‘Success’ Stories, Government Public Relations, and the Resettlement of South East Asian Refugees in Canada 1979-1980

by

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Abstract

Between July 1979 and May 1980, the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission undertook an extensive public relations campaign related to the resettlement of South East Asian refugees in Canada. This thesis sheds light on the origins and functions of this campaign, and examines how it emerged as a response to high levels of anti-refugee and anti-Asian racism within Canada. Through a critical reading of the most significant component of the strategy, the *Indochinese Refugee Newsletter*, this thesis reveals how the campaign repeatedly framed Canadians as naturally and wholeheartedly supportive of the refugee program, and South East Asian refugees as grateful beneficiaries of this generosity and inclusion. It argues that this essentializing narrative obscures the country's divided response to the South East Asian resettlement program, the complexities of resettlement, and the many occasions when Canada did not respond to the arrival of migrants with open arms.

List of Abbreviations Used

AV	Audio-Visual
CEIC	Canadian Employment and Immigration
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CIHS	Canadian Immigration Historical Society
CPRS	Canadian Public Relations Society
DND	Department of National Defence
GAR	Government Assisted Refugee
NCC	National Citizens' Coalition
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PR	Public Relations
PSR	Privately Sponsored Refugee
RLO	Refugee Liaison Officer
SSEA	Secretary of State for External Affairs (Foreign Minister)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Chapter One: Introduction

Between 1979 and 1980, over 60,000 refugees from South East Asia were resettled in Canada.[1] Of this group, 25,978 were government-assisted refugees, 32,281 were resettled under the newly launched Private Sponsorship Program, and an additional 1,790 were sponsored by relatives in Canada.[2] This was the highest number of refugees per capita resettled by any country in the world during this period, and was one of the largest single refugee intakes in Canadian history to date.[3] In 1986, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees awarded the Nansen Medal, the refugee equivalent of the Nobel Prize, to the 'People of Canada' in recognition of their resettlement efforts and their "essential and constant contribution to the cause of refugees within their country and around the world".[4] This was the only time the medal has been awarded the people of a country.

This moment in history is often characterized as a time of unwavering Canadian support for the resettlement of South East Asian refugees, fuelled by principles of

[1] Between 1975 and the end of 1978, Canada received 9,060 South East Asian refugees. Howard Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees* (L.A. Weigl Educational Associates, 1982), 1; Michael J. Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 3.

[2] Employment and Immigration Canada, *Indochinese Refugees: The Canadian Response, 1979 and 1980* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1982), 20; and Canadian Immigration Historical Society, CIHS *Bulletin* 73-A, April 2015, "The Indochinese Movement: Fortieth Anniversary," http://cihs-shic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/bulletin-73-a-2.pdf

[3] As of 1 December 1979, only five countries took in more than 10,000 refugees each. In absolute numbers, Canada (32,477) ranked third behind the United States (156,282, not including the 130,000 refugees who arrived in the U.S. in 1975) and France (58,376). See Adelman, 161. Although frequently referred to as "the single largest refugee intake in Canadian history", the movement of refugees into Canada averaged 30,000 per year in 1979 and 1980. The intake of European refugees after the Second World War totaled 186,000 from 1946 until 1952, averaging 31,000 per year. Over 50,000 entered Canada in a consecutive 12-month period in 1948-1949. Moreover, 37,000 Hungarian refugees entered Canada within a twelve-month interval extended over the calendar years 1956-1957. Thus, the Indochinese refugee movement was not the largest single refugee intake over a consecutive 12-month period. See Adelman, 161, for more information.

[4] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 4.

humanitarianism and generosity.[5] Excluded from this narrative of a galvanized Canada is the reality that this period also saw widespread public criticism of the government's refugee programs. As Howard Adelman points out in 1982 in *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees,* all national polls conducted during this period indicate that at least thirty-eight percent of Canadians remained opposed to the government's refugee program, a figure that easily fluctuated upwards of fifty and sixty percent throughout 1979 and 1980.[6]

In response to this opposition, the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) initiated a major public relations campaign between July 1979 and May 1980. This campaign included a news desk, audio-visual materials, informational pamphlets, and most significantly, a weekly newsletter that summarized news, stories, and events related to the government's South East Asian refugee program. The eleven-month run of the *Indochinese Refugees Newsletter* (*'Newsletter'*) was the most intensive public relations campaign the CEIC had ever undertaken, costing the federal government $132,000 and reaching a peak circulation of 16,000 Canadians.[7] Despite its historical and socio-political significance, the content of the *Newsletter* has received very little scholarly attention to date.

This project addresses this significant gap in the literature. Focusing primarily on the period between July 1979 and May 1980, it traces the rise of anti-refugee backlash in Canada in 1979 and the economic and racial factors that informed this opposition. I argue

[5] For example, see: Michael Casasola, "The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR and Canadian Resettlement Selection Policies and Practices," *Refuge* 32, no. 2 (2016): 42; Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*.
[6] Howard Adelman, ed., "The Indochinese Refugee Movement: The Canadian Experience," in *Proceedings of a Conference in Toronto, October 19, 20 and 21 1979* (Toronto: Operation Lifeline, 1980), 2; Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*, 1.
[7] Michael Molloy, "Indochinese Refugee Task Force: Topical Summary," *CIHS Collection*, 1980, 8.

that this backlash was congruous with a long history of anti-migrant and anti-Asian racism in Canada. From here, this project narrows in on the CEIC's response to this opposition. I demonstrate how the CEIC attempted to mitigate this backlash by undertaking a large public relations campaign that intentionally utilized 'success stories' as the primary discursive strategy. More specifically, these 'success stories' were intended to construct a favourable image of how supportive Canadians were of the refugee program, drawing upon naturalized rhetoric of humanitarianism and generosity to do so. Further, these 'success stories' positioned refugees as economically beneficial additions to the Canadian labour pool and grateful recipients of Canadian generosity and inclusion. Overall, I argue that this discursive rendering of righteous Canadian support for the refugee resettlement program not only obscures the country's complex response to South East Asian refugees, but also the many occasions when Canada did not respond to the arrival of migrants with open arms.

This introductory chapter, first, provides a contextual background of South East Asian refugees in Canada. Second, it summarizes the historiography of the period to demonstrate that the CEIC's public relations strategy has only been marginally treated in the literature. Last but not least, this chapter explains the methodology of the project and summarizes the chapter outline.

1.1: South East Asian Refugees in Canada

Prior to 1975, there were only about 1,000 individuals from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos living in Canada. Most were either students or highly trained professionals living in Quebec.[8] After the fall of the Western-backed Thieu regime in Saigon in 1975,

[8] There was relatively little popular or political support in Canada for the movement of South East Asian refugees into Canada before 1975. The general feeling of Canadian commentators and media was that the

approximately 9000 individuals came to Canada as political refugees between 1975-1978, primarily through refugee centers established in Hong Kong, Guam, and the United States. Most of these individuals were middle-class professional people who were involved in government work, the military, or the professions in Vietnam. Half were relatives of former students.[9] This early movement of South East Asian refugees to Canada, often called the 'first wave', garnered very little public or scholarly attention.

At the same time of this 'first wave', Canada was in the process of implementing new immigration legislation to replace the dated 1952 Immigration Act. The coming into force of the 1976 Immigration Act ('The Act') on 10 April 1978 formalized what had previously been an *ad hoc* approach to refugee determination and selection in Canada.[10] The Act introduced three far-reaching provisions that had significant implications for the South East Asian refugee movement. First, refugees who qualified under the United Nations Refugee Convention and Protocol were now a separate class of immigrants who were given top processing priority and exempted from the Canadian 'points system' of immigrant selection. Second, the government could now designate certain groups as special humanitarian cases whose admission would be made on grounds similar to those of Convention refugees. Third, the legislation allowed private groups and organizations to participate in refugee resettlement through sponsorship agreements with the federal

war in Vietnam was an American war, and thus, the major outflow of refugees was an American responsibility. Q.B. Nguyen and L.J. Dorais, *Monograph on the Vietnamese in Eastern Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of State for Multiculturalism, 1979).

[9] Doreen Marie Indra, "Social Science Research on Indochinese Refugees in Canada," in *Uprooting, Loss and Adaptation: The Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees in Canada*, ed. Kwok B. Chan and Doreen Marie Indra (Ottawa: Canadian Public Health Association, 1987), 5.

[10] Michael Kelley, Ninette; Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 404.

government.[11] These three provisions became the legal underpinnings for the resettlement of South East Asian refugees in Canada in the coming years.

Throughout 1978, the situation in South East Asia deteriorated further. This was due to a number of factors, including natural disasters, serious food shortages, growing hostilities between Vietnam and both Cambodia and China, continued repression of those associated with the defunct South Vietnamese and Laotian regimes, and the genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge in Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia).[12] In response, increasing numbers of people fled by boat to Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Macau, or overland to Thailand. The plight of these refugees gained some public momentum. Although the program remained officially untested until March 1979, the Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) program was officially launched in July 1978 by the CEIC with the release of the pamphlet "Sponsoring Refugees: Facts for Canadian Groups and Organizations".[13] The federal government also held briefings across Canada to faith communities, voluntary agencies, and parliamentarians to promote the emerging refugee situation and the benefits of the sponsorship program.[14] While most of 1978 saw the refugee situation on the margins of Canadian public awareness, the *Hai Hong* affair in November provided the catalyst for a dramatic shift of the crisis into the center of Canadian attention. This also launched the beginning of the 'second wave' of South East Asian refugees into Canada.

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[11] Canada Employment and Immmigration Commission, "Indochinese Refugees: The Canadian Response, 1979 and 1980," *Department of Supply and Services* (Ottawa, 1982).
[12] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 82.
[13] This program came into effect with the signing of the first Sponsorship Master Agreement between the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) in March 1979. Quickly, other churches followed suit. Molloy et al., 91.
[14] Molloy et al., 91.

The *Hai Hong*- a freighter organized by a Hong Kong smuggling syndicate- left southern Vietnam on 24 October 1978 with 2,500 refugees on board.[15] After being rejected for asylum by the Malaysian government, and amidst deteriorating conditions on board, the Canadian government agreed to accept 600 refugees from the stranded ship.[16] Canadian media were transfixed by this event. In turn, a growing public awareness of the dire refugee situation in South East Asia emerged. By the end of December, an 'Indochinese' designated class of refugees was created by the government in accordance with the new Act, and Cabinet decided that 5,000 'Indochinese' refugees would be admitted in 1979 under Canada's first Annual Refugee Plan. The number of refugees arriving in Canada in 1978 total 1,944, including 604 from the *Hai Hong*.[17]

In early 1979, Canadian media shifted its attention away from the refugee crisis and towards the federal election, which saw Joe Clark's Progressive Conservatives defeat the Pierre Trudeau Liberals with a minority on 22 May. The media situation altered in June when the monthly exodus from Vietnam soared to over 50,000 and public attention on the crisis again increased.[18] As Adelman notes, within the ten-week period of 17 June to 25 August, 133 items related to the refugee movement appeared in the *Globe and Mail* and 190 items appeared in the *Toronto Star,* including 27 front-page items.[19]

Amidst this public attention, the recently elected Tory Minister of Employment and Immigration, Ron Atkey, in partnership with Flora MacDonald, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and with the support of Prime Minister Clark, announced on 18

[15] Most of the refugees on-board were ethnic Chinese.
[16] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 95–103.
[17] Molloy et al., 470.
[18] Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*, 22.
[19] Adelman, 23.

June 1979 that the government intended to increase its intake of refugees from 5,000 to 8,000. This increase was alongside a private sponsorship target of an additional 4,000 refugees.[20] On 18 July, this number was increased to a historic 50,000 refugees to be accepted by the end of 1980. This number included the 8,000 approved in June, plus an additional 21,000 government assisted refugees to match privately-sponsored refugees on a one-to-one basis.[21] This unique and unprecedented program promised that for each refugee that private sponsorship groups brought in and settled, the government agreed to support the settlement of one more. To improve efficiency, a Refugee Task Force was established during this period consisting of five units: Selection and Movement from Abroad, Reception and Settlement in Canada, Refugee Policy, Coordination, and a dedicated Public Affairs unit.[22]

By late July, the Canadian intake of South East Asian refugees had increased from 1,000 to 3,000 a month, requiring new transportation arrangements. Two staging areas were set up to receive the refugees, one at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Longue-Pointe in Montreal for Eastern Canada, and a second at CFB Greisbach in Edmonton.[23] By late October, the government faced a dilemma that they had not anticipated: there were now more than 4,000 sponsorship applications for 22,000 refugees, surpassing the 1979-1980 private sponsorship target by 1,000.[24] Moreover, in early November, MacDonald announced a $15 million Canadian contribution to relieve serious famine in Cambodia, which was triple what Canada had already pledged.[25] After intense debates in Cabinet, in

[20] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 121.
[21] Molloy et al., 120.
[22] Rene Pappone, "Refugee Task Force," in *Beyond Expectations: Memoirs and Stories of a Timmins Boy* (Rene Pappone, 2013), 135.
[23] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 132.
[24] Molloy et al., 153.
[25] Molloy et al., 154.

order to hold the 50,000 ceiling and augment the Cambodia fund, the government made the decision on 16 November 1979 to no longer match every privately sponsored refugee (PSR) with a government assisted refugee (GAR). Instead, Employment and Immigration Canada would subtract one GAR for each PSR over 21,000.[26] The reaction to this decision by sponsor groups was overwhelmingly negative, with many criticizing the government's decision to renege on its earlier "one-to-one" commitment.[27] Despite this negative reaction, the Clark government did not diverge from its chosen course.

This course would soon be disrupted, however, as the days of the Clark government were numbered. After a budget introduced in the House of Commons by Finance Minister John Crosbie was defeated in a non-confidence motion on 13 December 1979, Parliament was subsequently dissolved and an election was called for 18 February 1980. The Progressive Conservatives were defeated, and the Liberals returned to power with a comfortable majority under Pierre Trudeau.[28] Atkey lost his seat in the election, and Liberal Lloyd Axworthy, a professor from Winnipeg, became Minister of Employment and Immigration and took over the South East Asian refugee file.

After taking power, the Liberal government was forced to consider the serious imbalance between committed PSRs (35,000) and GARs (12,400). There were still almost 260,000 refugees in South East Asia, with over 100,000 waiting for third-country resettlement.[29] On 2 April 1980, the Liberal government announced its decision to raise the 1979-1980 refugee resettlement target to 60,000, with the additional 10,000 refugees

[26] Molloy et al., 158.
[27] This reaction included a strongly-worded letter criticizing the government's policies, which was sent to CEIC and signed by forty-eight organizations. For a more thorough description of this decision and the reaction by civil society, see: Molloy et al., 160–64.
[28] Molloy et al., 164.
[29] Molloy et al., 169–70.

being government assisted. This decision inspired a mostly positive reaction by sponsorship organizations, most of whom were still upset by the Tory government's December betrayal of the one-to-one matching formula.[30]

As 1980 continued, the momentum of the refugee resettlement project began to wane. By June, the communications unit of the task force was disbanded, and by late August the interpreters and last of the refugees vacated the barracks at CFB Griesbach. Charter Flight 181 arrived at CFB Longue Point on 8 December 1980, carrying the last of 60,049 refugees admitted to Canada under the 1979-1980 movement.[31] In total, the 'second wave' movement had included 32,281 refugees sponsored by private groups, 1,790 sponsored by relatives, and 25,978 resettled by the government.[32] The estimated cost of this two-year program to the federal government was $137,140,000.[33] South East Asian refugees continued to arrive as part of the 'third wave' until 1999, but this movement garnered far less public attention. In total, between 1975 and 1999, close to 130,000 South East Asian refugees arrived in Canada. In 1986, the UNHCR awarded the Nansen Medal to the "people of Canada" in recognition of their "essential and constant contribution to the cause of refugees within their country and around the world".[34]

1.2: Postwar Refugee Policy

In terms of domestic refugee policy, a number of postwar refugee movements into Canada set the precedent for the South East Asian program. As James Hathaway makes clear, until the middle of the twentieth century, Canada had no law or policy expressly

[30] Molloy et al., 172–74.
[31] Molloy et al., 186.
[32] Molloy et al., 185–86.
[33] Molloy et al., 185–86.
[34] Molloy et al., 477.

directed to the admission of refugees *qua* refugees.[35] Rather, displaced and persecuted persons were admitted as part of the general immigration scheme, which favoured white Europeans and was designed to promote Canada's domestic economic interests.[36] Amidst postwar pressure from its Western allies, Canada was forced to confront the refugee phenomenon explicitly for the first time.[37] In response, between 1947 and 1951, Canada admitted 123,000 European refugees, including a significant number of Jews and internally displaced persons, from Poland, Ukraine, Germany, and Austria.[38] In 1956, after considerable public pressure to help those fleeing the Soviet invasion of Hungary, more than 37,000 Hungarian refugees were admitted to Canada in less than a year. Finally, in 1968 and 1969, 12,000 Czechoslovakian refugees were admitted after Soviet suppression of the Czech uprising.[39]

It is important to note that in this early postwar period, immigrant programs sustained the Canadian government's national aspirations as a white settler society. Admission policies privileged labourers who could contribute to the economy and the development of a particular vision of Canadian society. As Madokoro demonstrates,

> Migrants from the British Isles were preferred, along with northern Europeans. As in the early twentieth century, immigration officials continued to see Europe in shades of white, with migrants from southern Europe understood to be less

[35] James Hathaway, "Selective Concern: An Overview of Refugee Law in Canada," *McGill Law Journal* 33, no. 4 (1988): 680.
[36] See Laura Madokoro, "'Belated Signing': Race-Thinking and Canada's Approach to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees," in *Dominion of Race: Rethinking Canada's International History*, ed. Laura Madokoro, Francine McKenzie, and David Meren (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 160–82; Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006); Kelley, Ninette; Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*.
[37] Hathaway, "Selective Concern: An Overview of Refugee Law in Canada," 680.
[38] Kelley, Ninette; Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, 313.
[39] Kelley, Ninette; Trebilcock, 363–65.

