Mong Resettlement in the Chicago Area (1978-1987): Educational Implications

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MONG RESETTLEMENT IN THE CHICAGO AREA (1978-1987):
EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

PAOZE THAO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1994
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INTRODUCTION

Over 848,038 Southeast Asian refugees arrived in the United States between 1975 and 1987 after the U.S. withdrawal of its troops from Southeast Asia and the fall of the Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese governments to the Communists in 1975.¹ Of those refugees, approximately 26,400 resettled in Illinois.² Nearly 3,000 Mong made their transition, at some point, to resettlement in the United States through Illinois.³ This dissertation will examine the process of Mong refugee adjustment through education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the educational implications of Mong resettlement in the Chicago area from 1978 through 1987. The Mong, a closely-knit ethnic hill tribe from Laos, originally migrated from China in the eighteenth century and settled in Southeast Asia. Those in Laos assisted France during its colonial rule and the United States in its Secret War against the Communists.


²Ibid., 9.

³Association of Hmong in Illinois (AHMI), "General Section", Proposal for Employment and Adjustment Services to Jewish Federation (Chicago: AHMI), 12.
during the Vietnam conflict. After the United States withdrew its troops from Southeast Asia, the Mong in Laos were persecuted for political reasons by the Communist governments. In 1976, Congress recognized that the Mong had been employed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and authorized the State Department to admit some as refugees to the United States.

Because of the constant massive migration from place to place, and from country to country, the Mong have experienced a series of formative episodes: with the Chinese, with the French colonialism, with the Vietnam conflict, and with the refugee camps in Thailand during their transition to resettlement in the United States and other western countries. These formative episodes will be discussed as a background for the study.

Research Questions

It is estimated that 2,000 out of the 72,394 Mong refugees were resettled in the Chicago area between 1975 and 1987. The Mong were not only illiterate in their own language but also their lives had been totally disrupted by the long wars in Laos. Since the Mong did not have a written language, they did not have the skills of reading and writing. Consequently, these factors left them with very limited marketable skills to make a living in a high

technologically-developed nation such as the United States. Of the recent immigrants in the United States, the Mong were probably the least technologically sophisticated and the least formally educated. As a result, they faced notoriously difficult adjustment problems in almost every aspect of life. Therefore, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the Mong? Where did they come from? Why did they come to the United States?

2. What were the major trends that shaped Mong society?

3. What were the cultural and educational problems the Mong encountered during their resettlement in the United States?

4. What will the future hold for the Mong?

Scope of the Study and Limitations

In this study, the author attempts to present and discuss several aspects of adjustment problems faced by many refugees in the United States. However, the focus is limited to the Mong in the Chicago area in terms of their cultural and educational adjustment problems between 1978 through 1987. During this period, the author was actively involved in the Refugee Program of Travelers and Immigrants Aid in the Chicago area. Through use of historical and qualitative methodologies, the author hopes that the findings in this study will become a microcosm of the Mong
in the United States. A word of caution is that this experience may not necessarily represent the entire Mong population in the nation. However, the data gathered may be able to draw and substantiate a generalization that may reflect some of the most difficult adjustment problems of the entire Mong population during their transition from Mong to Mong-Americans.

Definitions of Terms

Several terminologies have been used for Mong. "Miao" was historically used by the Chinese and loosely translated as "barbarian." The dilemma could be explained in one way which related to the Annamese word, "Meau" for cat. 5 "Mong-tse" was used by the old Chinese historical work which compared Mong language with the howling or cry of the hyena. 6 M. Terrien explained the meaning of Chinese character for "Meau," transliterating a cat’s head. When he related it to agricultural activities, "Meau" consisted of two parts: one for "plant" and the other for "field," whereas tse may be translated as child. As a result, "Meautse" means "son of the soil, the farmers, who do not belong to the "Great Nation." 7 Schotter referred in the Chinese


6Ibid., 7.

7Ibid., 8.
Kweichow sense to designate "Meau" as all non-Chinese.\textsuperscript{8} Other researchers used the spelling of "Meo" as called by the Lao and the Thai.

The author feels that all the terminologies mentioned above have negative connotations. This ethnic group prefers to call themselves "Mong" or "Hmong," although the origin of the word "Mong" is unknown. To the author, the term "Mong" refers to a classless egalitarian ethnic group.

The author prefers to use the spelling "Mong" exclusively over any other terms in this study instead of "Hmong" which is being used increasingly by American linguists. General Vang Pao established the Hmong Language Council in February 1982 in response to the resolutions made during the two consecutive Mong national conferences in June and December 1980. He appointed twelve members to the council (the author also was an appointed member). The role of the council was to do research and to conduct studies to standardize the Mong language. Through the committee's experience of literary search in various libraries, they saw the necessity to change the spelling of the initial Hm to Mh and from Hmong to Mhong.\textsuperscript{9} The author also believes the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 8-9.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{9}Interim Report of the Mhong Language Council Conference August 12-14, 1982 by Cheu Thao, Chairman, and Barbara Robson, Advisor. (Washington, D.C.: Center for
spelling "Mong" will simplify library listings and the decision to use the spelling "Mong" is not new.

The Mong in the United States can be classified linguistically by two major groups: (1) Mong Leng (Moob Lees) who are also known under Blue Mong and (2) White Mong (Hmoob Dawb). The author will use the term "Mong Leng" since the term "Blue Mong" gives a negative connotation that the Mong Leng object to each time it is used. They find it offensive and are intimidated by its use. The Blue Mong were a subgroup of the Mong who anachronistically practiced a cult of cannibalism. It is in the opinion of the author that this subgroup of Mong is no longer in existence.

The Mong Leng are proud of their true name which translates "veins of the Mong," implying that the Mong Leng carry the life blood for all Mong. White Mong refers to the color of a ceremonial dress, and no negative connotation is attached.

Perhaps, the two groups of Mong are equal in numbers and population. In addition, the two dialects could be mutually and intelligibly understood by the members of each group. In another sense, the two groups can be compared to American English and British English. The two groups have interwoven their bonds through intermarriage for centuries but, surprisingly, have preserved their linguistic and cultural purity, and have respected each others

differences. Both groups have lived with each other harmoniously for over centuries. In fact, they act to interface with each other for a system of checks and balances within the Mong society. The social, religious, educational, and political system has its own dynamics that are absolutely symmetrical and balance within the Mong society. However, Mong Leng call themselves "Mong" and White Mong "Hmong."

The United States government is very sensitive to the naming issue. A neutral terminology "Highlander" was used to include the Mong, Iu Mien, Lao Lue, and Lao Theung when they addressed the Mong officially.10 Highlander is a terminology that is broader by its definition which puts all the minorities who came from the highlands of Laos under the same roof. The Lao refugees were labeled as "Lowlander" instead.

To sum up, these terminologies -- Miao, Meau, Miao-tse, Meau-tse, Meo, Mong, Hmong, or Highlander -- all relate to the same Mong in the United States. They may be used interchangeably across this study. Nevertheless the author prefers the term "Mong" and other terms will be used as references. Occasionally, the use of a Mong or foreign

language word may be necessary. In the event, transliteration will be utilized for clarity purposes.

Organization and Methodology

This dissertation consists of an introduction and six chapters. The introduction includes the purpose of the study, research questions, scope of the study and limitations, definitions of terms, and organization of the reports.

Chapter I consists of a brief historical commentary on the Mong and their cultural background. It includes the demography and geography, family life, religion, social structure, political organization, economic structure, arts and crafts, language, and education.

Chapter II investigates the impact of colonialism and war on Mong and their implications on education. This chapter also addresses the major trends that shaped the Mong society and their education in the years to come: the French colonialism, World War II, the Vietnam Conflict, the emergence of Christianity in conjunction with the Mong literacy development and a brief history of the Lao Evangelical Church, and the ongoing internal political tripartite conflict within the former government of Laos.

Chapter III examines the Mong's refuge in Thailand in transition during their resettlement in the United States and other western countries, the refugee registration process, the Refugee Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-212), the Mong
resettlement by the national Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGS) and their roles, the Mong resettlement in the United States and their general adjustment difficulties.

Chapter IV probes the process of the initial resettlement of refugees in the Chicago area by the local VOLAGs and their programs such as the Chicago Refugee Demonstration Project in the Chicago area. This chapter will entail how services were rendered to refugees, and how the Mong attempted to provide mutual assistance to one another. A review of the related and relevant research will also be incorporated in this chapter.

Chapter V attempts to digest the cultural and educational adjustment problems encountered by the Mong refugees who resettled in the Chicago area between 1978 through 1987. With the guidance of my committee and after a review of literature on the methodology of interviewing, four sets of tentative interview questions were developed along the framework suggested by Neuenschwander’s Oral History to obtain similar information from the sampling.\(^\text{11}\) However, they were adapted to measure certain aspects of Mong and American culture, education, and other common denominators of adjustment. The interview questions are classified into three categories: factual identification,

resettlement, and education. This chapter contains the digestion of personal interviews of five representatives of the VOLAGS in the Chicago area, six Mong parents and community members, five selected Mong students who went through elementary, secondary, and higher education, and five professional staff in educational institutions. The data gathered from the ethnographic interview will be used cross-sectionally beginning in Chapter IV and specially in Chapter V.

Finally, Chapter VI contains a summary of the findings, a generalization, a suggestion for further study, and recommendations for schools to deal with similar situations should large groups of unfamiliar immigrants arrive in the United States unexpectedly.
CHAPTER I
THE MONG AND THEIR CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Early Mong History

The Mong as a people may have a history of over five thousand years. Having no writing system of their own, their early history was recorded by Westerners and in part by Chinese. Two major theoretical views may account for the origins of the Mong.\(^{12}\) The first view was introduced by Savina, a French Catholic missionary sent by the Society for Foreign Missions in Paris to spread the Gospel to the Mong in Laos and in Tonkin in the early 1900’s. Based on his interpretation and Mong legends, the Mong came from the Pamir area in Central Asia before migrating to other parts of China.\(^{13}\) Quincy indicated that: "this region encompasses present day Iraq and Syria."\(^{14}\) After years of research, Savina concluded that the ancestors of the Mong were a subgroup of the Turanians, a Caucasoid people whom were forced out by the Aryans and continued their course of


migration from central Asia proceeding through Turkestan, Russia, Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria, Honan, Tibet, and then the plains of the Yellow River.¹⁵ No one knows the prehistoric migration of the Mong except through their legends. After the confusion of languages, the Mong ancestors headed toward a region "Taj xuab zeb haav suab puam" (sandy region) referred to as "Ta Soa" by Savina, then toward another region behind the back of China. This oral history remains the only remnants of the Mong from antiquity to Hoang-ti or the Yellow Emperor which was 2,497 B.C.¹⁶ Whether the Mong is a subgroup of the Turanians, a Caucasoid race, whose origin was from Mesopotamia, the quest remains inconclusive.

The second view was introduced by Eickstedt who proposed the theory of the ultimate southern origin. To him, the Mong "Miao" was derived from the "San-Miao" mentioned in the oldest literature in the Sung Period.¹⁷ Mottin explained that the Chinese writings actually referred to the "Sam-Miao" of the "3 Miao."¹⁸ Eickstedt referred to the oldest part of the Schu-djing which said that "the

¹⁵Savina, 115-123.
¹⁶Ibid., 115.
mythical Emperor Chun forced the San-Meau to hide away in San-Wei." Father Amiot confirmed that: "In the following year 2282, Chun threw the San-Meau back to San-Wei..." Quincy identified the ancient San-Wei as a mountainous area in Southern Kansu. This view was also supported by Graham and Linh Yeuh-Hwa. Based on the Miao folklore, Graham affirmed that the traditions of the Chuan Miao in Szechuan pointed to their former residence in a hot climatic region in the South probably either from India, Burma, or Tonkin prior to migrating into China as far north as the Yellow River. Linh Yeuh-Hwa also spoke of the existence of the San-Miao:

In the late twenty-fourth century B.C., the "San-Miao" established a state between lakes Tung-Ting (in Hunan) and P'eng-li (Poyang in northwestern Kiangsi) at San-Wei that required Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun (Choun by Savina) to exterminate them and killed their king.


20 Quincy, 34.


An expert on Mong, Geddes, estimated that the Mong "were driven off the fertile plains of both the Yellow River and the Yang-tse River some time between 2,700-2,300 B.C.^{23}

Though these two views existed, most experts agreed that the Mong were in China before the Chinese because it was the Chinese who mentioned the Mong in their history under "Miao." The Mong possibly already occupied the basin of the Yellow River about the twenty-seventh century B.C. Due to the rapid expansion of the Chinese, Tseu-You led the Miao attack on the Chinese.\(^{24}\) Huang-yuan (later Hoang-ti or the Yellow Emperor) defeated the Mong. It is safe to assume that the Chinese had little influence over the Mong during this semi-prehistoric period since Tseu-you's name did not carry a Mandarin clan name as today's Mong.

Since Hoang-ti (Shang Dynasty - 1,600-800 B.C.) to the nineteenth century, Mong history was mentioned in part by Chinese whenever there were sedition and revolts against the Chinese. History tells us that the Chinese had made many attempts to completely Sinicize the Mong into Chinese culture; whereas the Mong opposed assimilation and full

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^23Geddes, 5.

^24Savina, viii.
integration. Therefore, various stratagems had been employed to maintain control of the Mong. The following paragraphs exemplify those attempts.

Following Tseu-you's defeat, Hoang-ti of the Shang Dynasty reorganized the Mong into the eight-family system, implemented a policy of forced migration to those settlements, and coerced them to abandon their traditional lifestyle from slash-and-burn semi-nomadic farmers to sedentary peasants. The system became a prominent element of feudalism in ancient China. Quincy did not specify what the eight constituents were. However, the author believes that the Mong may have been divided then into these eight family groups still referred to today: Mong-Si, Mong Dlub (Black Mong), Mong-Dlaaj, Mong Suav Faaj, Mong Ncuav Pa, Mong Yob Tshuab, Mong Quas Npaab (Flowery Mong), and Mong Lab Hau according to the colors of their costumes. These were not linguistic divisions.

Besides banishing the Mong, they were used as political buffer in an unsecured location in southern Kansu against a fierce mountain people led by a chief called "The White Wolf" during the Chou Dynasty (1028-257 B.C.). Mandarin scholars were also sent to learn Mong's ways to govern Mong. The Chou Dynasty employed various strategies

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25 Quincy, 32.

26 Ibid., 32.
such as "the tried and true course of material rewards oppression and an extermination campaign policy towards the Mong."\(^{27}\)

Between 206 B.C. and 220 A.D., the Han Dynasty directed a "southern pacification policy" posing serious threats to the Mong by sending military expeditions to quell Mong uprisings.\(^{28}\) In 618, the Tang Dynasty launched a campaign to reconquer all territories previously lost to the Mong and brought a great deal of Mong territory under Chinese administrative control.\(^{29}\) The most inhumane policy against the Mong occurred during the Sung Dynasty in 907 when various political gimmicks and trickery were laid against the Mong including the proposed fake marriage of Mong princess, Ngao Shing, to a Chinese prince next in line for the throne. The Sung imposed a policy of fight or flight on the Mong. The policy required Mong to wear different clothes of different colors for the purpose of disintegrating unity among the Mong.\(^{30}\)

As time went by, Chinese oppression against the Mong gradually heightened. The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) continued to capture and to slaughter over forty thousand Mong up till the sixteenth century. Fearing the constant

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 34.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., 26.

\(^{29}\)Ibid., 41.

\(^{30}\)Ibid., 42-43.
Mong uprising, the "Mong Wall" on the Hunan-Kweichow border was built to prohibit Mong trade with the Chinese.\(^{31}\)

The Manchu Dynasty (1644-1911) imposed heavy taxes on the Mong to a point of inability to pay, forced Mong children to attend Chinese schools, prohibits Mong traditional celebrations, forced marriage with Mong women, slaughtered Mong indiscriminately, used them as scapegoats for other rebellions, and the worst of all, legalized Chinese prejudice against the Mong by prohibiting the use of Mong language, and urged local officials to suppress the wearing of Mong costumes.\(^{32}\)

Despite their losses, the Mong continued their resistance against the Chinese in the basin of the Yellow River and the Hoai (Hwai). They failed to recognize the Emperors Yao, Choun, and U the Great during the first centuries of Chinese history. A group of Mong was forced to the bend of the Yellow River near Chen-Si and Kansu and the other to the Blue River towards the lakes Tong-T’ieng (Tung Ting in Hunan) and Pouo-Yang (Poyang in northwestern Kiang-si).\(^{33}\) An old Mong saying was closely related to the Yellow River: "Tsì pum dlej dlaag sab tsì nggeg" (Not seeing the

\(^{31}\)Ibid., 44-46.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., 29-52.

\(^{33}\)Savina, vii-viii.
Yellow River is disbelieving). This saying reflected that the Mong must have attempted to cross the Yellow River many times in history but in vain. It implies that warning a person who disbelieves in something is worthless if s/he does not actually see it.

According to Savina, it was the Mong group from the basin of the Hoai who sprawled through Hupeh, Kiang-Si, and Hunan, the Blue River from the basin of the West River. They continued their journey to the northeast as far as Kweichow where the Chinese could not reach them. Savina thought that Kweichow was the base of the Mong concentration where they used to migrate to other provinces such as Kiangsi, in the south to Kwangtung, in the north to Szechwan, and in the west to Yunan. Mottin estimated that the Mong arrived in Laos around 1810-1820 by way of Vietnam.

**Demography and Geography**

It has been difficult to get a good estimate of the Mong population since no official census have been conducted. However, it was estimated that the overall Mong population in the world may have reached six millions. In

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34Phaj Thoj, *Paaj Lug Moob* [Mong Parables] (Iowa City, Iowa: Published by the Author, 1982), 23.

35Savina, iii.

36Mottin, 47.
1982, 5,030,897 Mong lived in China, 37 250,000 in Vietnam, 38 350,000 in Laos in 1974, 39 125,000 in Thailand (including Mong refugees), 4,000 in Burma, 110,000 in the United States, 7,500 in France, 1,100 in French Guyana, 700 in Canada, 350 in Australia, 130 in Germany. 40 Due to the Vietnam conflict, the Mong population in Laos may have decreased to 200,000 at the present time.

The Mong are found in the remote mountainous regions in the Southern provinces of China (in Kweichow, Yunnan, Kwangsi, Hunan, Szechwan, Kwangtun, Fukien, Chekiang, and Hupeh), 41 in Northern Vietnam (in Lao Cay, Chop, Lai Chau, Dien Bien Phu), 42 in Northern Laos (in Houaphanh, Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, and Sayaboury.) 43


41 Geddes, 25.

42 Mottin, 42.

43 Dao Yang, 30.
Geddes concluded that the Mong in Thailand normally live at an altitude of 3,500 feet to 5,000 feet or more.⁴⁴ Reed's findings supported this notion that the Mong occupy the mountainous regions of Laos at an altitude of between 3,000 feet to 6,000 feet.⁴⁵ Perhaps the two-fold underlying rationales for living in such a high altitude were to preserve Mong cultural solidarity and their love of independence.

**Family Life**

The Mong family, being the most important unit in Mong society, is the basic nurturing institution. It consists of all the people living under the authority of a household that later form an extended family. The Mong family is organized strictly on the paternal side. A Mong woman when married loses all the rights with her own family. Each member of the Mong family is task-specific and works hard to contribute to the welfare of the family: the male for breadwinning, the wife for housework, children for tedious and simple manual labor work, and grandparents for babysitting and educating the young Mong.

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⁴⁴Geddes, 38.

⁴⁵Tipawan Truong-Quang Reed, "The Hmong Highlanders and the Lao Lowlander" (Chicago, Illinois: Governor's Information for Asian Assistance, May 1978), 4-7.
Religion

The Mong were traditionally animists. Animism is defined as "any of various primitive beliefs whereby natural phenomena and things animate and inanimate are held to possess an innate soul." Hackett defines it as "the belief that all life is produced by a spiritual force, or that all things in nature have souls." Based on a study on the religious change among the Mong in San Diego, Scott found that the traditional Mong religion is comprised of three interrelated elements which are animism, ancestor worship and shamanism. Thus, animism is a belief system that combines the supernatural power, ancestor worship, superstition, and devil worship.

Traditionally, the supernatural power was referred to Yawm Saub (God), ancestor worship to good spirits that provide protection to the Mong families, superstition to spirits of nature in which Ntxwg Nyoog (Satan) and other dlaab (devils) whenever hungry were able to cause physical and psychological harm and discomfort to Mong in the form of

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illness, nightmares, and to certain extent death to demand sacrifice. Therefore, shamanism was the only means of maintaining communication between the Mong and the evil spiritual world to find out the causes of illness in order to treat the effects. By performing rituals with animal sacrifice, the shamans related the message from bad spirits to the individual involved. There are times when they had to perform exorcism of evil spirits. In a study on Hmong sudden death syndrome, Bliatout asserted that the Mong religious beliefs are closely interwoven with their beliefs on illness and death. Though standardization in Mong religious practices does not exist, Mong rituals tend to center around ancestor worship; whereas clan and lineage variations occur because rituals were traditionally handed down from generation to generation through oral tradition.\textsuperscript{49}

The Mong also believe in life after death. The souls with proper guidance will return to their ancestors for reincarnation. Unlike the Chinese, the Mong did not actually worship their dead ancestors or any other divine beings.\textsuperscript{50}

For practical purposes, of the three religious elements, the Mong dealt mostly with superstition and devil


worship. This is associated most closely with the notion of illness and death. Being extremely fearful of the devils' constant demands for bigger animals for sacrifice, the Mong had only two options: either to fight or surrender to evil spirits for the sake of their family members' health.

Ancestor worship was relied on from time to time in circumstances where a family member is deceased. Proper guidance necessitates the spirit of the deceased to return to his/her ancestors (in Mong sense, ancestors mean God). As time passed, the Mong only remembered two elements. Instead of turning to worship the Supreme power which is God, the Mong were psychologically compelled to devil worship, superstition and ancestor worship not by choice but by fear as they relate to health issues.

Social Structure

Besides the importance of the family and extended family, the Mong put emphasis on the clan system that originated from a common ancestor. The clanship is considered the basic social and political organization in the Mong society. A Mong at birth automatically takes his/her father's clan name and remains a member for life. The origin of the clan remains a mystery. The Mong legends referred the clandestine origin to a child of incest born from a brother and a sister dating back to the Great Flood. Shaped like an egg, the couple cut their offspring into
pieces that became the different Mong clans. The traditional Mong consisted of twelve clans that corresponded to their rituals as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAN NAMES</th>
<th>RITUALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chang (Chun)</td>
<td>Nrig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hang</td>
<td>Taag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Her</td>
<td>Dluag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kue</td>
<td>Nkug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Khang, Phang*</td>
<td>Pluag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lee (Li, Ly), Lor*</td>
<td>Cai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Moua (Mua)</td>
<td>Zaag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Song</td>
<td>Koo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Thao (Thor)</td>
<td>Dlub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Xiong</td>
<td>Mob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Yang</td>
<td>Yawg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the clandestine origin of the Mong is unknown, a possible assumption may be deducted from historical accounts. During the early Chou Dynasty (1,028-257 B.C.), the Mong must have had a good relationship with the Chinese. This was evidenced by the Mong’s willingness to take on Mandarin clan names. This significant incident must have taken place during the Chou Dynasty but before Confucius’ time, which was around the second century B.C. 51 Savina reported:

At the time of Confucius...there were still twelve noble and powerful families. 52

This demonstrated that the twelve noble and powerful families were possibly the twelve clans of the Mong.

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52 Savina, 131.
According to Chinese legend, the Mong assisted King Wu, the first king of the Chou Dynasty (1,028-257 B.C.), to fight against the last emperor of the Shang Dynasty. History did not mention how King Wu rewarded the Mong. However, after his victory, King Wu and the Mong may have had developed good relationship. They may have taken an oath to assist each other in times of need as brothers. This relationship was reflected in Mong’s term "kwvtij" (brothers). Mong referred themselves as "tij" (older brother) and the Chinese as "kvw" (younger brother). When the two words compounded as "kwvtij" (brothers), the relationship between the Mong and the Chinese may have developed up to the level of intimate brotherhood relationship. As time passed, the relationship may have become distant. Though history did not disclose more details, it was possible that the later emperors of the Chou Dynasty may have forgotten the oath taken in the old days with the Mong. Quincy indicated that Mandarin scholars were sent to live and to learn Mong’s ways to control them during the late Chou Dynasty.53

Another observation concerning the branching out of the Mong clandestine system possibly occurred during the Ming Dynasty (1,368-1,644). The Ming’s desired to trade with Southeast Asia so Yunnan needed to be annexed to create a passage to Burma. Military zones and administrative

53Quincy, 34.
districts were created to capture new lands to form the new provinces. Each province was administratively divided into three Prefectures "Fu," four sub-prefectures "Zhou," and seventy-five cantons "Zhang-kwang-si." Local chiefs were employed as "Tu Si" (officer) and "Tu Kwan" (collector) by all the administrative units under the Fu to handle military and civil affairs at the local levels. Quincy asserted that the Lolo tribes were granted Tu Si and often appointed Mong as sub-officials to maintain peace among their people. The Mong have a term "Katong" which was perhaps derived from "Cantons" meaning the chief of Canton. In order to justify to Chinese authority more Katong positions in the Mong tribes, the notion was that "Tu Si" appointed one Katong per clan. By branching out their clan, the Vang would have been entitled to four Katong under Vang, Cheng, Fang, and Vue; the Khang and the Lee to two; whereas other clans to one Katong per clan.

Political Organization

Traditionally, the Mong had a fairly complex hierarchical political system. It reflects the former political system of the Mong kingdom that existed between 400-900 A.D. years. It was "a loose federation of tribal heredity monarchy" that defied absolute power but exhibited certain democratic, participatory, and republican features.

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54 Mottin, 20-21.
55 Quincy, 44.
since the real power was decentralized to the localities. The successor of a Mong monarch was elected by the people among the Mong princes. The author thinks that the Mong’s political system has not been well-established. The Mong monarch was based on their natural leaders’ ability to rule rather than on a continuum of an organized political structure. The entire political and social life was centered around the monarchy. Due to their illiteracy, when the Mong natural leaders were deceased, the monarchy collapsed. Thus, the full scope of the traditional Mong political system has been difficult to determine.

When the Mong migrated from China to Laos in the early nineteenth century, some alterations in political structure were made under the auspices of the territorial organization of the Royal Laotian government. The following discussion may be helpful to explain its political hierarchy and organization.

A typical Mong village is comprised of between six to thirty families that formed a village headed by a Nai Ban (headman) who served as the village representative to handle matters for all members in his village. Several villages formed a canton and its chief, Tasseng (a district chief) was elected. Often, Tasseng was appointed by Chao Muong (Mayor) by the recommendations of several Nai Ban. Another

\[56\text{Ibid.}, 38.\]
higher layer of civil tribal administrative officials beyond the Tasseng was the Nai Kong whose authority corresponded to the Tasseng. The Tasseng was responsible to coordinate the affairs of several villages under his jurisdiction, to collect taxes, and to enforce the law. Tasseng reported directly to the Chao Muong (Mayor). Seven or eight Muong (cities) formed a province headed by Chao Khoueng (provincial chief or equivalent to governor) appointed by the Minister of Interior and Social Welfare.  

