whether group, food, place, or language influenced a person's perceived ethnicity, a series of scenarios were created, and the interviewees was asked to indicate whether they felt more Asian, Asian-American, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-American, or American in each situation. This line of investigation is based on Caulkins et al 2000 article "Using Scenarios to Construct Models of Identity in Multiethnic Settings." The complete list of scenarios given to the Vietnamese interviewees is included in Appendix C, but the names of the specific places have been changed. Basically, one set of scenarios altered whether individuals were by themselves, with Vietnamese friends, American friends, or with other Asian and ethnic groups and whether this influenced their identity. The next set of scenarios introduced place to the people variables to see if that changed how people perceived their ethnicity. Thus, individuals were asked how they felt when they were shopping at American stores and Vietnamese stores by themselves, with Vietnamese friends, American friends, and Vietnamese-American friends. The third set of scenarios dealt with food and sought to see whether individuals felt more Asian, Asian-American, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-American, or American if they were eating at Vietnamese, American, or Chinese restaurants by themselves, with Vietnamese friends, American friends, and Vietnamese-American friends and whether it mattered if they were speaking English, Vietnamese, or both with one another. Lastly, scenarios involving American and Vietnamese holidays with altering compositions of attendees and languages spoken were used to see if celebrating Vietnamese holidays reinforced Vietnamese

ethnicity and the same with American holidays and American ethnicity or if the presence of

other Asian ethnicities influenced Asianness over Vietnameseness or the converse.

The Results

To begin, individuals' answers to the scenarios were compared to the list of identities

they indicated they used to refer to themselves in order to see if their number one choice

appeared most frequently during the scenarios (Table 1).

TABLE 1

CORRELATION BETWEEN SCORES ON IDENTITY SHEET AND ETHNICITY
SCENARIOS

Group	Correlation	Number of Respondents out of 21	Percentage
1	#1 identity matched most frequent response on ethnicity scenarios	11	52%
2	#1 identity *does not* match most frequent response on ethnicity scenarios	6	29%
3	most frequent response to ethnicity scenarios marked on the identity sheet but not #1	4	19%

In addition, variation existed within the three groups. Six individuals in Group 1 selected one or

more ethnicities on the scenarios which were not indicated on their identity sheet. In Group 2,

one male did not mark any ethnic group titles in the identity section, but when asked about his

ethnicity, what he indicated did appear as the most common response to the scenarios. Another

individual in Group 2 indicated that she felt al of the choices in all of the situations but only

marked two of those on her identity sheet. In Group 3, one female had marked the most common

selection on the scenarios on the identity sheet, but it was not listed in the top three, and a male

had included the most common selection in his top three but not ranked it as number one.

Furthermore, a female's number one choice for identity, Vietnamese, came in second to the most frequently used choice, Vietnamese-American, which was not indicated on the identity sheet. Similarly, the most frequently used identity on the scenario for one male, Vietnamese-American, combined two of his top three choices, Vietnamese and American, but neither was ranked his number one, yet Vietnamese-American matched how he later described himself.

There are two possibilities for the disjuncture between how individuals saw themselves and how they felt in a given situation. The first option is that the methods were inappropriate and the questions were misunderstood. This may have been the case in the situation of the individual who circled all of the answers to all of the scenario questions. In addition, individuals may not have been in the situations described and thus guessed how they would feel. Efforts were made to control this by using those particular stores and restaurants that were frequently named by individuals in preliminary interviews, and individuals were asked during the open-ended questions whether they had friends who were American, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-American, and Asian but not Vietnamese. While no data on friends was collected for three individuals (they happen to fall within the category where everything matched), five (including the one who answered all to all) answered questions about people they did not include as friends, but excluding these questions from the total did not affect the overall results. Furthermore, some individuals stated that they in fact skipped questions about situations which were inappropriate and did not fit what they actually did.

The second option for explaining the disjunction is that what individuals feel at a given situation does not necessarily represent who they are in "isolation", that is how they conceive of themselves. Thus, the presence of the other imposes or suggests an identity different from what individuals may necessarily use for themselves. Indeed, when asked about his ethnicity early on,

one male informant made the point that he would not describe himself as Asian and chose

instead Vietnamese-American, yet he picked Asian as how he would feel in one of the scenarios

where he was attending a New Year celebration and Vietnamese and Chinese individuals were

present. This latter explanation substantiates Nagel's view of ethnicity as a situational, constant

process arising out of identity, culture, interactions with others, and context.