> desirable than those in the north. Migrants outside of Europe were even less desirable.[40]

Although the Chinese Exclusion Act, which had banned almost all immigration from China to Canada after 1923, was repealed in 1947, Chinese immigration continued to be subject to an order-in-council that mostly restricted Asian immigration to close relatives of sponsoring Canadian citizens. Quotas and restrictive policies also remained in place for migrants from Japan, South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean until 1967.[41]

The removal of explicit racial and geographical discrimination in Canadian immigration policy in 1967, and Canada's belated signing of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and its 1967 Protocol) in 1969, paved the way for refugees from outside of Europe to apply for admission into Canada. In 1970 and 1971, 226 Tibetans were admitted to Canada from India, and in 1972, 7,000 East Indian refugees were admitted from Uganda following Idi Amin's expulsion of the Asian population of Uganda.[42] In this case, Canada's readiness to act was in large part a response to the urgent needs of the United Kingdom, which would otherwise have been obliged to accept responsibility for all British citizens of Asian origin resident in Uganda after the expulsion.[43] Finally, in 1973-1974, after initial reluctance due to the geopolitics of the Cold War, the Canadian government agreed to admit 6,990 Chilean refugees to Canada after a military coup ousted the democratically elected socialist government of

[40] Madokoro, "'Belated Signing': Race-Thinking and Canada's Approach to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees," 164.
[41] Madokoro, 164.
[42] Hathaway, "Selective Concern: An Overview of Refugee Law in Canada," 681–82.
[43] Hathaway, 681–82.

Salvador Allende.[44] The resettlement of South East Asian refugees in the 1970s and early 1980s built upon the lessons learned from these earlier ventures.

1.3: Historiography

Despite its historical significance, there is a surprising lack of academic attention paid to South East Asian refugees in Canada, and almost none prior to 1978.[45] The large majority of scholarship on South East Asian refugees in Canada post-1978 can be divided into two categories: the adaptation process of the refugees and the logistics of resettlement. On the former, ten years after the refugees first arrived there was a spate of academic work conducted on their integration into Canadian society. In fact, Anh Ngo identified eighty-five scholarly works from 1970-2016 in a search of social sciences websites that researched the topic of how Vietnamese refugees fared in Canada, with the large majority published in the 1980s-1990s.[46] The most comprehensive and well-known of these is Morton Beiser's *Strangers at the Gate: The "Boat People's" First Ten Years in Canada* (1999), which focuses exclusively on British Columbia.[47] Other notable sources include *From Being Uprooted to Surviving: Resettlement of Vietnamese-Chinese "Boat People" in Montreal 1980-1990* (1996) by Lawrence Lam, and *Ten Years Later: Indochinese*

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[44] Kelley, Ninette; Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, 347–48.

[45] There are a few minor exceptions, with some research touching on psychological adjustment (Chan 1977), refugee policy (Dirks 1977), settlement problems (Nguyen 1977), and cross-cultural adaptation (Vuong-Riddick 1976). Even so, this research was not focused exclusively on South East Asian settlement in Canada. Doreen Marie Indra cites a number of factors for the research situation prior to 1978, including how South East Asian refugees fell between scholarly disciplines (South East Asian studies scholars tended to focus on overseas research, while anthropologists tended to make long term commitments to their communities of study), the limited number of individuals settled within Canada, and the lack of media attention on these communities. For more details, see Indra, 5.

[46] As cited in J.M. Molloy and James Simeon, "Introduction: The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Launch of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program", in *Refuge: Canada's Journal On Refugees* 32(2) (2016), 4.

[47] Morton Beiser, *Strangers at the Gate: The "Boat People's" First Ten Years in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Communities in Canada (1988), edited by Kwok B. Chan, Louis-Jacques Dorais, and Doreen Marie Indra.[48] There is no overarching study that covers the adaptation experience of these refugees Canada-wide, and little academic work on the topic seems to have been done since the 1990s.[49]

In addition to these sources regarding adaptation, the first systemic academic attempt to present on the logistical aspects of the refugee program in Canada was published in 1980 and titled *Southeast Asian Exodus: From Tradition to Resettlement.*[50] Edited by Elliot L. Tepper, this work represented the first time Canadian specialists of South East Asia came together to provide background information on the refugee crisis. The book described the roots of displacement, government policy, and some early difficulties that the refugees would face in resettlement.[51] However, it does not discuss the backlash against the program or the government's response to this opposition in any substantial way.

This book was quickly followed by a similar work edited by Howard Adelman, a York University professor and founder of Operation Lifeline, the largest private refugee sponsorship network in Canada within this period. Titled *The Indochinese Refugee Movement: The Canadian Experience* (1980), Adelman's work collected twenty-two speeches from a conference held in Toronto in October 1979 of scholars and politicians addressing four general themes: 1) government policy, 2) the international background,

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[48] Lawrence Lam, *From Being Uprooted to Surviving: Resettlement of Vietnamese-Chinese "Boat-People" in Montreal, 1980-1990*, York Lanes (Toronto, 1996); Louis-Jacques Dorais, Kwok B. Chan, and Doreen Marie Indra, eds., *Ten Years Later: Indochinese Communities in Canada* (Montreal: Canadian Asian Studies Association, 1988).
[49] Michael J Molloy and James C Simeon, "The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Launch of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program," *Refuge* 32, no. 2 (2016): 4.
[50] Elliot L. Tepper, ed., *Southeast Asian Exodus: From Tradition to Resettlement Understanding Refugees from Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam in Canada* (Ottawa: The Canadian Asian Studies Association, 1980).
[51] Tepper.

3) the Canadian community response, and 4) the problems of adaptation in Canada.[52] Although some of the speeches included in the work touch upon public backlash very briefly, none of them address the CEIC's public relations strategy.

Adelman expanded his research in 1982 with the publication of *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees.* This book offered a thorough overview of the Canadian sponsorship effort.[53] Dedicating a chapter to "The Vocal Backlash", Adelman spends a significant amount of time discussing the semantics and rationalization of the opposition (i.e. the multiple meanings of the word 'racist' or 'backlash'). Adelman makes only passing references to particular instances of opposition, and the entire chapter only has five references. He relies heavily on his personal experiences, and he points to the significance of understanding tensions and resentment *within* the sponsorship movement to better understand tensions from outside of it. While Adelman's work is helpful for understanding logics of opposition from an individual who was deeply involved in it at the time, there is a need to re-visit the particularities of the backlash from a more historical perspective. Chapter Two of this project seeks to fill in some of this gap.

Additionally, the 2017 publication of *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees 1975-1980* offers additional insight into both the backlash and the government's response within this period. Written by veterans of the Department of Immigration and published under the auspices of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society (CIHS) and McGill-Queen's University Press, this 600-page work focuses primarily on those immigration officers and refugee coordinators that helped to organize

[52] Adelman, "Indochinese Refug. Mov. Can. Exp."
[53] Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*.

the resettlement campaign.[54] Due to the personal nature of the authorship, it is an intimate glimpse into how government decisions were made during this period. Although it only briefly mentions public backlash to the program, *Running on Empty* provides a helpful, albeit brief, three-page summary of the public relations strategy. This is one of the very few occasions when the publication of the *Newsletter* is acknowledged in scholarship on the period.

Overall, the government's reaction to the opposition, particularly through the formalized information strategy of July 1979, has received less critical attention than it deserves. While Adelman summarizes it very briefly in *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees,* he offers very little critical analysis.[55] A helpful, albeit uncritical, source comes in the form of Rene Pappone's memoir published in 2013, *Beyond Expectations: Memoirs and Stories of a Timmins Boy.*[56] Pappone was an experienced media relations officer who was tasked with managing the public relations team that was established in July 1979 by Jack Manion, the CEIC Deputy Minister. Pappone oversaw media relations and the publication of the *Newsletter* between 1979-1980, and he dedicates a short chapter of his memoir to this role. The most significant contribution that Pappone's memoir makes is its insight into the thought-process behind the leaders of the public relations team. For example, he makes note that "Immigration Minister Ron Atkey was not only deeply committed to the refugee program but attached a great deal of important to it… it was a government priority".[57] Pappone also briefly acknowledges the opposition

[54]The book is divided into three sections: first, a historical review of Canada's involvement in the Indochinese refugee crisis; second, the Canadian resettlement operations in Southeast Asia; and third, the reception of refugees in Canada. Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*.
[55] Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*, 61–62.
[56] Pappone, "Refugee Task Force."
[57] Pappone, 135.

to the program, stating that "although the movement of refugees was going well, storm clouds were forming over the horizon", but unfortunately his description of these 'storm clouds' was not thoroughly developed.[58]

1.4: Project Parameters and Outline

This project attempts to address some of these gaps in the literature. Chapter Two traces the rise of anti-refugee backlash in Canada throughout 1979 and the context under which it emerged. I do so based on information drawn from seven Gallup polls conducted within this period, as well as newspaper features, letters to the editor, and radio broadcasts that gave voice to this opposition. I contextualize this data using historiography related to anti-refugee and anti-Asian racism in Canada. More specifically, I situate it within a longstanding tradition of anti-Asian racism that is rooted in economic concern over the 'threat' of Asian workers 'stealing' jobs from Canadian workers, and cultural and racial concern over an 'invasion' of Asian migrants shifting the racial makeup of Canada and threating white hegemony.

From here, Chapter Three introduces the CEIC's Public Relations strategy of July 1979. The first section of this chapter focuses on the *why* of the program, most notably how determined the CEIC was to direct public discourse regarding the South East Asian refugee program. This was formulated as a way to combat a negative and hypercritical mainstream media that gave voice to the opposition. From here, this chapter narrows in on the specifics of the communications plan itself, introducing the most significant feature of it: the twenty-one issues of the *Newsletter.* The chapter concludes by illuminating the role of 'success stories' as a pre-meditated tactic utilized by the CEIC

[58] Pappone, 140.

within the *Newsletter.* This sets the stage for chapters four and five, which critically examine representations of Canadians and South East Asian refugees within the publication.

Chapter Four specifically looks at how Canadians are depicted within the *Newsletter.* I trace how and when the publication acknowledged public opposition, demonstrating the widespread use of a tactic of diversion that shifted the conversation away from the backlash and towards a celebration of Canadian support. From here, I demonstrate how the *Newsletter* repeatedly lauded 'ordinary' support for the refugee program, naturalizing generosity and humanitarianism as innately Canadian qualities. To conclude, I examine how this narrative of dedicated and selfless Canadian support for the refugee program was also extended to both Canadian business and various levels of government.

The fifth chapter questions how South East Asian refugees as individuals and as a community are portrayed within the *Newsletter*. The first section of the chapter traces the ways that South East Asian culture and Canadian culture are discursively positioned at odds with one another. This 'clash of cultures' creates a situation where Canadians are formulated as patient and kind teachers, and the refugees are positioned as willing students, eager to abandon their own culture and embrace "Western ways". I argue that this construction positions the refugees as less of a cultural 'threat' for those Canadians concerned with maintaining white hegemony within Canada. From here, I trace the narrative of the 'grateful refugee', as well as the trope of the hard-working and desirable refugee-as-employee. This often meant describing the refugees as industrious go-getters, eager to find labour and contribute to the Canadian economy, as well as willing to take

any job that was offered, including those that Canadians did not want. I conclude by suggesting that this representation positions refugees as less of an economic 'threat' for those Canadians concerned that refugees threaten their economic livelihood.

1.5: Methodology and Sources

This thesis relies primarily on the *Indochinese Refugee Newsletter,* hitherto an underutilized primary source. I was able to access all twenty-one issues in print through the CIHS collection of South East Asian refugee documents at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. A critical analysis of these newsletters enables me to draw attention to the ways that the state, the Canadian public, and the refugees themselves are portrayed within them. I focus on the narrative strategies within these texts that lend weight to some ideological presumptions (i.e. the self-sufficiency of the refugees) and downplay others (i.e. the long history of anti-Asian racism in Canada), and then situate these narrative tools within the institutional frames and socio-political structures in which they are embedded.

The decision to critically analyze the content of the *Newsletter* over other aspects of the information program rests on the fact that the newsletters were available in full, and that this publication was the most wide-reaching component of the public relations campaign. Because the information strategy has been widely neglected in the scholarship, the *Newsletter,* as the most significant aspect of the campaign, was the logical place to start. I recognize that critical work needs to be done regarding the other aspects of the information program as well.

Finally, it is important to note that this thesis is more concerned with the CEIC's perception of public opinion, as described in the strategy itself, than it is with providing a

comprehensive overview of nuanced public debates that were occurring within this period. This thesis attempts to assert that public opposition to the refugee program did exist, as Chapter Two describes, and that it can be understood as having racial and economic contours that have deep historical roots. From here, the thesis is primarily concerned with the CEIC's opinion of, and response to, this opposition through the public affairs program. In doing so, I recognize that significantly more quantitative and qualitative work needs to be done to assess the full scope of this public conversation, especially as it relates to different forms of media.

1.6: A Note on Terminology

The media and others at the time referred commonly to South East Asian refugees as 'boat people' or Vietnamese refugees. The reality is more complicated. While ethnic Vietnamese were the largest group admitted to Canada, many of the 'boat people' were members of the ethnic Chinese minority in Vietnam. Additionally, many of the refugees were Cambodian and Laotian refugees who had escaped to Thailand across the Mekong River and were referred to officially as 'overland refugees', a distinct and separate group from the 'boat people'. Because of this complex reality, I avoid the term 'boat people' unless found in quoted text.

Moreover, 'Indochina' and 'Indochinese' were widely used terms before, during, and after this period of study. However, they are colonial terms invented by the French to describe their now non-existent South East Asian empire of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Today, the refugees themselves increasingly use the term "South East Asian refugees", and I have adopted this term throughout this project.[59] It must be noted that

[59] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 7.

there are at least eleven countries that are today collectively referred to as South East Asia, but this project is concerned specifically with refugees that came to Canada from the three distinct countries of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

Chapter Two: Public Opposition to the Refugee Program

There has been very little work conducted on Canadian opposition to the South East Asian refugee program, despite the recognition that it was a widespread sentiment within the period. Neither has much attention been directed towards the historical and political forces that shaped such opposition. The objective of this chapter is to illustrate some of this backlash and the context under which it emerged. I do so based on information drawn from seven Gallup polls and relevant letters to the editor. I contextualize this data using scholarship related to anti-refugee and anti-Asian racism in Canada.

2.1: Gallup Polls

Despite the magnitude of the South East Asian refugee program in Canada, opinion polls conducted from 1979 until 1980 indicate that there was never widespread public support for the resettlement of South East Asian refugees in Canada. In total, there were seven polls conducted by Gallup within the period of study, with the highest level of public support measured at forty-nine percent of Canadians favouring an increased target for resettling refugees in July 1979. This section offers an overview of each of these polls and their results.

The first of these independently commissioned Gallup polls was conducted in February 1979 and published in the *Toronto Star* on 21 March 1979. It should be kept in mind that early 1979 saw the Trudeau Liberal government, not yet defeated by Clark's Progressive Conservatives, agree to accept 5,000 South East Asian refugees within 1979 under the newly formed 'Indochinese' designated class. However, once the *Hai Hong* affair coverage subsided in late 1978, Canadian media's attention on the refugee situation

remained marginal. It was within this context that Gallup conducted a poll that asked respondents the following question:

> As you may know, the government announced recently that 5,000 refugees from Indochina would be admitted to Canada in 1979— almost three times the number allowed to enter in 1978. Keeping in mind conditions in Indochina and the number of people there who wish to relocate, is 5,000 for 1979 too high, too low, or about right?[60]

This question was posed to 1,036 adults in personal, in-home interviews. The results, published in the *Toronto Star* on 21 March 1979, indicated that fifty-two percent of Canadians felt the 5,000-refugees number was too high, seven percent felt it was too low, thirty-seven percent felt it was about right, and five percent responded that they did not know. A two percent higher proportion of those Canadians whose first language was one other than French or English were in favour of an increased admission of refugees, although the data is unfortunately not broken down further into each language.[61] A sample of this size is accurate within a four-percentage point margin, nineteen in twenty times.[62]

In early July 1979, another poll by Gallup and published in the *Toronto Star* on 8 August 1979 indicated slightly more favourable results for the refugee program. This poll was conducted shortly after the annual target of South East Asian refugees had increased marginally from 5,000 to 8,000 and amidst heavy Canadian media coverage of the plight of the 'Boat People'. This poll asked Canadians the following question:

> As you may know, many refugees from Viet Nam- sometimes called the boat people- are temporarily located in Malaysia and other Indochina countries, but are seeking permanent re-location elsewhere. In your opinion, should Canada allow more of these refugees to re-locate in Canada or not?[63]

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[60] "Too Many Refugees from Asia, 52% Say," *Toronto Star*, March 21, 1979.
[61] "Too Many Refugees from Asia, 52% Say."
[62] "Too Many Refugees from Asia, 52% Say."
[63] "Canada Divided on Boat People," *Toronto Star*, August 8, 1979.

Again, this question was posed to about 1,000 adults in their own homes. In this short period of intense publicity and minimal government action, forty-nine percent of Canadian adults approved of an increase in the refugee target, seven percent gave qualified approval, thirty-eight percent disapproved of an increase, and six percent said they did not know.[64]

These results were further broken down by region, community size, and age. Geographically speaking, Quebecois residents indicated more favourable attitudes toward the refugee program: fifty-nine percent of those living in Quebec approved of an increased amount of refugees, notably higher than the forty-seven percent of those living in British Columbia or the Atlantic provinces, forty-six percent living in Ontario, and significantly higher than the forty-one percent of those living in the Prairies.[65] Moreover, fifty-three percent of those living in cities with populations over 100,000 approved of an increased number of refugees, compared to forty-nine percent of those living in communities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000, and only forty-two percent of those living in towns with a population under 10,000.[66] Finally, this poll also indicates that fifty-four percent of those 30 to 49 years old agreed with an increased quota of refugees, compared to fifty-two percent of those 18 to 29 years old, and only forty-

[64] The qualifications for approval are not further defined.
[65] A higher level of Quebec approval is actually counter to historical trends in postwar Canadian views on immigration. For example, in a November 1973 Gallup poll, two out of every three people from Quebec considered immigrants to have made little or no contribution to the Canadian economy or have actually been a burden, while the proportions in other provinces feeling this way varied approximately from just over a third to just over a half. This higher level of approval for Vietnamese refugees in 1979 is likely attributed to the fact that many Vietnamese refugees spoke French, but more definitive work would need to be done to understand/explain this. For more details on postwar trends related to Canadian immigration, see: Nancy Tienhaara, "Canadian Views on Immigration and Population," 1975.
"Canada Divided on Boat People."
[66] These results are in line with historical trends in Canadian attitudes on immigration. For example, in November 1973, a Gallup poll showed that persons living in urban areas with populations over 100,000 were the most positive about the need for immigration and also about the contribution of immigrants, compared with persons living in smaller-sized communities. For more details, see Tienhaara, 26.

percent of those 50 years of age and older.[67] The results of this July poll would prove to be the most favourable response to the refugee program throughout the entire period of study.