However, the strongest basic unit of the Mong political system remains with the patrilineal clan system with his household at the local level. The members of the same clan refer to one another as clan-brother or clan-sister. Due to this clan orientation, the idea of grouping or clustering the members of any clan of the same common ancestors in one particular area into a community is typical. This phenomenon may refer to the organization of the Mong enclave. The underlying rationale for Mong enclave is to provide mutual assistance to one another in time of need such as marriage celebration, funeral, and problem resolution. The clandestine system was considered the integral part of the foundation of the Mong authority. Barney, a missionary to Laos during the 1950's, explained that the Mong political authority involved the concept of  

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respect for the elders. The Mong place a high value on older people. It was customary for young people to pay respect and gratitude towards the elderly. The old had more experience than the young and their views should be honored. Even though seniority was not emphasized, the norms tended to bend towards seniority. The chain of respect usually goes from the child to the older brothers, parents, grandparents to Tug Tsawg-Ntug (the householder) who has the final authority in familial matters. Before a decision is reached a thorough consideration of the best alternatives was assessed. Therefore, a Mong is responsible to answer to his family, to the clan, and particularly to the head of the household who maintains peace and harmony within his family, clan members, and other clan members.

To sum up, the Mong political system was closely tied to its clan system and remains strongest at the local level where most of the decisions were carried out.

**Economic Structure**

As economically self-sufficient farmers, the traditional Mong must have grown rice as their main crop in paddy fields in the basin of the Yellow River and the Yangze-kiang River in China. "Lai Ai Tebchaws" (Paddy Field Country) was known by the Mong for centuries. After the

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Chinese invasion, the Mong were driven off these fertile lands to the remote mountains. As mountain dwellers, they were forced to survive on slash-and-burn agricultural economy "Ua Teb" (farming) at a subsistent level by growing rice, maize, potatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, watermelons, and other crops. Adequate food was grown for their families and some extra for sale. The Mong also raised livestock such as chicken, pigs, cows, water buffaloes, ducks, and fish for protein, and horses for transportation. This agricultural economy was continued when the Mong moved to Laos in the early nineteenth century.

Apparently, the notion of division of labor was obviously important within the family, between members of the villages, and between villages. It was closely related to social and political patterns. Everyone in the family worked hard throughout the year and took part in the production of crops such as cultivating the land, planting the crops, weeding, harvesting, and storing food. The Mong believed in the spirit of collective teamwork and the notion of free labor exchange that had long existed within the traditional cultural realm of Mong life.

A few Mong families grew poppy as a cash crop. Poppy cultivation probably originated in Cyprus around 1,500 B.C., during the late Bronze Age and perhaps opiates were sent to Egypt, Greece, and Rome as a pain killer. Opium was
recognized as a pain reliever in the fourth century B.C.\textsuperscript{59} Geddes indicated that poppy was brought to China about the seventh century B.C. through Arab traders for medical purposes. However, it was not extensively used in "China and countries to the south" until the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{60} An inference may be made that it was the Chinese who probably introduced poppy cultivation to the Mong as a cash crop. Mickey asserted that the chief crop in Kweichow, China was opium.\textsuperscript{61} However, not all the Mong were content with poppy cultivation. Kemp reported that the Mong "Miao" in Kweichow were compelled to plant a certain proportion of poppy when they rented the land from the Chinese and that Mong Christians were persecuted for refusing to do so.\textsuperscript{62}

Therefore, it is assumed that the Mong possibly brought poppy seeds with them when they migrated to Southeast Asia in the early nineteenth century. They continued to grow it as a cash crop to supply to the French.


\textsuperscript{60}Geddes, 201-202.


opium monopoly in the colonial administration in French Indochina. Despite the Mong's dissatisfaction and opposition, Larteguy still stigmatized the Mong as the people of opium.

To sum up, the traditional Mong survived on a self-sufficient agricultural economy.

**Arts and Crafts**

The Mong are known for their arts and crafts such as the Paaj Ntaub (Pan-Dau). It is difficult to make a historical deduction on when the Mong developed their arts and crafts due to their classification. The Mong were divided into various subgroups according to the differentiation of their costumes and tradition such as the Mong Sib, Mong Dlub (Black Mong), Mong Ntsuab (Blue Mong), Mong Tsaij (Striped Mong), Mong Quas Npaab (Flowery Mong), Mong Dlawb (White Mong).

However, the author believes that Mong women probably first observed the patterns, the cross stitch embroidery and their applique from the design of the Cowrie Shell and the shape of animals and plants in China. These patterns were incorporated into costume design such as caps, jackets, baby carrying cloth, aprons, skirts, turbans, bags, men's sashes, flower cloths, quilts, baby carriers, covering

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63Quincy, 108-111.

for altars and beds, pillow cases, etc. Nowadays, the work became one of the most distinctive features of traditional Mong culture that may be illustrated through Lewis and Lewis’ research. Since 1968, Lewis and Lewis have extensively gathered the arts and crafts of six of the culturally distinct minority groups in Thailand: Karen, Mong, Mien, Lahu, Akha, and Lisu along with over 700 photographs in color. Their work featured one of the most complete documentation of the fascinating colorful Mong clothing and ornamentation exhibited through arts and crafts.65

Language

The Mong language is classified by linguists as a subgroup in the Sino-Tibetan language family of Asia. It is considered one of the pre-Sinitic languages. According to Arlotto:

Within China itself, among the few remaining pre-Sinitic languages we have the Miao-Yao family, spoken by scattered remnants of what once undoubtedly was a widespread and flourishing family.66

This means that the Mong had long existed prior to 1,300 B.C. Kun Chang indicated that the term "Miao" occurred as


early as the *Book of Documents* and the Miao people had been in contact with the Chinese at least since the Shang-Chou Dynasty.  

Mong is a monosyllabic, tonal, and harmonious language. The orthography currently used was based on a refinement of the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA) system developed by missionaries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), Linwood G. Barney and William A. Smalley, during the early 1950's. The Mong language consists of fifty-eight phonemes (eighteen single consonants, twenty-one double consonantal blends, fourteen triple consonantal blends, and five quadruple consonantal blends - see Table 1), ten vowel phonemes (six single vowel phonemes, four diphthongs - see Table 2), and eight different vocal tones. It is predictable that almost all of the Mong words end with tone markers represented by b, j, v, --, s, g, m, and d as following:

Mong Tone Markers

- -b high tone
- -j high falling tone
- -v mid rising tone
- -- mid tone
- -s mid low tone
- -g mid low breathy tone
- -m low glottalized tone
- -d low rising tone and a predictable variant of -m

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## TABLE 1

MONG CONSONANT PHONEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LABIAL</th>
<th>APICO-DENTAL</th>
<th>PALATAL</th>
<th>VELAR</th>
<th>GLOTTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bi-labial</td>
<td>Labio-Lateral</td>
<td>Labio-Lateral</td>
<td>Labio-Lateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>Alveolar</td>
<td>Alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VL*</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>pl</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>di**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>plh</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>dlb**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOPs</td>
<td>np</td>
<td>npl</td>
<td>nt</td>
<td>ndl**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nph</td>
<td>np lh</td>
<td>nth</td>
<td>ndlh**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nzh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nzh h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VL*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>xy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRI prefix</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASALS</td>
<td>VC*</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>ml</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIQUIDS</td>
<td>VL*</td>
<td>bl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLIDES</td>
<td>VC*</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by the Author


Remarks:  
** VL stands for Voiceless and VC for Voiced.

* Mong Literacy Volunteer, Inc., *Phoneme Spelling Change,* Minutes of Meeting on 13 September 1980 from tl, tlh, ntl, nth, and n to dl, dlh, ndl, ndlh, and ng (Joliet, IL: Mong Literacy Volunteer, Inc., 1980).

*** Phomeme Addition proposed by Rev. Xeng Pao Thao in consultation with Linwood Barney. Original spelling was vh. The author thinks this phoneme should be w instead.
# TABLE 2

**MONG VOWEL PHONEMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FRONT</th>
<th>BACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNROUNDED</td>
<td>ROUNDED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>i [i]</td>
<td>w [u]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE</td>
<td>e [e]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NASAL)</td>
<td>ee [ẹn]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>a [a]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NASAL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by the Author
Education

Little is known about Mong education in China during the prehistoric period up till the eighteenth century. It is the author's assumption that the first Mong inhabitants in China made their living through small scale farming, domestic animal keeping, hunting, and trapping. As time passed, guilds such as blacksmith, silversmith, craftmaking, clothesmaking, shamanism, customs, and rituals were developed. These skills then were passed on informally from father to son, from mother to daughter, and from generation to generation within the familial context. Gutek referred to the informal aspects of education as:

the total cultural context in which persons are born, nurtured, and brought to maturity. Through the process of enculturation, they acquire the symbolic, linguistic, and value patterns of their culture.68

History reveals that the Mong had received some formal education from the Chinese. Between 1801 and 1804, a concerted effort was made by the Chinese to Sinicize the Mong in Kweichow, China. Chinese civil authorities forced Mong "children to attend Chinese schools."69 However, history failed to give us further details on how education to the Mong was conducted.


69 Quincy, 50.
Conclusion

The Mong as a people may have a history of more than 5,000 years. This chapter attempted to answer two research questions (Who are the Mong? and where did they come from?) by examining their cultural background. Having no writing system of their own, early Mong history was recorded in part by Westerners and by Chinese. Two major theoretical views relative to the origins of the Mong were examined. Savina concluded that the Mong were a subgroup of the Turanians, a Caucasoid race, whose origin was from the Pamir area in Mesopotamia. Eickstedt argued that the Mong originated from either India, Burma, or Tonkin.

This chapter also briefly examined demography and geography, family life, religion, social structure, political organization, economic structure, arts and crafts, language of the Mong, and their educational implications during their settlement in China including their interaction with the Chinese for centuries.

What happened to the Mong when they migrated to Laos in the eighteenth and nineteenth century? What were the major trends that shaped and changed Mong society? These questions are explored in chapter II.
CHAPTER II

IMPACT OF COLONIALISM AND WAR

As part of their struggle for survival, the Mong continued their migration south of China reaching the northern parts of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand around 1810-1820. The author examines the major trends that shaped and changed Mong society. These trends consisted of French colonialism, World War II, Vietnam War, Christianity and Mong literacy development, and the internal tripartite conflict.

French Colonialism (1892-1947)

To examine the impact of French colonialism, it is necessary to first examine the pre-colonial period and then the period of French colonialism. The first trend that shaped Mong society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was French colonialism. Before the French protectorate, the Lao traditional school system was mainly the pagoda schools. Laos was historically descended from the independent kingdom of Lan Xang (the land of million elephants) established in Luang Prabang in the mid-fourteenth century. The kingdom reached its political climax by the seventeenth century by controlling sections of China (Yunnan, of the southern Shan states) and large

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stretches of the present northeastern Thailand.\textsuperscript{2} 

Two centuries later, Lan Xang was troubled by external factors such as periodic wars and invasions by Vietnamese, Thai, and Burmese; and by the internal division of the kingdom into three separate territories: Vientiane, Luang Prabang, and Champassak in 1698 A.D. and 1707 A.D.\textsuperscript{3}

Laos was religiously influenced by Hindu Buddhism for a long time. During the third century B.C., King Asoka of India was converted to Buddhist. He conquered most of the subcontinent by imposing an overlay of Buddhism upon the traditional Brahmanism. Monk Mahinda, King Asoka's emissary, went to Ceylon and converted the Singhalese. In turn, they brought Buddhism eastward to Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos. Thereafter, Buddhism remained the predominant religion in Southeast Asia. It is still unknown as to when Buddhism was introduced to Laos. Archaeologists found remnants of carved statues of Buddha in Laos dating back to the twelfth century. In 1356 A.D., an official Khmer mission presented Pra Bang Buddha, a Singhalese carving, to the king of Laos. Perhaps the Khmers brought Theravada Buddhism (Lesser Vehicle) to Laos because the first Buddhist

\textsuperscript{2}Human Relations Area Files, Laos: its People, its Society, its Culture (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1960), 1.

pagoda compound "Wat Keo" was built in the same year.4

However, Buddhism did not flourish until the seventeenth century when King Setthathirath proclaimed Laos a holy center of Theravada Buddhism. He founded the first official Buddhist schools in Laos.5 Through this Hindu-Buddhist influence, pagoda schools were always centered in the village Buddhist temples. Boys and men were required to enter monkhood for two or three weeks to participate in the preservation and the teaching of Buddhism.6 There is no evidence whether any Mong was educated in this manner.

Prior to the Communist era (1975), the tradition was for Laotian men to become novice monks to pay gratitude to their parents before starting their own families.

Monastic education was the sole system to provide education to boys up to the arrival of the French. Curricula included the study of Pali religious texts, orientated primarily to practical needs and full participation in traditional Lao village society; the study of Lao language; religious and domestic ethics; basic law; and manual training in the arts and crafts and religious fields.7 The


5 Ibid., 129.


7 Human Relations Area Files, 78-79.
Buddhist monks were considered the best teachers at that time.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, several western countries began to establish colonial empires in Asia and Africa. As part of this imperialistic trend, France sought colonies in Southeast Asia. By 1893, France conquered Vietnam and Cambodia, occupied the left bank of the Mekong river, and forced Thailand to recognize the Mekong boundary. Through a series of negotiations, Vice Consul Auguste Pavie⁸ convinced the royal court of King Oun Kham of Luang Prabang to submit to French protectorate.⁹ By conceding to this protectorate, Laos was colonized by the French. The French made no effort to revive the former royal families of Vientiane and Champassak but retained King Oun Kham of Luang Prabang (his royal title).¹⁰ To facilitate their transition, the French imported their entire structure of administration, for implementation in Laos, where it was in place for nearly fifty years from 1892 to 1947. With Laos as part of French Indochina, the French in 1917 proclaimed the Lao schools a common Indochina education system that also included Cambodia and Vietnam. Lao students could pursue further studies in Hanoi, Saigon, or


⁹Human Area Relations Files, 15-18.

The French were in need of bilingual interpreters and functionaries who had some exposure to western culture to carry out their functions. Between 1902 and 1905, they founded two adult Franco-Lao schools that later expanded to include elementary education for children. The pagoda schools were forced to merge with the newly created system. A teachers college was organized to retrain Laotian monks to teach in the Lao secular system in 1909.12

Teachers were initially French with substitutes being imported French-speaking Vietnamese instructors from Vietnam. French was the instructional and official language of Laos until the 1960's. It was reported that about 1,000 students enrolled in 1920 and 7,000 in 1930. An official French order in 1939 required every community in Laos to build "village schools," and a teacher house. The French government supplied the teachers and the materials.13 However, there was no report on the progress of implementing this order.

Perhaps the Great Depression of the 1930's had little effect on a poor country such as Laos as denoted by the marginal decline in school enrollment from 7,000 to

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11Ibid., 107-108.

12Ibid., 107-108.

Between 1939 and 1946, enrollment at the elementary school level increased from 6,700 to 14,700. Another source reported that, in 1946, there were roughly 24,047 students, 704 teachers, and 569 elementary schools.

The French colonization brought the entry of the European model to Laos. In 1925, Auguste Pavie founded the Pavie College, the first high school in Laos, for the elite families. About twenty Lao families were considered in this indigenous group that were trained academically in the French style and language to be civil servants. Pavie College was also supplemented by provincial secondary schools located in Pakse, Luang Prabang, and Savannakhet two decades later. Provo reported that, in 1946, about 200 students enrolled at the secondary level. Noss claimed that the first and only high school in Vientiane was founded in 1921 and did not become a full lycée until 1949. Along this line, Thee made an interesting comment relative to the completion rate that only ten Laotians graduated from high

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14Human Relations Area Files, 78-81.


16Ibid., 8.

schools in France and Hanoi during the French rule.\textsuperscript{18}

The Mong surfaced during the French colonial period. There were two main events that possibly earned them a recognition and a close relationship with the French. In 1885, Vietnamese Emperor Ham Nghi and his advisor, Ton That Thuyet, rebelled against the French. Both men sought refuge in the highlands of Laos. The Mong were used as scouts to successfully capture Ham Nghi and Ton That Thuyet. The second main event was marked by the Treaty of Tien Tshin between France and China in 1884. The treaty forced China to recognize French sovereignty over Vietnam. However, Chinese garrisons continued to occupy various sectors of the frontier, and Chinese became warlords and bandits known as "the Black Flags." Aided by the Mong for a period of over thirty years from 1884-1914, the French were able to push the Black Flags back to China.\textsuperscript{19}

Nevertheless, the relationship between the French and the Mong deteriorated as the Mong began their settlement in Northern Laos. In 1916, the French applied several taxes in Laos. An annual per capita along with a semi-annual taxes was implemented on every Mong. These taxes were collected either in monetary form or in the form of goods.


Further, every Mong male was to devote two-week free labor for road construction in Laos to Vietnam. The free labor lance which soon increased from weeks to months and from months to a year disrupted the Mong's farming season. Many Mong were unable to cultivate the land in time for farming. As a result, their families starved and, at the end of the year, were unable to pay their taxes. Many had to pawn their children as slaves to pay the taxes. This tax burden led to anti-French dissatisfaction among the Mong. The great rebellion, known as the "Rog Phim Bab" (Mad War), was led by Pa Chay against the French from 1917 to 1922.20

Though the French imported their educational system to Laos, the Mong did not benefit from it. Only a few had the opportunity to attend school. Nao Tou Moua, head of the Moua clan, was the first Mong to send his children to school at a French elementary school in Xieng Khouang in 1935. In addition, two more Mong, Touby and Tou Zeu Lyfoung continued their education and received their baccalaureate certificates from French institution in Vietnam. Touby Lyfoung became a prominent Mong political figure in Laos during the neo-colonialist period in the following two decades. He was appointed as deputy to the provincial governor in 1946 (known as Chao Muong Mee) and in 1960's as advisor to King Sisavang Wattana. Tou Zeu Lyfoung continued his education in France and graduated as the first

20 Ibid., 119-129.
Mong in Laos with a bachelor’s degree.21

Dao Yang asserted that the first primary school for Mong was built in Xieng Khouang in 1939. In the 1960’s, Mong students increased to 1,500 attending twenty village schools. By 1969, the numbers of students grew to 10,000 with 450 teachers administered through seven school districts overseen by Moua Lia, the Inspector of Primary Education. By 1971, 340 Mong attended public and private secondary schools in Vientiane, and thirty-seven studied abroad in various universities: twenty-five in France, four in Canada, four in the United States, one in Australia, one in Italy, one in Japan, and one in the Soviet Union.22

James Seying, formerly known as Mang Thao, was a former administrative officer with the Office of the Inspector of Primary Education in Xieng Khouang, Laos. Seying recalled that, in 1958-1959, four Mong graduated from l’Ecole Normal in Vientiane (Lee Blong, Moua Lia, Lee Beu, and Lee May See) and five from Xieng Khouang Teacher’s Training College (Siong Je, Tou Lor Lee, Ka Ying Yang, Lee Phia, and Yang Sao). Pha Khao and Samthong School districts were instituted in 1962 with the expansion of village primary schools. In 1975, primary education expanded to include nine school districts with 164 schools, 20,000

21Ibid., 131-146.

students (eighteen percent were ethnic Lao and Khamu), thirty third-rank teachers (beginners), twenty second-rank teachers, and 200 temporary seasonal teachers. There were no first-rank teachers in Mong schools. School supplies were made possible by USAID.23

**World War II**

World War II itself did not have much impact on the Mong. During World War II, Laos was occupied by the Japanese from 1941-1945. In 1945, the Japanese occupation force in Asia took complete control over the French colonial administration in Laos and forced King Sisavangvong to proclaim independence from France. Touby Lyfoung led the Mong to join the French in guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. Because this war period was quite short, the Japanese had very little influence on the education of the Mong. Many Mong vividly remembered World War II as "Rog Viv Poos" (the Japanese War).

The aftermath of World War II had tremendous effect on the future of the Mong. Perhaps it had changed the Mong society forever. After World War II, new nations were born in Africa and Asia from the old colonial empires.24 Laos gained independence from France in 1949 and

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established a constitutional monarchy.

The end of World War II signaled the beginning of a psychological warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union referred to as "the Cold War." Perhaps, the emergence of the Cold War was the turning point for change in the Mong society. It was one of the global trends that affected Mong the most. The United States and the Soviet Union had two competing and different political systems. Much of the competition was political and economic. The United States operated on self-interest and believed in democracy. The Soviet Union also operated on self-interest and asserted Communism in Eastern Europe and Asia as a buffer to provide for its security. While Western Europe's economy was unstable, many subversive activities were strongly supported by the Communists in France. The nations of the world were then divided into a bipolar world: those associated with the United States joined as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and those with the Soviet Union as the Warsaw Pact.

In 1946-1948, as part of the Truman doctrine, Secretary of State George Marshall devised massive military and economic aid to foreign governments known as the "Marshall Plan" to rebuild western Europe.\(^\text{25}\) To prevent Communist expansion into the world, George Kennan, a long time student of Russia, formulated the containment policy to

\(^{25}\text{Ibid., 3 and 68-70.}\)
keep the Soviet Union contained in Eastern Europe without going to war.\(^{26}\)

The Cold War became intensified between the United states and the Soviet Union. President Truman stated:

> Given a choice between freedom and totalitarianism, it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities.\(^{27}\)

The Marshall plan worked well in Europe but similar strategies did not work in Asia where China became communist. The Cold War and its global effects were conceivably the cause for the external political instability in Vietnam and for the elongated internal tripartite conflict within Laos (discussed later in this chapter).

**Vietnam War**

Vietnam was part of the French colonization in Southeast Asia. After World War II, Vietnam gained full independence from France. However, two political parties existed within Vietnam. The south, led by Ngo Dinh Diem, supported democracy while the north was led by Ho Chi Minh, a nationalist and a proponent of Communism.\(^{28}\) President Eisenhower provided the initial military and economic aid to

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\(^{27}\)Ibid., 67.

the South Vietnamese government which commenced the United states' involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Aid was expanded under President John F. Kennedy and the United states became heavily involved under President Lyndon B. Johnson and President Richard M. Nixon.

In the 1950's, "the Domino Theory" emerged. It created a constant fear of the rapid expansion of Communism into the world. Influenced by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, President Dwight Eisenhower declared that:

You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one and what will happen to the last one is certainly that it will go over very quickly.²⁹

During the Eisenhower Administration, only military officers and advisers were sent to Vietnam to build a conventional fighting force for the South Vietnamese government. This support was doubled under the Kennedy Administration when the United States deployed 16,000 troops in South Vietnam in 1963. The Johnson Administration deepened its involvement by increasing the American troops to 23,000 and contemplated direct strikes against North Vietnam.³⁰

In 1964, the North Vietnamese Communists attacked U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. President Johnson ordered bombing of North Vietnam. This marked the debut for the U.S. engagement in the Vietnam conflict that lasted for

²⁹Chafe, 258.
³⁰Ibid., 278.
ten years from 1964 to 1974. The Vietnam conflict had a direct consequence on the political instability of Laos. When the United States became involved in the conflict, there was much resistance against the Communists from South Vietnam. The U.S. troops were stationed along the seventeenth parallel latitude. It was difficult for the communists to transport their troops, food, and ammunition to support their ground fighting squads in South Vietnam. They cut a new route through Laos -- Route 13 known as the "Ho-Chi-Minh Trail." Because the Communists breached the Geneva Accords of 1962 (that guaranteed Laos' neutrality) by sending their troops, ammunition, and food to South Vietnam, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) approached the Mong General Vang Pao to form a special force known as "The U.S. Secret Army in Laos" to perform two missions. General Vang Pao specified the two-fold missions. First was to strategically penetrate the Communist force by reducing their troops, ammunition, and food along the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail. Second was to provide general and special rescue missions to downed American pilots. The Mong sometimes sacrificed as many as ten or more lives just to save one downed American pilot. Long Tieng, the Second Military Division of the Royal Lao Army, was the headquarter of this

31 Testimony of General Vang Pao at the Mong New Year Celebration, DesMoines, Iowa, 29 November 1980; and Conversation with General Vang Pao during the Trip to Hamilton, Indiana to attend Edgar Pop Buell's Funeral, 5-6 January, 1981.
operation:

It [Long Tieng] was the most forward advanced command post in Laos of the United States Air Force, which directed secret bombing missions first into North Vietnam and then all over Laos itself from buildings beside a milelong, all-weather macadam runway, the only field in northeast Laos capable of handling jet aircraft in trouble.\textsuperscript{32}

The U.S. Secret Army force consisted of 25,000 men of the royal army of Laos. They were organized, trained, paid, and entirely supported by the United States through the command of Brigadier General John A. Heintges and his 400 "technicians."\textsuperscript{33} Many CIA agents and military advisors known as "the Green Berets" whose names perhaps remained anonymous were stationed in Long Tieng, Laos. Out of these, two distinct Americans whom the Mong will remember for a long time were Colonel Jerry Daniels from Montana known as "Jerry" and particularly Edgar Pop Buell from Indiana known as "Thanh Pad" or "Mister Pop." They were distinguished by their profound and personal dedication to the Mong even long after the fall of the Laotian government to the Communists. Buell made a bipartisan commitment to General Vang Pao that:

I [Buell] and you [Vang Pao] will just have our own counter-insurgency program right here [Pha Khao]. You take care of the military, and I’ll take care of the civilians. And if I’m going to take care of ‘em, I’d better be the one who goes out and finds ‘em.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32}Don A. Schanche, \textit{Mister Pop} (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1970), 263.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 2:21-22.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 103.
In 1960's, Buell, a farmer near Metz, Indiana, joined a private peace corps conducted under contract to the Government’s Point Four AID program in Laos. Buell organized an emergency relief program to airlift and to drop the necessary life-saving supplies to displaced Mong through Air America. Schanche described that Air America:

> was the private airline of the Central Intelligence Agency, used throughout Southeast Asia to support intelligence operatives in the fields.

The cost of the relief program for all Laos ran about $4.5 million a year. The additional costs per year were $8.8 million for air transportation, $1.5 million for public health, and $1.25 million for education.

Education of the Mong children was disrupted because of the constant fighting and movement of the Mong. Schanche asserted that the development of educational programs for thousands of displaced Mong during the Vietnam War was made possible through Buell’s efforts. The first school was built in Ban Na in 1961 with twenty-seven pupils. By the end of 1961, twenty-eight schools were constructed. By 1969, the school system expanded to nine Groupes Scolaires (junior high schools), two high schools, and a teacher training school. About 300 Mong students enrolled in French high schools in Vientiane. Another seventy

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36 Ibid., 81.
37 Ibid., 246.
enrolled in the local Lao-American school and two dozens in universities across the world.\textsuperscript{38}

From 1960 to 1965, the numbers of casualties were enormous. It was estimated that 40,000 people or ten percent of the population of northeast Laos had either been killed or died due to war injuries.\textsuperscript{39} The Vietnam war was extremely detrimental to the Mong. Many innocent children as young as fourteen were drafted to the military to bear arms.

\textbf{Christianity and Mong Literacy Development}

Many Mong became Christians through the mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) headquartered in New York (now in Colorado). Rev. Xuxu Thao, the first Mong president of the Lao Evangelical Church during 1964-1967, talked about the history of the Mong Church in Laos. Rev. O'Lengta (unknown spelling) of the Swiss Ministries brought the Gospel of Christ to southern Laos in Savannakhet in 1902, mastered the Lao language, and completed the first translation of the Lao version of the Bible. Since the Lao were long influenced by Indian Buddhism, it was difficult to convert them to Christianity. The Kounthapanya's was the only Laotian group to convert to Christianity. Twenty-five years later, in 1928, a Canadian missionary couple, the Roffe's, went to Luang Prabang, the Royal capital city of

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., 93.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 245.
Laos, where the king of Laos resided. The couple mastered the Lao language and refined the translation of the earlier Lao biblical version in the 1950’s.