The second step in analysis involved looking for commonalities among the answers to the

scenarios, such as the presence of Americans influencing Vietnamese-Americans to feel more

American in situations where Americans are present while not affecting how those felt who saw

themselves as Vietnamese. Thus, the comparison began by grouping individuals based on how

they described their ethnicity. This resulted into twelve who considered themselves Vietnamese-

Americans, six Vietnamese, four Vietnamese/Vietnamese-Americans, one Vietnamese/Asian,

and one Vietnamese/Asian-American.

When individuals were asked how they felt when shopping at an American shopping

center with Vietnamese friends, there was a tendency by all to feel Vietnamese-American.

Looking solely at the influence of different groups of people, i.e. spending time at home with

Vietnamese, Americans, Asians, or Vietnamese-Americans did not influence how the

Vietnamese group saw themselves, but the company did influence how Vietnamese-Americans

saw themselves. In addition, shopping by oneself at either a local Vietnamese or American store

did not seem to have an effect on how the Vietnamese group felt, but in combination place did

have some influence on the Vietnamese group. On the other hand, place by itself and in

combination with people did have some influence on the Vietnamese-American group. These

results are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

SITUATIONAL VARIATION IN ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	Influences on Ethnicity		
	People	Place	Place and People
Vietnamese	no	no	place some
Vietnamese-American	yes	yes	place some

Another commonality evident in the results illustrated that the way individuals of both groups felt in a situation involving a Vietnamese holiday, with Vietnamese and Vietnamese American guests, and conversing in Vietnamese, matched how they felt when they were eating at a Vietnamese restaurant and visiting with Vietnamese friends in Vietnamese. This is generally true for the corresponding American situations and slightly less for the corresponding Asian situations. Thus, this seems to support the reliability of the scenarios. In order to test the reliability, the same scenario involving American food and place, Vietnamese-American company and Vietnamese language was asked twice with the only variable changing being the fast food restaurant in which it took place. Four out of the thirteen respondents answered the question differently which is expected to occur if their experience at each did differ. For instance, one of the fast food restaurants may have been managed by a friend or frequented more by people the individuals were familiar with.

In terms of the effects of food on feelings of ethnicity for each group, some members in each appeared to be affected and others not. Combining the categories together reveals that seven out of fourteen respondents listed no change in how they felt while food appeared to be a cultural marker for the other half. For example, these individuals felt either American, Asian, or Asian-

American at American restaurants; more Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American at Vietnamese restaurants, and more Asian or Asian-American at a Chinese restaurant. The Vietnamese group tended to prefer the Vietnamese or Asian identities over the hyphenated ones in this case. While Asian and Vietnamese-American was used by individuals in the Vietnamese group, Asian-American was identified only once by one Vietnamese individual.

Next, the Vietnamese, Vietnamese-American, and other groupings were divided based on the age when the individual came to the United States and how long they had resided here in order to see if additional correlations could be recognized. The age categories were second generation, teenagers when came to the United States, twenty-year olds when came, and thirty to seventy-year olds when came. These last three groups were further divided based on whether they come to the United States in the last five or more years or more recently in the last four. Because of the characteristics of the sample, some of the groupings only had one, two, or no members, comparisons were then concentrating among four groups (Table 3).

TABLE 3

COMPARISON GROUPS BASED ON AGE WHEN CAME TO THE UNITED STATES AND
NUMBER OF YEARS LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES

Age When Came	Ethnic Group	Number of Years in the United States	Sample Size
Second Generation	Vietnamese-American	_____	6
Second Generation	Vietnamese	_____	3
Teenage	Vietnamese-American	5 years or more	4
Twenties	Vietnamese-American	5 years or more	3

The results of the comparisons between these groups and the variables of place, people, food, and language are represented in Table 4. No correlations could be drawn with the second generation Vietnamese and twenty-year old arrival Vietnamese-Americans because of the small number of scenario questions answered by individuals in these groups. Second generation Vietnamese-Americans all felt Vietnamese-American shopping at an American place with Vietnamese friends, but the teenage-arrived Vietnamese-Americans indicated feeling either Asian-American, American, or Vietnamese-American. The people present appeared to be the influential factor in the place and people combination for the second generation Vietnamese-Americans considering that the answer in the people category was a predictor of the answer in the combination category involving the same people. This was not found to be the case for the teenage-arrived Vietnamese group, but their sample size for this question was only two individuals as the other two did not answer all of the questions relating to these variables. Furthermore, the type of food being eaten did not matter for the second generation Vietnamese-Americans as their answers were the same in each case. However, food was a factor for the teenage-arrived Vietnamese-American as their answers did differ. A possible explanation for this may be that the second-generation grew up more in the United States and was accustom to eating Vietnamese, American, and other ethnic cuisines based on preferences at home and school lunches. Yet, the teenage-arrived Vietnamese-American group did not have quite as long a background in "juggling" between American, Vietnamese, and other cuisines, and thus food is more of a factor for them rather than a given.