Two weeks after this poll was conducted but before the results were published in the *Toronto Star,* the Clark government made its historic announcement of a target figure of 50,000 South East Asian refugees to be admitted into Canada by the end of 1980. Unfortunately, the historical record does not indicate whether the CEIC was aware of the results of this July poll before or after the announcement. Nevertheless, after the poll results went public, they were used as justification by the CEIC that forty-nine percent of Canadians supported the new 50,000 target. On 15 August 1979, the *Newsletter* included a reference by CEIC Minister Atkey to the July poll, calling it a "dramatic reversal" of opinion and stating that he was "pleased with the substantial shift in public opinion in support of federal government initiatives to resettle up to 50,000 Indochinese refugees in Canada".[68] The *Newsletter* references the results of the poll, indicating that "49 percent of Canadians favour the admission of more refugees from Southeast Asian while only 38 percent of those polled disapproved of the current program".[69] While the publication does briefly mention that this poll was taken two weeks before the federal plan to admit up to 50,000 refugees, Atkey's comment on the Canadian public's "support of federal government initiatives to resettle up to 50,000 refugees in Canada" is misleading. While the poll results indicated that forty-nine percent of Canadians approved of an increased number of refugees, these results cannot definitively be used as justification that forty-

[67] As per Tienhaara, postwar views on immigration shows no statistically significant trends related to age. "Canada Divided on Boat People."
[68] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," *CIHS Collection*, August 15, 1979, 1.
[69] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," 1.

nine percent of Canadians approved of the 50,000-refugee plan, since that specific target was not yet on the table. It is highly unlikely that all forty-nine percent of respondents would agree with such a substantial increase in the quota. As such, the CEIC's utilization of these results as evidence of widespread support for the "current program" is problematic.

The idea that at least *some* of those in favour of an undefined increase of South East Asian refugees in July 1979 would be against the 50,000 target is substantiated by the results of later polls. In August, September, and October 1979, the CEIC sponsored three polls conducted by Gallup. These polls asked respondents the following question:

> As you may know, many refugees from Vietnam— sometimes called the "Boat People"— are temporarily located in Malaysia and other Indochina countries, but are seeking permanent relocation elsewhere. Canada is prepared to accept 3,000 of these refugees each month. With equal participation by the government and by private sponsorship, this will make it possible for up to 50,000 refugees to make their homes in Canada by the end of 1980. In your opinion, is this too few, too many, or just about right?[70]

These polls utilized a sample size of 2,000 rather than the customary 1,000. The results of the three-month study indicate numbers similar to that of the less-than-favourable February poll. In both August and September, fifty-two percent of respondents said this 50,000 number was too many, six percent said too few, and thirty-six percent said about right; in October, forty-seven percent said too many, five percent said too few, and thirty-eight percent said about right.[71] Perhaps unsurprisingly, given their less-than-favourable results, these results were never widely published by the CEIC or referenced in the *Newsletter*.[72]

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[70] Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*, 162.
[71] Adelman, 162.
[72] I came across the results in the endnotes of Howard Adelman's book *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees,* but he does not indicate where he accessed them.

One month later, in November 1979, the National Citizens' Coalition (NCC), an organization that explicitly opposed South East Asian refugee resettlement in Canada, commissioned another poll conducted by Gallup and published in the *Globe and Mail* on 6 December 1979. The questions and their responses were as follows:

> **Question 1:** How many Indochinese, from Vietnam, Cambodia, etc. in total, should the Federal Government allow into Canada in the next five years?
>
> **Results:** None (26.7 percent);
> Less than 25,000 (25.9 percent);
> 25,000 (11 percent);
> 50,000 (11.9 percent);
> 100,000 (9 percent);
> 250,000 (3.5 percent);
> More than 250,000 (1.5 percent);
> No restrictions (7 percent);
> Don't Know (2.9%);
> Not Stated (0.5 percent)
>
> **Question 2**: Refugees, on arrival in Canada, may apply to sponsor their overseas relatives- including parents, grandparents, and unmarried orphan brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces or grandchildren under 18. What was your awareness of this?
>
> **Results**: Aware they could sponsor relatives on arrival in Canada (28.2 percent);
> Aware of the types of relatives they could sponsor (5.2 percent);
> Aware of both of the above (20.2 percent);
> Not aware of either (46.1 percent);
> Not stated (0.4 percent)
>
> **Question 3:** In your own opinion, who should be able to sponsor relatives to immigrate to Canada?
>
> **Results:** Landed immigrants (13.4 percent);
> Canadian citizens (39.8 percent);
> No one, immigrants must apply independently (43.6 percent);
> Don't know (2.9%);
> Not stated (0.4 percent)

The methodology for the survey was never disclosed. The NCC published the results of these questions in an article titled "An Open Letter to Immigration Minister Ron Atkey:

63.6% of Canadians disagree with your position on Indochinese refugees".[73] The sixty-three percent figure in the title comes from the sum of those who favoured 25,000 refugees or less, with the inference being that they disagree with the current plan of 50,000 refugees. A response form was included at the end of the article asking "ordinary citizens" what they would like to see in a new immigration policy, although the results from this form were never published by the NCC.[74]

It is important to note that the NCC poll results are highly suspect, for the questions formulated by the NCC were extremely leading and not specifically designed to avoid bias. After the publication of the results, Alvan Gamble, head of Market Research, wrote a memo to the director of Public Affairs titled "Gallup Surveys on Refugees: November".[75] In his memo, Gamble protested the bias inherent in the NCC survey, stating the following:

> Ours [Market Research] was meticulously designed to avoid bias and pretested after formulation in consultation with the professionals at Gallup who develop the public interest for their newspaper clients. The NCC questions were formulated by the NCC alone and pretesting for bias denied. This sponsor clearly set up questions skillfully designed to elicit a desired response and merely hired Gallup to provide the vehicle for collecting it- and incidentally give the findings the respect of the Gallup name.[76]

For example, the reference period in the first question "in the next five years" may have confused respondents, as the government policy of 50,000 was targeted for the end of 1980. It may have been construed that the government would continue to take in large numbers of refugees between 1981-1984. As such, those respondents who may have opted for "undecided" in the carefully worded government poll now came out with a

[73] "An Open Letter to Immigration Minister Ron Atkey," *Globe and Mail*, December 6, 1979.
[74] "An Open Letter to Immigration Minister Ron Atkey."
[75] 16 January 1980. As quoted in Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees,* 163.
[76] Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees*, 163.

clear negative.[77] Nevertheless, the question remains why Gallup agreed to facilitate such an irresponsible survey.

Despite these major methodological flaws, the biased NCC results were nonetheless reinforced in an independently commissioned survey that was conducted in February 1980 by Gallup but not published until 21 May 1980 in the *Toronto Star*. Like earlier surveys, the results were based on 1,051 personal in-home interviews with individuals 18 years of age and older. It should be kept in mind that this survey came two months after the December 1979 government announcement to renege on its one-to-one matching commitment, and amidst a decreased amount of media attention on the plight of the refugees. It was within this context that Gallup asked the following question:

> On a matched level of private and public sponsorship, the Canadian government proposed the entry of 50,000 Indochinese refugees. Private groups, anticipating this 50,000 level will be reached earlier than the December 1980 deadline, have proposed allowing more Indochinese to enter Canada. If private sponsorship can be arranged, should the federal government allow the entry of more than the original target of 50,000 refugees or not?[78]

Nationally, sixty-three percent of respondents answered that the government should not allow the entry of more refugees, while twenty-nine percent said that the government should, and eight percent said they didn't know.

These results are further broken down by age and education. In terms of age, thirty-six percent of those 18 to 29 years old agreed with a target increase, compared to thirty-one percent of those 30 to 49 years old, and only twenty percent of those 50 years of age or older were in favour of an increase.[79] Additionally, forty-eight percent of those with a university education approved of an increase, compared to twenty-six percent of

[77] Adelman, 163.
[78] "Two-Thirds Oppose More Refugees," *Toronto Star*, May 21, 1980.
[79] "Two-Thirds Oppose More Refugees."

those with a secondary school education, and only twenty-one percent of those with an elementary school education.[80] In April, despite nearly two-thirds of Canadians being opposed to it, the refugee target was nonetheless increased to 60,000 by the Liberal government. The February 1980 poll was the last of the major polls conducted within this period.

2.2: Context for the Opposition

It should be noted that public opposition to an increased intake of refugees within this period must be viewed in the context of general Canadian opposition to immigration. An analysis of postwar Gallup polls by Nancy Tienhaara concluded that "the Gallup Polls of the post-Second World War period demonstrate that although there was a narrow margin of support for the idea that Canada needed immigrants in 1947, the majority of Canadians, since 1952 at least, have believed that Canada does not need immigrants".[81] While refugees have historically tended to elicit more support from Canadians than immigrants in general, those who support immigration are often in favour of limited or restricted immigration.[82] For example, in a longitudinal study of immigration made by the Department of Manpower and Immigration between 1969 and 1972, a control group of

[80] These results are in line with historical trends related to Canadian views on immigration and education. In 1973, for instance, 68 percent of those with a university-level education stated that immigrants contributed a great deal to Canada, whereas only 32 percent of those with a public-school education responded the same. See Tienhaara, 27.
"Two-Thirds Oppose More Refugees."
[81] Tienhaara, "Canadian Views on Immigration and Population," 2.
[82] For example, during World Refugee Year in 1960, Canadians were asked if they agree that Canada should "relax her immigration laws to permit a limited number of refugees from Europe to come to Canada". In response, 48 percent approved and 43 percent disapproved- a narrow margin. However, these results indicate more approval than was obtained on the question of need for immigrants in general six months earlier, when only 30 percent approved and 64 percent did not. Similarly, by a small margin, approval was registered on a September 1972 question concerning Canada accepting some Asian refugees holding British passports expelled by Uganda. At that time, 46 percent approved and 44 percent disapproved. This was notably higher than the 30 percent of those who approved of general immigration in 1970 and 1971. See Tienhaara, 35.

Canadians were asked to express attitudes towards immigration. The largest group of responses came in the "qualified yes" category. This group gave qualified approval to immigration as a long as it was restrictive, selective, fluctuated with the needs of Canada, or meant that immigrants could obtain employment without taking jobs away from Canadians.[83] Though "qualified approval" might seem supportive, the implication of these qualifications is that the majority of postwar Canadian citizens understood immigration through the lens of some kind of a threat, which may be economic, social, cultural, or political.

2.3: Refugees as an Economic Threat

This idea of migrants as a threat to Canada is further aggravated by economic and racial factors. On the former, prevailing economic conditions and the extent of unemployment in Canada has historically played a considerable role in shaping public opinion about immigration. Tienhaara's analysis of postwar Gallup polls demonstrates that when unemployment is high and there is more competition for jobs, Canadian public opinion shifts noticeably against immigrants. Gallup polls conducted in July 1959 and March 1971, which were held shortly after periods of economic downturn, offer a good indication of the historical importance of employment issues in the formation of Canadian attitudes towards immigration.

In July 1959, respondents were asked their opinion on what they considered the most urgent problem facing the government at that time. By far the largest proportion, thirty-nine percent, chose unemployment from among twelve issues.[84] Looking at just this group and isolating their opinion on immigration, seventy percent said that Canada

[83] Tienhaara, 2.
[84]Tienhaara, 30.

does not need immigrants, compared to the sixty percent of those who cited another problem as the most urgent.[85] Further, in March 1971, two-thirds of respondents stated that Canada does not need more immigrants. When asked why they felt that way, sixty-nine percent said that the jobless situation is already too bad, the immigrants would only take work away from Canadians, immigrants would be willing to work for less, and immigration would increase welfare costs.[86]

Data collected from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants between 1969 and 1972 corroborates these results. It concluded that most Canadians, whether or not they were unemployed themselves, felt that immigrants posed a threat of taking away scarce jobs from Canadians during difficult labour market conditions.[87] Although personal and national economic forecasts are usually related, there were respondents whose personal economic situation was secure but who were fearful for the nation as a whole. [88] However, this degree of negative feeling that is captured in Gallup polls has historically been more pronounced among Canadians who experienced unemployment themselves or who are more vulnerable to unemployment problems, including those from lower income groups, 'unskilled' occupational positions, and those with less formal education.[89] Labour-market competition is thus a potent source of anti-immigrant sentiment in Canada, in particular among those who worry that the influx of immigrants may be injurious to their livelihood.[90]

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[85] Tienhaara, 30.
[86] Tienhaara, 30.
[87]Tienhaara, 33.
[88]Tienhaara, 31–32.
[89] Tienhaara, 31–32.
[90] Whether fears that immigrant labor could supplant native workers are justified is subject to considerable dispute in the academic journals. See Jackman and Muha for an overview of these debates. Mary R Jackman and Michael J Muha, "Education and Intergroup Attitudes: Moral Enlightenment, Superficial

With these trends in mind, it is unsurprising that many Canadians disapproved of the South East Asian refugee program in 1979 and 1980. From the mid-1970s onwards, economic growth in Canada fell off sharply, inflation and unemployment rose, and government deficits soared. Between 1973 and 1982, economic growth weakened considerably, culminating in a decline in real Gross Domestic Product of nearly three percent in 1982. This was only the second such occurrence in the post-war period.[91] This reality is reflected in the unemployment rate for this period, which saw the proportion of the labour force unemployed jump from five percent in 1974 to seven percent in 1975 and eight percent by 1979.[92] Moreover, the inflation rate jumped from under three percent in 1971 to over ten percent in 1974. Inflation subsided slightly in 1976 and 1977, before picking up again to reach double-digit levels from 1980-1982.[93]

Canadian letters to the editor related to the refugee program throughout 1979 reflect this economic situation. For example, on 20 July 1979, C.A. Perley sent in a letter titled "Temper Generosity to Refugees with Touch of Sanity" to the *Globe and Mail.* In their letter, Perley states that "despite having one of the most serious unemployment problems in Canada, the city of Ottawa has undertaken the sponsorship of thousands of individuals fleeting from Indochina", and that while assistance "is naturally and rightfully expected of us, let's temper generosity with a touch of sanity".[94] Dorothy M. Hunston echoed these concerns on 13 August in their letter to the *Globe and Mail*, arguing that not only does the resettlement project "not begin to solve the underlying problem causing the

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Democratic Commitment, or Ideological Refinement?," *Source: American Sociological Review*, vol. 49, 1984.

[91] Kenneth Norrie, Douglas Owram, and J.C. Herbert Emery, *A History of the Canadian Economy*, Fourth Edi (Nelson, 2008), 402.

[92]Norrie, Owram, and Emery, 403.

[93]Norrie, Owram, and Emery, 402.

[94] C.A. Perley, "Temper Generosity to Refugees with Touch of Sanity," *Globe and Mail*, July 20, 1979.

refugees to leave their own country in the first place", but that it "places a major burden on the Canadian taxpayer".[95] Hunston went on to question whether Canada "can afford to aggravate the unemployment problem which now exists, and which is growing, by bringing thousands more people into the country".[96] Finally, in a letter to the editor published in the *Toronto Star* on 28 August 1979, Gordon Wilson questioned the "free OHIP" provided to the South East Asian refugees. They state that they have been "unemployed for quite some time now. I am, however, still expected to pay for my own OHIP", and later, "perhaps if I changed my status from citizen to refugee, I would be quickly placed in a job by Manpower, offered government housing, free OHIP, etc.".[97] As evidenced, the high rates of unemployment in Canada were intimately connected to the public debate over South East Asian refugees.

Wilson's letter also points to a logic that was echoed many times throughout 1979 by those unsupportive of the refugee program: Canada has an obligation to 'help their own' citizens first before extending help to migrants. This logic most often references unemployed or poor citizens, veterans, and Indigenous communities. For example, a letter to the editor titled "Appalled at support for Viet refugees" in the *Toronto Star* on 1 February 1979 states the following:

> What about the North American Indians? Before we begin to offer sanctuary to these unfortunate people, we should first look after our own true Canadians. These people have had their land taken from them. They are often hungry and sick, with very little medical care. We won't even leave their burial grounds alone. I suggest we look after our own first. Why can't we have a fund for donations for needy Indians? There seems to be funds for everything else.[98]

[95] Dorothy Hunston, "Boat People," *Globe and Mail*, August 13, 1979.
[96] Hunston.
[97] "Catering to Newcomers," *Toronto Star*, August 28, 1979.
[98] T Niiranen, "Appalled at Support for Viet Refugees," *Toronto Star*, February 1, 1979.

This sentiment was further echoed in the *Toronto Star* by M.E. Blais on 16 July 1979. Blais argues that "our Indian and Eskimo natives and our underprivileged whites across the country for the most part live in dire poverty and receive little or no help from the government or social agencies", and later, "we have enough unemployed Canadians who should be looked after before involving ourselves with the problems of outsiders".[99] Finally, also on 1 February 1979, H. Aiken argued that "each nation must, in the end, be fully responsible for the welfare of its own population". [100] These are three examples of many letters to the editor that argued against the South East Asian program on the grounds that the nation must prioritize Canadian citizens over migrants.

2.4: Refugees as a Racial Threat

Despite the significance of these economic realities and their role in shaping anti-refugee backlash, it is also true that economic factors operate in conjunction with other factors- social, cultural, and political- to produce anti-immigrant sentiment in Canada. In Canadian history, this includes the race of the migrant. Consistently, Canadians as a whole have preferred immigrants first from the British Isles and secondly from Northern Europe. As Tienhaara's postwar Gallup poll study indicates, opposition to those of certain ethnic origins is shaped by both race and political circumstances at the time.[101] Put simply, the fact that the South East Asian refugees were Asian played a significant role in shaping the contours of the backlash, and is consistent with a long history of anti-Asian racism within Canada.[102]

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[99] M.E. Blais, "'Look out for Canadians First' She Demands," *Toronto Star*, July 16, 1979.
[100] H Aiken, "Canada Is Not 'refugee Camp' Citizen Argues," *Toronto Star*, February 1, 1979.
[101] Tienhaara, "Canadian Views on Immigration and Population," 42.
[102] For a full overview of literature that discusses the role between economic self-interest and prejudice, refer to: Peter Burns and James G Gimpel, "Economic Insecurity, Prejudicial Stereotypes, and Public Opinion on Immigration Policy," *Quarterly*, vol. 115, 2000, 202.

From the mid- to late-1800s, Asian migrants were actively recruited to help develop Canada's nascent agricultural, fishing, lumber, mining and transportation industries. They were considered ideal laborers by economic elites and industrial capitalists who wanted a working force that was cheap, diligent, docile, and expendable.[103] However, as Sintos Coloma demonstrates, continued Asian migration and settlement in Canada, especially during periods of economic recession, has consistently raised nativist alarm. As Sintos Coloma states,

> Asians were seen as ruthless competition for jobs and dangerous threats to the social moral order. Racial antipathy became intricately linked to labor anxiety in White-dominant countries under industrial capitalist system. White public and working laborers' sentiments against Asians were reflected and reinforced by elected politicians, who marshaled the state's institutional power to discriminate.[104]

As such, Asian workers were constructed as an economic threat to the well-being of white workers.