The massive Mong and Khamu conversion took place in 1950 when the Andrianoffes went to Xieng Khouang province of Laos. After converting the first Khamu, Nai Kheng, the Andrianoffes rented a house for him and for their Laotian translator, Nai U-Te. The house once belonged to a French couple, the Beson, who lived and died there. The Beson’s home (known as the haunted house) was located at Phou Kham in Xieng Khouang, Laos, where Bua Ya Thao (the shaman of Touby Lyfoung), You Xang Thao, and Chong Her Thao’s families lived. The fact that the Beson ghosts did not seem to bother Nai Kheng and Nai U-Te shocked shaman Bua Ya Thao. Bua Ya Thao decided that if ghosts did not bother Christians, he would become a Christian and therefore be protected from ghosts. Bua Ya Thao was the first Mong convert to Christianity in Laos followed by You Xang Thao and Chong Her Thao’s. This incident of the Beson’s haunted house perhaps set the stage for the massive conversion of the Mong in the following three years. In the same year, the Andrianoffes and Nai Kheng travelled to Phou Kabo, Kiao Kouang villages followed by twenty other Mong and to fifteen Khamu villages to convert 5,000 Mong and 2,000 Khamu. The numbers totalled approximately 7,000 from 1950 through 1953.

Thao indicated the many factors that may have set
the stage and contributed to the massive conversion of the Mong and Khamu tribes to Christianity as follows:

1. Between 1940-1945, some Mong seers such as Mrs. Xay Sue Thao and Mrs. Youa Yao Thao told the Mong to stop worshipping the devils;

2. Between 1940-1945, some Mong seers commanded the Mong to stop opium and alcohol use and predicted religious change;

3. Between 1940-1945, a Mong legend emerged. The legend characterized a Mong by the name of "Chu Xang" (Tswv Xyaas). Through his magical knowledge, he placed a bamboo basket on his head and a pair of sickles in his mouth, and transformed himself into a tiger to hunt wild animals for food. One day, he erroneously killed a Khamu female. Therefore, the Mong were frightened to take the basket off his head and the pair of sickles out of his mouth. He became a real tiger and travelled to the frontier of China to challenge the Black Tiger for the White Dirt territory. The White Dirt territory was avoided by Mong because it was a deep jungle area, inhabited only by animals. Due to his smaller physical size, Chu Xang was defeated by the Black Tiger. He returned to Laos to recruit the souls of many talented, intellectual, and well-known Mong in Xieng Khouang to assist him during his struggle against the Black Tiger. If a Mong were Christian, he was saved from being spiritually recruited by Chu Xang and being forced to go to
the White Dirt territory;

4. The Mong were exposed to the power of black magic of the Khamu and the Laotians. This scenario worried many Mong. Whenever a Mong went down to the valleys, he normally died after returning home. Perhaps the instantaneous change in climate may have affected their physical being, but the Mong believed their deaths were the result of black magic;

5. Several cholera epidemics hit the Mong hard. Normally, Mong males buried the dead. Thao recounted that in one year the numbers of dead were so many that Mong women had to perform burial;

6. The Khamu were also hit hard by another natural calamity which was fire. Thao estimated that as many as twenty Khamu villages caught fire simultaneously (within three months) one village after the other;

7. Finally, the Mong were longing for a Mong king, a Messiah, who possessed magical power to save them from these natural phenomena. Christianity appeared to be the answer.  

Barney, a missionary to Xieng Khouang, Laos in 1951, also described certain economic, political, and educational changes in Mong culture in the same manner. He witnessed Mong participation in local trade, engagement in

wage labor, "lease terraced fields for irrigated rice farming," anxiety for inquiry and adoption of new ideas, augmentation in the political realm of Laotian national government, and participation for greater opportunities in education. Some Mong even went to Lycee in Vientiane. Barney knew at least one who attended college in Saigon.41

One of the immediate issues faced by the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) was the illiteracy of the Mong and the Khamu tribes. They could neither read nor write Lao. Both tribes had no writing systems of their own. Rev. Xeng Pao Thao, the second Mong president of the Lao Evangelical Church in 1968-1970, discussed the origin of the development of Mong literacy. In 1951, about ninety percent of the Christians were Mong. Mong Leng accounted for about ninety percent of the Mong Christians. Because of their massive conversion to Christianity, CMA conducted several conferences in 1951, 1952 and 1953. The conference resolution assigned two missionaries the tasks of developing writing systems for the Mong and the Khamu tribes. In this manner, Christian literacy and Bible translation could be developed in Mong and Khamu. In turn, they could comprehend the Christian doctrines which were the roots of the Christian faith. Therefore, Barney went to Xieng Khouang to

study Mong Leng and Smalley to Luang Prabang to study Khamu. Barney acknowledged that, in June 1951, he "set the task of reducing the Mong language to writing." Smalley also confirmed this mission. Barney mastered the Mong language and Romanized it into the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA) System. Many Mong called him "Thanh Mong" or "Mister Mong." Smalley, trained as a linguist, assisted Barney to refine the RPA system for the Mong. In 1953, the Communists took over Xieng Khouang province. All missionaries had to be evacuated for a short period of time so the Mong research project was interrupted. The RPA system was completed and was submitted to the Lao government in 1954 for approval but was repudiated.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance established a Bible School and a church in Xieng Khouang. Their activities were mainly the administration of the Bible School. By early 1953, there were about 3,000 Christians living in fifty-six villages. At the end of the Communist

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43 Barney, 4:68.


hostilities, the numbers of Christians were increased to 5,000 or 6,000 in ninety-six villages. The Mong accounted for about seventy percent.46

In 1962, Doris Whitelock (as known as Paaj Mim) of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) in Thailand visited the Mong Christians in Laos and informed them of the Thai orthography for Mong. The Lao Evangelical Church requested Whitelock to assist the Mong committee (consisting of Rev. Yong Xeng Yang, Rev. Nhia Yee Kong, Rev. Cheng Xiong and Rev. Nhia Neng Her) to prepare a Lao orthography for Mong in 1966 and completed the system in 1968. The first Mong Bible translation using the Lao orthography was completed in August 1975 when the majority of Mong became refugees in Nam Phong refugee camp, Udorn, Thailand. The Mong Christians increased to about 15,000. In March 1977, Rev. Xeng Pao Thao, still acting as President of the Lao Evangelical Church, requested Doris Whitelock and Rev. Wayne Persons (also known as K.XF. Paaj Tsaab Vaaj) to switch the Lao orthography in Mong to the RPA system since the Mong refugees no longer lived in Laos.47

Rev. Xuxu Thao also recalled that several major accomplishments accounted for the development of Christianity in Laos particularly the Mong from 1950 through 1975. A Lao Bible Training School was established in

46Barney, 68-69.

47Xeng Pao Thao, Interview.
Vientiane to train over 100 pastors. Nowadays, most of the Mong pastors, Christian laymen, and Mong leaders in the United States are the products of this training. A church in Saphangmo, Vientiane was built to accommodate the commuting Mong Christians and the U.S. officials who were detailed in Vientiane. The U.S. officials made up a fairly large American congregation. Dormitories, built for Mong students and Mong widows, were partially funded by World Vision of Laos. A private Christian school, "Saphangmo Christian School," was also built by the funds of World Council of Churches to admit over 300 students in the area. The church completed the translation of a Mong Bible version in Lao orthography and purchased a cemetery in Vientiane. Furthermore, the church worked closely with the Church of Christ in Thailand and other countries to develop future leadership. Seven Mong and two Laotians were chosen to continue their education abroad. They were Vang Sue, Moua Chou, Moua Lee, Bee Thao, Vang Lue, Koua Thao, Douangnary Kounthapanya, Malay Kounthapanya, and the author.\(^{48}\)

**Internal Tripartite Conflict**

When Laos gained its independence from France, its politicians were caught in between the Allies and Communism in the midst of the military, political, and psychological battleground of the continuing "Cold War" developed by the United States and the Soviet Union. In order to survive in

\(^{48}\)Xuxu Thao, interview.
the world politics and to protect it from being colonized by the Western countries, Laos neither sided with the Allies nor the Communists. The Cold War forced Laos to devise strategic and political mechanisms for the survival of the country. Neutrality was the only alternative. Laos established a neutral political system consisting of three political parties: the Neutralist party, the Right Wing party, and the Neo Lao Hatsat or the Pathet Lao (the proponent of Socialism and Communism). Each party wanted to establish political stability in Laos, but only in the party's own way. Therefore, the Laotians were divided into three major groups.

However, Lao's political fate depended upon two royal half-brotherly princes: Chao Souvannaphouma (the neutral political party) and Chao Souphanouvong (the Neo Lao Hatsat - the proponent of the Communist left wing party). Despite the establishment of neutrality for the country, Laos was caught in between the policy of Communist expansion of the Soviet Union and the containment policy of the United States. The conflict between the three factions resulted in a long tripartite civil war that lasted for the following four decades until 1975. This endless guerilla warfare continued to trouble Laos as the three factions fought against one another, one coup d'état after another, which continued to impact all aspects of life in Laos. The following illustrates the internal tripartite war within
Laos.

In 1957, the three political parties formed a coalition government of national union. It lasted only for a few months. The Right Wing political party, supported by CIA, seized power. The Pathet Lao leaders were incarcerated by General Phoumi Nosavan. In August 1960, the Right Wing government in Vientiane was overthrown by a neutralist coup d'état led by General Kong Le. The coup installed Prince Souvannaphouma to head the government as Prime Minister until 1975. In December 1960, four months later, General Phoumi attacked Vientiane and set the stage of a full scale civil war. By 1961, two-thirds of Laos was under the control of the Pathet Lao and the neutralist forces.

Even though the 1954 Geneva Agreements ended French rule in Laos, the United States replaced the French. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles proclaimed the protection of Laos under the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and opened the United States Operation Mission (USOM) office in Laos in 1955. In 1960, President Eisenhower approved the secret use of the United States and Thai Air forces in the civil war. President John F. Kennedy

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49 Thee, 12.


51 Thee, 12-13.

52 Ibid., 12.
viewed Laos as a testing ground for peace in our world. Wolfkill, an American news photographer with NBC, wanted to witness the peace agreement in Laos. He initially described the Laotians as:

the most gentle, most peace-loving people on earth. Buddhists, they hesitated to kill even animals, much less each other.

He was captured by the Pathet Lao forces in 1961, was held in brutal captivity for fifteen months, and perceived that the war forced people to change their attitudes over time.

On July 23, 1962, twelve countries including the United States, the Soviet Union, and North Vietnam signed the Geneva Accords in Switzerland to guarantee Laos as a neutral and independent country to be ruled under the tripartite government formed by the Right Wing, the Neutralists and the Pathet Lao. However, the Communist North Vietnamese breached the Geneva Accords by building up troops in Pathet Lao territory along the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail to South Vietnam. Prime Minister Souvannaphouma requested American economic and military aid. The result was large scale air operations over Northern Laos especially in Xieng Khouang where the Mong lived. It was reported that over 25,000 missions were

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53Ibid., 12-14.


flown against the Plaines des Jarres from May 1964 through September 1969. Over 75,000 tons of bombs were dropped and over 50,000 airmen at distant bases were involved. Even though thousands of people were killed and wounded and the plaines des Jarres may have disappeared forever, the massive bombardment was kept secret from the world. If it had been publicized, the United States would have been known to have breached the Geneva Accords of 1962. The American airmen who fought this secret war were known as "the Ravens." Their missions were "to fly low and slow, spot the enemy, and direct the winged artillery of American air strikes from adjacent South Vietnam, Thailand and U.S. aircraft carriers." Robbins asserted that the stories of the ravens during the Vietnam conflict were locked away in classified archives and would not be revealed until after the year 2000. Dengler, an example of the American servicemen, was shot down half way across Laos, was captured by the Pathet Lao in February 1966, was sent to a prison camp, and then successfully escaped from Laos. The battle in Laos was so severe that, in February 1971, three specific battalions in South Vietnam under the command of Lieutenant General Lam

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were ordered to clear the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail.\textsuperscript{59} The war in Laos was described by many witnesses as the "Ugly Duckling or the Seesaw War."\textsuperscript{60}

Laos may have been used as a testing ground for chemical warfare first by the United States and later by the Soviet Union during their competition for the leading role in the arms race during the Cold War. Bruchett reported that the tonnage of bombs dropped on Lao villages exceeded that dropped in any year on North Vietnam, more than on Nazi-occupied Europe in World War II.\textsuperscript{61} After 1975, the Soviet Union used aerial attacks with gas rockets of different types: yellow, green, or red on the territory that caused headaches, vomiting, diarrhea, and death after being exposed to those gases.\textsuperscript{62} Many Mong referred to this phenomenon as the "Yellow Rain."

Also, an external support from Communist China and North Vietnam to the Pathet Lao made it impossible for the Laotians to resolve their own internal tripartite conflict. Because the United States viewed Laos as the gateway to Asia


\textsuperscript{62}Jean Larteguy, \textit{La Fabuleuse Aventure du Peuple de l'Opium} (Eure, France: Presses de la Cite, 1979), 253.
under SEATO the Chinese regarded the U.S. commitment to Laos as a threat to its national security. The Chinese shifted a moderate policy aiming at a neutralized Laos to a militant one by supporting the Pathet Lao's military activities. Lee reported that, in 1966, the Chinese concentrated more than 300,000 troops and several air force units in the province of Yunnan and Kwangshi just north of Vietnam and Laos. Therefore, the idea of establishing a political ideology of neutrality in the world was never realized for Laos.

During the neo-colonialism period (1948-1961), Laos adopted the structure of government from France. Under the constitution, the King was the Head of State with His Judicial Council. The National Assembly formed the legislative authority. His royal Chief Executive was the Prime Minister who served as the president of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers consisted of nine ministers and four Secretaries of State. The country was divided into sixteen provinces under the territorial organization. The principal administrative division was the Khoueng (province) headed by the provincial governor who exercised his authority under the direction of the Minister of Interior. Then, the Khoueng was divided into Muong (cities), Kong (head of ethnic minority groups), Tasseng (districts), and Ban (villages).

63Chae-Jin Lee, Communist China's Policy Toward Laos: A Case Study, 1954-67 (Lawrence, Kansas: Center for East Asian Studies, the University of Kansas, 1970), 1-12.
Education was funded through the national budget and represented nearly twelve percent. In 1973-1974, about 2,000 million kips (about $3,300) were allocated for education. Education in Laos was centralized under the Minister of National Education, Fine Arts, Youth and Sports. The Director General of Education was the key person who oversaw the overall programs. He coordinated the activities of all National Directorates and internal services of the Ministry. Curricula were set by the Directorate of National Education. Elementary schooling was traditionally financed by the local communities. The subjects taught in elementary schools corresponded closely with the earlier period. Subjects included ethics and civics, history, geography, arithmetic, drawing or manual work, singing, and physical culture.

Secondary education in Laos was very limited but selective. Only five high schools were established since 1949 that provided three-year lower secondary in Laos. When students completed their third year, they continued their fourth year at Lycee Pavie in Vientiane, Laos. Curricula in the secondary level included ethics and civics, French, Lao, English, history, geography, French literature, mathematics, physical culture, drawing, music, and manual work.

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Instruction was in the French language and was similar to the French modern and classical lycee. It was reported that not more than 200 students enrolled in upper secondary levels. The numbers of students were increased to 652 in 1955 and 2,396 in 1959, a decade later.\footnote{Human Relations Area Files, 81-84.}

The most important event relating to the development of national education in Laos was the Royal Ordinance of Educational Reform of 1962. It recast the whole educational system by incorporating the Buddhist temple schools and emphasizing vocational training in the kingdom. The Act provided a charter for regulating the system of education in Laos to meet the country’s needs. This change influenced the structure, content and methods, administrative cadres and teaching personnel.\footnote{Royal Ordinance of 1962, No. 648.}

The ordinance divided elementary education into two cycles: elementary and the second primary. The elementary cycle was offered at the village level emphasizing Lao as the language of instruction; whereas the second primary cycle was given at a district central school called "Groupe Scolaire." French language instruction began from this level. A groupe scolaire usually had all six grades. It combined the two cycles of primary education. Outsama reported that a total of 3,171 elementary schools were opened to accommodate 216,687 students between 1970-
This expansion of education could not have been accomplished without the accelerated teachers training program of 1'Ecole Normal de Vientiane (then 1'Ecole superieure de Pedagogie). To meet the needs of educational expansion, with aid from USAID, students were asked to sign the promissory notes that they would teach for the government. Stipends and scholarships were given to stimulate Lao students to become teachers. As a result, enrollment increased from 100 in 1955 to 1,525 in 1966, and to 1,769 in 1967-1968. 

After completing elementary schools, students could go on to the general stream, teacher's training, technical and vocational education in secondary schools. The General stream included four years of first cycle and three years of second cycle. Students passing this stream would moved on to universities and other institutions of higher education.

The accelerated teacher's training consisted of two years after elementary. However, the regular stream of teacher training in Laos included four years in the first cycle and three years in the second cycle.

Technical and vocational education consisted of two cycles: four years for the first cycle and three for the

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67 Outsama, 120-121.

second cycle. Three areas of training were available: agriculture and animal husbandry, industry and construction and handicrafts, commerce and administration.

Students could go on to four years of lower secondary school at the School of Laotian Arts, two years at the School of Rural Handicrafts, three years in the first cycle and two years at the Dance and Music School (Natasinh), three years in the second cycle in the Royal School of Medicine, three years in the second cycle at the Royal Institute of Law and Administration or two years in Home economics.

For higher education, three disciplines were offered within the framework of Sisavangvong University promulgated by the Royal Decree 164 of 30 June 1958: medical training provided by the Royal School of Medicine, teacher training by l'École Supérieure de Pedagogie and law by the Royal Institute of Law and Administration.69

Conclusion

Chapter II has examined the trends that shaped Mong society and has identified their significant impact on the Mong during their settlement in Laos. Those trends included French colonialism, World War II, Vietnam War, Christianity and Mong literacy development, and the internal tripartite conflict and their implication on education.

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The Lao traditional school system was mainly the pagoda schools influenced by Hindu-Buddhist principles up till the arrival of the French. During the colonization, the French imported their educational system which was highly centralized and selective for implementation in Laos. Curricula and instruction were in the French language until 1975 except for the elementary level dictated by the Royal Decree of 1962.

Chapter III examines the rationales why the Mong fled from Laos to seek asylum in Thailand and then to the United States for resettlement. Some of their cultural problems may be identified relative to their resettlement in the United States.
CHAPTER III

MONG RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Prior to 1975, few Mong were in the United States. The fall of the Laotian government to the Communists in May 1975 resulted in a massive Mong exodus to Thailand for first asylum, then to the United States and other countries in the western hemisphere for relocation. The following describes the preconditions that forced the massive flight of the Mong.

On September 14, 1973, a peace accord was signed in Vientiane to end the long political tripartite conflict in Laos. The accord called for a cease fire and for the establishment of a coalition government consisting of the tripartite Cabinet from the Rightists, the Neutralists, and the Pathet Lao. Interestingly, the accord emphasized the withdrawal of foreign troops, particularly American and Thai troops, but did not specify the withdrawal of Communist North Vietnamese troops.¹

Despite the peace agreement, the Pathet Lao and the Communist Vietnamese forces continued to attack the positions held by the Mong. On May 6, 1975, General Vang

pao asked Chao Souvannaphouma, the head of the coalition government, how to stop the Communist attacks. General Vang pao was instructed not to fight but only to withdraw. The Mong General then resigned from his post as Commander of the Second Military Division of the Royal Lao Army. It appeared that the Mong had been used as a scapegoat for prolonging the tripartite Lao conflict and for delaying the emergence of Laos into a socialist country. Perhaps, it would have been easier for the reconciliation and healing process taken place within the three Lao factions without the presence of the Mong. Souvannaphouma stated later to an official of the French Embassy that:

The Meo have served me well. Vang Pao has fought well for me. The Meo were good soldiers. What a pity that the price of peace is at their disappearance.¹

Prince Mangkra Souvannaphouma, son of Chao Souvannaphouma and a former colonel in the Lao Air Force, also confirmed this statement:

[General Vang Pao] He sent message after message to denounce the advance of the Communists. He had the feeling of being abandoned. After the services rendered by his troops and by his Meo people, that was disastrous. As always, the leftist ministers denied this information and accused General Vang Pao of provocation... My father [Souvannaphouma] seemed to accept and believe this version. Nothing will be done to protect the Meo, peace is at this price...³

At that time, the communication infrastructure was

¹Jean Larteguy, La Fabuleuse Aventure du Peuple de l'Opium, (Paris: Presses de la Cite, 1979), 14:236-238.
³Souvannaphouma, 101.
broken down. Rumors that seemed to be true abounded instead. General Vang Pao had no choice but to airlift his families to Udorn, Thailand on May 7, 1975. Two days later, an article was published in the *Khao Xane Pathet Lao*, the official newspaper of the *Neo Lao Hat Sat* (comparable to the newspaper *Pravda* of the Communist party) headed by Souphanouvong. The article stated clearly that it was necessary to destroy the minority "Meo" down to the roots.  

On May 29, 1975, about 40,000 Mong organized a peaceful march to Vientiane, the capital city, to demand the coalition government guarantee the security of the people in Xieng Khouang. Two witnesses asserted that upon arrival to Hin Heup area, the multitude was ambushed by the *Pathet Lao* and the Neutralist soldiers. Between 100-140 Mong were either dead or wounded. Official statistics were not available on the numbers of casualties because the throng scattered after the shooting. Those who remained in the area continued to fight the Communists and were named "Chao-Fa" (soldiers of the sky). They faced excessive military retaliation from the Communist Pathet Lao and Russian aerial attacks with gas rockets of different types. The gassing caused violent headaches, vomiting, diarrhea and death. The Mong referred to the gas as "the Yellow Rain." A Mong

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*Larteguy, 14:243.*

*Ibid., 14:243-250.*

*Ibid., 253.*
leader told Hamilton-Merritt that 20,000 Mong may have been exposed to poisonous gassing during the war. The United States Department of State documented over 13,000 people dead. The Mong were persecuted for political reasons. They could either stay behind and be executed as dissidents and political prisoners or flee to Thailand and face an ambivalent future.

Approximately 150 Mong families were airlifted to Udorn, Thailand on May 7, 1975. The rest were forced to flee to Thailand on foot. Known as "the Land Refugees," the Mong escaped through jungles, forests, mountains, rivers -- walking for days, months and in some cases a year before they crossed the Mekong River to reach Thailand. Garrett reflected that there was no place for the Mong to run. In Thailand, after they were disarmed and their valuable belongings taken, they were put into various refugee camps.

Refuge in Thailand

There were two passages through which Mong refugees escaped to Thailand. The first one was through Vientiane and its vicinities across the Mekong River to Thailand. Those who made their entry through this passage were temporarily put in Nong Khai Refugee Camp. The earlier

---

7Jane Hamilton-Merritt, "Tragic Legacy from Laos", The Reader’s Digest, August 1981, 96-100.

refugees were placed in Nam Phong Camp and later to Ban Vinai Refugee Camp, which was originally built by the first Mong refugees in 1975. The second passage was by way of the jungle of Sayaboury province into Thailand. Those who made it to Thailand were put into the Chiang Kham and Nam Yao Refugee Camps in the north. Many other refugee camps in Thailand were also built at the same time for other refugee ethnic groups such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refugee Camp</th>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kapcherng, Khao I Dang</td>
<td>Cambodian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napho and Phanat RPC</td>
<td>Laotian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nam Yao, Ban Vinai</td>
<td>Mong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiang Kham, Phanat RPC</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban Thad, Phanat Processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers of refugees in these camps fluctuated from year to year depending upon how many had been resettled in the West. Thailand possibly received the majority of the refugees from Southeast Asia because it is bounded by Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The camp population in Thailand averaged over 100,000 a year. (See Table 3).

Refugee Registration Process

Each refugee was interviewed jointly by Thai officials and representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR). The purpose was to establish whether s/he met the international requirements for refugee status. If s/he met United Nations' standards, a camp number was issued to the refugee and his family. For instance, BV# 1009 stood for Ban Vinai case number 1009. If
### Table 3

**Indo-Chinese Refugee Activity**  
Cumulative Since April 1975  
As of December 15, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM/RPCs</th>
<th>POPULATION AS OF 9/30/91</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL SINCE 04/1975 TO U.S.</th>
<th>3RD VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION</th>
<th>RELOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HONG KONG</strong></td>
<td>64,138</td>
<td>23,129</td>
<td>215,902</td>
<td>51,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MACAU</strong></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,678</td>
<td>2,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDONESIA</strong></td>
<td>19,326</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>126,850</td>
<td>42,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALAYSIA</strong></td>
<td>12,766</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>258,003</td>
<td>89,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHILIPPINES</strong></td>
<td>8,815</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>54,063</td>
<td>10,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SINGAPORE</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35,254</td>
<td>5,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAPAN</strong></td>
<td>884</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>4,410</td>
<td>3,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KOREA</strong></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>258,003</td>
<td>40,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAIWAIN</strong></td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40,856</td>
<td>28,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THAILAND-KHMER</strong></td>
<td>14,852</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>248,291</td>
<td>50,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THAILAND-HIGHLANDER</strong></td>
<td>49,464</td>
<td>8,308</td>
<td>178,139</td>
<td>53,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THAILAND-LAO</strong></td>
<td>7,316</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>195,199</td>
<td>72,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THAILAND-VIETNAM</strong></td>
<td>14,510</td>
<td>2,749</td>
<td>156,684</td>
<td>37,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>86,142</td>
<td>13,516</td>
<td>778,313</td>
<td>213,666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL 1ST ASYLUM**  
192,672  
40,075  
1,521,460  
422,614  
495,456  
22,882  
42,172

**Rep. Processing Centers (RPCs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REP. PROCESSING CENTERS (RPCs)</th>
<th>3RD VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION</th>
<th>RELOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BANGLADESH</strong></td>
<td>6,551</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAMBODIA</strong></td>
<td>6,551</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAOS</strong></td>
<td>6,551</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIETNAM</strong></td>
<td>6,551</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>6,551</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL RPCS**

| TOTAL RPCS | 355,584 | 345,695 | 11,227 | 0 | 538 |

| VIET. TO US IN 1975    | 124,547 | 123,000 | 0 | 1,547 | 0 |
| OTHER TO U.S. IN 1975  | 12,000  | 12,000  | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| VIET. TO CHINA IN 1977/79 | 263,000 | 263,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**GRAND TOTAL**

| 205,845 | 40,075 | 1,921,007 | 903,309 | 769,683 | 24,429 | 42,710 |

**Source:** U.S. Department of State, Bureau for Refugee Programs  
U.S. Committee for Refugees, Refugee Reports, Vol. XII, No. 12  
a refugee was not registered by the United Nations, s/he could be repatriated. Officials of various countries such as Canada, Australia, France occasionally toured the camps to interview and select refugees for resettlement in their countries as well.

The United States based their criteria on family reunification and past employment with the United States government. In the past, refugees were normally screened by representatives of the American Council for Voluntary Agencies (ACVA). This representative was known as "Joint Voluntary Agency" (JVA). Biographical data containing basic information about the case was compiled. Then, it was referred for interview by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service officials for admission to the United States.

Once a refugee was accepted by the United States government, his biographic data was sent to the national Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs) mostly headquartered in New York and Washington, D.C. In turn, the "biodatas" were sent by the national VOLAGs to their local affiliates, so that local staff could locate the refugee's close relatives or to find a local American sponsor.

The VOLAGs receive about $500 per refugee from the United States Department of State. About thirteen prominent national VOLAGs have dominated the initial resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees since 1975. The following
illustrates the numbers of refugees resettled by each national VOLAGs during the twenty-seven month period from October 1, 1978 to January 1, 1981:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary Agency</th>
<th>Number Resettled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS)</td>
<td>35,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees (AFCR)</td>
<td>6,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement (BC)</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church World Service (CWS)</td>
<td>33,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)</td>
<td>9,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Rescue Committee (IRC)</td>
<td>26,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Idaho Program (IDHO)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Refugee Service Center (IRSC)</td>
<td>2,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services Refugee Service (LIRS)</td>
<td>24,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolstoy Foundation (TF)</td>
<td>4,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Catholic Conference (USCC)</td>
<td>113,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Relief Refugee Services (WRRS)</td>
<td>11,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)</td>
<td>2,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>271,026</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the national VOLAGs did the arrival paperwork, they passed on the responsibility of the actual resettlement to their local affiliates. It was at the local level where the initial and long-term services of the refugee resettlement process were rendered to each refugee.