The division into further categories highlighted the possible role of language as a cultural marker for one subset of the sample. Namely, using place, people, and food as independent variables with language as the dependent, the identity chosen when the language was English

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and when it was Vietnamese did not change for second generation Vietnamese-Americans, but it did affect how the two teenage-arrived Vietnamese-Americans felt. Again, the small size of the sample precludes more than a preliminary correlation. In addition, the second generation Vietnamese-American group felt Vietnamese-American in a Vietnamese restaurant eating Vietnamese food and visiting in Vietnamese with Vietnamese friends while more diversity existed among the teenage-arrived Vietnamese-American group, two of which felt Vietnamese, one Vietnamese, and one Asian-American. In the two converse situations involving American and Asian settings, the reverse was true with the teenage-arrived Vietnamese-American group feeling Asian-American in both situations, and diversity existing among the second-generation Vietnamese-Americans.

TABLE 4

SITUATIONAL VARIATION IN ETHNICITY: ARRIVAL AGE AND TIME IN THE UNITED STATES

Age When Came	Ethnicity	Number of Years in the United States	Influences on Ethnicity		
			People	Food	Language
Second Generation	Vietnamese-American	_____	yes	no	no
Teenage	Vietnamese-American	5 years or more	no	yes	yes

Discussion

The variability within and between these several different groups and even among individuals on how they answered each scenario limited the amount of associations that could be drawn. This variability in the results supports Nagel's proposition that ethnicity is situational and changing. Because of individual past experiences, their interpretation of each situation differs

somewhat and does not present a defined cohesiveness. Nevertheless, it is expected that groups of individuals sharing the same ethnicity would react similar to similar situations. Namely, ethnicity formation is not a free-for-all, rather some broad similarities exist to facilitate the interaction, but the situational dependency precludes a more rigid predictability. The justifications for selecting one identity over another reinforces the appropriateness of Nagel's model which takes into account the individual, the other, the background, and the context of the interaction. For example, one Vietnamese-American female explained that she felt both Vietnamese and American while eating pizza; American while shopping at a department store because Vietnam does not have shopping like that; Vietnamese-American at the local Vietnamese grocery store; and American at Wal-mart because the surroundings, the merchandize, layout, people, are all American and different from Vietnam, and the Americans interact with her in a friendly way. The importance of language for one female Vietnamese-American is evident in her statement that she still feels Vietnamese because she does not know all of the American slang. Furthermore, the influence of the "other" is apparent in the comments of one female Vietnamese-American's about why she feels Asian-American while shopping at an American store. Namely, she stated that the average person would know that she is Asian but would not know that she is Vietnamese. Other researchers on the Vietnamese have reported similar findings where individuals indicated that they felt different in different situations. This by no means suggests passing judgment concerning the insecurity of an individual's ethnic identity but rather illustrates that different scenarios place different weights of relevance on the cultural markers and identity feelings of individuals.

Nevertheless, four individuals did report that no matter where they were, who they were with, what language they were speaking, or what they were doing, their ethnicity did not change.

Two of these individuals (one male and one female) identified themselves as Vietnamese-American, and two (both males) identified themselves as Vietnamese. The question arises as to whether this stands as evidence against Nagel's perception of ethnicity. Yet the solution may lie within the context of the situational explanation. The past experiences of these individuals may have been such that personally the "other" and the context do not matter for them. They hold a different interpretation of what ethnicity means. Their responses to changing identities, i.e. being proud and not ashamed of who they are, help to understand the position they are coming from. However, this in no way reflects negatively on those who did feel different depending on the context. Their ethnicity is not somehow weaker or a lesser vehicle of pride because it adjusts to the situation. In fact, the resilience to be able to reconcile how they conceive of themselves in light of outside influences witnesses to the strength of their ethnicity.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Ethnicity is an illusive term; one that has been a subject of past debate between primordialists and circumstantialists within the disciple of anthropology. Following the work of Nagel (1994), this research adopts the definition of ethnicity as a product of identity and culture continually produced during the interaction between self and "other". Among the Vietnamese community in Kenton, such aspects as language, religion, dress, food, and holidays were used to negotiate ethnicity. In extending the shopping cart analogy, these items were taken in and out of the cart and employed depending on the circumstances surrounding the interaction. A historical look at these cultural boundaries revealed that markers of ethnicity do not necessarily have to be nor are of Vietnamese origin. How they are used to maintain boundaries is what is important. Moreover, family who remained in Vietnam served to sustain transnational relations between the Vietnamese community in Kansas and the Vietnamese living in Vietnam, and such links may serve to reinforce a Vietnamese identity. In conclusion, Nagel's approach to ethnicity provides a satisfactory model for understanding ethnicity as well as the basis to begin understanding the dynamics of ethnic identity, the reasons for its diversity among individuals, and with this a foundation for investigating how such dynamics can lead to conflict.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONS ASKED IN INTERVIEW AND ON QUESTIONARE