Sunera Thobani sheds additional light on this history. In *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada,* Thobani demonstrates how Orientalist constructs abounded within Canadian national culture within this period. In turn, these constructions were central to the denial of citizenship rights to Asian migrants until the mid-twentieth century in Canada. This included the following legislative measures: the Immigration Act of 1885, which levied a head tax on the Chinese; the Continuous Journey Regulation of 1908, which posed a migration barrier for Indians by requiring all immigrants to travel uninterrupted from their point of origin to Canada; and the Hayashi-Lemieux Agreement of 1908, which limited Japanese immigration to 400 individuals per

[103] Roland Sintos Coloma, "'Too Asian?' On Racism, Paradox and Ethnonationalism," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 34, no. 4 (2013): 284.
[104] Sintos Coloma, 284.

year.[105] When Chinese immigration did not abate in spite of increasing head tax payments from $50 to $100 and then to $500, the Immigration Act of 1923 banned Chinese immigration to Canada, with the exception of diplomats, merchants and students.[106]

In his study of anti-Asian racism in British Columbia from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, Peter Ward demonstrates how vigorously the white segment of the population identified itself in racial terms, and how committed this population remained to their racial identity.[107] Moreover, Ward demonstrates how this population stubbornly constructed its interests as national interests, and "fought to maintain the exaltation of its racial identity as *the* national identity".[108] As Thobani states, "in the national imaginary, Asians were constructed as filthy, immoral, lazy, diseased, and cunning, inassimilable and corrupting of the white community". [109] As such, they were debased for national inclusion.[110] In contrast, white Canadians understood themselves to be clean, orderly, lawful, healthy, and civilized, and hence worthy of national citizenship.[111]

The successful imposition of these constructs reiterated a belief that Asian migrants were intruders in Canada, and white Canadians belonged. In turn, this belief shaped frequent racial attacks and hostilities against Asian individuals and communities in Canada. As Thobani states, this included the following:

> Among such rites were the routine harassment of migrants; the active petitioning of provincial and federal governments to curb Asian immigration; organized forays into Asian neighbourhoods and attacks on Asians; the burning down of their camps, homes, and shops; boycotts of the businesses of whites who

[105] Sintos Coloma, 584.
[106] Sintos Coloma, 584.
[107] As quoted in: Sunera Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).
[108] Thobani, 85.
[109] Thobani, 86.
[110] Thobani, 85.
[111] Thobani, 86.

> employed Asians; and the segregation of non-white children from their own in order to pass their racial privileges onto subsequent generations.[112]

Despite the recruitment of Asian workers as cheap labour by employers, the prevailing ideology of the period fantasized Asian migrants as planning to 'invade' white Canadian society and were thus perceived to be an immediate threat.

Given these explicit anti-Asian hostilities and regulations of the early twentieth-century, the period from the 1970s onward is often viewed as a positive transformation in Canadian racial attitudes and race relations. The passage of the Immigration Act of 1976, and later the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, seemed to signal the dawn of Canada's era of liberal multiculturalism. Yet anti-Asian racism continued in the public sphere, including with the opposition to the South East Asian refugee program.

Unsurprisingly given the aforementioned history, this anti-Asian racism primarily expressed itself as the perceived protection of white Canadian identity and national homogeneity. For example, on 29 July 1979, a *CJAD* radio program was aired that was titled "Refugees: some say 'Go home'".[113] This program included a debate on the refugee program between Doug Collins, a columnist with the Vancouver Courier, and Howard Adelman, the founder of Operation Lifeline. In response to a question posed by Adelman about why Collins was not opposed to the Canadian resettlement of Hungarian refugees in 1956, Collins replied that "the difference is that Europeans can assimilate into this country much more easily than people from a totally alien culture. And if you were honest, you would admit that".[114] When asked if he considers himself a racist, Collins

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[112] Thobani, 86.
[113] *CBC News,* "Refugees: some say 'Go home.'", CBC Digital Archives, July 29, 1979, https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/refugees-some-say-go-home
[114]"Refugees: Some Say 'Go Home,'" *CJAD News*, July 29, 1979.

replied that he does not, but he reckons that "people naturally do not want to wake up and find themselves living in an Indian community, or a Chinese community, or a South east Asian community".[115] It is obvious that Collins is referring only to the white Anglo-Saxon majority when he refers to "people". Later, Collins states that "there is something that this country is anxious to retain, but will certainly not retain if the likes of you [Adelman] have their way, and that is a sense of identity: everyone else can have a sense of identity, but English Canada is not supposed to have that".[116] Collin's comments are emblematic of how anti-Asian racism was formulated as a protection of white Canadian identity within this period.

Ethno-nationalist views were publicly re-iterated numerous times throughout 1979 and 1980. For example, in one particularly explicit display of racism, Thomas McGuiness from Shelburne, Ontario told a *Globe and Mail* reporter that "I was in the war for 5.5 years. The reason I fought was to protect my people and my country. I can tell you I don't want any goddamn boat people coming here- the same goes for Negroes, Japanese, or Pakistanis too".[117] This example demonstrates how Canada as a nation is to be fought for, insofar as it remains white; racialized 'interlopers' are explicitly grouped together and identified as undesirable citizens.[118] A police officer named Kenneth Wood expressed similarly racist views, stating that "as far as I'm concerned, Asians should be staying in that part of the world", and later, "this [Shelburne] is a white community here,

[115] "Refugees: Some Say 'Go Home.'"
[116]"Refugees: Some Say 'Go Home.'"
[117] Rosie Dimanno, "An Illusion Dies in 6-Minute Walk on Main Street," *Globe and Mail*, July 21, 1979.
[118] Of course, the territory now called Canada has never been exclusively white, and this idea of protecting the nation from racialized interlopers is fundamentally tied up in the settler colonial project of the Canadian state.

and they just wouldn't mix".[119] Another commentator re-iterated this point, arguing that a Vietnamese family in the community would "stick out like a sore thumb".[120]

It is also important to keep in mind that anti-Asian racism within this period was not limited to radio broadcasts or letters to the editor, but also took on violent physical forms. For instance, in June 1979, at the height of media coverage on the 'boat people', two Asian immigrants, Sukdev Shokar and his cousin Badlev Mangat, were sitting in their car at a traffic light in Calgary when they were attacked by four white men from another car. The four men smashed the car windows, and beat Shokar and Mangat with hammers and pipes. Shokar spent seven days in hospital, and suffered from loss of hearing and from impaired vision. Mangat was released from hospital after receiving eight stitches and a head wound.[121] According to an article covering the incident, anti-Asian racism was the only clear motive for the attack. However, the perpetrators were not charged as the incident was deemed by police as a "traffic incident".[122] This is reminiscent of the racist attacks that occurred in Canada in the early-twentieth century.

2.5: Conclusion

This chapter has traced the rise of opposition towards the South East Asian refugee program as captured in both Gallup polls and some letters to the editor throughout 1979 and early 1980. As demonstrated, this opposition should be viewed in its historical context, namely that economic and racial factors have traditionally played a large role in shaping Canadian attitudes towards immigrants and refugees. More specifically, Canadians tend to view migrants as an economic 'threat' to their livelihood, especially in

[119]Dimanno.
[120] Dimanno.
[121]Barry Nelson, "Refugees and Racism," *Globe and Mail*, July 28, 1979.
[122]Barry Nelson, "Refugees and Racism," *Globe and Mail*, July 28, 1979.

times of economic recession and wide unemployment, as was the case in 1970s Canada. In conjunction with these economic factors, Canadians also tend to project more negative feelings upon non-white migrants, especially Asian migrants who have long been subjected to widespread and violent hostility within Canada. This anti-Asian racism has historically been formulated as a protection of white Canadian identity and hegemony. As demonstrated, this construction of South East Asian migrants as a 'threat' to white Canadian culture was expressed throughout public forums in 1979. This is the context under which the CEIC's Public Relations campaign, covered in depth in the next chapter, emerged.

Chapter Three: The CEIC Responds: Public Relations Strategy

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the summer of 1979 witnessed heightened levels of critical public debate over the resettlement of South East Asian refugees within Canada. This was shaped by both the economic recession of 1970s Canada and the long-standing tradition of anti-Asian racism in Canada. It was within this context that, on 17 July 1979, the Government of Canada authorized the CEIC to undertake an extensive public relations campaign related to the ongoing refugee operation.[123] This plan was realized on 25 July 1979 by the drafting of an information strategy by Mack Erb, Amédée Gaudreault, and Rene Pappone of the Public Affairs Branch.[124] The strategy was attached as a Memorandum to the Minister by the Deputy Minister, J.L. Manion, and approved by Minister Atkey and Minister MacDonald on 28 July.[125] The strategy was executed between July 1979 and May 1980, and costs for the eleven-month period totaled approximately $225,000 excluding salaries.[126]

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the strategy: its purpose, its tactics, its successes, and its shortcomings. The first section focuses on the *why* of the program, most notably how determined the CEIC was to direct public discourse regarding the South East Asian refugee program in Canada. This was formulated as a way to combat the media, which the CEIC viewed as platforming public opposition. From here, this chapter narrows in on the specifics of the communications plan itself, introducing the most significant feature of it: the twenty-one issues of the *Indochinese*

[123] J.L. Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," *LAC RG76, Vol. 1836, File 5780-1-726*, July 25, 1979.
[124] Manion.
[125] Manion.
[126] Molloy, "Indochinese Refugee Task Force: Topical Summary," 13.

Refugees Newsletter. The chapter concludes by illuminating the role of 'success stories' as a pre-meditated tactic utilized by the CEIC within the *Newsletter.* This sets the stage for the remainder of the thesis which examines representations of Canadians and South East Asian refugees within the *Newsletter,* paying particular attention to how 'success' is measured and discussed.

3.1: Purpose of the Strategy

Overall, the CEIC's information strategy was explicitly intended to mitigate widespread public criticisms of the government's refugee program and maintain a "positive climate for the refugee movement".[127] The overall tone of the strategy is defensive, with the public relations team understanding themselves to be fighting an uphill battle to maintain support against an increasingly critical Canadian populace. This intent is captured within the following excerpt for the July 1979 strategy:

> Although there is intense support from groups and organizations who have traditionally supported immigration movements, the interest of the general public and many ad hoc organizations will wane as the months pass. Also, while support for the Indochinese refugees is high among articulate groups, the level of support from the general public may be much less intense. This level may decline further when unemployment rises and when the number of refugees become visible in Canadian communities. The word "backlash" may be too strong to describe this situation, but some "disenchantment" will certainly set in. When this happens, our information programs must be firmly in place.[128]

The strategy was thus conceived as a way to potentially mitigate this 'disenchantment' amongst the Canadian public. As evidenced above, the strategy was less concerned with the attitude of those 'articulate groups' that have traditionally supported refugees, but

[127] Rene Pappone, "CPRS 1980 Awards of Excellence- General- Submission- Public Information and Media Relations Program for the Indochinese Refugee Movement," 1980; Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 3.
[128] Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 1.

instead, it was understood to be directed at those individuals who have less of a vested interest in the refugee program and are thus more prone to opposition.

In terms of what fuels this opposition, the CEIC recognized and acknowledged the role that economic and racial factors play in forming anti-refugee sentiment amongst Canadians. In the above-mentioned excerpt, it is noted that opposition to the refugee program "may decline further when unemployment rises and when the number of refugees become visible in Canadian communities".[129] This rising opposition will set in, according to the strategy, when the Canadian public inevitably ('*when'* this happens not '*if'* this happens) blames rising unemployment rates on the growing numbers of South East Asian refugees in their communities. Moreover, this rising opposition will set in when refugees become *visible* in their new communities. Although the strategy does not state it directly, it is implied that the refugees' 'visibility' is through their marked difference, or their race. It is assumed that the refugees will be a minority within their new communities, and that these communities will inevitably be made up of at least some individuals that would blame unemployment rates on those racially marked as Other. It is to this community and those individuals that the CEIC's strategy was directed.

3.2: Countering the Media

The CEIC's information strategy understood mainstream media to be a vector for these public criticisms. This is best evidenced through the following statement from the July 1979 strategy:

> While the refugee movement from Indochina has been developing since 1975, it is only recently that the plight of the "boat people" has captured public attention, and the movement has become a major "media event". This new interest generated the formation of various public and private groups to stimulate the

[129] Manion, 1.

> movement of refugees, and resulted in media criticism of the speed and adequacy of the government's response to the question.[130]

However, it is important to note that the media is not thought of by the CEIC as a neutral institution that reflects public sentiment. Rather, the CEIC saw the media as challenging the refugee program, having a short attention span, and distorting public attitudes. They worried that newspapers provided a platform for and amplified opposition to the program and sensationalized opinion.

In response to this belief, the CEIC's communications plan intended to tell an overall less critical and more supportive version of events. According to a Topical Summary on the Refugee Task Force that was conducted by CEIC in 1980, the "key decision of the Public Relations area was that in the initial phase of the operation, the CEIC would tell the story rather than relying on the press".[131] This intention is stated throughout the information strategy, including within the introduction. It states the following:

> It should be borne in mind that while the Indochinese refugee movement is a major media event right now, this intense media interest is unlikely to be sustained. New events will occur, and the media's attention- never very long- will be directed elsewhere. When this happens, the government will still be faced with the need to communicate with the public, and we must make communication plans that do not rely on an unpredictable and uncontrollable press.[132]

This notion of mainstream media as being *unpredictable* and *uncontrollable* is significant, as it demonstrates the CEIC's expressed desire to direct, in some capacity, the story that is being told within Canadian public discourse about the South East Asian refugee program.

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[130] Manion, 2.
[131] Molloy, "Indochinese Refugee Task Force: Topical Summary," 8.
[132] Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 1.

This desire to direct public conversation is re-iterated a number of times throughout the information strategy, including under the sub-heading "Community Relations". This section states the following:

> As indicated earlier, the media are an uncertain mirror of the communities' attitudes and sympathies, so we must establish effective liaison directly with community organizations. We must proceed immediately with an analysis of regional reports on community and media attitudes, and delineate clearly the opportunities- and problems- we will encounter in the various regions of the country.[133]

Again, this sentiment gives rise to a dichotomy, with unreliable media on one side, and the CEIC's seemingly more honest version of events on the other. This was the key intention of the public affairs strategy throughout 1979 and early 1980.

3.3: Features of the Strategy

In terms of personnel required to execute this mission, Rene Pappone was tasked with leading the Public Affairs team of the Refugee Task Force. Pappone reported directly to the Executive Director of Immigration and Demographic Policy Cal Best, who in turn reported to CEIC Deputy Minister Jack Manion. Under the leadership of Pappone was Guy Gagnon, an experienced immigration officer who headed the media relations office, and Steve Jeffrey, a young officer who desired media relations experience.[134] Other staff included Toni Timmermans as the English-language editor, Elsie Kleppy as the secretary and typist, and Morrison Arnott as a general writer, specifically of speeches. Finally, a former departmental employee, Johanna Drewry, returned temporarily from the Privy Council Office to help in drafting resource materials.[135] As Pappone makes clear in his

[133] Manion, 11.
[134] Pappone, "Refugee Task Force," 136.
[135] Pappone, 136–37.

memoir, there was a minimum level of formality within the section, and important decisions were made when members passed one another in the corridors.[136]

A range of communication tools were implemented to varying degrees of success within this period. For example, a speakers bureau was strategized in July 1979 in order to allow Ministers and "other skilled speechmakers" to "channel their influence and contacts for the benefit of the refugee program".[137] Relatedly, a mission to South East Asia for Ministers was planned as a tactic to garner widespread publicity, although it never occurred due to the changing of federal leadership in early 1980.[138] Moreover, a direct mail campaign was also strategized, which planned to utilize mailing lists to "reach employers and workers, encouraging monetary and sponsorship assistance".[139] Importantly, this plan was "not intended to promote refugee sponsorship in any areas of Canada suffering from high unemployment or which do not offer reasonable prospects for continuing employment of the refugees".[140] Similarly, it was made explicit in July 1979 that the Public Affairs team did not plan on engaging in paid advertising for the program, unless "public interest shows serious indications of waning and requiring stimulation", in which case the view "may be re-assessed".[141] The historical record unfortunately does not indicate the extent to which this direct mailing campaign or paid advertising occurred.