Refugee Act of 1980

About 400,000 Southeast Asian refugees may have already been resettled in the United States between 1975-1980 before Congress enacted the Refugee Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-212) into law on March 17, 1980. The Act set the overall

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tone for the resettlement program in the United States and overseas. The goal of the refugee resettlement was "the achievement of self-sufficiency as quickly as possible." "Refugee" was defined broadly as "people subject to persecution in their homeland." The objectives of the Refugee Act of 1980 are:

- to provide a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission to this country of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and to provide comprehensive and uniform provisions for the effective resettlement and absorption of those refugees who are admitted.  

The policy of the United States toward refugees is to "respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands." In contrast, even though Thailand has been one of the most generous country towards Southeast Asian refugees, it has maintained a strict policy towards refugees since 1975. Burutphat, a Thai political science professor, indicated in detail that Thailand sought to use every means to push refugees out of Thailand's territories. It employed human deterrence mechanism to control the refugees currently in Thailand to prevent any problems that they may have been caused. The human deterrence mechanisms included the push back policy, the confinement of refugees in refugee camps, the disarmament of

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11Ibid., 313.
their weapons, and communication with Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to repatriate their refugees back to their countries. This policy and a standard guidelines were approved by the Council of Ministry on June 3, 2518 B.E. (1975). Burutphat asserted that this policy was derived from the trends of various countries. He stated that no country really would want any refugees in their own territory. 12

Under the Refugee Act of 1980, a U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs was established in the Department of State responsible for the development of refugee admission, resettlement policy, and coordination of international and domestic refugee resettlement. 13

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) was also established in the Act as the administrative body for refugee resettlement in the United States Department of Health and Human Services. ORR was authorized to reimburse cash and medical assistance to state and local governments to providing services for refugees described by the Act during their resettlement in the United States. Congress appropriated funding through ORR to subcontract with public and private agencies to provide various services to

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13 Immigration and Nationality Act, 315.
refugees. The services included employment, English language training, health and mental health, educational, special education, care and placement of unaccompanied refugee children.\textsuperscript{14}

Prior statistics for the refugee budgets between 1975-1986 were not available. However, two statistical tabulations from 1987-1992 were compiled exclusively for this study. Table 4 and Table 5 provide tabulations for overseas and domestic refugee programs administered through the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs in the United States Department of State and through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), United States Department of Health and Human Services (see Table 4 and Table 5).

ORR budgets suggested that refugees in the United States may have become self-sufficient and self-reliant or may have received less assistance. The United States Department of State budgets implied that there may be more refugees overseas. Therefore, the need for relief should be directed towards refugees overseas rather than the domestic refugee programs.

Resettlement by the VOLAGs

VOLAGs is an acronym for the Voluntary Agencies. They are not-for-profit entities that engaged in resettling refugees in the United States and have identical refugee and program cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 316.
### Table 4

**State Department Migration and Refugee Assistance Budget 1987 - 1992**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1987 (Enacted)</th>
<th>1988 (Estimated)</th>
<th>1989 (Request)</th>
<th>1990 (Request)</th>
<th>1991 (Request)</th>
<th>1992 (Request)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugee Admission</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>108,731,000</td>
<td>119,548,000</td>
<td>115,400,000</td>
<td>231,949,000</td>
<td>185,220,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugee Assistance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>194,725,000</td>
<td>176,200,000</td>
<td>197,100,000</td>
<td>168,653,000</td>
<td>215,200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assistance</td>
<td>34,900,000</td>
<td>34,702,000</td>
<td>19,500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Expenses</td>
<td>8,500,000</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>8,215,000</td>
<td>8,528,000</td>
<td>10,294,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees to Israel</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>29,893,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Organisations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11,036,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>346,856,000</td>
<td>338,450,000</td>
<td>340,000,000</td>
<td>449,746,000</td>
<td>408,948,000</td>
<td>10,294,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by the Author

Source: Department of State, Budget of the U.S. Government

# TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORR REFUGEE AND ENTERANT ASSISTANCE BUDGETS</th>
<th>1987 - 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enacted (1)</td>
<td>Estimated (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA)</td>
<td>225,316,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-administered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>33,797,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>68,617,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Grant Program</td>
<td>3,828,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventative Health</td>
<td>5,039,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Assistance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>339,597,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by the Author

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, Family Support Administration


* For 1989-1990, this line-item includes cash and medical assistance program, state administration costs, and refugee social services.
state. Some national VOLAGs may have had their origins dating back to pre-World War II. Their role was to seek refugee admissions to the United States. For instance, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) assisted Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. The emergence of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953-54 brought about 214,000 war-torn refugees from Europe, and 29,000 "Refugee-Escapees" from Hungary, Korea, Yugoslavia, and China in 1957. In 1959, with the fall of the Batista government in Cuba, an influx of 700,000 Cuban refugees poured into the United States. The role of the VOLAGs became more transAtlantic. In 1975, with the fall of the Lao, Cambodian, and Vietnamese governments to the Communists, the Southeast Asian refugees were brought to the United States for resettlement. With the entry of these refugees, the role of the VOLAGs was integrated to become even more internationalized. Both the national VOLAGs and their local affiliates extended their expertise and resources into a full fledged systematic refugee resettlement process. In fact, the United States government could not have accomplished such a difficult task without


Immigration and Nationality Act, 422-423.
the full participation of the VOLAGs. Over a million southeast Asian refugees and half a million others were resettled in various states by the VOLAGs within a time span of seventeen years since 1975-1992 (see Table 6 for the refugee admissions into the United States by federal fiscal year and Table 7 for the estimated cumulative refugee population by state). Their human resources have become indispensable to the federal, state, and local governments.

The VOLAGs exemplified the concept of International NonGovernmental Organizations (INGOs) discussed by Boulding. These INGOs were described as:

the transnational voluntary associations which cover the whole range of human interests and include the chambers of commerce; service clubs; scouting association; YWCAs and YMCAs; churches; and associations of farmers, teachers, doctors, physicists, athletes - any type of groups that seeks relations with people of like interests across national borders., e.g. churches, YMCA, scouting associations.  

Over 102 non-aligned countries affiliated with neither the United States nor the Soviet Union and 18,000 active non-governmental organizations existed in 1985-1986 in the world. According to Boulding, this substantive demographic, political, organizational base can build a new civic order for the world without violence through peace education. She sketched a metaphysics of civics and introduced the notion of social imagination by giving civics a new meaning.

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### TABLE 6

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS INTO THE UNITED STATES

BY FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR</th>
<th>EAST ASIA</th>
<th>EAST EUROPE</th>
<th>SOVIET UNION</th>
<th>LATIN AMERICA</th>
<th>NEAR EAST PRIVATE SECTOR</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
<th>ANNUAL Admissions Ceilings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>1,947</td>
<td>6,211</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>146,158</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>1,756</td>
<td>7,345</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27,206</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>1,755</td>
<td>8,191</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19,946</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>20,574</td>
<td>2,245</td>
<td>10,688</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36,507</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>76,521</td>
<td>3,393</td>
<td>24,449</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>111,363</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>163,799</td>
<td>5,025</td>
<td>28,444</td>
<td>6,662</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>207,116</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>131,139</td>
<td>6,704</td>
<td>13,444</td>
<td>2,017</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>159,252</td>
<td>171,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>73,522</td>
<td>10,780</td>
<td>2,756</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>97,355</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>39,408</td>
<td>12,083</td>
<td>1,409</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>2,648</td>
<td>61,681</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>51,960</td>
<td>10,285</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2,747</td>
<td>71,113</td>
<td>72,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>49,970</td>
<td>9,350</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1,953</td>
<td>68,045</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>45,454</td>
<td>8,713</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1,315</td>
<td>62,440</td>
<td>67,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>40,112</td>
<td>8,694</td>
<td>3,694</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1,994</td>
<td>64,823</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>35,015</td>
<td>7,818</td>
<td>20,421</td>
<td>2,497</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>76,487</td>
<td>87,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>45,680</td>
<td>8,948</td>
<td>39,553</td>
<td>2,605</td>
<td>1,922</td>
<td>107,238</td>
<td>116,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>51,611</td>
<td>6,196</td>
<td>50,716</td>
<td>2,309</td>
<td>3,494</td>
<td>122,326</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>53,485</td>
<td>6,855</td>
<td>38,661</td>
<td>2,237</td>
<td>4,424</td>
<td>112,810</td>
<td>131,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,035,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>112,459</strong></td>
<td><strong>258,229</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,383</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,485</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,984</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,551,871</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>61,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td><strong>142,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FFY 1992 has 1,000 unallocated slots assumed in the 142,000 ceiling

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement/U.S. Department of Health and Human Serv
U.S. Committee for Refugees, Refugee Reports, Vol. XII, No. 12
TABLE 7
ESTIMATED CUMULATIVE REFUGEE POPULATION BY STATE*
INCLUDING ENTRIES FROM 1983 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>229,400</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>90,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>8,600</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>5,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dist. of Columbia</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>27,300</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>3,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>11,400</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>11,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>21,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>6,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>39,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>5,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>14,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>25,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>26,400</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>12,800</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>9,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>18,900</td>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>*Other territories</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>8,600</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>706,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates include all major populations. Adjustments for secondary migration through FY 1990. All totals rounded to the nearest hundred

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
History and the future were seen as an expanded sense of the present of a span of two hundred years.  

Refugee resettlement is a process involved more with the grassroots. The projects were more locally determined, e.g. agency to people, people to people. This integration of community-based involvement from the bottom up was known as the grassroots/integrated-community based approach. This is in contrast to the linear approach in which the development was from the top down.

Southeast Asian Refugees

The Southeast Asian refugees mainly came from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. In the past, two terminologies were widely used: Indochinese and Southeast Asian refugees. Because the term "Indochinese refugee" has a negative connotation dating back to French Indochina, "Southeast Asian refugee" will be used instead.

Even though Southeast Asian refugees may look similar, they are completely distinct in their language, religion, history, and culture. They consist of five major groups. From Cambodia are the Cambodians and the Chinese-Cambodians. From Laos are the Lao and the Mong. From Vietnam are the Vietnamese and the Chinese-Vietnamese.

The Iu Mien (or the Yao), Khamu, Lahu, Lao Theung, and Lao Lue are other ethnic groups of refugees from Laos. Since these groups are not substantial, the author will not

---

19Ibid., 3:35 and 7:138.
cover them. To alleviate any redundancy, the Mong group was
covered extensively throughout the study. For statistical
purposes, the numbers of the Iu Mien, the Mong, and the Lao
ethnic groups were kept together with the country of
nationality (see Table 8 for the Southeast Asian Refugee
Arrivals in the United States by Nationality, FY 75-88).
Between 1975-1989, about 144,745 Cambodians, 204,530
Laotians, and 569,869 Vietnamese were resettled in the
United States. The numbers totaled to 919,144 in 1989. The
following describes each ethnic refugee group briefly.

The Cambodians were perhaps a mixture of tribesmen
of either Indonesian origin or Indian, Javanese, and Chinese
descent. Their history dated back to the 5th century when
they inhabited Cambodia. Cambodia was colonized by the
French and became independent in the 1950's under King
Sihanouk. The Cambodians are Buddhists, family-oriented,
and artistic. The society was divided into several layers
of hierarchical social classes reflecting its monarchy
system and religion. Cambodians are shy, humble, submissive
and easy going but frank and honest in their opinions and
feelings. King Sihanouk was overthrown by General Lon Nol
in the 1970's through U.S. involvement to wipe out the
Communists at the Cambodian borders.\textsuperscript{20} When the Communists

\textsuperscript{20}Nancy Lee Koschmann and Joseph Jay Tobin, Working with
Indo-Chinese Refugees: A Handbook for Mental Health and Human
Service Providers (Chicago: Travelers Aid/Immigrants' Service
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Laos</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Total a/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>130,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>14,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>20,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>30,200</td>
<td>44,500</td>
<td>80,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>55,500</td>
<td>95,200</td>
<td>166,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>27,100</td>
<td>19,300</td>
<td>86,100</td>
<td>132,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>20,234</td>
<td>9,437</td>
<td>43,656</td>
<td>73,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>13,114</td>
<td>2,835</td>
<td>23,459</td>
<td>39,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>19,851</td>
<td>7,224</td>
<td>24,927</td>
<td>52,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>19,097</td>
<td>5,181</td>
<td>25,209</td>
<td>49,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>9,789</td>
<td>12,894</td>
<td>22,443</td>
<td>45,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>15,564</td>
<td>23,012</td>
<td>40,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2,805</td>
<td>14,563</td>
<td>17,499</td>
<td>34,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1,916</td>
<td>12,432</td>
<td>22,664</td>
<td>37,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>144,745</td>
<td>204,530</td>
<td>569,869</td>
<td>919,144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a/ Does not include Amerasian immigrants

Compiled by the Author.

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Bureau of Refugee Programs, Department of State.
took over Cambodia, Pol Pot massacred over three million Cambodians. This was a tragic holocaust in Asia illustrated by a film named "The Killing Fields."\(^{21}\)

The Lao were related to the Northern Thai sharing their Sino-Indian cultural traditions and Buddhism. The Chinese mentioned their existence around the Yangtze Kiang River before 800 B.C. The Lao established the kingdom of Lan Xang (the Land of Million Elephants) in 1353 A.D. They value flexibility, adaptability, harmony, interpersonal relations, autonomy, and gentle lifestyle. Like the Cambodians, the Lao society was also divided into several layers of hierarchical social classes influenced by its monarchy and religion. Laos was colonized by the French in the early nineteenth century, gained its independence after World War II, and established a constitutional monarchy. However, the tripartite civil war emerged and grew as part of the Vietnam conflict.\(^{22}\) The Communists took control over Laos in 1975 after the United States withdrew its troops from Southeast Asia.

The Vietnamese were under Chinese rule until the tenth century. Vietnam was torn by internal political strife and was divided along the seventeenth parallel during the seventeenth century. The Trinh's ruled in the North and

---


\(^{22}\)Koschmann and Tobin, 18-19.
the Nguyễn’s in the South. Vietnam was colonized by the French in 1884. Ho Chi Minh declared independence in 1946 and won the battle over the French in Dien Bien Phu. The Geneva Convention of 1954 officially divided the two Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel: North Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh and South Vietnam under Bao Dai and later Ngo Dinh Diem. The Vietnam conflict became more intensified when the United States became involved in the 1960’s. Its culture is more Chineselike and different from its neighboring countries. Though Buddhism plays a major role in the Vietnamese society, Confucianism influenced many Vietnamese. Confucianism stresses the importance of applied politics of correct social comportment and political relationship. Through French influence, many Vietnamese were converted to Catholicism. Since 1975, the term "Boat People" has been widely used to refer to the Vietnamese refugees who escaped from Vietnam on boats in the high seas.

The Chinese from Southeast Asia comprised a sizeable population in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Since they focused mainly on economic development, they controlled many commercial and industrial enterprises in Southeast Asia. Koschmann divided ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia into three groups: the Ming Huong, the Cantonese, and the Taiwanese. The Minh Huong migrated from China to Vietnam during the Ming Dynasty. They are now a part of the

---

23Ibid., 22-25.
Vietnamese. The Cantonese, who left China during the Ch’ing dynasty, were accounted for the majority of the Chinese in southeast Asia. The Taiwanese with strong political ties to Taiwan moved to Vietnam in 1950’s. They encouraged an anti-communist sentiment among the Chinese population in Vietnam. After the fall of Saigon, the Communists began implementing a policy of shifting the Chinese to different economic zones. They attacked Cholon where most of the Chinese concentrated. That signaled the beginning of Communist genocide against the ethnic Chinese.  

Mong Refugees in the United States

Mong were brought to the United States like other Southeast Asian refugees. After passing an interview with the Immigration and Naturalization Service officers, Mong refugees were referred to the International Committee on Migration (ICM) for physical examinations and for travel arrangements. Then, they were transported from the refugee camps to Phanat Nikhom Transit camp in Bangkok to travel to the United States. The transportation costs were loans to them that they must repay to the government through their sponsoring agencies at a later date.

The first Mong refugees, who arrived in the United States in 1975, were General Vang Pao and his families. They must have been sponsored by one of the national VOLAGs in conjunction with local churches, and private American

24Ibid., 26-27.
sponsors. They were resettled in Missoula, Montana. Reder described resettlement counts of Lao hilltribes (Highland Lao in which the Mong were also included) in the United States by year of entry. In 1975, the Lao hilltribes only accounted for 301 people. North found that most of the refugees who left in 1975 were urban elites, well-educated, often speaking French or English. More Mong were brought to various states across the United States in the following years. The peak of the Mong arrivals was in 1980 when 27,242 came to the United States.

The exact counts of Mong were uncertain because they were a subgroup of the Highland Lao and the Highland Lao a subgroup of the Lao; therefore, Mong were not always counted separately. Most of the statistics were kept by country of nationality instead of ethnic identity. Table 9 contains the best estimates provided by Reder during 1975-1980 and by Yang and North during 1981-1988. The counts were consolidated to bring the numbers up to 1988. (See


27Reder, 36.

Table 9 for the Highland Lao Arrivals in the United States, fiscal Year 1975-1988). Regardless of the counts, the majority of the Highland Lao are Mong.

In Yang and North's study, the Mong were distributed in seventy-one communities in thirty states. The estimated Mong population nationwide totalled over 105,253 including U.S. births (see Table 10 for the estimated Cumulative Mong Refugee Population by State). Other Highland Lao (Iu Mien, Khmu or Lao Theung, Lahu, Lao Lue) were found in nineteen communities and were accounted for over 12,700. (See Table 11 for the estimated non-Mong Highland Lao Population by State through November 1988). Their report reflected a national picture of the status of Highland Lao resettlement as of 1988. It was noticeable that eighty-five percent of the Mong lived in three states: fifty-six percent in California, sixteen percent in Wisconsin, and thirteen percent in Minnesota. The largest Mong concentrations in the United States are Fresno, California with 24,000; St. Paul, Minnesota with 13,450; and Merced, California with 7,500. The following described some of the adjustment difficulties of the Mong.

Adjustment Problems of the Mong in the United States

The early Mong refugees were more educated and more comfortable with western culture than later arrivals (as was true with the rest of the Southeast Asian refugees).

---

29 Yang and North, 32-125.
TABLE 9

HIGHLAND LAO ARRIVALS IN THE UNITED STATES, FY 75-88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>3,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>3,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>11,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>27,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>6,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>8,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>10,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>83,865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by the Author.
### TABLE 10

**ESTIMATED MONG REFUGEE POPULATION BY STATE THROUGH NOVEMBER 1988**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>58,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>2,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>13,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>105,253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>2,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>16,456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Compiled by the Author.

Source: Survey of Mong Community Leaders by CZA, Inc.
### TABLE 11

**ESTIMATED NON-MONG HIGHLAND LAO POPULATION BY STATE THROUGH NOV. 1988**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
<th>State of Residence</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic: Iu Mien</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ethnic: Lahu</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>8,032</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>10,288</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic: Khamu</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ethnic: Lao Theung</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>1,713</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>12,777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates include all Non-Mong Highland Lao population. Adjustment for secondary migration through FY 1988.*

Compiled by the Author.

Source: Survey of Mong Community Leaders by CZA, Inc.
They had less problems with the adjustment to the mainstream of American culture. In contrast, those who arrived after 1978 constituted the majority of the Mong and spoke neither English nor French like their early counterparts. Many experienced cultural shock. The minute they got off the planes, they were exposed immediately to American family life and customs. Some of the common symptoms of cultural shock included disorientation of time, anxiety and withdrawal, fear of coping with the new daily tasks and the new environment such as the high-rise, nervousness, unusual fatigue, and suspicion towards the members of the new culture. Koschmann and Tobin defined "cultural shock" as:

a phenomenon when one finds himself/herself in the middle of a new culture in which cues are difficult or impossible to interpret produces feelings of disorientation, inadequacy, and isolation.  

Almost all of the refugees experienced some form of cultural shock. Some might express this shock through depression and cry. However, the degree of cultural shock may heighten if refugees had language barriers since information could only be channelled through an interpreter, the third source. Some refugees displayed psychosomatic symptoms such as recurring headaches and digestion problems. Some would express desperation since they needed to learn the most basic common daily tasks taken for granted by a typical American, such as shopping for groceries, using

30Koschmann and Tobin, 4.
public transportation, acclimation with different climates, coping with standards of personal and public safety on what to do in emergency situations, and learning to read street signs. These daily tasks might look simple to Americans but to the Mong refugees, learning a lot of things in a short period of time was overwhelming.

Those Mong, resettled far from one another, found themselves alienated. Therefore, learning simple daily tasks could be stressful. Their earlier experience, as guerrilla fighters and rice farmers for men and housewives for women, was not considered as transferable skills for living in the new land.

Between 1981-1982, a unique problem emerged among the Mong refugees. They began to move to Orange County, California in massive numbers. This phenomenon was known as "secondary migration." It is a process in which refugees moved from the first place of resettlement to a new location either to reunify with their relatives or for other reasons.

On February 3-4, 1983, the Indochina Refugee Action Center (IRAC) in Washington, D.C. sponsored a national Conference for about thirty Mong and other Highland Lao representatives to meet with top federal officials in the refugee program to discuss the key problems Mong refugees faced. Ambassador Eugene Douglas (U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs), Mr. James N. Purcell, Jr. (Director of Bureau for Refugee Programs, Department of State), and Dr.
Phillips Hawkes (Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, United States Department of Health and Human Services) were present at the conference. As Mong representative from Illinois and spokesman at the conference, the author presented secondary migration as the most pressing problem for Mong refugees in the nation. More Mong were also planning to move to California.

In order to prevent such an urgent problem from recurring, four suggestions were presented to the top federal officials for consideration:

First, the United States government should make funding available to Mong Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA’s) across the United States to conduct extensive workshops and orientation sessions to Mong communities in the targeted areas and to receive newcomers from other states.

Second, the United States government should provide technical assistance, develop agribusiness and other economic development projects to targeted Mong communities.

Third, the United States government should assist Mong refugees to establish a clearinghouse network consisting of a steering committee of the Mong Mutual Assistance Associations in the targeted Mong communities.

Fourth, the federal, state, and local governments should pay attention to the fundamental needs of the Mong communities more than in the past. The Mong demonstrated
that they needed special assistance to cope with their basic needs.

Ambassador Douglas acknowledged the fact that the United States Department of State had neglected the Highland Lao refugees in the past. This was evidenced by the massive movement of Mong secondary migration across the United States. Douglas advised the representatives to inform the refugees to start making concrete plans for future and permanent settlement in the United States. In turn, Douglas would establish a position in his office, ask the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and each Governor to take steps to respond to the Highland Lao's needs. During the course of the conference, a good assessment about the cause of Mong secondary migration was made by the Mong representatives. They concurred that several factors may have contributed to the cause of Mong secondary migration across the nation. The following paragraphs described those factors.

**Lack of knowledge and access to jobs**

Employment difficulties were the most pressing problems for Mong refugees. Jobs were interwoven and interrelated with other complex problems such as language barriers, no marketable skills as required by the employers, service-cuts, health, economic development, and discrimination against hiring.

**Family Reunification**

The Mong cultural tradition emphasized on extended
family and clan orientation. The grouping or clustering of members of the same clan in a specific city, or state was typical. The purpose was to create a support system to provide mutual assistance to one another socially, politically, and educationally. Though Mong were resettled in various states, from 1978, they started a movement to cluster in particular cities such as St. Paul, Fresno, Merced, Stockton, Portland, Philadelphia.

Service-Cuts

Service cuts were identified as one of the causes of secondary migration. The federal government applied a policy of an eighteen-month cut off date for the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) about 1982. The Mong could not find jobs prior to the completion of the eighteenth month in the United States. In addition, their low level of cultural adaptation made it virtually difficult for them to cope with the modern systems such as the ability to find jobs as required by the Illinois General Assistance job search policy. Since they could not find jobs in a timely manner and since services were cut, moving to other localities appeared to be the way out. Thus, service cuts worsened the problem of secondary migration.

Unequal Distribution of Services

The distribution of services between counties and states was different. One state may provide better services to refugees than another. For instance, California,
Minnesota, and Wisconsin provide more opportunities to refugees to have access to educational (especially vocational) services than Ohio and Illinois. It was typical for refugees to shop around for opportunities in education, career training, and English language training.

**Sudden Unexplained Death Syndrome (SUDS)**

SUDS was another striking and horrified phenomenon associated with the migration and the resettlement of the Mong during their transition to become Mong-Americans. About 115 Mongs in the United States have died mysteriously in their sleep.\(^{31}\) The Mong usually referred to this as "Tuag Tsaug Zug" (Sleeping Death). There was no record of Mong having died in their sleep in Laos. Munger described the characteristic moaning, choking, and snoring sounds at the time of death among the twenty documented cases. There were similarities between the Mong and their sudden deaths to the "bangungut" experienced by Filipino males in Hawaii in Oahu County from 1937 to 1948.\(^{32}\) Aponte stated that Filipino healthy males were said to die during the night making moaning, snoring, or choking noises as well.\(^{33}\) Oalmann

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specified that "the interval between the onset of symptoms and the death is less than twenty-four hours." Several experts linked sudden death syndrome to nightmare fright due to stress of cultural assimilation, chemical exposure during the warfare in Laos, or congenital effects due to inbreeding. However, there is no sufficient evidence to support those claims. Why did sudden death happen to the Mong in the United States? The question still remains a mystery.

**Vocational Adjustment and Sex Role Adjustment**

Like any other refugees, the Mong went through a period of vocational adjustment and sex role adjustment. In Laos, one’s professional and vocational status was intertwined with his identity, social respect, and self-esteem. In the United States, adjustment in the new culture meant an adjustment to a new self identity. Many former high ranking military officials who were illiterate had difficulty coping with vocational adjustment by accepting

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38 Koschmann and Tobin, 7-8.
minimal paying jobs such as custodians. Many Mong males also experienced the evolving sex role adjustment. Men were traditionally the breadwinners for the families. However, this was no longer true in the United States. Circumstances required two incomes to support a family. They resented the economic independence of their wives and were threatened by the sexually integrated work force.

Because the Mong demonstrated that they needed special assistance, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), United States Department of Health and Human Services initiated an approximately $3,000,000 emergency fund called the "Highland Lao Initiative" (HLI) to assist 34,500 Mong and other Highland Lao outside of California and Minnesota on a non-competitive basis. The funding was equally distributed to the counties impacted by Mong refugees. This mechanism was aimed at keeping Mong intact in their existing communities to prevent secondary migration to the Central Valley of California. North summarized the objectives for the funding of the emergency effort by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

The Highland Lao Initiative (HLI) was primarily intended to increase employment, decrease welfare dependency, stabilize the Highland Lao communities and stem secondary migration, particularly to the Central Valley of California.39

By 1983, ORR funded forty-seven programs in the nation in areas where Mong were concentrated. In the

39David S. North et al, iv.
following year, ORR contracted with Coffey, Zimmerman and Associates, Inc. of Washington, D.C. to conduct an evaluation on thirty-two of the forty-seven programs funded by HLI to determine their effects. (The author was among the six member team selected to evaluate this project). The HLI programs were funded to deliver eight categories of services: outreach, job placement, on-the-job training (OJT), vocational training, craft development, English as a Second Language (ESL), farm and garden, other business development and day-care. Of the thirty-two programs which offered direct employment services, fourteen were evaluated. Two hundred eighty-six people secured employment through HLI. Seven programs used the OJT technique that resulted in seventy-one job placements. Portland, Toledo, and Omaha employed the vocational training approach. In Portland, 186 Mong signed up for the classes and 112 were placed in jobs. In Toledo, forty-four refugees received training and fourteen secured employment. In Omaha, a Mong store was established for store operation training. Fifty-two refugees enrolled in the program and eight were upgraded into better positions. Other programs were in the process of evaluation or could not be evaluated in terms of cost.