Background

1. Are you male or female?

2. In what city or village were you born?

3. When did you come to the United States?

4. How old are you?

5. Are you married?

6. What languages can you speak, read, and write? How well?
   Vietnamese
   English
   Mandarin Chinese
   _____

Do you have children?
Do you speak to your children in Vietnamese, English, both, or another language?

7. Where do you work now?

8. Where did you work in Vietnam?

9. What was the last grade you attended/degree you received in Vietnam or the United States?

Contact with Vietnam

10. When have you gone to visit Vietnam? Why did you go back to visit Vietnam?

11. What types of things do you send to people in Vietnam?

12. What types of things do you receive from people in Vietnam?

13. How often do you email people in Vietnam?

14. How often do you call people in Vietnam?

Everyday Activities

15 What types of activities do you do in your spare time?

16. What types of music do you listen to?

17. Do you sing/watch Vietnamese karaoke?
    Do you sing/watch English karaoke?

18. Circle any of the following types of movies you watch.
        American
        Vietnamese
        Chinese
        Korean
        _____

19. About what percent of the food you eat is Vietnamese _____
        About what percent of the food you eat is American _____

20. Do you eat Vietnamese food and non-Vietnamese food at the same meal?

21. Do you wear the ao dai?
        Why or Why not?

        When do you wear it?

22. Which do you attend?   Please write the name of the temple or church.
        A church   _____
        A temple   _____

23. Do you have Vietnamese friends who are Buddhist?
    Do you have Vietnamese friends who are Catholic?
    Do you have Vietnamese friends who are Baptist?

24. Which of the following do you use when you are sick?
   Traditional medication like green oil
   Prescription medication
   Over-the-counter medication

25. Do you vote?

26. Who are the leaders in the Vietnamese community in Wichita?

27. Which of the following are you involved in?
   Wichita Asian Association
   Wichita Vietnamese Mutual Association
   Parent-Student Association
   Former South Vietnamese Military Association
   Vietnamese Military Cadet Officer Association of National Academy of South Vietnam
   Vietnamese Student Association at Wichita State University
   Wichita Indochinese Center

Ethnicity

28. If you were to tell someone about Vietnam and the Vietnamese people, what would you say?

29. When you think of home, is home in Vietnam, the United States, or both? Why?

30. What are some stereotypes others have about Vietnamese?

31. What are some stereotypes other have about Americans?

32. Do you have friends who are Vietnamese?
   Do you have friends who are American?
   Do you have friends who are Vietnamese-American?
   Do you have friends who are Asian, but not Vietnamese?

33. In Vietnam
        Who lived with you in your house?

        Who cooked the food?

        Who did the shopping?

        Who washed the clothes?

        Who cleaned?

        Who took care of the children?

34. In the United States,
        Who lived with you in your house?

        Who cooked the food?

        Who did the shopping?

        Who washed the clothes?

        Who cleaned?

        Who took care of the children?

35. Which one do you feel represents your identity?

Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American-Vietnamese
Asian American
Sino-Vietnamese
American
_____

Please circle the holidays that you celebrate.

General   New Year's Festival (Tet Nguyen-dan)
                                  Mid Autumn Festival (Tet Trung-thu)
                                  Hung King Celebration
                                  Longevity Birthday
                                  One Month Birthday (An Day Thang)
                                  First Birthday

Who do you celebrate these holidays with?

What do you do on these days?

What do you eat?

Buddhist   Sakyamuni Buddha's Birthday or Vesak Day
                                  Sakyamuni Day of Enlightenment
                                  Le-Vu-lan

Who do you celebrate these holidays with?

What do you do on these days?

What do you eat?

Catholic   Christmas
                                  Easter
                                  All Saints Day

Who do you celebrate these holidays with?

What do you do on these days?

What do you eat?

United States   Thanksgiving
                       4th of July
                       Memorial Day
                       Labor Day
                       Valentine's Day

Who do you celebrate these holidays with?

What do you do on these days?

What do you eat?