One of the principle elements of the information strategy was a news desk. Directly associated with the Task Force on Refugees and headed by Pappone, the news

[136] Pappone, "Refugee Task Force."
[137] The historical record unfortunately does not provide any additional information on this bureau. Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 5.
[138] Manion, 4.
[139] Manion, 9.
[140] Manion, 9.
[141] Manion, 11.

desk was set up to "deal with the media and carry out other public affairs projects, extracting information from immigration programs officers and feeding it to the media".[142] Due to the structure of the Task Force, Mack Erb, the Director General of Public Affairs, was a member of the Departmental Management Committee and spoke daily with the offices of the Minister and Deputy Minister. As a result, the media team was able to speak with more authority and accuracy to the media on issues related to the South East Asian program.[143]

In addition to the news desk, in light of increasing demand by the public for information on refugee sponsorship, an audio-visual (AV) presentation was prepared to assist field officers in explaining the refugee sponsorship program to potential sponsors. According to Pappone, "it was felt that a combination of voice and pictures would help convey a deep meaning of the responsibilities of sponsorship and help potential sponsors to relate to the refugee problem that existed".[144] A second AV presentation was designed to help settlement officers, particularly those at the two staging centres in Edmonton and in Montreal, to familiarize refugees with Canada and to explain the responsibilities that the refugees and sponsors assume in the sponsorship program. Both private citizens and officers from government departments co-operated in the writing, editing, and voicing of the scripts and in the selection of the visual material.[145] In order to reach the refugees, the AV presentation was prepared in Cambodian, Laotion, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, English, and French. All production was done in-house. Since this was

[142] Manion, 3.
[143] Pappone, 137.
[144] Pappone, "CPRS 1980 Awards of Excellence- General- Submission- Public Information and Media Relations Program for the Indochinese Refugee Movement," 30.
[145] Pappone, 30.

largely a partnership effort between the private sector and government, the cost for both AV presentations was $3,600 to the CEIC.[146]

There was also an identified "urgent need for printed materials to advise sponsors on the customs, culture, food and philosophical outlook of Indochinese refugees".[147] It was strategized that Public Affairs would co-operate with the Secretary of State department and examine counselling materials produced by private organizations in putting together a kit for sponsors. A revision of the fact sheet "Sponsoring Refugees: Facts for Canadian Groups and Organizations" was printed as a booklet in July 1979.[148] Moreover, sponsors and others involved in the resettlement of South East Asian refugees in Canada were given three guides in 1979: "A Guide to Working with Vietnamese Refugees", "A Guide to Working with Cambodian Refugees", and "A Guide to Working with Laotian Refugees".[149] These were published by the Secretary of State adapted from material collated by Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Catholic Conference. The booklets include an overview of the culture, religious and social structures, schooling and education, climate and living conditions, and food preferences of the respective groups.[150]

An interesting consideration for the CEIC within this period was assuaging potential concern by "other ethnic groups" that the South East Asian movement of refugees would not "jeopardize the flow of immigrants from their countries".[151] The

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[146] Pappone, 30.
[147] Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 7.
[148] Manion, 7.
[149] "A Guide to Working with Vietnamese Refugees," *CIHS Collection* (Minister of State Multiculturalism, 1979); "A Guide to Working with Laotian Refugees," *CIHS Collection* (Minister of State Multiculturalism, 1979); "A Guide to Working with Cambodian Refugees," *CIHS Collection* (Minister of State Multiculturalism, 1979).
[150] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," *CIHS Collection*, September 5, 1979, 2.
[151] Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 3.

government strategized to assure these groups that processing of other refugees and immigrants would continue in "the normal way".[152] As the strategy states,

> It is planned to keep Canada's ethnic population informed of all aspects of the Indochinese refugee program, reassuring them that it will not interfere with applications under the regular immigration program. This will be done through the communication links already established with these communities in Public Affairs ethnic programs. Information on the movement has already been despatched [sp], and will continue, under our ongoing contract with Canadian Scene which distributes material in 13 foreign languages to all ethnic media in Canada.[153]

The vehicle to reach these communities was through the quarterly news magazine *Kaleidoscope Canada ('Kaleidoscope')*, an existing publication by Public Affairs of Employment and Immigration Canada. The focus of *Kaleidoscope* was on immigration and ethnic affairs in Canada, and it was distributed to both media and community organizations in multiple languages.[154] Of the six issues of *Kaleidoscope* published between July 1979 and April 1980, all of them mentioned the South East Asian refugee program to varying extent.

Last but not least, by far the most significant aspect of the strategy was the weekly *Newsletter.* The first issue of the *Newsletter* was actually published on 16 July 1979, one day before the overall media strategy was approved and two days before the government announced the decision to accept 50,000 South East Asian refugees.[155] The *Newsletter* was initially published weekly and later bi-weekly, and then eventually monthly.[156] In total, nineteen regular newsletters were published between 16 July 1979 and 14 February

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[152] Manion, 3.
[153] Manion, 5.
[154] Manion, 5. The University of New Brunswick library helpfully holds the entire collection of *Kaleidoscope.* From my understanding, the publication ran from 1974 until at least 1983. The record does not indicate why it ceased publication. I consulted the issues from 1978-1980.
[155] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-1," *CIHS Collection*, July 16, 1979.
[156] The frequency decreased over time due to the fact that there was simply not enough relevant information available for a weekly publication.

1980, with seventeen published in 1979 and two in 1980. Additionally, two special edition newsletters were published. The first one, titled "Health Care: Facts for Sponsors of Indochinese Refugees", was published on 6 March 1980 by CEIC in co-operation with Health and Welfare Canada.[157] This issue provided an overview of the health mechanisms put in place for both South East Asian refugees and those in direct contact with them. The second special edition, "Languages: Word Lists for Sponsors of Indochinese Refugee" included words and phrases in Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian, and was published in May 1980. This publication was in collaboration with the Multilingual Service Division, Indochinese Refugee Settlement Unit, and Iowa Refugee Service Centre.[158] This was the final issue of the *Newsletter.*

Staffed and supported by Public Affairs, the *Newsletter* came under the jurisdiction of the Task Force which controlled its content, thrust, and direction.[159] Eventually, in May 1980 the *Newsletter* was shut down by Executive Director Best because it was costing the Department too much. This was also when the Communications Unit of the Task Force was disbanded.[160] According to a Topical Summary published in 1980 by the Refugee Task Force, the *Newsletter* "became the most successful PR to the CEIC ever developed with a circulation of 16,000 when it ceased publication".[161] Unfortunately, the historical record does not include any further information on who or where the primary readership was.

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[157]"Newsletter: Southeast Asian Refugees- Special Edition: Health Care- 2-3," *CIHS Collection*, March 6, 1980.
[158] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees Special Edition: Languages: 2-4," *CIHS Collection*, May 1980.
[159] Molloy et al., *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975-1980*, 135.
[160]Molloy et al., 177.
[161]Molloy, "Indochinese Refugee Task Force: Topical Summary," 8.

Overall, the *Newsletter* primarily detailed the selection and transportation of refugees and the matching system, offered practical advice to sponsorship organizations, highlighted 'success' stories across Canada, answered frequently-asked-questions, and carried technical and 'human interest' features.[162] The newsletters were simply designed, containing very few images or graphics. For example, the first issue was introduced as: "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees*,* July 16, 1979, 7-1".[163] There was a brief summary of its content as follows:

> Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey today issued the first of a weekly series of reports on Canada's Indochinese refugee operations. / This first report indicates that as a result of around-the-clock efforts by the Minister and his officials, a major breakthrough has been achieved in transportation and processing arrangements and in facilities for private sponsorships. / He also confirmed reports that a major step was taken recently toward reuniting relatives in Vietnam with families in Canada. / This report covers only arrangements respecting Canada's existing commitments to July 12, 1979. New data resulting from any further government or private commitments will be made available in subsequent weekly reports.[164]

From here, the first issue of the *Newsletter* moved into very short descriptions of the resettlement of South East Asian refugees in Canada and "throughout the World", the quantity and location of immigration officers in South East Asia, public support of the Refugee Sponsorship Program including a list of national sponsorship agreements, provincial support for the program, transportation arrangements with commercial airlines and DND, and the increased number of family reunification cases being approved. Appendix A ("Indochinese Refugee Statistics: 1975-1979") detailed figures related to persons arrived between 1975-1979, the month of arrival, the category of persons

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[162]Molloy, 8.
[163] The first two editions of the *Newsletter* were numbered 7-1 and 7-2. Presumably the 7 represents the month of July. On 31 July 1979, the edition began as Vol. 1 No. 3, and followed sequentially thereafter, changing to Vol. 2 No. 1 on 24 January 1980.
[164] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-1," 1.

(government plan, relatives, or group sponsored), and distribution of persons by province, and Appendix B ("Refugee Sponsorship Program") contained further information on the number of persons sponsored by local and national groups and their provincial distribution.[165]

This first *Newsletter* is a representative summary of subsequent weekly reports. The publication was intended to not only be a practical tool of information sharing, but also a space for the CEIC to tell their version of the resettlement operation. The structure of the newsletters was formulaic: they began with an introduction, usually by Minister Atkey, which highlighted 'big news' for the program (i.e. government announcements, changes to the program, media events) and summarized what was to follow in the issue. Following this, "Activity Highlights" usually expanded upon relevant government announcements, responded to community and media concerns, provided updates from staging areas, and highlighted procedural changes. The *Newsletter* then moved into a "Provincial Focus", highlighting news out of each of the provinces. This usually included the arrival of refugees, personal stories, and events from sponsorship organizations. Next, the newsletters would occasionally move into "Questions and Answers", which responded to questions about the sponsorship process. It is unclear if these were questions actually posed by individuals from the public, or if CEIC developed them in-house.[166] Finally, the *Newsletter* included an appendix titled "Indochinese Refugee Statistics",

[165] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-1."
[166] I would guess that they are hypothetical question created by CEIC. My reasons for this guess are that the questions never provide authorship, there was no discussion of *how* the public may submit questions for future issues within the *Newsletter,* and the record does not indicate a person from CEIC who managed the questions coming in.

which highlighted how many persons arrived and the provincial distribution of those who has arrived, and contact information for those interested in sponsorship.

3.4: 'Success' Stories

One of the most salient features of the *Newsletter* was the widespread use of positive stories to convey how successful the refugee program is and will continue to be. These 'success' stories can be understood as the explicit celebration of government actions and announcements, positive Canadian attitudes and behaviours, and the refugee's expected ability (as both an individual and as a community) to 'adapt' and 'succeed' within Canada. As chapters four and five demonstrate, these stories include references to humanitarian Canadian attitudes, friendly gestures, the employability and agreeable nature of the refugees, the availability of jobs or housing to assist with resettlement, the commitment to the program and efficiency of the federal government, and the positive economic and social benefits of refugees in Canada.

Unequivocally, utilizing 'success' stories within the *Newsletter* was a tactic explicitly pre-meditated and pre-formulated by the CEIC. This is especially true for highlighting the economic success of earlier groups of refugees to convey the economic potential of resettling South East Asian refugees. According to the approved strategy from 25 July 1979:

> We plan to bring to the attention of the public the contributions made to Canada by earlier refugees, especially outstanding examples from the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian programs. Public Affairs will encourage the writing and marketing of such stories in the appropriate media at headquarters and in the regions.[167]
> … To counteract negative attitudes to this movement and fill requests for information on the subject, it is proposed to develop an information sheet giving concrete statistics and facts on the contribution immigrants have made to our

[167]Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees."

> economy, their traditional self-sufficiency and entrepreneurial nature, the jobs they create and the increased demand they generate as users of goods and services.[168]

Though the historical record does not indicate if an information sheet was ever developed, this particular tactic of highlighting the stories of 'self-sufficient' migrants was taken up prolifically in the twenty-one issues of the *Newsletter,* as will be discussed in chapters four and five.

Finally, it is important to note that the communications strategy that was approved in June 1979 was re-evaluated and re-adjusted throughout the eleven-month period of the campaign. This is especially true for the content of the *Newsletter* and the commitment to 'success' stories. A personal memorandum from August 1979 from Cal Best to Kirk Bell, the Deputy Executive Director of Immigration and Demographic Policy, demonstrates this determination. This memorandum was written for Bell who had been away from the office for a while, and Best wished to leave him "a few notes on matters that have developed" during his absence.[169] Under the sub-heading "Newsletter", Best stated the following:

> I had a discussion this morning with Jack Manion about the newsletter. He is concerned that it does not seem to be as sharply focused as it should be. He finds it lacking in information on the occupation and job opportunity of the refugee and generally lacking on the information as to how well the refugees are doing. I have telexed the three or four major Regions asking them for "success stories", with a particular reference to Vietnamese who have been here for some time who have developed businesses or other job opportunities. The Chairman also feels that we are perhaps trying to have too much content and we should keep it as sharply focused as possible. It would be appreciated if you could ask Ivan Timonin or Roger Heath to have a hard look at any data we might have as to the kind of occupations the refugees might have. In addition, I am leaving with Phyllis Neff some material that SPP dug up for Jack. It should be catalogued and we should obtain copies. It deals with studies of other refugee movements. The idea would

[168] Manion, 7.
[169] J.C. Best, "Memorandum from J.C. Best to Kirk Bell- 10 August 1979," *LAC RG76, Vol. 2, File 8620*, 1979, 1.

> be to have one of our experienced officers, perhaps an FSO, go through it and look for kinds of material that would be useful for the newsletter, particular to show how well refugees do adapt to Canada. Once this has happened, this could then be discussed with our Public Affairs people and a series of articles written for the newsletter.[170]

As written, the CEIC was determined to showcase "how well the refugees are doing" within the *Newsletter* to the Canadian public. This is especially true for the economic success of Vietnamese refugees, their creation of job opportunities, and their development of businesses.

3.5: Conclusion

The use of these 'success' stories fits into the CEIC's larger goal of presenting a narrative that Canadians were overwhelmingly supportive of the South East Asian refugee program, despite the reality that many Canadians were not. While it is true that the CEIC acknowledged the economic and racial factors that informed public backlash against the refugee program, it is also true that the CEIC was concerned that mainstream media would overemphasize these racist attitudes and provide a platform for public opposition to the program. As the July strategy reveals, the public relations campaign was formulated as a response to this concern. The remainder of the thesis is concerned with describing this response, paying particular attention to how racial and economic fears by Canadians were addressed within the twenty-one issues of the *Newsletter*.

[170] Best, "Memorandum from J.C. Best to Kirk Bell- 10 August 1979."

Chapter Four: Canadians in the *Newsletter*

As Chapter Three demonstrated, the intent of the CEIC's communications plan was to mitigate the economic and racial concerns of Canadians who felt threatened by the South East Asian refugee program. One of the most salient and intentional features of this plan was the use of positive stories to convey just how successful the program was and could be. With this in mind, the remainder of this thesis attempts to answer the following questions: how were Canadians and South East Asian refugees represented within these 'success' stories? And, what does this representation mean in the context of the economic and racial contours of the backlash?

This chapter specifically looks at how Canadians were narratively constructed within the *Newsletter.* I trace how and when the publication acknowledged public opposition, demonstrating the widespread use of a tactic of diversion that shifted the conversation away from the backlash and towards a celebration of Canadian support. From here, I demonstrate how the *Newsletter* repeatedly lauded 'ordinary' Canadian support for the refugee program, naturalizing generosity and humanitarianism as innately Canadian qualities. I also examine how this narrative of dedicated and selfless Canadian support for the refugee program was also extended to business and various levels of government. To conclude, I suggest that this construction obscures the complexity of the Canadian response to the refugee program, as well as the history of anti-Asian racism within Canada.

4.1: Acknowledging Backlash

As would be expected, the public relations strategy was overwhelmingly positive, with little mention of any public backlash to the refugee program. This reality was despite the

fact that the CEIC tracked the Gallup poll results and media coverage closely, and were aware of the significant divisions within public opinion. However, there were a few brief exceptions that warrant some attention.

On two occasions, the Public Relations team utilized the *Newsletter* to respond to specific media events related to the South East Asian refugee resettlement program. The first was concerned with public health, particularly the risk factor for refugees bringing hepatis B into Canada.[171] This concern was published in the *Globe and Mail* on 18 July 1979, in an article titled "Boat people should be screened for hepatitis, liver expert urges". [172] This article interviewed Dr. Murray Fisher who admonished the Canadian government for not immediately screening all incoming refugees for the disease.[173] Dr. Fisher's primary concern was that the rate of the disease was 20 to 40 times higher in South East Asia than in Canada.[174]

Shortly after the publication of this article, a confidential Memorandum to the Minister was sent by Manion to Minister Atkey, which stated that because the public health issue was now "aired in the press by Dr. Fisher, it could not be ignored".[175] This memorandum continued by stating that in response to the *Globe and Mail* article, "the weekly newsletter will contain a paragraph of a general nature suggesting normal health precautions be taken and recommending that refugees be referred to local health officers or family physicians should any health problems be observed or suspected".[176] This was

[171] Joan Hollobon, "Boat People Should Be Screened for Hepatitis, Liver Expert Urges," *Globe and Maill*, July 18, 1979.
[172] Joan Hollobon, "Boat People Should Be Screened for Hepatitis, Liver Expert Urges," *Globe and Maill*, July 18, 1979.
[173] Hollobon.
[174] Hollobon.
[175] J.L. Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Refugee Health Considerations," *LAC RG76, Vol. 1836, File 8700-12-1*, 1979.
[176] Manion.

eventually published on 31 July 1979 in the *Newsletter* under the sub-heading "Viets: No Health Hazard".[177] Although the issue did not mention hepatitis B or Dr. Fisher by name (which is unsurprising given that it was intended to be "of a general nature"), it cited Dr. Jay Keystone, the Head of Toronto General Hospital's Tropical Disease Clinic. As quoted in the issue, Dr. Keystone argued that there is "a small but definite risk of any diseases being transmitted, but I think the chances are very slim".[178] The feature continued with Dr. Keystone stating that "most or many of the exotic diseases that may be brought in by refugees will not be easily transmitted in Canada, because of our high standards of health and hygiene".[179] This quotation attempts to assuage public health concerns by celebrating Canada's high standards of health and hygiene. Of course, the implication of this celebration is that the high rates of hepatitis B in South East Asia are due to lower health standards.

The second media controversy that was addressed within the *Newsletter* was in response to a $10,000 National Citizens' Coalition advertisement that was published in the *Globe and Mail* on 24 August 1979.[180] This NCC advertisement called into question the government's knowledge of the refugee situation, particularly concerning the quantity of familial sponsorship that will occur after the refugees are resettled within Canada. As the advertisement states, "the best authorities on immigration tell us that the 50,000 initial entrants will each sponsor about 15 of their relatives, on average, and this will lead to at

[177] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-3," *CIHS Collection*, July 31, 1979, 15.
[178] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-3," 15.
[179] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-3," 15.
[180] "Canada's Great Humanitarian Gesture: The Boat People of Vietnam," *Globe and Mail*, August 24, 1979.

least 750,000 people in the not too distant future".[181] It continues by questioning how the government can ensure these people do not take jobs "away from Canadians".[182]

In response, Atkey took to the *Newsletter* on 29 August 1979 to declare the claims "unfounded" and "greatly exaggerated".[183] Atkey refuted the 15:1 ratio by citing CEIC studies that determined that for each 100 independent immigrant landing in Canada, an "additional 80 sponsored immigrants are likely to be landed over the subsequent 20-year period". [184] He concluded by stating that South East Asian refugees are in "less favourable financial circumstances upon arrival than regular immigrants", and would therefore not be able to sponsor large numbers of relatives.[185] The logic of this response is interesting. In effect, it attempts to assuage the concern of Canadians vis-à-vis refugee familial sponsorship by noting that refugees *cannot afford* to sponsor their relatives. Atkey's response did not actually challenge the logic of the initial backlash, but instead presents the "less favourable financial circumstances" of South East Asian refugees as a re-assuring fact of the resettlement situation.