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40Ibid., 28.
41Ibid., 44-50.
42Ibid., 51-56.
effectiveness.\textsuperscript{43} The emergence of the Highland Lao Initiative (HLI) as a one time aid in 1983 provided by the federal government temporarily stabilized the Mong communities outside of California and Minnesota. It encouraged some hope in the Mong communities that the federal government cared about them. HLI somehow slowed down Mong secondary migration to a certain extent as reflected in Yang and North’s data collection. In 1988, Yang and North reported that 58,976 Mong lived in California (fifty-six percent), 16,456 in Wisconsin (sixteen percent), 13,700 in Minnesota (thirteen percent), and 16,121 Mong scattered in twenty-seven other states (fifteen percent).\textsuperscript{44} In comparison, the total Mong population in 1984 outside of California and Minnesota was 31,966\textsuperscript{45} whereas in 1988 it remained steady at 32,577.\textsuperscript{46}

Conclusion

When the Communists took over Laos in 1975, the Mong had to seek asylum in Thailand. As allies of the United States, the Mong were persecuted for political reasons. Some of these Mong refugees were brought to the United States for resettlement. Chapter III examined the Mong resettlement in the United States. By coming from a

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 56-60.
\textsuperscript{44}Yang and North, 9.
\textsuperscript{45}North \textit{et al}, 8.
\textsuperscript{46}Yang and North, 9.
predominantly rural, and preliterate background with a few transferable marketable skills, the Mong had difficulties in adjustment to the new culture. The adjustment problems resulted in massive secondary migration to various states particularly to the Central Valley of California. Their problems centered around the lack of knowledge and access to jobs to achieve self-economically sufficiency, the need for family reunification, the federal policy on service cuts, the unequal distribution of services in various states, the horrible phenomenon of "Sudden Unexplained Death Syndrome" (SUDS), the struggle for re-establishment of self-identity, and the vocational adjustment.

For a clearer focus on the resettlement process, Chapter IV examines a case study of the Mong resettlement in the Chicago area.
CHAPTER IV

PROCESS OF RESETTLEMENT IN CHICAGO

Chapter IV examines the process of Mong resettlement in the Chicago area. It includes the initial reception and placement by the Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs), three models of resettlement, the development of refugee programs, Mong resettlement, and the rise and fall of the Association of Hmong in Illinois (AHMI).

As described in Chapter III, six national VOLAGs have their local affiliates in Chicago. (See below).

Local Affiliates

| Catholic Charities of Metropolitan Chicago | United States Catholic Conference (USCC) |
| Illinois Conference of Churches (ICC)     | Church World Service (CWS)               |
| Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) | Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)      |
| Lutheran Child and Family Service (LCFS)  | Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) |
| Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA)        | American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS) |
| World Relief Corporation (WR)             | World Relief Refugee Services (WRRS)     |

These local VOLAGs were vital to the resettlement of refugees. When a refugee was accepted by the United States government, his/her biographic data was forwarded from the American Council for Voluntary Agencies (ACVA) abroad to the national VOLAGs in the United States. In
turn, the national VOLAGs passed it on to their local affiliates to locate the relatives of the refugee and to find a local sponsor. At that time, a caseworker was assigned to the case. The arrival date of the refugee was set.

**Initial Reception and Placement by the VOLAGs**

Prior to the arrival of the refugee, a caseworker with the sponsor would try to find an apartment for the family. The VOLAGs normally conducted an orientation to brief the sponsors about their responsibilities.¹ Sponsors generally provided moral support to refugees but the VOLAGs furnished the income maintenance. The financial support was channelled from the United States Department of State through the national VOLAGs to their local affiliates. Each VOLAG generally received about $500 for each refugee.²

However, each national VOLAG set its own policy for the disbursement of this fund. For example, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) retained refugee funds at its headquarter in New York and depended upon its local churches to supply the necessary financial needs for the refugees. The United States Catholic

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Conference (USCC) and World Relief Refugee Services (WRRS) retained more of this money for overhead administration and passed smaller amount to its local affiliates. The American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS) retained about $150 and passed $350 to its local affiliates for the actual resettlement of the refugee. The money was used for security deposit, first month rent, used furniture, initial utensils and food for a month and a half until the VOLAGs could find a job for the refugee. Because the resources were so scarce, each VOLAG had to constantly do fundraising to cope with the additional financial needs of the refugees. With emphasis on cost control, each caseworker was responsible for the overall financial planning for each case with the approval of his/her supervisor to maximize the service delivery.

The caseworker and the sponsor met the refugee at the airport and took him/her to the apartment. If the refugee family had relatives nearby, they might help in preparing the first meal for the refugee. Some sponsors might end up taking the refugee family in their home for a few days until an apartment was secured. If a sponsor could not be found for the family, the caseworker was responsible to perform all these tasks.

A caseworker generally conducted an orientation session for the refugee in the apartment. The session included securing all the door locks, operating the stove to
assure that the knobs were completely closed to prevent any gas leak, hot and cold water taps in bathroom and kitchen, and maintaining the standard of personal safety. If a refugee family was resettled in an isolated area, a phone might be necessary for emergency reason.

Unlike immigrants, refugees were admitted to the United States with a refugee arrival document (Form I-94) issued by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. With proof of this form and the Alien Registration number, services were rendered.

As defined in the Department of State Cooperative Agreement, the VOLAGs were to fulfill certain recognized activities. They consisted of pre-arrival planning, sponsor orientation, travel arrangements, airport reception, refugee orientation, arranging for housing, food, clothing, school enrollment, transportation assistance, referral for initial health screening, vocational English as a Second Language (VESL), employment services, and introduction to their ethnic mutual assistance associations for cultural services.

As part of the initial resettlement process, a caseworker arranged for several orientation sessions. They included personal and public safety, standards of personal and public hygiene, transportation system, immigration and family reunification, and an employment development plan for each employable refugee adult in the family. Any refugee between the age of sixteen to sixty-five without any minor
children under the age of eight was considered an employable refugee adult. The duration of the initial reception and placement normally lasted between one to three months.

Models of Refugee Resettlement

Since the arrival of the Southeast Asian refugees in 1975, three models of resettlement have been used in the Chicago area: the traditional sponsorship method, the bilingual and bicultural sponsorship model, and the case management sponsorship model. Each approach has its own advantages and its pitfalls.

The Traditional Sponsorship Model

The traditional sponsorship model was the use of individual/local church sponsorship. A VOLAG generally coordinated resettlement activities with the sponsor. This method relied heavily on the resources of the individual or the local church that sponsored the family. The first flow of refugees to the United States in 1975 were resettled in this manner. This method allowed refugees to have direct contact with the host community -- the American sponsor. Eventually, the sponsor assisted them to acculturate to the mainstream of American life. However, if a sponsor was not sensitive to the refugee’s culture, misunderstanding could easily occur.

The Bilingual/Bicultural Sponsorship Model

The bilingual/bicultural sponsorship model combined the traditional sponsorship model with bilingual
and bicultural staff who spoke the language of the refugees. The staff were knowledgeable of the refugee experience and sensitive to the refugees' emotional concerns. They might act appropriately in crisis intervention. This appeared to be the most effective approach for refugee resettlement. It sought to ameliorate the cultural adjustment problems of the refugees for a smooth transition.

The concept behind this model was derived from the notion of outreach. In 1978, Ione DuVall of Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA) founded a program called "Indochinese Social Service Outreach Program" (ISSOP) to provide immigration assistance to thousands of Southeast Asian refugees in Illinois. ISSOP recruited staff from various Southeast refugee communities. By the end of 1978, over 4,000 refugees in Illinois had adjusted their status to U.S. permanent resident aliens through this program.

In 1981, TIA incorporated a training component for in-house training. The program extended to include training for the staff of various agencies in the Chicago area on how to work with refugees. This resulted in the development of three manuals for paraprofessionals to work with refugees. They became the cornerstone for all caseworkers. It was estimated that over eighty staff members were trained in

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this program. As a result, Illinois was singled out by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in Washington, D.C. for its program successes, distinguished by the quality of its systematic delivery of services.

The ISSOP staff continued their employment with TIA. Services were expanded to include resettlement services. The agency recognized the importance of self-help efforts and encouraged its staff to devote their time to build up a support system for their own communities. In 1980, four ethnic mutual assistance associations emerged: Association of Hmong in Illinois (AHMI), Cambodian Association of Illinois (CAI), Lao Service Center (LSC), and Vietnamese Association of Illinois (VAI). Some TIA staff still function either as advisory board members or board of director members to these organizations.

However, there were some pitfalls in the bilingual/bicultural sponsorship model. The demand for services doubled as the community grew. Providing services to their own communities was no longer an eight to five job for bilingual staff. Some ethnic staff had to work around the clock and experienced burnout.

The bilingual staff assumed different roles in the resettlement program due to funding constraints. Each role was in conflict with one another. During the reception and placement, staff functioned as helpers. Later, their role was shifted to case managers and employment counselors by
working cooperatively with the city, state and government agencies to ensure that refugees complied with the rules and regulations. The ultimate goal of the United States government for resettlement was for refugees to attain self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Each case manager was responsible to monitor and sanction refugees if they did not cooperate with the VOLAG plan. The following actions by refugees required strong action from the staff, e.g. refusal to accept a suitable (as defined by staff) job or failure to attend Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) on a regular basis as required by the Employment Development Plan (EDP) developed previously by the case managers and the refugees. Refugees perceived staff as helpers, community leaders and advocates who could act on their behalf. They turned to staff for advice. In contrast to the Western social work philosophy, staff gathered all the pertinent facts, presented the alternatives to the clients but left the decision for the clients. This role shift by social service staff confused many refugees.

The Case Management Sponsorship Model

The case management sponsorship model was the use of agency sponsorship in conjunction with refugee anchor relatives. This model was derived from the concept of case management of the local VOLAGs. Based on their program successes, six local VOLAGs wrote a joint proposal to the United States Department of State to undertake a new program
called the "Chicago Refugee Demonstration Project" (CRDP).

CRDP incorporated a comprehensive service plan to resettle 1,370 multi-ethnic refugees who arrived in Cook, Lake, and DuPage counties during 1985. The plan included all the components of refugee resettlement consisting of case management, income and medical support, and employment services. Through case management, refugees were motivated to work as soon as possible after arrival in the Chicago area to achieve independence and self-sufficiency. CRDP used the income support equal to "Public Aid Level" as a determining standard. The support covered rent, food, personal, transportation, and other costs for a time frame of six months before refugees could be referred for the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program. CRDP provided for medical support to cover all refugees for the first six months through a hospitalization insurance policy of the Insurance Company of North America. The policy carried a $250 deductible per capita for medical support.4

However, CRDP came to a halt after one year of implementation because the United States Department of State considered it an expensive program. In addition, four refugee mutual assistance associations in the Chicago area (Association of Hmong in Illinois, Cambodian Association of

Illinois, Chinese Mutual Aid Association, and Vietnamese Association of Illinois) wrote a joint letter to the United States Department of State to sharply criticize CRDP for its uncompromising policies and procedures. CRDP's approach required strong documentation and planning periodically revised by caseworkers to reflect changes. All cash and in-kind donations were valued according to fair market price and were computed as part of the income support budget for each refugee family.

**Development of Refugee Programs in the Chicago Area**

Between 1975-1979, the refugee program in the Chicago area was in an embryonic stage. Thousands of Southeast Asian refugees were already resettled throughout Illinois by the sponsorship of the national and local VOLAGs.

In 1975, the local VOLAGs began to meet informally for information sharing to avoid duplication of services and interagency cooperation. A Voluntary Agency Council was formed in 1979 to include Catholic Charities of Metropolitan Chicago, Illinois Conference of Churches (ICC), Jewish Family and Children Services (JFCS), and Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA). In 1980, a more concerted effort was made by the VOLAGs and other refugee serving agencies to form the "Refugee Social Services Consortium." The

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Consortium met on a monthly basis at the Jewish Federation. Its members expanded to include representatives from over fifty agencies from self-help organizations to city, state, and federal governments in 1989.6

The emergence of the Refugee Act of 1980 set the framework for the domestic refugee resettlement programs in the United States. The Act limited refugees who received aid under the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program to thirty-six months from the date of entry. New amendments reduced the time-limit to twenty-four months in 1982, twelve-months in 1985, eight months in 1989 and four months in March 1993.

In the 1980's, the Office of the Governor's Information Center for Asian Assistance was consolidated with the Illinois Department of Public Aid (IDPA). Its manager, known as the "State Coordinator," developed systematic programs for the refugees. Funding was channelled from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in Washington, D.C. through its regional office to IDPA. The Jewish Federation emerged as the prime contractor for administrative coordination for all refugee programs in the Chicago area.

Mong Resettlement in the Chicago Area

In 1976, the first Mong families were resettled in various cities throughout Illinois. They were sponsored by local churches and private American sponsors. Pursuant to a personal recollection, a few Mong families were resettled in Chicago, Wheaton, Ottawa, Dixon, and Wilmington.

Some of the resettled Mong were clan leaders. They began to file affidavits of relationship through local VOLAGs for their relatives to reunify with them in their localities. The relatives arrived one after another. Some, who were resettled in other states, migrated to Illinois. Most used telephone as a means of communication. It was estimated that their phone bills averaged between fifty to one hundred dollars a month during this early period.

That was the beginning of the development of a unique Mong resettlement pattern in Illinois and perhaps throughout the United States. This pattern was not new. By tradition, the Mong in Laos lived in villages. Clustering in a geographical area was derived from a cultural norm. The Mong lived in communities for interdependency and support. Goza called this concentration an "Ethnic Enclave," dealing with the de facto or voluntary segregation of minority members of the same race clustering in specific geographic areas. Perhaps the Mong population distribution

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7Franklin William Goza, "Adjustment and Adaptation among Southeast Asian Refugees in the United States" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1987), 29-
in Illinois in 1984 best illustrated this pattern. (See Table 12). In Illinois, Mong clustered in four cities. The Xiong and Yang were the major clans in Chicago with eighty-six families, the Yang in Dixon with forty-nine families, the Xiong in Wheaton with twenty-seven families, and the Hang and the Thao in Ottawa with eighteen families. 8

TIA Associate Director Virginia Koch explained that the resettlement process:

...probably begins overseas...because people are supposed to really get orientations and some information before they arrive in the United States so that’s supposed to be the beginning, like a reality check but what things are really like in the United States, I'm not sure how it works well. Otherwise, technically, the resettlement process begins when either a relative comes to sign the papers or prepares for a refugee who is arriving or we get a phone call from New York saying the refugees have arrived and we start to prepare for all these before the refugee sets foot in the United States. And again, technically, three months after people are here, the Department of State feels they have been fairly well resettled. The resettlement process truly ends with people at different times...people who are young...who are looking forward sometimes to a newer existence, it can takes less time. But people who have strong roots in their homelands, it will take much longer. 9

Evidently, the first Mong arriving in 1976 spoke English. They filed affidavits of relationship for their relatives in Thailand. However, the influx did not begin

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TOTAL 239

* Considered a Mong community

Compiled by the Author
until 1979-1980. In Chicago, Koch resettled the first Mong refugee families in 1976: the Thao, the Vang, the Xiong, and the Yang and later their relatives reunified with them. They were initially housed in the high-rise buildings in the Uptown area, such as 901 West Argyle, 920 West Lakeside, 850 West Eastwood, and 840 West Sunnyside buildings. ¹⁰

Mong refugees were referred to Chicago Department of Health Uptown for health screening, Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) for employment services, Chicago Urban Skills Center (the Hilliard Adult Education Center) and Truman College for English language training, and to the Special Unit Office of IDPA to receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and food stamps for financial assistance.

From 1976-1980, the Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) extended its employment services to include all Southeast Asian refugees. Bender described JVS' role in assisting immigrants in their search for employment through an organized five-step systematic approach:

- self-assessment and appraisal, exploration of the job market, instructions in the techniques of finding a job, a mock interview, and job hunting and follow up; ¹¹

The younger children enrolled in the Chicago Public School system particularly Stewart, McCutcheon, Joan

¹⁰Ibid., Koch.

Arai Middle School (Junior High) and the older ones to Nicholas Senn High School;

Prendergast did a study on a Vietnamese refugee family in the Chicago area and found that the Quang Ly family realized the American dream. Ten years after their arrival, they had two children. They studied English, political science and computer science, obtained fulfilling employment, and bought their first home in the suburb.\(^\text{12}\)

In comparison, as the Mong obtained employment, they moved out of the Uptown area to relocate in Albany Park and Logan Square areas where several bought houses and apartment buildings for permanent resettlement. Between 1976-1992, 2,000 Mong may have made their transition through Chicago. Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA) accounted for the majority of the Mong resettlement. TIA, at one point, employed up to six Mong staff to provide services to Mong refugees. As many as 100 Mong families up to 500 people may have migrated into Chicago to join their relatives between 1978-1982.

**Association of HMong in Illinois**

In 1978, Moua Thao, a former major in the Lao Royal Army, organized a self-help association. The organization was officially incorporated into "Association

of Hmong in Illinois" (AHMI) under the General Not for profit Corporation Act on August 29, 1979. Thao was elected president for two terms from 1978-1981. The purpose for which AHMI was organized was:

to plan, operate, and participate in charitable, religious, scientific, and educational services, including the establishment of a community center or centers to aid in the resettlement of Hmong persons in Illinois, by providing job counseling, youth activities, child care services, English language training, activities to preserve the moral and cultural heritage of Hmong persons, social and sport activities and other services.

In May 1981, Hu Xiong was elected AHMI president. During Xiong's terms (1981-1984), the Mong community in Chicago underwent a period of perplexity. The most controversial issue centered around the ideology of self-identification, attachment, and the selection of AHMI director. One group wanted to sustain AHMI. The other wished to be included within a larger political realm of the Lao by consolidating AHMI with the Lao Family, Inc. of Mong General Vang Pao. This group formed a new organization under "Chicago Hmong Community Services" (CHCS). The controversy was intensified perhaps by internal cultural and external political factors.

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Internal Cultural Factor

The internal cultural factor referred to the clan system and AHMI board's limited understanding of the western notion of voluntary organization culture relative to roles, methods, and staff selection; and the external political factor related to the involvement of General Vang Pao.

The Mong have lived harmoniously a lifestyle of a community or a society rather than a nuclear family for centuries. The clan system, a political system for checks and balances, played a major role during this transition. The system established acceptable cultural norms for all Mong clans. They have remained intact on a continuum basis. When a clan member moves to the extreme, others will act to check and balance it. Apparently, clan identification had both positive and negative implications.

On the positive side, the Mong society was divided into communities of clans. The system taught Mong to treat and interact with one another as a community rather than an individual. No one acts alone without a consultation with the members of his clan. A clan member learns to be interdependent with his clan especially in conflict resolution. McInnis defined clan identification as:

a psychological and sociological indicator of belonging for the Hmong. The clan is the boundary inclusive of families with the same name. The clan serves as a

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format for group decision making and problem resolution for Hmong families.\textsuperscript{16}

clan division has good implications for marriage. It is a custom for Mong to marry outside of their own clan to avoid intermarriage within their own blood line.

On the contrary, clan division also has a negative implication. When a conflict occurs in the Mong community between two clans, the system may blindfold a clan member from seeing the truth without fully investigating the fact.

The External Political Factor

The external political factor that intensified the confusion of the Mong community in Chicago during this period involved General Vang Pao. Upon his arrival in the United States, the Mong general established the "Lao Family, Inc.," a mutual assistance association in California. He desired to have branches throughout the Mong communities in the United States. After his proposal was rejected by Hu Xiong, he asserted his influence over AHMI board members to dissolve AHMI and to consolidate it as a branch of the Lao Family, Inc. As a result, AHMI board was divided and so were the Chicago Mong.\textsuperscript{17}

Despite the controversy, Mong refugees in the


\textsuperscript{17}Meeting at 3518 W. Belden, Chicago, Illinois chaired by General Vang Pao, 25 May 1981.
Chicago area demonstrated a great need for services. On March 2, 1983, MAA (Mutual Assistance Association) Coordinator John H. Ballard of the Jewish Federation chaired a meeting between two Hmong groups. A plan of cooperation was accepted by the Association of Hmong in Illinois (AHMI) and Chicago Hmong Community Service (CHCS) while each remained a separate entity. The plan included the creation of a joint Hmong community center, the formation of a steering committee consisting of nine board members: three from AHMI, three from CHCS and three neutral members recommended by Illinois Department of Public Aid (IDPA). The committee's role was to develop and guide the center, its services, and the selection of a director. This committee was also known as the Interim Governing Committee (IGC). The cooperative plan was worked out and IDPA funded Hmong Center in the amount of $54,000 through TIA. The purpose of the center was to design programs to provide adjustment services to Hmong refugees in the Chicago area. Djoua X. Xiong was selected as director, Koua Yang as an outreach worker, and Pa Yang as a part-time secretary.

President of the board of directors Hu Xiong

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18 Minutes of Meeting between Association of Hmong in Illinois and Chicago Hmong Community Service and a Draft of Proposal by MAA Coordinator John H. Ballard of the Jewish Federation, Meeting of 2 March 1983.

19 AHMI Proposal, September 6, 1985, 5.
applied for recognition of exemption for AHMI. On October 18, 1982, AHMI was granted tax exemption under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service. This was a basic requirement for AHMI to request funding to various agencies in the subsequent years.\textsuperscript{20}

On June 2, 1984, an election for new AHMI officers was held at Truman College. One hundred sixty-nine Mong were present. The author and Roger C. Xiong were elected president and treasurer. The other nine board members were selected based on equal representation of the Mong communities in Illinois: first vice-president from Country Club Hills, second vice-president from Dixon, one board member from Ottawa, one from Rochelle, and three from Chicago, one from Wheaton, and one from Carol Stream.\textsuperscript{21}

The AHMI board met with the Interim Governing Committee (ICG) of the HMong Center on June 7, 1984 to transfer authority. A joint recommendation was made to IOPA that funding be contracted directly to AHMI effective July 1, 1984. The board assumed full responsibility as fiscal agent for the grants. As an organization, AHMI was governed by an eleven member board of directors and seventeen member advisory board from various professions.\textsuperscript{22} During fiscal

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 42.

\textsuperscript{21}Thao Diary, June 1984, Paoze Thao, Chicago, Illinois.

\textsuperscript{22}HMong Center, Minutes of Joint Meeting of the Interim Governing Committee of the HMong Center and the Board of the Association of HMong in Illinois, Meeting of 7 June 1984.
year 1984-1985, AHMI received $150,000 from various sources to provide services to Mong refugees in the Chicago area. (See the breakdown below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Funding</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$59,000</td>
<td>Social Service from IDPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>Highland Lao Initiative, IDPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 9,200</td>
<td>MAA Development Fund, IDPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 2,500</td>
<td>Illinois Art Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 4,000</td>
<td>Contributions from communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$149,700(^{23})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the two former presidents who utilized centralization for governing the association, the new AHMI president employed decentralization and a team management approach to restore unity and confidence of the Mong refugees in Illinois. The approach included the allocation of responsibilities to each board member, the rotation of AHMI board meetings to various communities in Illinois, the recognition of local Mong leadership to strengthen its infrastructure, the alternation of Mong New Year celebration to various Mong communities in Illinois, and the revision of AHMI bylaws. These changes were necessary elements for AHMI to become a viable and effective community service organization.

A resolution was made during the AHMI board meeting in Dixon, Illinois on June 28, 1984 to delegate responsibilities to each board member. (See Table 13).

The Mong communities in Illinois were dispersed in Chicago, Wheaton, Dixon, Rochelle, Ottawa, Danville, Moline, Rockford/Belvidere, Hanover Park/Barrington, Kankakee, and Princeton.

The board also adopted a logo for AHMI. It was circular in form with the word "Association of HMong in Illinois," and "AHMI" within a drawing of the State of Illinois.\(^{24}\)

In July 1984, AHMI received additional funding from the Highland Lao Initiative (HLI) grants in the amount of $75,000. Three staff were added to extend services: Hu Xiong, former AHMI president, was selected as HLI Coordinator of the seven HLI funded sites in Illinois; Susan Wood as a job developer (and later Beu Xiong); and Pa Ly as a job counselor.

To strengthen the infrastructure of the Mong community in Chicago, an executive order was signed by AHMI board president to appoint Thai Thao as area chief of the Mong in Logan Square and treasurer; Xia Lee Xiong, area chief in Uptown; and Fay Ching Xiong, area chief in Albany Park. These chiefs performed special tasks by assisting AHMI in conflict resolution, in cultural, educational, and athletic events.\(^{25}\)

Each AHMI board member was active in his area of responsibility, notable by two major accomplishments. The first task was the development of a Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for AHMI by Koua Xiong, first Vice-

\(^{24}\)Association of HMong in Illinois (AHMI), Minutes of Meetings of the Board of AHMI, Meeting of 28 July 1984, Dixon, Illinois.

\(^{25}\)AHMI Executive Order by the AHMI President, 11 September 1984, Chicago, Illinois.
president and Social Services Commissioner. AHMI board adopted it for implementation as of July 1, 1985. AHMI was the first of the Southeast Asian mutual assistance associations in the Chicago area to undertake such a task.26

The second major accomplishment was the revision of AHMI bylaws. There was no room for continued board leadership development within the organization. Every two years, there was a turnover of the entire board of directors on election day. Since this was a crucial component for AHMI, certain provisions of AHMI bylaws were revised.

In the interim, AHMI board adopted a resolution to add four new board members (Ching Xiong and Blong Xiong from Chicago, Shong Cheng Thao from Ottawa, and Sao Moua from Joliet). This addition was to institute the notion of continuation to board development and community leadership development. If these structural changes had been accepted by the Mong community in the next election, the revised bylaws would be in effect. According to the plan, five board members’ terms were up for election in 1986, six in 1987, and four in 1988.27

AHMI board held a retreat on December 14-15, 1985

26AHMI, Minutes of Meetings of AHMI Board, Meeting of 3 November 1984, Ottawa, Illinois.

in Joliet to plan for the development of AHMI center. The retreat was made possible by a grant from the Community Development Project of IDPA. To provide effective services to the Mong communities in Illinois, a needs assessment was to be done. A consultant was hired to design the survey package. The plan was to use the existing AHMI resources and AHMI staff to assist in conducting the surveys. When the community needs were identified, projects could be designed in response to the related needs. In order to develop the Mong communities statewide, local leaders needed leadership training.28

Nevertheless, an atypical phenomenon emerged. An AHMI board member designated a former AHMI staff to attend this retreat on his behalf. On December 15, 1985, he disrupted AHMI board's meeting when they discussed the election process. The board wanted to adopt their plan of staggered elections for board members (described above). He wanted to elect only nine. This signaled the beginning of the AHMI staff's disorder in early January 1986 described later.29

In December 1985, two new programs expanded under subcontracts. Pa Chia N. Lee was hired with Chinese Mutual Aid Association (CMAA) as part of the Opportunities for


29AHMI, Minutes of Meetings of the AHMI Board Retreat, Meeting of 14-15 December 1985, Joliet, Illinois.
southeast Asian Women program. Meng Xiong was hired as youth Specialist under a subcontract with Alternatives, Inc. AHMI received a total of $189,000 to provide employment, adjustment, social services, community development, women's and youth services in fiscal year 1985-1986.30

The needs assessment for the Mong community development project was slowed down by a series of events involving an AHMI staff strike that extended to the Mong community in Chicago. AHMI board undertook an onerous task for the remainder of their term. The following described a series of events that led to AHMI staff’s strike and later involved the Mong community in the Chicago area.