Vietnam   Feb 3   Communist Party
                       Sept 2 National Day
                       May 19 Ho Chi Minh Birthday
                       May 1 International Workers Day
                       April 30

Please write in any holiday that you celebrate which is not on this list and explain how you celebrate it.

_____

_____

United States   Thanksgiving
                       4th of July
                       Memorial Day
                       Labor Day
                       Valentine's Day

Who do you celebrate these holidays with?

What do you do on these days?

What do you eat?

Vietnam   Feb 3   Communist Party
                       Sept 2 National Day
                       May 19 Ho Chi Minh Birthday
                       May 1 International Workers Day
                       April 30

Please write in any holiday that you celebrate which is not on this list and explain how you celebrate it.

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

IDENTITY QUESTIONS

Which of the following describe how you feel about yourself/describes your identity?
In other words, how would you complete the sentence I am _____.
You may choose as many as you like.

Asian	Grandfather
Asian-American	Hmông
Vietnamese	Thái
Vietnamese-American	Mường
American	Việt Kieu (Overseas Vietnamese)
American of Vietnamese descent	Northern Vietnamese
Sino-Vietnamese	Southern Vietnamese
Wichitian	Central Vietnamese
Kansas	Student
Saigon	Teacher
Hue	Business person
Hanoi	Your job title
Catholic	Mother
Buddhist	Father
Baptist	Daughter
Kho Me (Khmer)	Son
Hoa (Chinese)	Sister
Chăm	Brother
Việt Kinh	_____
Grandmother	*Other term*

Name the top three identities that you prefer. _____

Name the one you prefer the most. Why? _____
_____
_____

Does the identity you most associate with change depending on who you are with or where you are?
_____
_____

What identities from the above list would your parents' choose?_____

What identities are/have been used by non-Asians to refer to you?

_____
_____

ETHNICITY SCENARIOS

In the following situations, please circle the term that best represents how you feel.

1. You are at a McDonald's in Kansas with several of your Vietnamese-American friends. Your friends are talking to each other in Vietnamese. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

2. You are shopping by yourself at the local Vietnamese supermarket. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

3. You are at Wal-Mart shopping with Vietnamese friends. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

4. You are eating dinner at KFC with several Vietnamese-American friends. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

5. You are shopping at the local grocery store by yourself. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

6. You are shopping with some American friends at a Vietnamese grocery store. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

7. You are at the mall with some Vietnamese-American friends. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

8. You are at a New Years Celebration. There are Chinese, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-Americans, Koreans, and Americans there. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

9. You go to a New Years Celebration. There are Vietnamese and Chinese there.
Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

10. You are attending a 4th of July Independence Day celebration with fireworks. There are Americans, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-Americans and Chinese there.
Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

11. You go over to a friend's house for a One Month Birthday (An Day Thang) celebration. There are Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American guests there. Everyone is speaking Vietnamese. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

12. You go to your American friend's house for a barbeque on Memorial Day. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

13. You are eating lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant with some American friends, and they are talking with each other in English. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

14. You are eating dinner with some Vietnamese friends at a Vietnamese restaurant. Your friends are visiting with one another in Vietnamese. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

15. You are eating dinner with some Vietnamese-American friends at Vietnamese restaurant. Your friends are speaking with each other in English. Do you feel more….

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

16. You are hanging out with Vietnamese friends at your house in Kansas. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

17. You are hanging out Vietnamese-American friends at your house in Kansas.
Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

18. You are having lunch at Subway with some of your Vietnamese-American friends. Your friends are speaking English with one another. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

19. You are eating lunch with your Vietnamese-American friends at a Vietnamese restaurant. Your friends are speaking to one another in Vietnamese. Do you feel more….

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

20. You are shopping at the local grocery store with some American friends. Do you feel more….

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

21. You are at a Burger King in Kansas with your Vietnamese-American friends. Your friends are talking in Vietnamese with one another. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

22. You are eating at an American-style buffet restaurant by yourself. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

23. You are eating by yourself at a Vietnamese restaurant. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

24. You are eating by yourself at an Asian buffet restaurant. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

25. You are eating at Subway with Americans friends, and they are talking with each other in English. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

26. You are eating at a Vietnamese restaurant with Vietnamese-American friends, and they are talking with each other in Vietnamese. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

27. You are eating at an American-style buffet restaurant with Vietnamese friends, and they are talking with each other in Vietnamese. Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

28. You are hanging out with some American friends at your home in Kansas.
Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

29. You are hanging out with some Chinese and Thai friends at your house in Kansas.
Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American

30. You are having dinner with some Chinese and Thai friends at an Asian buffet restaurant.
Do you feel more…

Asian
Asian-American
Vietnamese
Vietnamese-American
American