In addition to these two specific moments of rebuttal, there were three occasions when the *Newsletter* addressed general Canadian opposition to the refugee program. The first instance was mentioned in Chapter Two, when the issue published on 15 August 1979 discussed the favourable results of the July Gallup poll. This was the only *Newsletter* issue from the entire publication to mention Gallup poll results, which is

[181] "Canada's Great Humanitarian Gesture: The Boat People of Vietnam."
[182] "Canada's Great Humanitarian Gesture: The Boat People of Vietnam."
[183] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-7," *CIHS Collection*, August 29, 1979, 1–2.
[184] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-7," 2.
[185] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-7," 2.

unsurprising given the higher levels of public support captured in this July poll. In response to these results, the *Newsletter* states the following:

> Minister Ron Atkey is pleased with the substantial shift in public opinion in support of federal government initiatives to resettle up to 50,000 Indochinese refugees in Canada. A Gallup poll, conducted nationally in early July, indicates that 49 percent of Canadians favour the admission of more refugees from Southeast Asia while only 38 percent of those polled disapproved of the current program. In February of this year, a similar poll showed that 52 percent of respondents felt that too many refugees were being admitted at that time. In February the resettlement plans called for admission of up to 5,000 refugees this year. Some 37 percent of the people polled in February felt that the number was appropriate. The dramatic reversal recorded in the July poll taken some two weeks before the announcement of the federal plan to admit up to 50,000 refugees by the end of 1980 indicates a major shift in public sentiment towards the refugee program. "This is probably the greatest support for immigration of refugees ever recorded in a national poll," says Mr. Atkey. "We are very pleased—but not at all surprised at the results. Canadians are the kind of people who cannot disregard the suffering of others—they are humanitarians of the highest order".[186]

While Atkey very briefly recognizes the less-than-favourable February results, he quickly shifts the discourse to a celebration of the high-level of support from Canadians to the program captured in the July poll.

Moreover, while Atkey's comment about the forty-nine percent results being the "greatest support for immigration of refugees ever recorded in a national poll" are technically true, it is worth noting that before 1979, there was only two comparable Gallup Polls in Canadian history that asked the opinion of Canadians related to refugees, outside of the aforementioned February 1979 poll. The first, conducted in January 1960, asked if Canada should allow a "limited number of refugees from Europe to come to Canada", with forty-eight percent approving and forty-three percent disapproving. The second poll was in September 1973 and asked if Canada should accept "some" Asian refugees expelled from Uganda. This poll indicated that forty-five percent approved and

[186] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," 2.

forty-four percent disapproved.[187] Thus, while Atkey was accurate in stating that the forty-nine percent approval rate from July 1979 was the highest level of support for refugees in Canadian history, it is important to note that the data for comparison is severely limited and does not indicate substantially higher levels of public support.

Nonetheless, this tactic of briefly acknowledging opposition to the program then shifting the discourse to celebrate Canadian support for the refugee program was repeated again within the *Newsletter* published on 5 September 1979. This issue included a very short feature titled "Human Rights Commissioner Distressed by Backlash". [188] This feature centers the opinion of Canadian Human Rights Commissioner Gordon Fairweather, who says that "Canadians should be welcoming Vietnamese with open arms rather than with closed minds". [189] The feature continues by stating the following: "While terming the backlash against refugees "distressing", the Human Rights Commissioner noted that the favourable response from the majority of Canadians has been deeply and profoundly moving".[190] It is interesting to note that Fairweather's response did not include any particular reference to an incident of backlash, but rather assumed the reader was aware of the general presence of it. Similarly, it did not include any acknowledgement of the reasons (economic, racial, or other) for the opposition. Instead, the feature addressed the backlash as "distressing" and immediately re-directed the conversation towards a celebration of the "majority of Canadians" that supported the refugee program.

[187] Tienhaara, "Canadian Views on Immigration and Population," 35.
[188] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 10–11.
[189] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 10–11.
[190] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 10–11.

The *Newsletter* published on 8 August 1979 also utilized this tactic of diversion. This issue featured the words of federal Liberal immigration critic Robert Kaplan, who argued that it is necessary to counter backlash against the refugee program because refugees "are good for Canada".[191] Although the feature does not cite any specific incident of backlash, Kaplan recognized the general presence of it and astutely traced it back to two different causes: the fear of unemployment and racism. To counteract opposition on economic grounds, Kaplan urged those supportive of the program to "point to the positive contribution refugees make to the country's economy".[192] He continued by asserting that "far from being a burden on the economy, the Indochinese refugees will help in its development. They are hard-working, industrious and self-reliant people who will find a place in Canadian society quickly".[193] This construction of refugees as hard-working individuals and good for Canada's economy was extremely common within this period, as will be discussed at length in Chapter Five. Moreover, to counteract opposition on racial grounds, Kaplan argued that racists should be "isolated and ignored" because "the vast majority of Canadian people are decent and they are prepared to welcome newcomers".[194] Again, this quotation serves to shift the conversation away from any thorough engagement with the reality of racist backlash within Canada and towards a celebration of the decency of the "vast majority" of Canadians. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that Kaplan's use of the word 'racism' was the only time that racism or anti-Asian sentiment was ever explicitly mentioned in the entire eleven-month run of the *Newsletter.* As Chapter Five demonstrates, the idea of 'culture' was oft-repeated within

[191] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," *CIHS Collection*, August 8, 1979, 5.
[192] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 5.
[193] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 5.
[194] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 5.

the *Newsletter*, yet race, with the exception of this issue published on 8 August 1979, was altogether ignored.

4.2: Support from Individual Citizens

As has become evident, the content of the *Newsletter* was primarily concerned with downplaying the presence of backlash in Canadian society and replacing it with an explicit celebration of 'ordinary' Canadians supporting the refugee program. This support took on many forms, including sponsorship, fundraising, and moral support. For example, in the *Newsletter* published on 24 July 1979, Minister Atkey commented on the level of public support for the program:

> "The support, co-operation and assistance we have received from private organizations and other levels of government can only be described as phenomenal," said Mr. Atkey. "The response to the plight of these people and the immediate positive action taken by provincial and municipal governments, church groups, service organizations and individual citizens, shows the depth of Canadian understanding of the problems of these thousands of men and women. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every individual and organization who had joined with us to alleviate some of the misery and suffering this great tragedy has produced".[195]

Moreover, Prime Minister Clark was quoted in the *Newsletter* published on 15 August 1979 as taking pride that Canadian citizens' "determination and commitment will place our country in the forefront of the nations of the world working to alleviate this horrendous situation".[196] Finally, on 3 October 1979, Atkey was again quoted within the *Newsletter* saying how proud he is of "the response of Canadians to this tremendous challenge… thousands and thousands of people in all provinces and territories are taking an active part in helping the refugees".[197]

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[195] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-2," *CIHS Collection*, July 24, 1979, 1.
[196] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," 3.
[197] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-12," *CIHS Collection*, October 3, 1979, 8.

One of the adjectives that was frequently employed within the *Newsletter* to describe the public's response to the refugee program was 'generous'. For instance, on 24 July 1979, Atkey was quoted as saying that "in view of the increasing public concern and support for these unfortunate people, I am confident Canadians will respond generously and show leadership to the international community".[198] Moreover, Atkey repeated a similar sentiment within the *Newsletter* published on 26 September 1979. This issue highlighted the "extraordinary response of Canadians to the plight of refugees", as well as the "sincere desire of these [sponsorship] groups to begin their new responsibilities".[199] While Atkey expressed delays in processing due to logistical issues, he noted that "Canadians are to be heartily thanked and congratulated for their compassion and overwhelming generosity".[200] Finally, when announcing Canada's increased contribution to the international relief effort to assist the victims of famine in Cambodia, the *Newsletter* issue published on 15 November 1979 highlighted the words of Minister MacDonald: "It is the generosity and deep human feeling of the Canadian people that allows my government to make this pledge".[201]

In addition to generosity, notions of humanitarianism were frequently evoked. For example, on 15 August 1979, Prime Minister Clark was quoted within the *Newsletter* as stating that he is "personally moved by the warm and humanitarian actions by Canadians everywhere".[202] Almost always, rhetoric around humanitarianism was intimately tied to something that was deemed to be innately Canadian. Reflect again on Atkey's

[198] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-2," 5.
[199] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-11," *CIHS Collection*, September 26, 1979, 1–2.
[200] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-11," 1–2.
[201] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-15," *CIHS Collection*, November 15, 1979, 1.
[202] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," 3.

aforementioned response to the July Gallup poll: "We are very pleased— but not at all surprised at the results. Canadians are the kind of people who cannot disregard the suffering of others—they are humanitarians of the highest order".[203] This naturalized idea of Canadians as the 'kind of people' who will inevitability help refugees is one that was repeated many times throughout the run of the *Newsletter.* For instance, the issue published on 3 October 1979 also highlighted the words of Atkey, who spoke at a fundraising dinner given by the Indochinese Refugee Relief Trust Fund in Toronto. Atkey stated that he "never had any doubts that Canadians would react favourably to the one-for-one sponsorship program announced in July", and that he "could not envision any circumstances where we could fall short of the goal of 50,000 refugees through a lack of interest or compassion".[204] Moreover, the issue published on 13 December 1979 noted that the refugee program was "a challenge that offered a tremendous opportunity to put Canada's humanitarian values and traditions to the test", and that Canadians had exceeded the expectations of the government.[205]

Finally, this celebration of Canadian efforts to support the South East Asian refugee program occasionally took on a more personal form. For instance, a story titled "Cool Aid" that was published in the *Newsletter* on 8 August 1979 states the following:

> Fifty dollars a glass for a cold drink? That's what some people have been paying at a Westmount stand in Montreal operated by Grace Prince. It's all part of the Montreal mother's efforts to raise funds to aid Indochinese refugees. In one week she collected $650. People are asked to give whatever they can and this has ranged from nickels and dimes to "folding money" and cheques. One Tuesday during Montreal's recent torrid heat wave, Mrs. Prince and her helpers totaled $200 in sales. "I supply the drink and the paper cups and the neighbourhood supplies the kids to augment my own collection," said Mrs. Prince. The money is

[203] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," 2.
[204] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-12," 8.
[205] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-17," *CIHS Collection*, December 13, 1979, 6.

> being turned over to the Montreal Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, one of the many organizations providing assistance to the refugees. Four of Mrs. Prince's seven children have been working at the stand making signs and poster and pouring cool drinks for the customers. If someone says they gave the day before they are liable to be told by a youngster, "that was for yesterday's boat people. What are you going to do for today's?". Some residents have come to regard the stand as a sort of toll station. "They give every day on the way home", Mrs. Prince said. In addition to her fund-raising campaign, Mrs. Prince and her husband have agreed to take in an Indochinese family for a year. The family is due to arrive in five or six weeks.[206]

This is one of a number of stories featured within the *Newsletter* that utilized personal stories to showcase how 'ordinary' Canadians were raising money and sponsoring refugees within their communities, drawing upon rhetoric of generosity and humanitarianism to do so. The twenty-one issues of the *Newsletter* gave the sense that the large majority of Canadians were actively involved in the South East Asian refugee program, despite the reality demonstrated in chapter two that many Canadians were not only passively uninvolved but actively unsupportive.

4.3: Support from Businesses

This narrative within the *Newsletter* that positioned most Canadians as generously supporting the South East Asian refugee program was extended to Canadian business as well. There were two forms this took: private businesses offering donations to charity and businesses offering jobs to refugees. On the former, a story published on 8 August 1979 titled "Companies Match Employee Contributions" epitomizes this approach. It states:

> Canadian companies offering to match employee contributions to groups aiding Indochinese refugees say the response is enthusiastic. According to a Shell Canada spokesman, employees went to a committee running the firm's special fund for charities and asked if they could do something for the refugees. Shell Canada decided to match donations from the employees. Dan Fockler, Vice-president of Industrial and Community-Relations for Colgate-Palmolive Canada, says cheques have started arriving for his company's plan to match contributions

[206] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 17.

> to the Canadian Red Cross Society's Vietnamese Boat People Fund until September 1. The Red Cross Society is hoping to raise $500,000 for aid to refugees still in Southeast Asian camps. Michael Barrett of Xerox of Canada Ltd. Said they were quite surprised by the reaction. "We're very pleased. There's a lot of enthusiasm." Xerox of Canada has a policy of matching employees' cash donations to recognized charitable groups.[207]

This story positions private corporations as making a concerted effort to support the South East Asian refugee program through charitable donations, a sentiment that was common throughout the entire run of the *Newsletter.*

Canadian businesses were also framed as overwhelmingly generous with employment offers for the newly-arrived South East Asian refugees throughout the publication. Employers were deemed to be providing "a number of job offers" for the refugees, and offering them the opportunity to become increasingly self-sufficient within Canada. [208] For example, the issue from 15 November 1979 noted that "refugees from Southeast Asia settling in Toronto have received almost 2,000 more job offers than can be filled".[209] This idea of a *surplus* of job offers not only frames Canadian business as generous and supportive of the refugee program, but also assuages concern by Canadians over refugees 'taking' jobs away from Canadians.[210]

Additionally, in a similar narrative form to the "Cool Aid" story mentioned in the previous section, stories were often told within the *Newsletter* about specific businesses offering employment to a named refugee(s). For example, a story published on 19 September 1979 titled "Life begins at fifty-nine" offers a glimpse into the life of Ly Si

[207] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 16.
[208] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 11.
[209] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-15," 14.
[210] This is discussed further in chapter four.

Nghi.[211] Nghi had just moved to Sechelt, British Columbia to begin a job as an automotive parts mechanic at Suncoast Chrysler. According to the *Newsletter,*

> After spending six months in the crowded camp Mr. Ly and his wife, Nguyen Thi Huong, came to Canada, arriving in Vancouver last January. Both took five months of language training. Meanwhile Suncoast Chrysler owner Bill van Westen had contacted Tom Steele, a community counsellor at Vancouver's Immigration Reception Centre, seeking a qualified refugee to work in his parts department. Mrs. Ly was initially reluctant to leave Vancouver, but Mr. Ly was enthusiastic about the job offer and he began work August 20. Mr and Mrs. Westen have provided the Lys with two rooms in their home until they can find suitable accommodation.[212]

In this case, the Suncoast Chrysler owner Bill van Westen was positioned as generously offering employment to a newly arrived refugee. Similarly, on 12 September 1979, the *Newsletter* told the story of two Vietnamese couples who were resettled in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. Upon arrival, they were greeted with furnished apartments and food, and "all four will be employed by the Eskimo Inn Motel in Inuvik once they have completed language training. Two more refugee couples, who will be employed by the McKenzie Motel, are expected to arrive shortly".[213] Utilizing the strategy of 'success' stories, Canadian businesses were consistently framed throughout the run of the *Newsletter* as generously offering economic and employment support for the South East Asian refugee program.

4.4: Support from Governments

Finally, alongside Canadian individuals and Canadian businesses, the Canadian government was also positioned as fully and generously supporting the South East Asian refugee program within the *Newsletter.* This is unsurprising given that the *Newsletter* was

[211] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10," *CIHS Collection*, September 19, 1979, 6.
[212] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10," 6.
[213] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-9," *CIHS Collection*, September 12, 1979, 8–9.

a federal government publication, but the multi-pronged way this was discursively enacted deserves attention.

Most commonly, the federal government was represented as hard-working and dedicated. For example, in the first published issue of the *Newsletter,* it was stated that "as a result of around-the-clock efforts by the Minister and his officials, a major breakthrough has been achieved in transportation and processing arrangements and in facilities for private sponsorships".[214] The idea of 'around-the-clock efforts' was typical of the period, positioning government officials as sacrificing their time and energy for the sake of the program.

Similarly, efficiency and capability were qualities that were consistently ascribed to the CEIC's refugee program. For example, on 8 August 1979, Minister Atkey was quoted in the *Newsletter* as stating that the 50,000-refugee commitment the Canadian government made was "an expression of confidence in the capacity of Employment and Immigration Canada".[215] This idea was re-iterated by Prime Minister Clark himself in the *Newsletter* issue published on 15 August 1979:

> "I committed our government to increasing significantly Canada's contribution to Indochinese refugee relief and resettlement. I am pleased that my colleagues, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Employment and Immigration, were able to follow up on this commitment very quickly with their July 18 announcement of measures that constitute one of the most concerted refugee efforts in Canadian history".[216]

Finally, the last issue of the *Newsletter* for 1979 stated that "Canada's refugee program in Southeast Asia is hailed around the world as both efficient and effective. Canada will reach its objective of 50,000 Indochinese by the end of next year in what can be

[214] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-1," 1.
[215] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 2.
[216] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-5," 3.

described as a quiet victory for mankind".[217] This 'quiet victory for mankind' is posited as the result of Canadian efficiency and effectiveness.

Alongside this language of efficiency and capability, there was an element of humanitarianism to the rhetoric. More specifically, the response to the refugee crisis by the Canadian government is discursively rendered within the *Newsletter* as an act that is fueled by flexibility, humanitarianism, and justice. This is best exemplified within the issue published on 31 July 1979, with a section titled "Refugee Selection Humanitarian". It states:

> Canadian immigration policy and regulations are designed to allow the greatest latitude in dealing with the human consideration that apply to all refugees coming to Canada. "Canadian immigration policy is very much against breaking up family groups and associations," Immigration Minister Ron Atkey said. "In the current relocation of Indochinese refugees to Canada every attempt is being made to ensure the greatest flexibility is used in the interpretation of the rules and regulations which may apply. We are not about to admit a productive healthy young refugee while denying admission to a family member solely because of age or ill health. That would be a total denial of the principles of family reunification and humanitarian concern for refugees upon which our immigration policy is based".[218]

This excerpt associates the government's response with South East Asian refugees to the larger Canadian immigration system, a system that allegedly deals with the "human consideration" of migration.

Another way this 'human' element of Canada's refugee system was depicted was through personal stories of Immigration Officers working with South East Asian refugees. The best example of this comes from the issue published on 14 August 1979. Titled, "It Happened in Hong Kong", the *Newsletter* tells the following story:

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[217] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-17," 4.
[218] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-3," 4.

> Immigration Officer Colleen Cupples was supervising the embarkation of Indochinese refugees for their flight to Canada. She spotted a tiny Vietnamese girl in the lineup carrying a bucket almost as big as she was. One of Miss Cupples' tasks is ensuring that certain foodstuffs are not imported by the refugees contrary to Canadian regulations. She approached the child and gently asked what she was carrying. The child took the lid off the bucket. It contained water. "When we left Vietnam," she gravely explained to the interpreter, "we were all very thirsty on our boat. Now I'm going to Canada. I don't know how far away it is but it is certainly a long journey, and I am never going to be thirsty again".[219]

The decision to include this story within the *Newsletter* is significant, as it humanizes Canada's refugee resettlement process. The use of emotive descriptions like "tiny Vietnamese girl"/ "carrying a bucket almost as big as she was"/ "she gravely explained"/ add an element of personal feeling to the officer's story.

Finally, this representation of a government wholeheartedly committed to the refugee program was not only limited to the CEIC, but also extended to other federal departments. For example, on 31 July 1979, the following statement was made:

> Commenting on the airlift which will bring up to 3,000 Indochinese refugees to Canada every month, Mr. Atkey said the level of co-operation extended to us [CEIC] by External Affairs, National Health and Welfare and the Department of National Defence was indicative of the spirit of determination and dedication needed to "see the job through to its successful competition. There is a lot of Canadian know-how being used in this operation,", he concluded. "Frankly I did not expect anything less than the maximum effort that is now being demonstrated. Our people are doing just what was anticipated- the best job possible."[220]

In this case, External Affairs, the Department of National Health and Welfare, and the Department of National Defence were all presented as rallying around the same cause. Later in the same issue, it was announced that Elmer MacKay, Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, made about 3,000 housing units available for occupancy by refugees from Southeast Asia. As the *Newsletter* notes, "the

[219] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," *CIHS Collection*, August 22, 1979, 12.
[220] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-3," 1.