Five staff wrote a memo directly to AHMI board dated December 30, 1985 to oppose the board’s resolution relative to the community development project. Since it was related to the performance of AHMI, they felt it a conflict of interest. They needed to respond to the urgent needs of the unemployed Mong. Due to the severity of the content of the memo, the AHMI board president referred the staff to the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual. The AHMI board president asked the AHMI director to conduct an urgent meeting with the staff to clarify the project and resolve

30AHMI, Director’s Report by Djoua X. Xiong during AHMI’s Annual Conference and Election of the new AHMI Board, Meeting of 10 May 1986, Truman College, Chicago.
their misunderstanding.\textsuperscript{31} Before the AHMI board had the opportunity to resolve their concern, six staff members exacerbated the situation by filing another petition to AHMI board. This time, additional issues were raised involving salary increases, travel expenses, training and development, and employer-employee interaction. A deadline was set for the board to respond by January 15, 1986; otherwise a strike would proceed. All these phenomena happened on the week when AHMI director was on vacation.\textsuperscript{32}

Since the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual of AHMI took effect on July 1, 1985, it was being tested for the first time. Because the matter involved the chain of command in AHMI center, the AHMI board president referred the matter to the AHMI director for disposition and the staff to the grievance procedures.\textsuperscript{33}

A series of pre-and post-activities involving the strike emerged. The outside window of the director’s office was found broken. It seemed like a bottle from the street was thrown into it. Its remnants were found on the window.

\textsuperscript{31}AHMI, Memorandum by Five Staff Members to the AHMI Board of Directors, Memorandum of 30 December, 1985; by the AHMI Board President to the AHMI Staff Members, Memorandum of 7 January 1986; and by the AHMI Board President to AHMI Director, Memorandum of 7 January 1986.

\textsuperscript{32}AHMI, Petition and Memorandum by AHMI Staff Members to the AHMI Board of Directors, 2 January 1986.

\textsuperscript{33}Memorandum by the AHMI Board President to the Five AHMI Staff Members, 10 January 1986.
silt. The AHMI director received anonymous death threat letters and phone threats relating to his family's safety.  

On January 15, 1986, six AHMI staff members went on strike. The situation was so intense that the AHMI director had to change the door locks to protect AHMI property. On January 16, 1986, broken keys were found in the door locks. A telephone fraud was found involving AHMI's long distance service amounting to $784.

The AHMI director made several attempts to resolve the AHMI staff strike. He invited the staff to a meeting at the Jewish Federation held on January 20, 1986 to talk about the problems and to find solutions with the MAA Coordinator from the Jewish Federation. The staff responded that it was not worth it to meet with him. They wrote another letter to the AHMI board to resolve their problems by January 26, 1986; otherwise they would involve the local and national media. The AHMI board president urged the staff to attend a meeting scheduled on January 23, 1986 at the Jewish Federation. It was chaired by Koua Xiong, Social Service Commissioner of AHMI Center. The director confirmed the same meeting to the staff. The meeting took place but was not productive. According to Xiong's report:

34Report by the AHMI Director, 6 and 13 January, 1986.

35Memorandum by the AHMI Director to the AHMI Staff Members, 17 January 1986; by AHMI Staff Members to AHMI Director, 20 January 1986; by AHMI Staff Members to AHMI Board of Directors, 20 January 1986; and by AHMI Director to AHMI Staff Members, 20 January 1986.
they asked me as Commissioner on Social Services whether I was able to take action to terminate either the director or the six staff. These are the only 2 options in which they refused to discuss in details before further details could be discussed. I emphasized that further action would depend on how the facts are found. They further insisted that they have no trust in the Director or the Director will not trust them. They rejected this reconciliatory talk if I am unable to make the termination decision as mentioned above. The director had no chance to respond. Since these attempts have not come to any solution. The meeting adjourns at 10:00 A.M.\(^\text{36}\)

Since these two attempts to resolve the strike were unsuccessful, AHMI board president called an emergency board meeting to study the issues relating to strike and seek a solution to the problem. After a five-hour meeting, the AHMI board passed a resolution to abide by the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual adopted on May 11, 1985.\(^\text{37}\) This meant that the AHMI board found no concrete evidence to support the staff's claims because they refused to discuss their problems. An ultimatum was given to AHMI director to recall four permanent staff to work while continuing to file their grievance and to discharge the two new staff who were on probation.

On January 30, 1986, some Mong hand-delivered a letter to AHMI board president and director stating the rationale for the returning of the six staff members. It

\(^{36}\text{Meeting with the AHMI Staff Members at the Jewish Federation by Koua Xiong, Vice-President and Social Service Commissioner of the AHMI Center, 23 January 1986.}\)

\(^{37}\text{AHMI, Meeting of the AHMI Board of Directors, Meeting of 25 January 1986, Ottawa, Illinois.}\)
specified an individual should be chosen to remain in the AHMI center to diffuse the tension in the AHMI center. Since the staff members had pledged "to stick together," the four staff decided not to return to work. In the afternoon, another letter was hand-delivered to the AHMI board president stating that the community might take the matter into its hands. 38

On January 31, 1986, the AHMI director terminated the employment of the four AHMI staff members. A staff member filed a grievance against the AHMI with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). After some investigations conducted by an NLRB agent and a defense by General Counsel Patricia Cosentino of Travelers and Immigrants Aid for AHMI, the charge against AHMI was withdrawn on March 4, 1986. 39

All steps were taken by AHMI director and board to seek a positive solution to end the staff's strike. However, the staff refused to cooperate and kept insisting it wanted to meet with the entire board. The result was chaos and turmoil. On February 10, 1986, the staff along with some Mong families took part in a demonstration outside of AHMI Center. State Coordinator Edwin B. Silverman for the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) of Illinois

38 An Unsigned Letter by Some Mong Community Members to the AHMI Board President and AHMI Director, 30 January 1986.

39 Grievance by Pa Chia N. Lee Against the AHMI Center Filed with the National Labor Relation Board, 31 January 1986.
Department of Public Aid (IDPA) in conjunction with John H. Ballard, the MAA Coordinator from the Jewish Federation, intervened in the crisis. Instead of fully supporting the AHMI board's leadership and supporting the staff terminations, their position was to review the staff grievances again and to seek reconciliation.

On March 9, 1986, the AHMI board president found a white bag containing a scoop of rice, two white chickens and a white pigeon with their heads chopped off outside his apartment. He called five individuals to witness the event (a board member, Je Siong; three Mong Area Chiefs, Fay Ching Xiong, Xia Lee Xiong, Thai Thor; and a Mong Christian leader, Ge Vang). This was an act of Mong black magic to place the AHMI board president under the influence of a voodoo spell.\(^40\) Voodoo is defined as:

> a religious cult characterized by a belief in sorcery, fetishes, and rituals in which participants communicate by trance with ancestors, saints, or animistic deities. Or a charm, fetish, spell, or curse believed by adherents of voodoo to hold magic power.\(^41\)

Silverman convened a meeting at AHMI Center on March 8, 1986 to include the AHMI staff, Mong community, AHMI board, and AHMI director. After a long meeting which lasted for sixteen and a half hours from March 8, 1986 to the early morning of March 9, 1986, the board maintained a


firm stand on their previous resolution. The board voted six to three to reinstate the employment of four permanent staff but to discharge the two on probationary status.

Silverman reconvened another AHMI board meeting on March 15, 1986 at 624 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. He made a new motion for the AHMI board to vote again to rehire the six staff. Knowing that Silverman had deepened his involvement in AHMI's affairs, the AHMI board president made a firm statement not to vote on this matter. Twelve board members were present. Excluding the AHMI board president's vote, the result was six to five for the reinstatement of the entire six staff.\(^42\)

The strike was over. All staff returned to work and services were restored at the AHMI center. However, the consequences of the actions taken by Silverman of IDPA and Ballard of the Jewish Federation on the AHMI board were so significant. The lines of authority and procedures outlined in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual of AHMI were nullified by their action. The staff continued to bypass the AHMI director by writing letters directly to the AHMI board, the Jewish Federation, and IDPA.\(^43\)

\(^{42}\)Memorandum by Edwin B. Silverman, State Coordinator, to the AHMI Board of Directors and the AHMI Director, 10 March 1986 and AHMI, Minutes of Meetings of the AHMI Board of Directors, Meeting of 15 March 1986.

\(^{43}\)Letter by the six AHMI Staff Members to the AHMI Board of Directors, 27 March 1986.
Analysis of AHMI Staff's Strike

In retrospect, the AHMI staff strike involved several determining factors. Issues raised by the staff were inconsistent. The AHMI's problems might have been solved, but the situation deteriorated because of complex hierarchical multi-layers which produced the paradoxical intricacy described below.

The first layer involved a discord between the AHMI staff and director relative to the daily operation of the AHMI center. Because the demand for services from the Mong community had increased, the staff could not tolerate the overwhelming caseload on a daily basis. That resulted in staff burnout, resentment, and insubordination.

The second layer involved a dissension from a former staff member who had lost his job at the termination of the Highland Lao Initiative. By a board member allowing him to attend the board retreat in Joliet, this individual was given the opportunity to initiate a staff revolt. As a background, the Mong may be dissected and dichotomized into fragments along the socio-linguistic and religious lines. By focusing on common denominators along these lines, he received support from the Mong community.

This dialectic view was supported by a report from the AHMI director in the Summer of 1985. The AHMI director speculated that someone secretly compiled a list for some community purposes. It classified the Mong by clan names.
and by religious beliefs. According to the list, sixty-four Mong families accounting for 375 people lived in Chicago area as of July 5, 1985. Forty-eight families were non-Christians with 295 individuals, and sixteen Christian families with eighty persons.⁴⁴ (See the breakdown below).

1. The Mong Still Holding to Traditional Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th># of Families</th>
<th># of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xiong</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vang</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thao</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Mong Christians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th># of Families</th>
<th># of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thao</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vang</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiong</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list was revised to reflect the actual Mong population in the Chicago area as of April 1986. There were sixty-eight families with a total of 374 people. Fifty-two non Christian families with 291 individuals and sixteen Christian families with eighty-three persons. (See the breakdown in the next page).

⁴⁴Report by the AHMI director to the AHMI Board president and Vice-President, 5 July 1985.
1. The Mong Still Holding to Traditional Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th># of Families</th>
<th># of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xiong</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Mong Christians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th># of Families</th>
<th># of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thao</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vang</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiong</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, the underlying chronic issues behind the dispute never surfaced. They were the complex, hidden socio-linguistic variations and religious differences that have been embedded in the Mong community since the turn of this century.

Unlike the separation of church and state in the United States, the underlying cause of the staff strike at AHMI center was perhaps the socio-linguistic variations and religious difference between the Mong animists and the Mong Christians discussed in Chapter II. After all, the AHMI board president and the AHMI director were both Christians. The secret list may indicate that some staff may have been thinking about politicizing the AHMI by portraying its AHMI director as a vulnerable target because of his religion.

Assistant director Nancy Gittleman of the AHMI center
asserted in her report:

They [staff] mentioned that they had planned to hold a meeting with the Hmong community if things did not go as they planned, to elect their own Board and oust the present Board. They felt very strongly about this and the beliefs they have about their grievances.45

The AHMI requested the Republic Telcom to investigate the alleged telephone fraud. The investigation indicated that one new AHMI board member and his newly-wed wife in Chicago had engaged in the unauthorized usage of the long distance of network for personal and family business. The board voted him out as a board member and required that he pay restitution to AHMI.46

The third layer involved the intervention from the funding sources, MAA Coordinator John H. Ballard of the Jewish Federation and State Coordinator Edwin B. Silverman, Refugee Resettlement Program of IDPA. In portions of a memo from Ballard to Silverman, Ballard stated:

I [Ballard] fear we may have intruded too far into AHMI’s affairs in our desire to help resolve the breach. True, the staff are back, and this can be justification for the hard line we took with the board on March 15. We will never know whether four staff might have come back in a week or two if we had let matters lie. But I cannot help but wonder about the price exacted in pride etc. from key AHMI officers. The simple fact is that on the 15th we really didn’t persuade many persons; if Paoze had voted, the previous decision would have remained in effect.

45Report by Assistant Director Nancy Gittleman of the AHMI Center, 15 January 1986.

46Letter by Kathy Lenertz, Fraud Collection Department of Republic Telcom to an AHMI Board Member in Chicago, 6 March 1986 and AHMI, Minutes of Meetings of the AHMI Board of Directors, Meeting of 15 May 1986.
So, in a sense, you and I and the staff won one. To go farther and authorize some token compensation runs a great risk of further eroding the confidence of key board members in themselves and in us. I think we need to let them win one now.\(^47\)

After this intervention, key AHMI officers lost their confidence in Silverman, Ballard and in themselves. The Chicago Mong began to move out of state.

On May 10, 1986, the revised bylaws of AHMI were presented to the Mong community for consideration but were rejected. The entire AHMI board was replaced at the end of its term.\(^48\) A few months later, the AHMI director resigned. AHMI was defunded in 1987 and dissolved as an organization in 1988.

**Conclusion**

Chapter IV examined the process of Mong resettlement in Chicago. It included the initial reception and placement by the VOLAGs. In Chicago, three methods of refugee resettlement were employed: the traditional sponsorship method, the bilingual and bicultural sponsorship method, and the case management sponsorship method. This chapter also discussed the refugee program development and the Mong resettlement. The Mong as a group went through a

\(^{47}\) Memorandum by John H. Ballard, MAA Coordinator of the Jewish Federation to Edwin B. Silverman, State Coordinator of the Refugee Resettlement Program of Illinois Department of Public Aid, 3 April 1986. A Copy of the Memo was given to the AHMI Board President during the Second AHMI Board Retreat in Wood Stock, Illinois on April 3-5, 1986.

\(^{48}\) AHMI, Minutes of Annual Meeting and Election, Meeting of 10 May 1986, Truman College, Chicago, Illinois.
difficult adjustment period. The discussion entailed the rise and fall of the Association of Hmong in Illinois established to aid Mong resettlement during 1978-1989.

In Chapter V, we shall investigate through case studies the problems of cultural and educational adjustment of some individuals who experienced the process in Chicago.
CHAPTER V
THE PROBLEMS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

As described in Chapter IV, the Mong experienced difficult adjustment problems in the Chicago area. Chapter V examines the educational implications of the Mong resettlement during 1978-1987, the focus of this study.

Research Design and Setting

Through use of historical and qualitative methodologies, four categories of persons were identified and surveyed in two major areas, resettlement and education. The categories involved the Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs), Mong parents and community members, Mong students, and professional staff from various educational institutions. To ensure a diversity of perspectives, four sets of interview questions were devised along the framework of Neuenschwander's Oral History to examine issues to be discussed during the course of the interviews.¹

Subjects were selected based on their availability and their experience on Mong resettlement. Each was briefed about the procedures and was asked to sign a consent form as a participant in the study. Some interviews were conducted in Mong. For some who preferred not to be identified, pseudonyms were used to respect their confidentiality and

anonymity. The policies and procedures of the Loyola University Institutional Review Board (IRB) were strictly adhered to because human subjects were involved in the study. The data obtained were two-fold: first narrated by the Mong themselves and second by the refugee-serving professional. Their stories perhaps best illuminated the problems of Mong cultural and educational adjustment in Chicago.

In light of the many subjects, the categories were examined in a sequential order: VOLAGs representatives, Mong parents and community members, Mong students, and professional staff from various educational institutions.

**VOLAGs' Representatives**

Five VOLAGs representatives participated in this study: Virginia Koch, Mary Wodarczyk, Bachnguyen Lee, Lindsay Cobb, and Djoua X. Xiong.

**Factual Identification of the VOLAGs' Representatives**

Virginia Koch, Associate Director of Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA), has worked with the agency since 1976. TIA first assisted Cuban and Hungarian refugees in 1956-1958 and resettled refugees from Southeast Asia in 1976. TIA resettled about 2,000 Mong and employed up to four Mong workers to assist in the resettlement.²

Mary Wodarczyk has been Program Director for the

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²Interview with Virginia Koch, tape recording, Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Chicago, Illinois, 1 June 1992.
Refugee Program at Catholic Charities (CC) since 1976. She initially assisted the resettlement of two groups of Vietnamese refugees from Ft. Chaffe, Florida and Ft. Pendleton, Pittsburgh in 1975. Catholic Charities has resettled fifty-four Mong families with 224 people since 1979.³

Bachnguyet Le, a refugee from Vietnam, is a CC case manager. She speaks Lao and, since 1980, has assisted refugees from Southeast Asia in their adjustment to living in the Chicago area.⁴

Lindsay Cobb is a Language Missionary among Asians for the Uptown Baptist Church. Since 1978, he has resettled twelve Mong families, totalling seventy-five people, through the Illinois Conference of Churches (ICC). During this period, Cobb learned to speak Mong.⁵

Djoua X. Xiong, former Director of the Association of Hmong in Illinois (AHMI), has been Site Director of World Relief in the DuPage Office since 1983. He has helped to


⁴Interview with Bachnguyet Le, tape recording, Catholic Charities of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 3 June 1992.

⁵Interview with Rev. Lindsay Cobb, tape recording, Uptown Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois, 29 May 1992.
resettle about 1,500 Mong.⁶ (See the factual identification of the Mong community members and parents for more details).

**Findings of Cultural Adjustment Problems: VOLAGs’ Perspectives**

The findings revealed that the first Mong were resettled by Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA) in 1976. Described as "English speaking without being English literate," the Mong’s occupational background was "military related, rice-farmers (for men), and homemakers (for women)." TIA referred Mong to Jewish Vocational Services for job placement whereas Catholic Charities, Illinois Conference of Churches, and World Relief utilized their own resources. In Chicago, Mong worked as factory workers, janitors, light assemblers and cleaners. They liked to live together as a group. The clan system contributed to their adjustment. Koch stated that "they were not adrift as other groups." Mong females learned English, adjusted faster than their spouses, and shared more responsibilities as providers. Koch witnessed:

some very worn-out Mong women because...basically the role that shifted...they are not just both roles...the Mong women did start to work as soon as they got some...English, although the men were certainly one group where nobody held back from work...it’s a hard working group of people...but the Mong women also continued...pregnancies and delivery of children and taking care of those children...taking care of the house as well as do the jobs and I think...that is very

difficult thing to do.\textsuperscript{7}

From interviews with the VOLAGs, the Mong demonstrated needs for larger housing units, translation, Americanization, and paper-based mentality. For example, some Mong received advertisements in the mail like pizza sales or car repairs. They brought the mails for Cobb to sort for them. They believed that those were significant papers. The whole western medical system was foreign to them. Sometimes, the cultural differences resulted in cultural clashes between Mong tradition with the American culture, e.g. surgery, Mong women's resistance to male doctors' examination, and drawing blood for diagnostic purposes. The health problem was overwhelming at the beginning, including vision, hearing, and dental needs.

Abraham pointed out that the Assyrians, bonded by Christianity, adjusted well to the western culture in Chicago.\textsuperscript{8} In contrast, the Mong held on to their tradition. A case of "Yuav Nam Tij" involved a marriage of a Mong younger brother to his sister-in-law (twenty years older than him). Another case involved a female, second wife of a Mong resettled in California. After she became a Christian, her husband reclaimed her. Cobb intervened in this case because polygamy was against the law in the United States.

\textsuperscript{7}Koch, interview.

\textsuperscript{8}May Abraham, "Assyrian Ethnicity in Education in Chicago" (ED. D. Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 1984), 62-86.
some teenager problems also existed in the Mong community involving a Mong wanting to abduct a Spanish girl for his wife. The police labeled it as an act of kidnapping which was a serious federal offense. However, no action was taken. Several incidents involved Mong teen pregnancies that were eventually settled by the clan modality within the Mong community. The Mong clan leaders of the parties involved resolved these problems by either arranging for the parties to get married or paying a fee to save face of the girls in case the teens did not want to get married.

The VOLAGs noted that the Mong adjusted amazingly well. The elderly held on to what they had cherished in Laos. The Mong adults found jobs, became providers and instilled values to their children. The youth enrolled in the American educational system and studied hard. The children made a value judgement to adapt the Mong tradition and adopt the American culture. Some of the programs that worked well with the Mong were the English classes provided by the Chicago Urban Skills, socialization programs of the Mong association, church programs, Mong gardening, and craft projects.

A typical Mong family averaged about five to seven people. The birth rate was high whereas the mortality was considerably low. The Mong community in the Chicago area was stabilized until 1983 when two-thirds outmigrated to

9Le, interview.
Minnesota, California, and Wisconsin in search for smaller towns, jobs, vocational training, education, and family reunification. The Mong extended family constellation and the clan modality influenced secondary migration to a new territory. Those Mong who remained in the Chicago area were often those who had purchased homes, or who had secured fulfilling employment.

A horrifying phenomenon -- Sudden Unexplained Death Syndrome (SUDS) -- emerged in Chicago. A fifty-year old man, Nao Soua Thao, arrived in Chicago in July 1983 and died in his sleep in September. Three months later, his twenty-year old son came to Chicago in December and died in the same manner a week later. The autopsy could not reveal the cause of their death.

Findings on Educational Adjustment Problems: VOLAGs' Perspectives

In Laos, Mong males received one to two years of education in the Lao language whereas Mong females received almost none. The first large group of Mong to enter the United States did not receive English language training in the refugee camps nor did they have appropriate orientation. Later in the resettlement process, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) required refugees in transit to go through a twelve-week English course before coming to the United States. However, this was too late to benefit most Mong. In Chicago, the Mong were required to attend English classes at Truman College or Hilliard Adult
Education Center. Their children enrolled in the Chicago public Schools (CPS) where special bilingual programs were designed to meet their needs.

At the elementary school level, whereas the Mong parents brought the notion of "teacher knows best," their children came with the concept of respect to teachers. In Laos, their behavior was prescribed and more controlled with little freedom superimposed by dress code, relationship, and attitude. The VOLAGs agreed that no major problems existed at the elementary school level. However, Mong students had difficulty in acclimation and cultural differences. A Mong student wore neither shoes nor gloves to school in the midst of Winter. Another Mong female student who did well in class was given the opportunity to attend summer camp. However, her father objected to the idea. It was not customary for Mong girls to be away from home without parental supervision.

At the secondary school level, VOLAGs officials concurred that the intergenerational gap between Mong parents and Mong students seemed to widen. Mong Students had more freedom of choice; therefore, some acted "bizarre, troublesome, and hysterical to parents due to peer pressure." A Mong girl was not allowed to see a movie. When Le intervened, her mother told Le that:

I don't worry about the movie but I worry about what
happens after the movie.\textsuperscript{10}

One VOLAG representative sympathized with Mong parents who discouraged their children in developing friendships with Americans because of fearing gangs and drugs. Prejudice also emerged in school. Cobb stated that a Mong student was attacked because he was different. Le commented that Mong parents tended to overprotect their daughters when dating non-Mong. A Mong girl dated a non-Mong but kept it secret from her parents. When they knew about it, they warned her boyfriend to stay away from her.

Mong parents objected to the teaching of sex education and the legal definition of child abuse as stated by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Schools gave children so much freedom that they became so independent and, as a result, disobeyed their parents. Like the Vietnamese, the Mong used home remedies such as "coin rubbing" for the relief of a headache. The Mong believe that headache was caused by tremendous pressure in the head. Using coin with some ointment to rub gently the forehead of an individual would provide some relief for the pressure and would cure the headache. The mark on the forehead might be misinterpreted as an evident symptom of child abuse.

Mong parents set a high expectation for their children. Mong children were looked upon as their future

\textsuperscript{10}Le, interview.
social security. Mong parents were concerned that their children might lose the connection with the traditional values and put them in nursing homes. Girls were frustrated because their brothers did not take a fair share in the work at home. Overall, there were possibly more dropouts than graduates due to early marriages.

In Laos, parents entrusted their children's education to the teachers and schools. This was the rationale why there was less or no parental participation with PTAs. The language barrier was another factor that prevented them from attending those meetings. Though Mong parents remained passive in school activities, they wanted the teachers and schools to be stricter.

At the college level, a VOLAG representative commented that it was not an easy transition for Mong students to go from high schools to colleges. They seemed to lose their way in the larger, more impersonal college setting.

Mong Parents and Community Members

Six parents and community members participated in the study: Youa Kao Vang, Djoua X. Xiong, Ia Yang, Je Siong Pao Choua Vang (pseudonym), and Cher Pao Yang.

Factual Identification of Mong Parents and Community Members

Youa Kao Vang, seventy-three year old former chief of village in Navang district from 1948-1961, joined the Lao Army in 1961, and became a colonel in 1967. His family was
airlifted from Laos to Thailand in May 1975. He remained in
Thailand until 1987 when his family of seven people came to
Chicago through the sponsorship of Travelers and Immigrants
Aid.¹¹

Djoua X. Xiong, a thirty-nine year-old student
in business administration from Kiao Ban district, escaped
on foot to Thailand. On his way, his mother and sister
drowned. He was resettled in Carbondale, Illinois in 1976
through Tolstoy Foundation and was later relocated in
Wheaton where his father and a brother from Columbus, Ohio
reunited with his family.¹² (See the factual identification
of the VOLAGs earlier in the chapter).

Ia Yang, a forty-five year old widow of a Mong
soldier killed during the Lat Huong and Lat Seng battle in
Laos in 1968-1969, was sponsored by Lutheran Immigration and
Refugee Service (LIRS) to Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1978. Her
family of four people moved to Chicago in 1978. In Chicago,
she has worked as a factory worker.¹³

Je Siong, fifty-four year old former teacher from
Navang district and later Phaxay district, studied
agriculture in Poland, returned to Laos, and worked in the
Lao Agricultural Department. His family of six arrived in

¹¹Interview with Colonel Youa Kao Vang, tape recording,

¹²Xiong, interview.

¹³Interview with Ia Yang, tape recording, Chicago,
Illinois, 8 June 1992.
Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1976 through LIRS and moved to Chicago in 1978. He was a factory worker and currently is a teacher’s aid at Stewart School.\(^{14}\)

Pao Choua Vang (pseudonym), forty-one year old former soldier from Bo Ong district, worked for USAID from 1964-1975. His family of five sought refuge in Thailand in December 1975. He was among the first two Mong families resettled in Chicago by Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA) in March 1976. Between 1976-1979, he organized a Mong Christian Fellowship that converted many Mong refugees to Christianity. Vang has worked as a machine operator.\(^{15}\)

Cher Pao Yang, a forty-eight year old man from Long He district, was trained to be a medical assistant in 1962-1963. He worked in refugee hospitals in Xieng Khouang, Laos until 1975. His family of five came to Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1976 and moved to Chicago in 1978.\(^{16}\)

Findings of Cultural Adjustment Problems: Perspectives from Mong Parents and Community Members

The Mong parents escaped from Laos to Thailand in 1975. Xiong, Vang, and Yang were in Nong Khai Refugee camp and transferred to Nam Phong, and Ban Vinai refugee camps. Ia Yang, Siong, and Youa Kao Vang went directly to Nam Phong

\(^{14}\)Interview with Je Siong, tape recording, Chicago, Illinois, 2 June 1992.


\(^{16}\)Interview with Cher Pao Yang, tape recording, Chicago, Illinois, 22 May 1992.
Refugee camp. Xiong described the condition of Nong Khai camp in 1975 as:

the most...the terrible camp that we faced was Nong Khai camp and Nam Yao camp. Nong Khai camp where I was... there were no shelters...there were no woods for firewood...there were nothing to build our own shelters...and there were no foods...so when we first arrived we had to sleep around the police compounds... outside edge during the day and the night mosquitoes bite all day long and they are malaria mosquitoes so anyone gets bites, gets sick and that was monsoon too. That was in June, July...it was so rainy...during the night it rained so heavily...there were no shelters... people just used plastic to make their own shelters... and the wind blows over the mountains and the water sprang out of the irrigation fields and it’s floating so all of the fire were all extinguished...(laughing) you cannot sleep so the kids and the parents stand up at the irrigation fields like standing all night until the morning until they can find their way out because they can’t go out...if they go out you got shot or they got robbed by bandits or pirates that you don’t know."¹⁷

Namphong, a military training center, was no more than a concentration camp surrounded by barbed wires. Mong were restricted to remain within the camp; otherwise they would be confined in Tawb Piv in solitude confinement. Ia Yang’s family received four bowls of rice and four pieces of meat every five-days.¹⁸

Four Mong parents interviewed were admitted to the United States in 1976, one in 1978, and one in 1987. Two were sponsored by TIA, two by LIRS, one by Tolstoy Foundation, and one unknown. Three Mong parents moved to Chicago from out-of-state. The VOLAGs generally provided

¹⁷Xiong, interview.

¹⁸Ia Yang, interview.
them with adequate basic needs except in one case. Xiong stated:

I first came to Carbondale, Illinois...the first two weeks of life there was so terrible and we didn’t have many resources and there were not many people help us so we just ate apples for our meals, for dinner...for breakfast and lunch. I just eat one meal...for a day. I found out that was difficult to live...and there was no job...When we first arrived, we cried a lot.\(^\text{19}\)

Through the intervention of the Sawyers, a missionary couple to Laos, Xiong was able to relocate to Wheaton. Later, a Mong church was organized in Wheaton to provide a support system for the new arrivals.

Life in Chicago was difficult at the beginning. The language barrier was the major adjustment problem. Siong had a cultural shock. Vang experienced such a feeling of homesickness. He claimed that it "cannot be compared to anything." Yang felt isolated because there were "no Mong to talk to." Xiong’s wife experienced a culture shock and "had no one to talk to." When Mong refugees came to the United States, they found themselves in the middle of a new culture completely surrounded by the new environment and new people. This produced the feeling of homesickness, isolation, and disorientation.

Some of the Mong interviewed claimed that Chicago "was good for the educated, had everything for the consumers and goods and complete materials for consumption." However,

\(^{19}\)Xiong, interview.
one parent felt that Chicago had "cultural and racial problem intensified by the rich and the poor." Siong condemned the high rate of robbery, crime, and theft in the Chicago area. Vang said that "everything is bill payment and freedom that is hard to control."

A presupposition question was raised whether they would, knowing what they know now, have remained in Laos or come to the United States. Three cases responded they would have remained in Laos. One was undecided. One did not know and one indicated that he would follow the Mong leaders. Three reported that they had enjoyed higher social status in Laos than in the United States. Their skills would have been more useful in Laos. Five were underemployed in Chicago.

In terms of religious identification, the Mong who resettled in Chicago were basically animists whereas those in the suburbs and down state Illinois were Christians. Two subjects associated animism with Buddhism. Mong Christians claimed they had less religious adjustment difficulties but the animists underwent some changes in their religious practices. They could no longer sacrifice live animals to the deceased at a funeral.

The Mong celebrated some social events such as New Year's Day, involving the entire Mong community. However, some controversy emerged between the Mong Christians and animists. While the Christians wanted to begin the
celebration with prayers and hymns and to end it with benediction, the animists preferred to start and end with a ritual ceremony. Therefore, it was not easy to find a neutral ground between the Christians and the animists.

In Chicago, the perception of Mong leadership was redefined. The leadership changed from military commanders to the intellectual, professional and educated Mong. The new leadership was characterized by possessing information useful in the American culture, the ability to bridge the bicultural gap and a commitment to serve the communities.20

The Mong parents estimated that as many as 4,000-7,000 Mong had made their transition through Illinois. Service cuts may have caused Mong secondary migration to other states. In Laos, the Mong moved by necessity and by war. They travelled on foot. In the United States, the Mong migrated voluntarily by personal automobiles or public transportation.

Five Mong parents knew Mong crafts and customs. They were concerned because their children did not seem to care about preserving Mong crafts and customs. A Mong parent asserted that "my children called me 'old style' when I taught them about Mong crafts and customs."

Mong folktales were engirded with moral and hard work values. Mong parents thought that it was important to preserve and transmit them to their children. They were the

20Ibid.
means to instill morality to Mong children to "live a sensitive and optimistic life," and to "be able to separate good from evil." Superstition was a means to fulfill a wish in the old days. However, the taboos no longer had impact on Mong Christians. The Mong Voluntary Literacy, Inc. (a division of the Moob Federation of America) and the Catholic Mission in French Guyana made concerted efforts to preserve Mong folktales. The Moob [Mong] Federation of America is a national not-for-profit corporation organized to:

aid and assist the Mong refugees from Laos; and to provide social, educational, literature, cultural, historical heritage and economic programs and incentives to these people becoming self-sufficient.  

The Mong animists wanted to preserve Mong music but their children were less interested in it. In addition, the lack of raw materials such as bamboo made it difficult to produce Mong musical instruments even though a few Mong in Minnesota still knew how to make them. There were no formal classes to teach Mong customs, folktales, legends, superstitions, and music but they could be transmitted informally.

Findings of Educational Adjustment Problems: Perspectives from Mong Parents and Community Members

All of the Mong parents interviewed reported that their education was disrupted by the Vietnam war. They had engaged in the fighting with heavy casualties. Xiong lost

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Moob Federation of America, Articles of Incorporation, Seattle, Washington, 13 September 1982.
five people in his family, including his mother and sister. Ia Yang’s husband was killed in action. Pao Choua Vang’s brother died in the war. Cher Pao Yang was wounded and lost a brother in a battle. Youa Kao Vang, a colonel, directed many battles. However, no subjects were directly involved in earlier wars.

Two of the Mong parents interviewed received no formal education. One had attended elementary school. Two attended high school, and one attended college abroad. Their spouses had no formal education except for one who attended elementary school.

Five Mong parents received no English language training in the refugee camps. One reported that he studied some English for a few weeks. Those who arrived earlier in the United States had less of an opportunity to enroll in English classes. Those recently arrived had more access to English language training. However, there was a big difference in their children’s education. Those of the four Mong parents graduated from college as opposed to the one who arrived in 1987.

Mong children experienced some difficulties at schools. For example, in 1976, whenever the Xiong’s drank milk, it caused them to have diarrhea for six months. The parents did not know how to explain their children’s problem to the school. Because Mong parents and schools were limited in the assistance they could provide to their
children with their school work, Mong children were left alone to study by themselves. Due to the language barrier, Mong parents had a great difficulty in monitoring their children's progress.

Teachers, in Laos, traditionally assumed the role of "second parents." They were more authoritative and strict than teachers in the Chicago area. They instilled morality and enforced strong discipline such as corporal punishment so Mong children were more disciplined. However, their methods of instruction were limited to rote memorization or "par-coeur" (learning by heart). Teachers in the Chicago area tended to involve parents in educating their children and constantly changed their methods of instruction to maximize their students' learning ability. However, they sometimes lost control of their classes so students "were stubborn and disobeyed teachers, parents, and schools."22

A Mong parent was concerned that his children always spoke English. English was good for their future but his children would forget the Mong language and culture. One parent wanted them to be proficient bilingually in both English and Mong. Though Mong parents neither prohibited nor encouraged their children to develop friendships with Americans, most preferred them to date Mong because others were probably not sensitive to the Mong culture.

22Xiong, interview.
When asked about whether their children obeyed them, the result was a split decision: three parents responded positively and three negatively. Their children were less submissive but more aggressive. If the students had remained in Laos, they would have behaved differently. Two parents reported that their children consulted them for ideas when they wrote compositions.

The Mong colonel preferred private schools that emphasized a dress code and discipline. In this manner, Mong children were less influenced by drugs, gangs, sex, and peer pressures. In Wheaton, a drug prevention program "Say No To Drugs," was implemented to raise the awareness of Mong students. When having differences in opinion, issues were normally resolved at the dinner table. One parent sought an answer through literature. No Mong teen pregnancies were reported except some early marriages. These cases were eventually resolved by the Mong community. The clan leaders met to discuss the cases and reached a decision mutually accepted by the individuals and their parents. They assisted the individuals involved to get married within the Mong tradition. One Mong parent noted that social service agencies should stay out of these problems.

In Laos, at the elementary school level, the curriculum consisted of morality, Lao, arithmetic, physical education, geography, recitation, science, spelling and history. At the secondary school level, the core courses
were French, grammar, mathematics, geography, Bali and sanskrit, history, Lao, and French literature. Elementary schools ranged from two to five classrooms except in the urban areas. One teacher taught all of those classes. Students memorized lessons by heart and were required to pass all subjects. Though education was not compulsory, it was very selective and could only reach one out of every seven children.

A Mong parent felt that his children should be literate in mathematics, language, and certain technical skills to become good workers. Mong parents resented the teaching of sex education, home economics, rhythmics, and dancing classes. They thought that these classes would affect their children's development of good attitudes and high morality. Three parents emphasized the teaching of specialized skills. A Mong parent stated that his children knew the theoretical framework well but lacked practice. Teachers should also relate theory to application so that his children could function in their daily tasks. He wondered whether teachers held back some knowledge.

Although Mong parents were inactive in PTA meetings, they picked up report cards and discussed their children's progress with teachers. Due to the language barrier, they contacted schools through third parties.

**Mong Students**

Based on their relationship with Mong parents and
community members, five students participated in the study: Wang Vang (brother of Pao Choua Vang), Gwaub Thao, Bee Lee (son of Ia Yang), Sam Yang (pseudonym and son of Cher Pao Yang), and Pa Chia N. Lee, sister of Xeng L. Naohlu and the only Mong female student in the study.

Factual Identification of Mong Students


Gwaub Thao arrived in Des Moines, Iowa through USCC in 1978. He attended Franklin Junior High in 1978, North High School in Des Moines, Iowa in 1981, then Ottawa High School in Ottawa, Illinois in 1982 where he graduated in 1983. He took courses at Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby and then transferred to the National College of Education (now National Lewis University) in Evanston, Illinois in 1984. He received a bachelors’ degree in education in 1990 and moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.²⁴

Bee Lee arrived in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1978. After moving to Chicago, he attended Goudy school in 1978,


²⁴Interview with Gwaub Thao, tape recording, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 31 May 1992.
Nicholas Senn High school in 1981, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UIC) in 1986 in computer science. He got married and dropped out of UIC.\textsuperscript{25}


Pa Chia N. Lee first arrived with her family of nine people in Hawaii in 1977 through VIVA, Inc. She attended high school in Hawaii, Nicholas Senn High school in Chicago in 1978, Northern Illinois University in 1981, North Park College in 1982, and Northeastern Illinois University where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in computer science.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{Findings of Cultural Adjustment Problems: Perspectives from Mong Students}

Only one Mong student was airlifted to Thailand. The rest escaped on foot, by car, and by boat. Two came to the United States in 1976 and three in 1978. Three were placed in Namphong and Ban Vinai refugee camps, one in Nong Khai camp and another was too young to remember. Three

\textsuperscript{25}Interview with Bee Lee, tape recording, Chicago, Illinois, 16 June 1992.

\textsuperscript{26}Interview with Sam Yang (pseudonym), tape recording, Chicago, Illinois, 22 May 1992.

\textsuperscript{27}Interview with Pa Chia N. Lee, tape recording, Chicago, Illinois, 7 July 1992.
students studied basic English taught by Mong in the refugee camps. No agencies provided English instruction at that time. Five students knew some relatives living in Chicago in the early 1980’s. Two were sponsored by ACNS affiliates, two by USCC, and one by LIRS.

Life in Laos was "simple, easier, and dull." In Chicago, one Mong student "had difficulty going to the bank, market, and social service agency." The other described life was hard at first but easier later. Another was extremely homesick because he was separated from his parents.

Their most difficult problem in Chicago was the language barrier. They liked the freedom and opportunity in education. However, they criticized that some students went out of line with less respect for parents and teachers. The law worked both ways, either to protect or harm people, depending on how it was interpreted. A student disliked the multi-ethnicity in the United States. Another learned more from his teachers in the United States than those in Laos but had to work harder. One Mong student hated the violence, vandalism, and murder in Chicago.

All of the Mong students interviewed had relatives in other countries but rarely corresponded with them. A presupposition question was raised, knowing what they know now, whether they would have remained in Laos or come to the United States. Mong students preferred coming to the United
states for more freedom and greater opportunity. Two would have remained in Laos, whereas one would not have come to the United States without his parents.

Mong students referred Mong religion to "ancestor worship" or "spiritualism." One stated that "people never go to church." There were a few Mong Christian families in Chicago. Two respondents stated that Christianity and animism were different but did not go into details.

Mong students admitted that they had limited knowledge of Mong crafts because the skills were culturally prescribed for Mong women. However, they believed that Mong crafts should be preserved because they were unique and different from the rest of the world. They were considered a part of the Mong culture.

Five students knew Mong customs to a certain degree and felt that the Mong tradition of respect should be preserved. Lee stated:

in Mong customs if you don't respect parents, you are nothing. Customs distinguished a culture. If we don't conserve our customs, we don't conserve our culture. Then, it will disappear.\(^{28}\)

Though there were no formal classes, Mong customs could be learned from clan leaders and grand parents. A student mentioned that his parents did not tell him about Mong folktales, legends, and superstition. Most students reported that they no longer believed in superstition. Only

\(^{28}\)Wang Vang, interview.
one student still believed in a custom that prohibited the Yang to eat chicken’s hearts. Although Mong students did not know how to play a Mong musical instrument, they expressed an interest in Mong music which they regarded as an integral part of the Mong culture.

Findings on the Educational Adjustment Problems: Perspectives from Mong Students

All five Mong students' education had been disrupted by wars. The consequences resulted in family separation in the case of Wang Vang during his escape to Thailand and in the death of Bee Lee’s father. During the escape to Thailand, a boat turnover caused a tragic death of Sam Yang’s relatives. An uncle of Pa Chia N. Lee was killed. The impact on Bee Lee’s family was enormous. His life would have been different if his father were still alive.

Five students reported that they had attended an elementary school in Laos. Two had learned some English in the refugee camps but only used it in the United States. Educationally, authority and power in Laos were vested in the teachers, including use of corporal punishment. In Chicago, they were partially assumed by teachers. Mong students felt that their teachers did not get the respect deserved. While teachers in Laos were stricter, their methods of instruction were limited to rote memorization. In contrast, various instructional methods were used by Chicago teachers. They taught students how to relate to
things and to think logically. One reported that she received more help from her teachers in the Chicago than from those in Laos. She made an interesting comment that her English teacher in Hawaii knew how to teach better than the one in Nicholas Senn High school. So far, Mong students got an average grade B and C in their high school courses.

Five students spoke Mong at home and English elsewhere when they socialized with their peers. They felt their parents were not concerned about their English usage. However, Mong was used at home to communicate with their parents.

Most of the students interviewed had between four to twenty American friends throughout their school years. Their parents did not encourage their friendships with Americans. Two felt that their parents would possibly feel sorry, bad, and unhappy if they dated non-Mong. Their parents preferred them to date someone in their own ethnic group. If they had remained in Laos, they would have behaved differently. One stated that he would have married earlier, would have helped his parents farming, and would have missed the opportunity for higher education. Another student asserted that "the way you talk and act, think first." Another indicated that he would have been a totally different person due to the environment.

At the secondary school level, the curriculum consisted of history, reading, grammar, mathematics, French,
art, and religion in Laos. In Chicago, there were various subjects in high schools. One student stated that Nicholas Senn High school put too much emphasis on ESL and neglected other subjects. Lee thought that English was important. Thao asserted that school should teach students to be computer literate. Some subjects taught in school were considered unimportant to Mong students. They were ESL, history, physical education, review on high school materials, and gymnastics.

One Mong student stated that schools should teach Mong and American culture and the bilingual program for the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students. Schools should provide them with more opportunity to learn computer, English, biology, and chemistry to prepare them for college.

At the college level, Mong students experienced some difficulties. Vang had a problem with his roommate relative to playing loud music and poker. Thao could not comprehend the concepts in his reading and had difficulty coping with the dormitory culture and school activities at the National College of Education. Lee did not know how to do research. Yang was caught in the big system of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. As a result, he transferred to a smaller college. Lee had a problem with her nursing faculty who discouraged her from pursuing her career.

Mong students stayed away from drugs, gangs, and
peer pressure. Parental pressure also influenced them to a degree. When having differences in opinion, Mong students normally gave in to their parents. One student chose to ignore his mother. Because their parents were illiterate, Mong students resolved their own school problems. They sought parental guidance when making non-academic decision and needing financial resources.

Mong students reported that schools did not reach out to their parents to involve them in school activities. When there was a problem at school, their parents would go to a third party such as the VOLAGs or Mong community leaders to intercede on their behalf.

**Professional Staff from Educational Institutions**

Five professional staff from various educational institutions participated in the study based on their direct experience with the Mong students in the Chicago area during 1978-1987. These staff members consisted of Jan Smith (pseudonym), Bruce M. Allman, Miriam C. Lykke, Seng L. Naohlu, and Duong Van Tran.

**Factual Identification of Staff from Educational Institutions**

Jan Smith (pseudonym), who preferred not to be identified, was principal of an elementary school (Samuelson School - a fictitious name) of the Chicago Public School in the north side where the majority of Mong students attended. Smith was a former teacher, school counselor, and assistant principal. Since 1990, Smith was appointed as principal by
the school council. Smith estimated that ten Mong students per academic year attended Samuelson School from 1978-1985.29

The numbers of Mong students indicated may have been underestimated. Through interview with VOLAGs, a representative stated that Samuelson was one of the main receiving schools for Mong. Each Mong family had at least three children enrolled in the Chicago Public Schools.

Bruce M. Allman, former bilingual lead teacher at Joan Arai Middle School from 1975-1988, in 1993 was in the same position at Chappell School. About fifteen to twenty Mong students attended Joan Arai Middle school from 1978-1983. The numbers of Mong students were underestimated as well.30

Miriam C. Lykke, former coordinator of TESOL program at Nicholas Senn High School from 1964-1989, is now retired. In 1981, Lykke also coordinated the writing of textual materials for the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students for the Chicago Public Schools for classroom use. The majority of Mong students attended Senn High School.


during 1978-1987.\textsuperscript{31}

Seng L. Naolhu, former coordinator for the Asian bilingual teachers' training program at the National College of Education (NCE) from 1983-1988, is Education Consultant to Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). NCE received funding under title VII to train Asian bilingual teachers. NCE accounted for educating the majority of Mong students in higher education in the Chicago area during 1978-1987.\textsuperscript{32}

Duong Van Tran, former director of the refugee program at Truman College, is now Assistant Dean. Truman College accounted for educating the majority of Mong adult refugees in the Chicago area from 1978-1985.\textsuperscript{33}

Findings of Cultural Adjustment Problems: Perspectives from Staff of Educational Institutions

At the elementary school level, Mong students were placed into grades that corresponded to their ages. Then, supportive services were provided by a Mong bilingual aid. No formal testing was conducted for Mong students at this level. Smith noted their sudden movement to Wisconsin and Minnesota where there was a need for adjustment to new school setting.

At Samuelson School, the Mong bilingual aid

\textsuperscript{31}Interview with Miriam C. Lykke, tape recording, Barrington, Illinois, 29 May 1992.


\textsuperscript{33}Interview with Duong Van Tran, Truman College, Chicago, Illinois, 3 June 1992.
extended a welcome to Mong parents and students and related issues to Smith. Samuelson had a Vietnamese teacher, a Cambodian aid, a Mong aid, and two and a half Spanish teachers. About ten Mong students attended Samuelson School per academic year. Smith commented that Mong students were bright and one was a valedictorian.

At the Junior high school level, some Mong students had some schooling in the refugee camps where they learned some mathematics. However, their English language was very poor. Arai Middle School depended upon its teachers' evaluation for student placement. In 1979, a test, "FLA," was developed as a screening mechanism to determine whether students needed bilingual program and additional ESL services. The test consisted of fifteen questions that required students to repeat five different sentences and to answer ten simple questions in a graduated difficulty. Allman explained that Mong students had many educational needs:

The Mong needed everything... We didn't have anybody in the building that spoke Mong that was educated so they were probably the most needed.34

When queried as to how Arai Middle School met the needs of the Mong students. Allman responded that:

We didn't do very well with the Mong because we didn't have a teacher that can speak the language and also we didn't have a teacher who can speak Lao, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. The only thing that most of them have in common was that they were Buddhists so we use that as a

34Allman, interview.
commonality. They were given English as a Second Language and dumped into the same class. Eventually, we got a Vietnamese teacher and so the Vietnamese didn't go into that class. Eventually, we had a teacher who could speak Lao from Thailand and we kept the Mong in there anyway because of the same nationality even though culture and language were different. It was also a question of space. We didn't have a special space to put them.  

Arai Middle School had difficulty with Mong parents. Described as "very shy about coming to school," Allman asserted that Mong parents "were excessively docile." It was TIA staff that interceded and enrolled Mong children in Arai Middle School. Allman stated that there was nobody from the government to assist them in this process.

Since Arai Middle School's student population spoke over thirty languages, an ethnic student assembly was called every year. Though Arai Middle School involved diversity, it did not encourage separatism. Allman estimated that about fifteen to twenty Mong students enrolled at Arai per year. However, the Mong might have been included with the Lao group. Arai Middle School encouraged Mong parental participation in school activities through flyers.

Allman was responsible to provide the numbers of appropriate minutes of ESL language instructions and to keep track on how students were doing. Marsha Santelli, at one time, wrote a proposal in 1980 to establish a welcoming center at Brennemann School but it was never acted upon.

35 Ibid.
At the secondary school level, Senn High School was the natural place for all high school students in the Uptown neighborhood. Mong students were referred to Lykke and put under her charge. A screening test was conducted orally, followed by a sequence of grammatical survival questions. Because most of the Mong students came to the United States totally unprepared and just followed directions, they were placed in Level One ESL that emphasized basic English with gestures. In Level One ESL, Mong students learned English sounds, sentence structures and phrases. Nicholas Senn High School had five levels of ESL. Due to funding cuts, the levels were reduced to four and then to three. Besides the screening test, a mathematics test was also conducted by a teacher, Kathy Koshaba.

Mong students had no idea about the meaning of science or history. They did not even know their own history. Some knew more English but could not comprehend the meaning underneath. Senn High School attempted to reach out to Mong parents by word of mouth. Because funding was limited, Nicholas Senn High School used some Mong students to interpret for others. Once in a while, Senn requested TIA staff to assist with the assimilation of Mong students.

With a strong commitment, Senn bilingual teachers provided special help to Mong students for reading, writing, and some home visitation. Lykke herself participated in
some community events such as Mong New Year celebrations. Though many Mong attended Senn High School, it was difficult to get an accurate count. Lykke recalled that there were more male students than females.

Lykke intervened in a case of teen pregnancy involving two Mong students at Senn High School. The girl was desperate because her family did not want her and neither did her boyfriend’s family. In Mong custom, when a girl is pregnant, she brings disgrace to her family. She needs to discuss the matter with her boyfriend about the alternatives. She may choose to elope with her boyfriend. If her boyfriend is unwilling to marry her, he would have to live with the consequences of the clans’ resolution. In this case, the Mong community resolved it through Travelers and Immigrants Aid (TIA). TIA staff arranged for a meeting between leaders of the two Mong clans to settle this marriage problem. The boy admitted that he did some wrongdoing to bring disgrace to the girl and her family. As a result, his parents paid a fee valued at approximately $500 in the United States currency to save the girl’s face. The purpose of this fee was to maintain the harmony within the two clans in the Mong community.

At the college level, between 1978-1987, a few Mong students went to various Illinois higher education institutions. A program was singled out for this study. Between 1983 and 1988, National College of Education (NCE)
received Title VII funding for an Asian bilingual teachers' training program. NCE drew on two pools of students. The first pool was to attract former teachers from Southeast Asia. The second pool was to approach Mong high school graduates. Upon the termination of the program, none of the students from the first pool completed the program due to the language barrier and family responsibility. Some students in the second pool graduated from NCE: six Cambodians, ten Koreans, four Mong, six Vietnamese, and three Lao. Three students changed majors.

Before admitting students into the program, a language and mathematics assessment test was conducted to determine their ability. Then, they were placed into one of the five ESL levels for college preparation. Due to their limited English language proficiency, most of the Mong students were placed into Level One ESL. NCE matched thirty cents for every dollar received from Title VII. NCE received about $140,000 a year. Twenty-two percent of the funding was allocated for staff salary and seventy-eight percent was reserved for scholarships for students. NCE also provided $300-$400 per semester as a stipend to each student enrolled in this program.

Around 1985, NCE expanded the program to include the graduate level open to all language minorities. The program attracted over eighty students. Many former teachers from Cambodia and Vietnam took advantage of the
opportunity. However, there were no Mong and only a few Lao in the graduate program. The Lao students failed to produce the equivalency of a bachelors' degree so they dropped out of the program.

The peak of the enrollment was in 1984-1985. In fact, Mong students had no more than six years of education in Laos. In the United States, they were placed in high school grades that corresponded to their ages so they lacked the academic foundation for success in college.

At the adult education level, about seventy-five percent of Mong adults attended the English as a Second Language program at Truman College. After enrolling in the program, they were tested for placement. Truman had three levels of ESL (One-Three). Level One was divided into three sub-levels: Level One C for the illiterate, Level One B for the beginners, and Level A for the advanced. Tran noticed that the educational level between Mong males and females was strikingly different. Mong males had three to four years of formal education whereas Mong females had almost none. Therefore, Mong men demonstrated higher academic competency than Mong women.

In 1980, due to a large influx of the Mong in Chicago, Truman College hired a Mong worker, Kao Vang, to provide orientation and counseling as support services. Truman College used the notional functional method of instruction which emphasized functional communication or
communicative acts and conversational analysis of the English language rather than its grammatical structures. Truman College believed that English language competency was necessary for the refugees' successful adjustment and assimilation. In the past, Truman functioned as a cultural center for many groups to hold their cultural activities.

In 1984-1985, Tran observed a drastic decrease in Mong population in Chicago. From what he learned, the Mong moved from Chicago to California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin due to service cuts.

**Findings on Educational Adjustment Problems: Perspectives from Staff of Educational Institutions**

At the elementary level of education, no major problems stood out for Mong. Mong students looked forward to physical education, reading and to doing well in school. Initially, they clustered among themselves. Later, friendship was developed among bright Mong and non-Mong students. According to Smith, Mong were neither retained nor penalized at Samuelson School for being bilingual.

At the junior high school level, Mong students had problems with the language barrier and racism. African American students often assumed that every Mong student was Chinese. Allman stated that the Mong refused voluntary integration and assimilation. There were some fights in Joan Arai Middle School but Mong students refused to participate. Allman recalled that some African American and Lao students were suspended from school. Allman did not
remember whether any translators were provided in resolving these incidents or whether parents were satisfied with their resolutions. Another problem Mong students had difficulty was related to adjustment to cold weather. Allman did not understand why Mong moved to Wisconsin and Minnesota where it was colder. Perhaps the Mong moved to these two states in search for vocational training, education, public housing, jobs, and family reunification.

Allman further stated that Mong students were exposed to drugs, alcohol, sex, and peer pressure like any other American students in urban school settings. However, no problems existed with the Mong. Being in the Uptown neighborhood, Mong students were very vulnerable. Amazingly, they were not visible outside of school. Because Allman could not speak Mong, he did not know the extracurricular activities of the Mong students outside of the school.