Minister said he was pleased to be able to offer this help on behalf of the Corporation and to support the endeavors of his government and other concerned Canadians in relocating the refugees".[221] This rhetoric serves to homogenize the federal government as one supportive, efficient, and dedicated body that is entirely committed to the South East Asian refugee program.

This notion of every Canadian working towards the same cause was also extended to provincial and municipal governments. For example, in the first published issue of the *Newsletter,* it was stated that Minister Atkey "visited every province to discuss the refugee situation with Provincial Ministers and has received general support from them for Canada's program for refugees".[222] The issue published on 8 August 1979 focused heavily on the municipal support received from Ottawa, including the Ottawa Board of Education's decision to waive tuition fees "for some of the expected refugee students".[223] Moreover, when 202 South East Asian refugees arrived at Ottawa international airport in early August 1979, Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar was there to greet them. The *Newsletter* was quick to quote Dewar, who stated to the newly-landed refugees: "We are hoping you will love us as much as we're going to love you".[224]

4.5: Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to elucidate the ways that Canadians were portrayed within the twenty-one issues of the *Newsletter.* Through a critical discourse analysis of the

[221] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-3," 2.
[222] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-1," 7.
[223] Fees of $16 for two-hour-a-day classes and $32 for four-hour classes were dropped for a one-year period for refugees wishing to take continuing education courses within the OBE system. Also, students from kindergarten to grade 13 who are without legal guardians did not have to pay regular non-resident fees ranging from $2,000 to $2,600 annually. "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 20.
[224] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-4," 19.

content of the newsletters, this chapter has highlighted how 'ordinary' Canadians, Canadian business, and Canadian government were portrayed as unwaveringly supportive of the program. In doing so, I shine light on how the discursive rendering of Canadian humanitarianism was both reiterative and performative, obscuring the reality of widespread opposition and public debate within this period. While it is true that many Canadians *did* generously support the refugee program, it is also true that the CEIC problematically utilized these actions to spin a narrative that generosity and humanitarianism were something that was *naturally* and *traditionally* Canadian within the publication, obscuring the longstanding tradition of anti-Asian racism within Canada.

Chapter Five: Refugees in the *Newsletter*

This thesis has established four key assertions. First, that widespread Canadian public opposition to the South East Asian refugee program was present throughout 1979 and early 1980, and that it was rooted in both economic and racial fears. Second, the CEIC's attempt to mitigate this public backlash was through a large public relations campaign. This information strategy was intended as an alternative, more positive account of the Canadian response than the hypercritical mainstream media. Third, one of the most salient features of this public relations campaign was the tactical use of 'success' stories within the *Newsletter*. Fourth, these 'success' stories position Canadians (in their communities, as business-owners, and as making up the government) as unflinchingly supportive of the refugee program. In doing so, qualities of generosity and humanitarianism become discursively constructed as something uniquely and innately Canadian, erasing the longstanding tradition of anti-Asian backlash within Canadian society.

With these four findings in mind, this final chapter seeks to question how South East Asian refugees as individuals and as a community are portrayed within the twenty-one issues of the *Newsletter.* If the publication positions Canadians as generous and overwhelmingly supportive of the refugee program, how are the refugees themselves depicted? How does this representation relate to the history of anti-migrant and anti-Asian racism within Canada? And, in what ways does this depiction provide or deny refugees with agency?

5.1: Clash of Cultures

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the *Newsletter* mostly ignored race and anti-Asian racism as shaping the resettlement experience of South East Asian refugees in Canada. Despite this neglect, the publication was replete with references to culture, especially Vietnamese culture.[225] More specifically, the CEIC team routinely emphasized the cultural differences between Canadian and South East Asian communities, and the ways that these differences manifested themselves throughout the refugee resettlement process.

Take, for example, the *Newsletter* published on 5 September 1979.[226] This issue highlighted the recent publication and distribution of 'A Guide to Resettling Vietnamese Refugees' by the Secretary of State, with information collated by the Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Catholic Conference.[227] The *Newsletter* highlighted "a few interesting excerpts from the publication", and it is worth considering what the CEIC deemed to be interesting enough for the *Newsletter* from the original document. These excerpts are as follows (ellipsis included in the original):

> Language: The Vietnamese language is a tonal language, using five different tones or inflections. Distinctions in meaning are made through the use of levels of pitch… An important feature of Vietnamese is a system of personal pronouns and personal classifiers indicating status relationships. Age, education, personal achievement and official rank command respect… the use of the wrong term or form can cause offence.
>
> Names: In Vietnam, the family name is written first, followed by at least two more names, the last of which is the first name.
>
> Family Structure: The family represents the chief source of social identity for the individual. Nearly all Vietnamese still feel that the family has first claim on their loyalties and that the interests of each individual are subordinate to those of his common descent group.

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[225] While frequently the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were conflated into one homogenous South East Asian culture, the *Newsletter* often discussed Vietnamese culture more than anything else, likely given the higher number of Vietnamese refugees arriving to Canada.
[226] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 3.
[227] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 3.

> Position of Men and Women: Great respect is given to men, especially elder men… Throughout her marriage a woman is expected to be dutiful and respectful toward both her husband and his parents. Nonetheless, a wife retains her own identity and, with the passage of time, her role in family affairs increases.
>
> Gestures: Waving motions in Vietnam are quite different than in Canada. To try to call children by beckoning them with the fingers while the palm is up will baffle them. But if you put your palm down and motion them toward you with the entire palm and fingers, they will understand.
>
> Formality: The Vietnamese, particularly those with limited exposure to Western ways, practice a formality which is sharp contrast to North American casualness... after a short time here, Vietnamese learn that Canadian casualness in addressing persons is not meant as disrespect, but as friendliness.
>
> Self-Control: Vietnamese culture... places a high premium on the disciplined acceptance of things as they are… Stoicism is a major value. Self-control also demands restraint in conduct; Vietnamese tend to keep their voices low and conduct conversations quietly. They respect those who show themselves to be gentle and amiable, polite and courteous in dealings with others, and passionate, uncontrolled displays of feeling are strongly disapproved.[228]

As demonstrated, Vietnamese culture is repeatedly framed within the *Newsletter* as being "quite different" from "Western ways". It is one that is extremely disciplined, respectful, and polite, and one that holds familial ties above all else. This is contrasted to North American "casualness" and "friendliness".

Another particularly illuminating example of how this 'clash of cultures' was utilized within the *Newsletter* is from 29 August 1979. Titled "Ice, Time, and Escalators", the feature proceeds as follows:

> Few Indochinese have experienced snowy, freezing winters. When the first boat refugees arrived in Toronto before Christmas, federal immigration counsellors had to teach them how to walk on ice because they had no concept of how to balance on hard and slippery frozen surfaces. Also, in Southeast Asia, anyone in authority is held in great respect and treated with deference. So, while the kids learned about snowballs, the parents had to learn that it isn't necessarily disrespectful for children to playfully throw snow.
> John Chu of the Toronto Vietnamese Association says refugees are astonished to learn that people will drive for an hour or two just to visit a friend or have dinner

[228] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 3.

> somewhere. They are equally astonished to find that there are so few motor bikes on the streets. In Vietnam the streets are clogged with them.
>
> "I always tell them that their first investment should be a cheap but serviceable watch," laughed Mr. Chu, contrasting the punctuality in Canada with the "rubber time" of Vietnam. "They have to learn that when they are asked to be somewhere at noon, they must be there promptly at noon". He also reminds them not to wander around hotel corridors or the street in their pyjamas. "Back home pyjamas were often worn as day dress," he explains.
>
> Such things as elevators and escalators are another completely new experience for most, as is colour television and the multiplicity of channels. Supermarkets, with their vast choice of food and other items, are another source of amazement. Everybody seems to be intrigued with the amount of green space in the midst of busy cities and towns. They're accustomed to having all arable land utilized for food production.
>
> Since the Indochinese are a traditionally polite people and are grateful to the Canadian government and their private sponsors, they hesitate to place extra burdens on their sponsors by asking questions or discussing difficulties. Interpreters in the Indochinese community try to stress to the new arrivals that their sponsors are eager to help them adapt and are pleased to answer their questions.[229]

Again, this feature acts to discursively position South East Asian and Canadian culture at odds with one another, including developmentally. This extends from large cultural differences (i.e. the treatment of elders, the asking of questions) to those seemingly innocuous details of everyday life (i.e. the wearing of pyjamas). As with the previous example, the South East Asian refugees are positioned as being polite, grateful, and stoic. These differences in culture between the refugees and Canadians allegedly permeated nearly every aspect of the resettlement process. Moreover, they were significant enough, according to the CEIC, to warrant multiple references to them within the many issues of the *Newsletter.*

It is worth considering why this was the case. While these cultural differences are not necessarily outlined in an inherently negative way, in fact, most of these features

[229] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-7," 8–9.

within the *Newsletter* seem to be intended as 'funny' stories, they nevertheless invoke the sense that the refugees were hapless, confused, and naïve in a foreign land, and Canadian sponsors were there to patiently teach them about 'Canadian' culture. The next issue, published on 9 September 1979, supports this claim. In the Question & Answer section of the *Newsletter*, it was asked why at least five Canadian individuals were required to form a sponsorship group.[230] In order to explain the responsibility of sponsorship, the CEIC stated the following:

> Someone must be able to spend time with the refugees, introducing them to the people, services and employment opportunities available in their new community. They will need help learning the language and adapting to our culture and faster-paced lifestyle. The appliances we use will be a mystery to many Vietnamese, as will the food we eat and the way we prepare it. Even things like how to board a bus and which one to get on may pose frustrating problems to people accustomed to getting around on foot or by motorcycle.[231]

This is an extremely useful paragraph for not only re-iterating the 'clash of cultures' sentiment mentioned above, but also for better understanding how the CEIC viewed the role of Canadian sponsors (as teachers) and South East Asian refugees (as students) throughout the resettlement process.

To dive deeper into this telling excerpt, the sentence "*they* will need help learning the language and adapting to *our* culture and faster-paced lifestyle" reveals four key assumptions on the part of the CEIC within this period. First, it assumes that refugees need help in adapting to "our culture", foreclosing the possibility that they already possess the skills required to adapt. Put simply, it refuses to acknowledge that some refugees could adapt to 'Western ways' with no intervention by their sponsors. Second,

[230] Authorship unknown. As previously mentioned, I suspect the CEIC developed the questions for the Q&A in-house, but cannot definitively say.
[231] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-9," 12–13.

and corollary to this point, it sets up assimilation for the refugees as non-negotiable. This forecloses the possibility that refugees, as individuals, may not want to adapt to "our culture and faster-paced lifestyle" (including "our food and the way we prepare it") for any reason. It refuses to acknowledge the reality that some refugees will not adapt to "Western ways" and be perfectly fine living within Canada by their own definitions. Third, it positions all sponsors as adhering to this hegemonic culture, erasing the reality of Asian sponsors and community ties. Although I was unable to access any data related to the racial breakdown of official sponsors, established South East Asian communities, with their own formulation of 'Canadian' culture, were an invaluable information source for the newly-arrived refugees. Similarly, constructions of "our culture" and "our food" homogenize 'Canadian' culture into one that is decidedly *not* South East Asian, erasing the lived reality of these communities within Canada in 1979. Finally, this discursive rendering erases the lived reality of many additional communities within Canada that do not practice a "fast-paced lifestyle" or eat "our" foods. 'Canadian' culture is thus presented as a non-negotiable, homogenized thing-to-be-taught by a limited group of Canadians, and a non-negotiable, homogenized thing-to-be-learned by South East Asian refugees.

5.2: Abandoning Culture, Embracing Culture

This construction of South East Asian refugees abandoning their own culture and 'adopting' Canadian culture was re-iterated many times throughout the *Newsletter,* especially related to food. Take, for instance, two stories published in August 1979 that illuminated the food choices of refugees at the Griesbach Barracks staging area. The 22 August 1979 issue of the *Newsletter* notes how the Edmonton staging area went into

official operation on 14 August 1979 with the arrival of a DND 'Magnet 11' flight with 199 South East Asian refugees on board.[232] At the newly opened staging area, the refugees "were fed a light meal prior to undergoing the usual immigration, customs and health processing". [233] The *Newsletter* continues by making an intentional point to illustrate how "the main attraction was not oriental food but North American style hamburgers and hot dogs".[234] This story was repeated and expanded upon two weeks later, under the sub-heading "Refugees Like Canadian Food":

> When the first planeload of Indochinese refugees arrived at the Armed Forces Base at Griesbach, the National Defence kitchen staff had decided to adopt a "wait and see" attitude before formalizing any menus. On hand for the first day was a carefully balanced Vietnamese-Canadian meal of baked fish, beef stew, rice, fresh fruits and vegetables and rice water. By the second day, the preferences of the refugees were exhibited when a trayload of hamburgers and hot dogs disappeared in a flash. These mainstays of North American diet were such a hit that many of the refugees came back for seconds. The popularity of the hamburgers and hot dogs were second only to apples. Accustomed to paying $2.00 per apple in Southeast Asia, the refugees took advantage of this Canadian delicacy. Rice is still a must on the meal table, but rice water, thought to be a popular beverage, seems to have fallen by the wayside.[235]

If this incident is true, the fact that the refugees chose hot dogs over Vietnamese baked fish becomes a significant action *through* the telling of the story by the CEIC, not in and of itself. The action comes to embody the act of South East Asian refugees abandoning their own culture, or at the very least allowing it to "fall by the wayside", and actively participating in the act of assimilation. Quite literally, this story positions the refugees as hungerly eating up "Western ways". In the context of anti-Asian racism in Canada, this narrative of assimilation presents the Asian refugees as less of a 'threat' to white Canadian identity and hegemony.

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[232] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 7.
[233] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 7.
[234] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 7.
[235] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-8," 11–12.

5.3: Grateful Refugees

Building upon this narrative of refugees eagerly participating in this 'learning' of Canadian culture through the abandonment of their own, the *Newsletter* consistently positions South East Asian refugees as grateful beneficiaries of Canadian kindness and teaching. Put simply, refugees were portrayed as being eternally grateful to Canadians for their efforts in resettlement, their offerings of employment, their general support for the program, their teaching of "Western ways", and their friendship. This is best exemplified in the issue published on 3 October 1979, which illuminates the words of a recently arrived refugee named La Chuong Han. The "Letter of Appreciation" states the following:

> Dear Edmonton Immigration Personnel:
>
> When I first step on Canadian soil (Edmonton Airport), at that moment I felt the warmth within me. I haven't felt any discrimination against me. Your kindness, your understanding, and friendship made us feel like a long lost child returning to a mother. Here was no uneasy feeling or strange feeling to make up feel out of place or cheap. At this special moment I can sense the path before me is wide and unobstructed. This is really my home—Canada.
>
> Before I came to know this country I always dream of a lovely home of my own--- to be able to protect it from any destruction or harm that comes to it. I will try my best to study hard, to work hard, to become a good citizen to give my love and strength for her.
>
> I don't know where to begin to show my gratefulness to the government to thank you all- the only thing I can do is to become a good citizen for this country; to help my fellow countrymen in order not to fail you all for what you have done for me. I want to tell the whole world that I am the luckiest person. Thank God! Thank God!
>
> To you all my respect,
>
> La Chuong Han[236]

[236] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-12," 10.

This letter fits perfectly within the narrative of cultural abandonment and refugee graciousness that the *Newsletter* continually deployed. More specifically, La Chuong Han's letter portrays him as not having experienced any discrimination in Canada, as eternally grateful for resettlement, as eager to become a "good citizen for this country", and as graciously abandoning his own country and culture. Canada, his "real home", becomes a land of novelty, opportunity and kindness. In these ways, it is unsurprising that La Chuong Han's letter of appreciation was one of the very few occasions where a refugee voice was ever included in the *Newsletter.* While this very may well have been La Chuong Han's honest experience of Canada, it is the *act* of including it in the publication, alongside the blatant disregard for other narratives from South East Asian refugees in Canada, that this chapter is concerned with.

5.4: Economically Successful Refugees

In addition to showcasing refugees as gracious beneficiaries of Canadian benevolence, and thus not a racial 'threat', one of the primary goals for the *Newsletter* was to showcase how economically successful refugees can become in Canada, and thus not an economic 'threat'. This was done to assuage public concern that refugees were 'stealing' jobs from Canadians or 'draining' public resources. In order to construct this narrative, the *Newsletter* highlighted the economic success of earlier groups of refugees.

This was most obviously expressed in the issue published on 22 August 1979. This issue states the following:

> Studies carried out by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) over the past ten years indicate that immigrants and refugees make major contributions to the Canadian economy and social growth in a short time. Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey said that the studies, which began following the arrival of Czechoslovakian refugees in 1968, dispel the myth that refugees hurt our economy or that they become charges on the public purse.

> "Our findings show quite conclusively the contributions these newcomers make," Mr. Atkey said. "The facts speak for themselves".[237]

These facts are developed later in the issue by highlighting economic factors related to the resettlement of Czechoslovakian refugees in 1968 and 1969. It states:

> Nearly 12,000 Czechoslovakians entered Canada between October 1968 and March 1969. Most of them received financial assistance, during their first few months in Canada, on an average of $766 per person until they became self-sufficient. By the end of the first year the average Czech refugee family was earning $518 monthly. In the two following years the average monthly earnings rose to $603 and $726 respectively. The $726 represents about 85% of the Canadian average for that year. Most of these earnings went back into the economy. In the second year, for example, the income was spent this way: 18% on housing, 16% on food, 8% on clothing, 8% on transportation, 4% on education, 5% on medical care, 6% on recreation and 12% on miscellaneous items. About half had purchased furniture and cars: 30% had bought television, radio and record-playing equipment; 10% had bought refrigerators, stoves and washing machines. Almost one in five- 17%- had purchased a home.[238]

The issue then continues by highlighting economic factors related to the resettlement of Ugandan Asian refugees in 1972:

> The Ugandan Asian movement brought 7069 persons from Uganda. Twelve months after arrival, 88% were employed full-time. Of these one in 11 were at the managerial level, 15% were in professional and technical positions, 36% were in clerical and sales, and 22% were craftsman. Though starting at income levels well below the Canadian average, most had moved quickly upward and after one year were just slightly below the Canadian average. The Ugandan Asian movement shows a particular feature. Within a year, people from this group had launched 66 small businesses. While many were family operations, about 9% were already providing employment to between 20 and 49 other residents of Canada. On the average, each self-employed Ugandan Asian brought direct employment to five other workers. Earnings were ploughed back into the nation's economy, giving a widespread ripple effect. After a year, more than two-thirds were paying rent regularly for modest apartment accommodations and one quarter had rented or bought a house- all of which meant other spending on durable household goods.[239]

Finally, the Chilean refugee resettlement project beginning in 1973 is referenced:

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[237] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 1.
[238] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 3.
[239] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 3.

> In Chile, the coup d'état of September 1973 created another special refugee movement. About 7,000 people have come directly from Chile as well as from special refugee camps in adjacent South American countries. A study made in 1976 showed that 73 percent of the Chileans who had arrived by then had become employed. One third had a family income in the $10,000-$14,999 range, while 11 per cent had a family income of less than $6,000. This is comparable to figures for the Canadian population in general. Of these former Chilean refugees, 85 percent were paying rent for housing while 7 percent had purchased a home. Only a fraction were sharing accommodations with relatives or receiving further adjustment assistance.[240]

These facts were intended as historical precedent to economically justify the South East Asian refugee program. It is important to note that this approach ignores the racial and cultural differences between these distinct groups of refugees, and also the socio-political and historical context under which they were displaced and resettled within Canada. A 'refugee' in Canada is thus reduced to a one-dimensional trope, one where 'adaptation' and 'success' is measured in their ability to "develop businesses or other job opportunities".[241]

5.5: Refugees as Employees

This approach of depicting refugees as good for Canada's economy was frequently utilized within the *Newsletter* to describe South East Asian refugees as employees. This often meant describing the refugees as industrious go-getters, eager to find work and contribute to the Canadian economy. As Ken Munshaw, an employment counsellor in Regina, stated for the *Newsletter*, "they are anxious to get going, to get jobs and to learn English".[242] Similar stories were repeated throughout the entire run of the *Newsletter*. For example, the issue published on 19 September 1979 highlighted the words of Bob Friedrich, an employment counsellor at the Edmonton staging centre. Friedrich stated that

[240] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-6," 3–4.
[241] Best, "Memorandum from J.C. Best to Kirk Bell- 10 August 1979."
[242] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10," 9.

he is “really impressed” with the refugees, and that “they are so polite... that it makes it easy to work with them”.[243] Grace Boyle, who runs the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program from the Y.W.C.A., echoed the sentiment of Friedrich within the same issue. Boyle stated for the *Newsletter* that she has “found that the refugees adapt well and are very eager to find work”.[244] Moreover, on 3 October 1979, Irene Doheny, the executive coordinator of Brock House Society in Vancouver, was interviewed regarding her employee Emily Wong, a Vietnamese refugee now living in Canada. According to Doheny, “Emily is one of the most conscientious employees we’ve ever had... I have to force her to even take time off for lunch”.[245]

This narrative of South East Asian refugees as loyal and dedicated employees was oft-repeated within the publication. One final example comes from the issue published on 19 September 1979. This issue featured the words of John Dunlop, an Ontario region immigration officer who worked at Hong Kong’s most populous refugee camp, Kai Tai West. The *Newsletter* highlighted Dunlop’s “most vivid memory” from his time at the camp:

> Of the muscular young man who took time out from the labourer’s job he had found inside the camp to present himself for an immigration interview on two consecutive days. He sat in front of Scott Mullin [another immigration officer], dripping wet from his exertions, his clothes sticking to his body in the heat and humidity, as he explained that he would work hard in Canada and that he would do any kind of work… if only he were allowed to go there. His effort was not without reward; he and his family are now being processed.[246]

Stories like this present the South East Asian refugees as young, able-bodied, and extremely eager to prove their industriousness through labour within Canada. This

[243] “Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10,” 6.
[244] “Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10,” 6.
[245] “Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-12,” 11.
[246] “Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10,” 4.

account does not provide the refugee with a name, but instead details the physical toll that hard labour has had on his body: "the muscular young man"/ "dripping wet from his exertions"/ "his clothes sticking to his body in the heat and humidity".[247] Not only is this individual's worth tied up in this description of his physical body, but resettlement in Canada is framed as a *reward* for hard labour. This creates the impression that South East Asian refugees were selected for resettlement for their physical attributes and willingness to "do any kind of work", obscuring the reality that Canada had international obligations to resettle refugees as per the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.[248] Not only is this narrative incredibly ableist and exclusionary for those unable or unwilling to perform hard physical labour, but it also problematically and dangerously constructs a narrative where refugees implicitly *owe* their labour to Canada in exchange for safety and resettlement. In sum, the resettlement of South East Asian refugees within Canada is framed as resulting from the willingness of generous immigration officials to 'take a chance' on able-bodied refugees, as opposed to an adherence to international refugee law.

Nevertheless, stories like the ones mentioned above are evidently intended to assuage any public concern over refugees becoming a 'burden' on Canadian social services like unemployment insurance and welfare. This assertion is made abundantly clear within the issue published on 29 November 1979, which compared the Canadian refugee resettlement program to a similar refugee resettlement program in Iowa. According to the *Newsletter*, "the success of the Iowa refugee program can be attributed

[247] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-10," 4.
[248] Madokoro, "'Belated Signing': Race-Thinking and Canada's Approach to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees."

to several factors that are similar to Canada's program".[249] This includes placing "prime importance on early self-sufficiency through employment of all adults, much as Canada's program does", the emphasis on organizational sponsorship rather than family sponsorship, the "high degree of personal service" provided through counsellors, and the fact that refugees "are not encouraged to adopt a welfare mentality. In fact, cash assistance through welfare offices is actively discouraged".[250] The fact that the CEIC chose these particular features of the Iowa refugee program to include in the *Newsletter* elucidates their attempt to mitigate public concerns that refugees will become a 'drain' on public resources.

However, the team also recognized that these stories of refugee industriousness could exacerbate public concern over unemployment rates; if refugees are so willing to work hard, are they not more likely to take jobs away from Canadians? In order to assuage this concern, while still keeping true to the hard-working refugee trope, one of the key narrative tactics within the *Newsletter* was to highlight how refugees agreed to work jobs that Canadians were unwilling or unable to work. In short, refugees filled vacancies that Canadians left. This was made especially obvious on 29 November 1979, when the *Newsletter* Q&A section asked the following question:

> Q: Why is the government bringing in thousands of Indochinese at a time when they will compete with Canadians for jobs?
>
> A: Indochinese are showing a willingness to accept all kinds of work in Canada, including jobs that Canadians do not want. Therefore, it is unlikely that they will take away jobs from Canadians. Indications are that the refugees are integrating well into our communities with the help of sponsors and that they are becoming productive citizens and contributors to economic growth.[251]

[249] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-16," *CIHS Collection*, November 29, 1979, 5–6.
[250] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-16," 5–6.
[251] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-16," 15.

As stated, the South East Asian refugees were represented as willing to accept "all kinds of work in Canada, including jobs that Canadians do not want". Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is no discussion on *why* Canadians do not want these jobs, which were probably for very logical or practical reasons, i.e. they are dangerous, grueling, underpaid, etc. This construction allows for the aforementioned tropes of the hard-working refugee to remain intact while simultaneously assuaging concern that refugees were 'stealing' jobs from Canadians in a time of massive unemployment.

This notion of the amenable and willing refugee employee was repeated on a number of other occasions. The 24 July 1979 issue, for instance, featured the town of Vegreville, Alberta, where "the whole town is awaiting the arrival of 25 Indochinese refugee families".[252] The story mentions how Eugene Demkiw, Operations Manager of a Vegreville agricultural manufacturing plant, has "always encountered problems in recruiting workers".[253] In response, Demkiw "approached officials with an offer to employ up to 25 workers from Indochina if they could be brought into Canada".[254] The idea was discussed with the town council and officials of CEIC. In mid-July, following a town meeting, "enthusiastic and widespread" support for the sponsorship plan was received from the town, and as a result, the recruitment problem was solved. Again, this feature does not include details on *why* there was a recruitment problem in a time of significant unemployment.

[252] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-2," 10.
[253] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-2," 10.
[254] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 7-2," 10.

Relatedly, the 3 October 1979 issue of the *Newsletter* illustrated how every September, the Canada Employment Centre in Windsor receives orders from the Canada Farm Labour Pool in Leamington for tomato pickers. As the *Newsletter* states:

> The hours are long and the work is often hard. Many years the demand for workers exceeds the supply. This year, however, the supply of Canadian workers has been supplemented by Indochinese refugees. Although most of the refugees lived in urban settings in their homeland and had no experience with agriculture, 13 showed up for work on Leamington farms the first day, 21 on the second day, and more on each successive day of the harvest.[255]

Again, this quote celebrates a willingness for South East Asian refugees to fill a gap in Canada's economy, and is an excellent example of how refugees were described as economic tools and investments to support Canada's economy.

Overall, these examples highlight how South East Asian refugees were repeatedly presented within the *Newsletter* as a homogenous group willing to accept work that is deemed too difficult or unpleasant for Canadians. In this way, refugees were discursively constructed as economically valuable for Canada, assuaging concern that they would be negative for the 'public purse', while simultaneously keeping them separate from the existing Canadian labour pool and Canadian standards of acceptable working conditions.

5.6: Conclusion

At the start of this chapter, I posed three questions. The first question asked how the refugees themselves are depicted within the *Newsletter.* From here, I asked how this representation relates to the history of anti-migrant and anti-Asian racism within Canada. This was in the context of the evidence put forward in Chapter Four which saw Canadians positioned as generous and humanitarian. As has been demonstrated, the South East Asian refugees were portrayed as being stoic, naïve to "Western ways",

[255] "Newsletter: Indochinese Refugees: 1-12," 17.

amenable, hard-working, self-sufficient, determined to find work, and grateful for resettlement and the generosity of Canadians. Moreover, the refugees were represented as being eager to abandon their own culture and adopt a 'Canadian' culture. Arguably, this positioned them as representing less of a 'threat' to the hegemonic 'Canadian' identity. I also demonstrated how the South East Asian refugees (as well as Czechoslovakian, Ugandan, and Chilean refugees) were portrayed as a wise economic 'investment' for Canada as they filled an existing gap in the labour pool. In short, refugees took jobs that Canadians did not want, and thus represented less of a 'threat' to unemployed Canadians.

From here, I asked how this depiction provides or denies refugees with agency. As noted, refugees were rarely given a voice or a name within the *Newsletter.* When they were, as was the case with La Chuong Han's "Letter of Appreciation", it was a story that corroborated the CEIC's positive narrative of resettlement. The publication never included diverse viewpoints on the resettlement experience, nor did it make space for any engagement with refugee lives *before* coming to Canada. There was never any discussion of things missed about life in Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos, only the celebration of all of the things gained by coming to Canada. Moreover, in the context of employment, refugees were positioned as willing to take any job offered to them, without any acknowledgement that these individuals have skills, qualifications, needs, and desires that exist outside of job vacancies or the Canadian labour pool. While painting an overwhelmingly positive picture of the resettlement experience is unsurprising given that the *Newsletter* was a public affairs project, it is nevertheless important to shed light on the discursive strategies that were utilized to do so.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In 1980, Rene Pappone submitted the CEIC's South East Asian information strategy to the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) Awards of Excellence. In his submission, Pappone argued that the *Newsletter* "explained various aspects of Canada's Indochinese policy and programs, provided practical information about the resettlement of refugees, answered frequently-asked-questions, and gave current statistics regarding the movement".[256] Including related media clippings in his submission, Pappone argued that the clippings show "how prompt, factual responses to media inquiries resulted in balanced stories", and that "the press clippings show that from time to time the media also picked up material published in the Indochinese Refugee Newsletters".[257] Looking back at all of the elements of the information strategy combined, Pappone stated the following:

> The Commission feels that the public relations program was instrumental in promoting refugee sponsorship and in maintaining a generally positive image of the refugee movement…. The media relations activity, combined with our general information strategy, resulted in a countless number of factual stories at the local level and motivated more Canadians to become active participants in the resettlement program.[258]

In response to the CEIC's bid for an award, the CPRS commended the news desk and the audio-visual presentations, bestowing on them awards. However, according to Pappone, "in contrast, the newsletters were panned by the Canadian Public Relations Society… judges found the newsletters did not show warmth for the refugees".[259] In some ways,

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[256] Pappone, "CPRS 1980 Awards of Excellence- General- Submission- Public Information and Media Relations Program for the Indochinese Refugee Movement."
[257] Pappone, 30.
[258] Pappone, 30.
[259] I reached out to CPRS to try and get the primary source documents related to the 1980 Awards of Excellence. However, their records only date back until 2001.
Pappone, "Refugee Task Force," 145.

this thesis, and especially Chapter Five, has come to the same conclusion that the CPRS came to in 1980.

Overall, this project has traced the context, intent, and implementation of the federal government's South East Asian Refugee Public Relations campaign in 1979 and 1980, specifically the content of the *Newsletter*. As Chapter One demonstrated, the *Newsletter* is an incredibly rich historical source that has been widely neglected in scholarly literature, despite the historical and socio-political insight that can be gleaned from a critical discursive analysis of it. This insight can take many forms, but this project is concerned with how this publication functions as a response to widespread Canadian public opposition against the refugee program. As Chapter Two demonstrates, this opposition was captured through the results of seven Gallup polls conducted within this period, as well as letters to the editor. However, it is important to note that this opposition was not created in a vacuum. Instead, Chapter Two demonstrates that a historical approach is required to trace the economic and racial factors that have played a significant role in anti-migrant and anti-Asian backlash within Canada. More specifically, refugees have historically been deemed an economic 'threat' to Canadians, especially in times of widespread unemployment. This operates in conjunction with the longstanding tradition of positioning Asian migrants as a cultural and racial 'threat' to white hegemony within Canada.

With these considerations established, Chapter Three introduced the CEIC's response to this backlash. This response was a large communications plan intended to mitigate criticisms and provide an alternative narrative of the program, countering a hypercritical media. I demonstrated how the CEIC was aware of the racial and economic

factors that shape public opposition to the program, noting that the team anticipated that public support "may decline further when unemployment rises and when the number of refugees become visible in Canadian communities".[260] This 'visibility', I argue, is coded language that describes race and the Othering process that happens for Asian migrants in Canada. In response to these economic and racial considerations, the CEIC attempted to counter the impact of the press on public opinion, especially through the pre-meditated use of 'success' stories.

Chapter Four asked how these 'success' stories within the *Newsletter* depicted Canadians. As demonstrated, through the use of 'success stories', Canadians were continually portrayed as wholeheartedly supportive of the refugee program. This includes individual citizens, as well as Canadian business and various levels of government. In turn, this narrative of support becomes naturalized as representing innate Canadian qualities of humanitarianism and generosity. In short, the myth of widespread Canadian support for the South East Asian refugee program becomes the evidence required to make the claim that Canadians naturally support refugees. This logical fallacy becomes further entrenched through personal anecdotes and appeals to emotion. I conclude by arguing that not only does this construction misrepresent the complicated response of Canadians to South East Asian refugees within this period, but it also obscures the longstanding tradition of anti-refugee and anti-Asian backlash within Canadian society.

Finally, Chapter Five was concerned with how refugees were discursively constructed within the *Newsletter.* While Canadians are depicted throughout the publication as being patient teachers of 'our culture', refugees are depicted as being eager

[260] Manion, "Memorandum to the Minister: Information Strategy- Indochinese Refugees," 1.

to embrace "Western ways" and abandon their own culture. I argue that this construction presents the refugees as less of a 'threat' to racist Canadians who fear that the presence of Asian-Canadians threatens white Canadian identity and hegemony. From here, I trace the narrative of the 'grateful refugee', as well as the trope of the hard-working and desirable refugee-as-employee. As the second half of Chapter Two demonstrates, this often meant describing the refugees as industrious go-getters, eager to find work and contribute to the Canadian economy. This narrative also includes the depiction of refugees as willing to take any job that was offered, including those that Canadians did not want. I conclude by arguing that this representation problematically positions refugees as less of an economic 'threat' for Canadians concerned about unemployment.

6.1: Measuring 'Success'

By way of conclusion, it is worth briefly considering whether the Public Affairs strategy undertaken by the CEIC between July 1979 and May 1980 could be considered a success. Put simply, did it accomplish what it set out to do?

In a very narrow sense, the key intention of the information strategy was to provide an alternative narrative to the critical voice expressed in the media through the use of 'success' stories to convey the benefits of resettling refugees in Canada. As chapters four and five demonstrate, the simple answer to this question is that, yes, the strategy *did* provide a positive spin on the resettlement program and utilized the discursive tactic of 'success' stories to do so. Overall, the strategy constructed the response of Canadians to the refugee program as one of a pure, righteous generosity, and the response of the refugees as one of unabashed gratitude at being included in the nation's milieu. There was never any inclusion within the publication of dissenting

voices, and it was never implied that not all Canadians or refugees fit into this simple mold. In this way, the *Newsletter* was a 'successful' application of the CEIC's initial goal to tell a positive story.

Beyond this literal reading, reflecting on the broader 'success' of the information strategy is an important question to consider but a difficult one to answer. When thinking if the strategy mitigated social dissent and increased public support for the program, the results of the Gallup poll results highlighted in Chapter Three indicate that public support *decreased* after the implementation of the strategy in July 1979. However, there are a myriad of factors that influenced these results, including but not limited to: the changing of the refugee target to 50,000; the decreasing levels of media coverage on the plight of the refugees; the government reneging on its one-to-one matching formula; the 1980 federal election; and the rising rates of unemployment in Canada. It is conceivable that these rates of disapproval would have been higher had the strategy not been in place, but this is impossible to measure. Moreover, because I was unable to access data related to the readership and audience of the *Newsletter,* it is difficult to make any definitive claim about who had access to the content of the publication, and how it affected individual or community opinions of the refugee program or South East Asian refugees.

As with most research projects, the answering of one question raises other questions, including those with contemporary relevance. If this project had the time to develop further and widen in scope, it would become necessary to establish whether the use of 'success' stories by the state is effective in mitigating anti-refugee backlash within Canada. If no, what alternative purposes might they serve? What are their consequences? If yes, does it mean that they are acceptable forms of state public relations, even if they

inaccurately position all Canadians as generous and supportive and problematically position all refugees as industrious and grateful? Who gets to decide what an 'acceptable' narrative is when it comes to federal government information strategies? And, what are the public avenues to challenge them? My hope is that future research on the subject considers these questions and continues where this project left off.

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