Mong parents never conversed with Allman so he did not know what kinds of knowledge and values they expected the school to transmit to their children. Mong students were encouraged to participate in school activities through their bilingual ESL and regular teachers. Though PTA never existed in Arai, there was a loose parent council of White, African American, and Hispanic parents and a bilingual committee comprised of Hispanic and Vietnamese. However, no Mong parents were involved in these two committee.
When queried how well Mong students did compared to others, Allman reacted:

They were slower. They had more obstacles. The Vietnamese were very quick. The Cambodians were also pretty good as far as learning English...learning math and getting themselves exited from the program. The people who spoke Lao were not quite as sharp as the Vietnamese. They weren’t as motivated. They did all right. And everybody did better than Hispanic students. As a group, Hispanic students stayed in the program a lot longer. The Mong... because of no alphabets, I would say that of the Asian groups, they were the slowest as far as academic achievement but they probably did as well as the Hispanic.³⁶

When asked about the method of instruction found effective to teach Mong. Allman expounded:

We didn’t know what to do...and we just gave them oral English ...a lot of oral English. It was very similar to what happened when our own grand parents came to this country didn’t know Latin alphabets, they just sink or swim. It wasn’t the best thing to do but we didn’t have teachers who spoke the language. And if we had teachers, we wouldn’t have books because there were no books in their native language. So of all groups of children that we had...probably the one that we serviced the worst were the Mong through language obstacles, teacher obstacles...the parents wouldn’t have a vocal, demanding, and appropriate education for the children as required by Lau versus Nichols. And we used to laugh saying that we have to wait for our own students to graduate to come back and teach the other students...because that was when we gonna get the teachers from our own students four or five years later. So the Mong were the hardest to educate. The children weren’t different but the strategies were very, very hard.³⁷

At the secondary school level, Mong students did not know what to expect. They needed to learn so many things. Lykke remembered they liked to do things with their

³⁶Allman, interview.

³⁷Ibid.
hands such as driver education but disliked gymnastics. Being vulnerable to gangs, Lykke recalled, Senn teachers walked Mong students to Broadway Avenue to avoid gangs' attacks. Mong students liked school and did not want the weekends to come. Senn teachers used geography and mathematics done in simple language to teach the concept of past and present, space and time to Mong students. Lykke described that Mong students:

...were hard working. I could remembered some kids who could not even hold on to a pencil. One I remembered in particular...how hard we worked to get her to be able to hold on to a pencil so that she could make marks. 38

Senn High School had over 750 students in their bilingual program. The Mong students also participated actively during the school's international festival by wearing their traditional costumes. Prom had no meaning to Mong students. Relative to progress in school, Lykke asserted that Mong students learned:

in proportion to what he brings to the process. They came pretty unprepared so they could not progress academically. 39

They stayed in school until they either graduated or moved away. Memorization was found as an effective instructional method that Mong students accepted as correct. The approach was good for them to make analogies leading to the development of a conceptual framework. Having the power of

38 Lykke, interview.

39 Ibid.
observation and curious minds, Mong students were able to learn grammar in sequence, understand word boundaries, and recognize the English sentence structures. With a special sense of color, they loved arts. However, putting s endings in English, history and literature were difficult. Lykke thought that emphasis should be on mathematics, English, and science.

At the college level, the most difficult problems dealt with the lack of cultural sensitivity and the burden of passing the English language proficiency test. Since some faculty were not sensitive to their needs, Mong students travelled across town to take the same course offered in a downtown campus where the student population was a little more diverse. In another instance, a Mong student was assigned to do his student teaching in a regular seventh grade class that was predominantly African American and Hispanic. He was intimidated by his students.

In addition, Mong students had difficulty passing the English language proficiency test required by the National College of Education (NCE). The test was also a prerequisite for taking upper level courses. The topics were culturally biased such as one dealing with abortion. Mong students were brought up in Laos where the culture did not emphasize logical and critical thinking. Naohlu requested the NCE English Department to reassign Mong students to do their student teaching in bilingual classes.
and to allow a variety of topics for the English language proficiency test.

Influenced by traditional culture, Mong students stayed away from drug, gangs, or alcoholism. They were family-oriented with a commitment to education for their family, clan, and community. However, their lack of academic background forced them to retire from the program but they still appreciated the opportunity of the scholarships.

There was a lack of Mong parental involvement in the program. Only a few Mong female students attended the program. Therefore, an advisory council was established to orient Mong parents about the program. In addition, Mong students were taken to various boards of education to familiarize themselves with school settings.

Mong students clustered among themselves and others within the same program. No dating between the Mong and others was reported. Academically, Mong students were very disadvantaged. It took the Mong students six years to complete a regular four-year teacher education program. Some had to do student teaching twice and take the English language proficiency test several times. NCE used a quarter system so its classes were not individualized. Mong students preferred to go slowly chapter by chapter and to take examinations. Naohlu reported that Mong students had difficulty taking multiple choice examinations.
At the adult education level, Tran stated that education could not be separated from cultural, political, and economic factors of their past. To explain the process of adjustment of the refugees, Tran referred to his conceptual framework of OverAmericanization. To him, all refugees or new immigrants experience a frustration period. However, their rate of adjustment is different among refugee groups. For instance, a Canadian whose culture is similar to the United States' may adjust faster than a Mong whose culture is diametrically different. English language competency also plays a key role in their adjustment. The language barrier causes regression, aggression, denial, and withdrawal. In addition, the degree of cultural conformity is also different among different refugee groups. Tran assumed that a Canadian may easily blend into the American culture whereas the Mong may either fight or flee from the system. Tran witnessed the massive secondary migration of the Mong from the Chicago area to other states in 1983. Tran thought that some Mong withdrew from the reality of their past, developed a new style of adjustment, and had a tendency to be overAmericanized.

Though Tran did not define OverAmericanization, "ego psychology" may be drawn upon to expound his framework. The new style of adjustment previously mentioned called the "hybrid ego" which Friedman defined as:

the result of mixing two separate plants or animals and getting a new type which is often stronger than
either of their parents. This is the result of combining the refugee's own ethnic cultural ego with aspects of American ego. Refugee children may likely grow up with a hybrid style with a tendency to become overAmericanized in language use and norms distinct from the refugees' and Americans'. Their behavior tends to deviate from the norms towards the extreme.

Mong adults liked their teachers at Truman College. Some faculty even went out of their way to assist the Mong students to sell their textiles. Mong adults were encouraged to participate in social activities. Tran stated that Mong adults did not progress as well as their counterparts from other countries. Teaching an abstract concept to an illiterate adult was extremely difficult so Truman faculty had difficulty moving the Mong from Level One ESL to Level Two.

Funding restrictions did not allow adequate bilingual, bicultural support, and equipments as needed. Tran elaborated:

Truman College was frustrated by funding, the lack of bilingual and bicultural staff, and inadequate comprehensive planning. In some cases, it will give us the feeling that we want to sacrifice one generation and then, we will wait for new, new American generation. That is not quite human, humane, humanistic in our policy and policy implementation in serving the Mong refugees who happened to be the parents of American

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citizens.\textsuperscript{41} Therefore, the Mong were mixed with other groups. When asked about an effective method of instruction for Mong, Tran replied that Truman College did not develop a specific method of instruction for Mong only. However, he stressed the importance of the bilingual and bicultural approach in providing educational and social services to any new refugee groups.

\section*{II. INTERPRETATION}

\textbf{Cultural Adjustment Problems}

The VOLAGs reported that the Mong had difficulty with housing, translation needs, Americanization, lack of paper-work based mentality, misconceptions about the western medical system, and sudden death syndrome (SUDS). Some cultural differences resulted in cultural clashes with the host culture on issues such as polygamy, abduction of a girl for marriage, surgery, intergenerational gap, "Yuav Nam Tij" (involving marriage of a younger brother to his sister-in-law). [In Mong custom, when a husband dies, his wife may remain with her husband's clan. The next brother of her deceased husband was obligated to marry her and care for the children]. In 1983, the Mong community in Chicago began disintegrating by moving to other states. The VOLAGs indicated that the Mong extended family constellation and the clan modality influenced their secondary migration to

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.
other areas.

Mong parents, community members, and students defined their adjustment problems differently from VOLAGs. While the VOLAGs pinpointed specific problems, the Mong stated that their difficulties dealt with cultural shock, the language barrier, homesickness, isolation, and early marriages. All four categories of persons witnessed Mong migration from Chicago to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California. The Mong said that service cuts contributed to their migration. No comments were made by school officials.

**Educational Adjustment Problems**

At the elementary level, the VOLAGs noted that refugee children brought with them a tradition of respect of parents and teachers -- the concept of "teachers know best" to Chicago. Their behavior was prescribed and more controlled. However, they had adjustment problems to the cold weather. They were placed in grades that corresponded to their ages.

Mong parents stated that they felt frustrated by not being able to help their children with their homework. As authoritative figures, teachers in Laos used strong measures to discipline students including corporal punishment. However, their instructional method was limited to rote memorization. Teachers in Chicago were more flexible with their students and were knowledgeable about various methods of instruction. They taught Mong students
how to relate to things and to think logically.

School officials reported fewer problems in adjustment in the elementary school level. Since children learned English faster, it was easy for them to go through the entire cycle of schooling. At the junior high school level, Mong students needed to adjust to everything. The two most difficult problems related to the language barrier and racism. Mong students were reported to resist integration.

At the secondary school level, Mong students had more difficult adjustment problems. Besides being overwhelmed by their daily tasks, Mong students had to learn everything. Some were limited to ESL classes. Their English language proficiency was so poor that they could not be placed in regular classes. They faced the reality of the street gang problem, prejudice, personal and family problem etc... and were caught between the two cultures, that of their parents and their peers.

The approach in Laos was teacher-centered and in Chicago was student-centered. In Laos, teachers were more authoritative and strict but their method of instruction was limited to rote memorization. The use of corporal punishment was often used to discipline students. Mong students received more help from their teachers in Chicago who often did not get the respect from their students.

Various methods of instruction were used to teach children
how to relate to things and to think logically.

At the college level, Mong students were very disadvantaged. Besides the language barrier and familial responsibility, Mong students lacked strategies for studying and the skill of critical reasoning. NCE was not sensitive when assigning Mong students to student teaching in a predominant African American and Hispanic class. They also had difficulty passing the English language proficiency test in coping with the dormitory culture, and lacked the research skills to write their term papers. Mong students were lost in the big university system. Finally, some faculty appeared to be prejudiced against Mong students.

At the adult education level, the majority of Mong students enrolled in Truman College. Its faculty believed that learning English was the key to successful adjustment and assimilation in Chicago. Due to their illiteracy and lack of formal education in Laos, the Mong had difficulty in moving from English Level One to Level Two.

Conclusion

Chapter V examined the problems of Mong cultural and educational adjustment in Chicago during 1978-1987. Culturally, the Mong experienced cultural shock and the language barrier. They had difficulties with cultural difference, diversity, and conformity. Specific problems were the role shift in women, housing, Americanization, paper-work mentality, and misconceptions of the western
medical practices. The Mong were caught between their traditional and the American culture especially in areas such as the legalism of western medical practices, child abuse, and marriage customs. These problems were especially acute in their resettlement in the Chicago area between 1978-1987.

Educationally, from K-5, Mong students had difficulty in acclimation. Some Mong students did not know how to dress appropriately for the cold weather. At the junior high school level, they encountered the language barrier and racism. At the high school level, their problems became intensified. Lacking formal education in their homeland, they were lost in the school system. At the college level, Mong students had to make a tremendous adjustment to the dormitory culture, faculty, their lack of strategy for studying, and difficulty passing the English language proficiency test. At the adult education level, Mong students with very little education had difficulty moving up from Level One to Level Two ESL.

Chapter VI contains a summary and a conclusion of the study along with recommendations.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation investigated the educational implications of Mong resettlement in the Chicago area from 1978-1987 through use of historical and qualitative methodologies. Chapter I presented an historical commentary on the Mong and their cultural background. Having no writing system of their own, early Mong history was recorded in part by Westerners and Chinese. As a people, the Mong have a history of over five thousand years. Two anthropological theories account for the origin of the Mong. One speculates that the Mong was a subgroup of the Turanians, a Caucasoid race from Mesopotamia. The other claims that they came from South Asia.

The commentary also discussed the mistreatment and struggle of the Mong for survival against Sinicization from the Chinese. Incorporated in chapter I were Mong cultural background, demography and geography, family life, religion, social structure, arts and crafts, language, and education.

The Mong population is estimated at six million, living in Asia (China and Southeast Asia), Europe (France and Germany), Australia, North America (Canada and the United States), and South America (French Guyana).
Regarded as the basic nurturing institution, the Mong family formed a household and an extended family unit. The Mong originally were animists but more became Christians through the missionalization of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The Mong’s social structure was organized paternally by the clan system, originating from a common ancestor. Their political system was a loose federation of tribes with an hereditary monarchy. However, the core of the political system remained the patrilineal clan system.

The traditional Mong survived on a self-sufficient agricultural economy. Their traditional arts and crafts displayed fascinating colorful distinctive features. Mong was considered a pre-Sinitic language within the Sino-Tibetan language family. However, little was known about their education in China. As part of their struggle for survival, the Mong migrated to Laos in the early eighteenth century.

Chapter II examined the impact of colonialism and war on Mong. Five major trends were examined: French colonialism, World War II, Vietnam War, Christianity and Mong literacy development, and the internal tripartite conflict within the Lao government.

In the pre-colonial period, influenced by Hindu-Buddhist principles, pagoda schools provided education in Laos. In the colonial period, the French introduced the
European model including its educational system which was implemented in Laos for nearly fifty years. The system was highly centralized and selective. Curricula were based on the French educational pattern. Instruction was conducted in the French language and only a few Mong benefitted from it.

Though World War II had little influence on Mong, its aftermath brought tremendous change in their society. The "Cold War," was the turning point for Mong. During the Vietnam Conflict, the Mong were recruited by the CIA as "U.S. Secret Army in Laos" to fight against the Communists. Another factor was the emergence of Christianity. Many Mong and Khamu were converted to Christianity. This brought the development of Mong orthography by American missionaries in Laos for the first time.

In order to survive the "Cold War," Laos instituted a neutral political system but was caught in the middle of the policy of Communist expansion by the Soviet Union and the Communist containment policy of the United States. This resulted in a long tripartite civil war in Laos lasting until 1975.

Chapter III examined the massive plight of the Mong to seek asylum in Thailand and in the United States. As former employees of the CIA, the Mong were persecuted for political reasons. This chapter described the refugee registration process in Thailand, refugee processing, the
Refugee Act of 1980, the resettlement by the VOLAGs, the Southeast Asian refugees, Mong refugees and their adjustment in the United States, and their secondary migration to various states. The United States federal government provided a one-time funding, "the Highland Lao Initiative," project to stop their secondary migration.

Chapter IV examined the process of resettlement in the Chicago area by the VOLAGs. Three models of refugee resettlement were examined: the traditional sponsorship method, the bilingual and bicultural sponsorship model and the case management sponsorship method. The Refugee Act of 1980 set the tone for the refugee resettlement programs in the United States. The discussion included the development of refugee programs, the Mong resettlement in Chicago, and the rise and fall of the Association of HMong in Illinois.

Chapter V examined the educational implications of the Mong resettlement during 1978-1987 through ethnographic interviews with four categories of persons on two major areas, resettlement and education. The categories included the VOLAGs, Mong parents and community members, Mong students, and professional staff from various educational institutions.

The resettled Mong in the United States displayed many needs such as housing, translation, lack of paper work mentality, Americanization, and difficulty in coping with the western medical system. Some cultural differences
contributed to cultural clashes with the host community. Apparently, these were the causes of their massive secondary migration to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California. Mong parents and students claimed that the most difficult problems at the beginning involved cultural shock and the language barrier. There were concerns raised by Mong parents that their children did not seem to care much about preserving Mong crafts, customs, superstition, folktales, and music.

Educationally, Mong students experienced a lot of difficulties except at the elementary level of school. The older the refugees, the harder their adjustment. At the junior high school level, Mong students had multiple needs. Their most difficult problems involved the language barrier and racism. At the high school level, many Mong were lost in the school system. They had to learn many skills and knowledge ranging from the simple to the complex. Being overwhelmed by daily tasks, they did not know what to expect. At the college level, being accustomed to rote memorization, they lacked learning strategies. They had difficulty in coping with dormitory culture and the faculty.
Recommendations

Coming from a rural background, the Mong experienced tremendous frustration during the initial resettlement period in the Chicago area during 1978-1987. Their lives and education had been disrupted by war. They were illiterate in their own language. Their lack of formal education in Laos makes it difficult for them to make a living in a technologically-developed city such as Chicago. The language barrier impeded them from developing their full potentialities and becoming contributing members in the society. Their difficult adjustment consequently resulted in their massive secondary migration from Chicago to California, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

What should be done if there is a similar challenge in the future regarding refugee resettlement? In order for the Mong or similar groups to have a smooth transition during their initial resettlement in the United States particularly in the Chicago area, the author proposes the following. These recommendations are made to the Mong themselves, Mong students, the VOLAGs, school districts, and higher institutions of learning, and local and federal government agencies involved in resettlement.
To the Mong

Two factors may have held the Mong from fully assimilating to the American culture. One relates to their language barrier that decelerated their rate of adjustment. The second deals with their attitudes that held them back even further. Some Mong still longed to the return to their homeland. In the past two decades, the Mong were influenced by two forms of political leadership. The former influenced many Mong to return to Laos to fight the Communists. The latter focused on community building and development for permanent resettlement in the United States.

The author recommends that the Mong start taking control of their own destiny by focusing on the present and in the future rather than the past. Recognizing that nobody helps them unless they help themselves, they should plan short and long-term objectives for their lives. They should design specific plans of action on how to become economically self-sufficient as soon as possible. The language barrier can be overcome if one tries hard enough. Changing attitudes could be one of the most challenging task in their lives. The older the person, the deeper the attachment to his/her motherland. The Mong leadership at each locality should encourage small-scale economic development projects such as grocery stores, restaurants, and other small businesses that may be achievable and profitable for the Mong. The aim is to develop self-esteem
for the Mong. However, the real goals must be determined by each individual Mong.

Culturally, the Mong should conform to the host culture by not practicing certain customs such as polygamy, "Yuav Nam Tij" (a next brother married to his sister-in-law and cared for his deceased brother's children), abduction of girls for wives (forced marriage), and early marriages. These Mong customs are not acceptable in the United States.

On the other hand, the Mong should preserve certain aspects of their culture such as the notion of respect, the importance of the clan system, folktales, crafts, arts, and music to sustain their cultural existence. These characteristics make the Mong unique culturally.

In terms of community building in the Chicago area, the rise and fall of the Association of Hmong in Illinois during 1978-1987 taught the Mong a very important lesson. The Mong should study the western notion of voluntary organization relative to the roles of the board of directors, methods, and staff selection. They should stay out of controversial issues that have been embedded in the Mong since the turn of century. Robert's Rules of Order should be observed at all times when conducting meetings for the purpose of achieving constructive and effective results. Experience showed that the board of directors of the Mong associations spent too much time at their meetings in internal quarrels as illustrated in Chapter IV. The Mong
should be united rather than divided into factions because they have interdependent needs. Though the Association of HMong in Illinois was dissolved, new self-help organizations should be re-established to assist the Mong who remained in the Chicago area and other localities throughout the United States.

The Mong resettlement during 1978-1987 illustrated a very important lesson. The best guarantee for peaceful co-existence is for the Mong to respect, recognize, and allow diversity, be it linguistic, religious, or racial. Fragmentation along socio-linguistic, religious, or other lines for personal or family gain can plant the seeds for senseless conflict in the Mong community in the years to come. The Mong should nurture, preserve, and respect their diversity and differences and not risk the prospect of dissension and cultural incompatibility which can develop serious problems within the Mong society. Besides this internal factor, the Mong should be aware of the external factors such the local and state government's intervention in their community affairs. The Mong should now redefine themselves as a community within a larger nation-state such as the United States.

The author wants to stress the importance of becoming American citizens by encouraging Mong to become politically involved at the local levels in order to have a greater impact on legislation at the state and national
level. The Mong should be tough, honest, and practical in bringing their voices and concerns to the local, state, and federal government. Specific issues directly affecting the Mong in Laos and in the first asylum countries could be addressed to the federal government through this channel such as the repatriation program and the chemical warfare against the Mong by the Soviet Union.

Educationally, Mong parents should recognize that teachers in Chicago are not "second parents" as they have anticipated. They should pay attention to the education of their children by involving them in extra-curricular activities such as church programs for youth, YMCA swimming programs, boys or girls' scouts, and American Youth Soccer Organizations. These are activities that would divert their children's attention to develop positive attitudes toward the society. Mong parents who still depend on welfare utilization should continue to take ESL classes on a continuing basis. This may be the only means to overcome the language barrier. English language proficiency could be the key to successful adjustment to a new life in the United States. As soon as they learn English, the Mong should look for jobs. By becoming self-supportive, they could set a good example for their children. They may indirectly influence and instill the value of diligence and hard work in their children.
In contrast, many Mong had secured fulfilling employment in the United States. However, some of them became workaholic and paid less attention to the progress of their children in school. No one in the family had time to instill the moral character and values in their children. As a result, their children did not know where to draw the line between right and wrong so they grew up with the influence of peer pressure. The author recommends that Mong parents should spend more time nurturing and educating their children. Besides parenting, they should orient their children with career goals and provide them with sufficient school supplies and clothing. They should encourage their children to develop to their full potential. The father acts as an authoritative figure in the family whereas the mother reinforces and monitors their progress at school. By following up with their children's daily activities, they could identify and seek solutions to the problems before they develop into serious ones. In this manner, preventative mechanisms could be devised to keep their children away from gangs, sex, drugs, and to a certain extent peer pressure.

The Mong should develop strategies to prevent too early marriages. Mong parents should counsel and advise their daughters to seek certain occupational skills prior to starting their own families. Schooling should be stressed in family life.
To Mong Students

Mong students at the elementary and secondary school levels should learn how to cope with acclimation. They should not become Americanized too soon but learn how to balance the two cultures by avoiding the intergenerational gap and peer pressure. Recognizing that they are not totally Americans, they should learn how to make a selective adaptation to the American culture in order to withstand peer pressure. They should obey their parents and preserve certain good aspects of their culture, e.g. the concept of respect, the importance of the clan system, and the life of a community.

At the higher educational level, Mong students should study at least twice or three times as hard as their counterparts. They should not hesitate to ask their faculty for assistance. In addition, they should develop study habits and strategies that would help them in their studies and research. They should initiate some types of student clubs at various institutions of higher learning to address their concerns to the university. The clubs may be used for the purpose of tutoring one another and to advise one another about course selection. Occasionally, certain faculty members could also be invited to make presentations for the club members and to familiarize themselves with Mong students. In this manner, faculty and alumni may provide students with insight and orientation on specific topics.
that may be beneficial to everyone in the club.

To School Districts and the Higher Education Level

The author recommends that school districts should provide the bilingual and bicultural approach to learning during the initial resettlement. Adequate bilingual staff could be very beneficial to assist Mong students make a smooth transition at the elementary and secondary level. The bilingual staff may facilitate their learning, adjustment, and assimilation.

At the higher educational level, faculty should be sensitive to the needs of Mong students and provide them some assistance. A special program may be instituted and may be staffed with bilingual Mong to tutor Mong students for academic success during their college education.

For adult education, comprehensive English as a Second Language should be developed immediately to teach the Mong English. In Chicago, English language training was not developed until the 1980's due to the lack of financial resources from the federal government through the state to the local educational institutions. Those refugees who arrived between 1975 and 1980 had no English language training. Those who arrived later did not speak English and were required to attend more English language lessons before they were referred for job placement.

The author recommends that educators should design a special method to teach Mong that follows the bilingual
and bicultural approach developed by Travelers and Immigrants Aid. The approach should be used in classroom instruction in the beginning of the program before mixing the Mong with other ethnic groups. Integrating different ethnic groups at various levels of ability runs the risk of many dropping out of the program. Those who learned fast get bored and those who were slow could not keep up the pace and then dropped out.

To the United States Federal Government

The federal government has a moral obligation to assist the Mong in their long-term resettlement in the United States. The Mong had specific problems that needed special attention. The Highland Lao Initiative project was a perfect example. However, the project was too short and too little. The federal government lacked a firm commitment in developing a comprehensive and concrete plan for the long-term successful Mong resettlement.

Knowing that thousands of Southeast Asians would come to the United States, the United States federal government should have developed a concrete plan for the resettlement of refugees from Southeast Asia. Although they came to the United States since 1975, they were left under the care and responsibility of the VOLAGs, private and local church sponsors. This put a tremendous burden on the local and state governments. It took almost five years before Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 to allocate funding
to assist in their adjustment to the new country.

The Refugee Education Assistance Act was also passed into law in 1980. Prior to that, the local and state governments had to pick up the cost for educating refugees. Educators knew well in advance that there would be a massive immigration of refugees into the country. However, the bureaucrats did not provide the educators any financial resources until the refugee children started to flood the school system in massive numbers.

To the State and Local Governments

Without any sensitivity to the socio-linguistic and religious differences in the Mong community in Chicago, the state and local governments should stay out of the natural Mong leadership development. Their intrusion into the internal affairs of the Mong association created a skeptical attitude to the state and local government in the Mong leadership.

To conclude this study, the Mong, coming from a semi-primitive life style, adjusted amazingly well in a high technological city such as Chicago. Though the Mong culture was diametrically different from that of the United States, the freedom which they have under the Constitution poses no threat to their identity in contrast to their forced integration into a dominant culture like China. They have the right to adapt, adopt, preserve, and maintain their ethnic identity as Mong-Americans.
The future of the Mong depends on education. The younger generation of the Mong has more opportunity for socio-economic mobility. Known for their intelligence, adaptability, and love for freedom, the Mong continue to adjust as a community. Through hard work, determination, and perseverance, the Mong are expected to successfully acculturate into the American society. The Mong will advance to their full potential and contribute greatly to the advancement of life in the United States.

Suggestions for Further Study

Through ethnographic interviews with Mong parents and community members in the study, a new dilemma emerged involving some Mong teenagers in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin who are recruited as gang members. The Mong referred the predicament as "Ua Laib" (gangsters). This phenomenon may become a crisis in Mong education. More longitudinal studies should be conducted to find its causes and methods to prevent such occurrence.
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VITA

Paoze Thao was born on July 18, 1953 in Xieng Khouang, Laos to Rev. Xuxu and Phua X. Thao. He, his wife Gonggi X. Thao, his son Thongteng, and his daughters Gaozong and Chee-Ah C. live in Chicago.

Disrupted by the civil strife in Laos and the Vietnam War, Mr. Thao attended Vanthong and Pathammavong schools in Vientiane from 1961-1968. Mr. Thao first studied English with a missionary couple, the Mccolm Sawyers, in Vientiane, Laos from 1966-1968. As part of the leadership development for the Lao Evangelical Church, he received a scholarship from the Christian Women's Association of the Church of Christ in Thailand to continue his education in Thailand. Mr. Thao attended Aroon Pradit School in Petchaburi, Thailand from 1969-1971. From 1972-1976, he attended Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand where he was awarded a bachelor's degree in education. While attending the university, he also worked part-time at World Vision Foundation of Thailand. After the Communists took over Laos, his family came to the United States as refugee under the sponsorship of the Laotian Overseas Volunteer Effort, Inc. (L.O.V.E.) consisting of five local churches in Ottawa, Illinois through the United States Catholic
Conference (USCC) and was resettled in Ottawa, Illinois. Mr. Thao worked for Snap On Tools Corporation from 1976-1978.

From 1978-1987, Mr. Thao was employed as a Program Specialist and Supervisor for Travelers and Immigrants Aid to provide assistance to the new refugees from Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and Central America. He was awarded a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics from Northeastern Illinois University in 1986.

Mr. Thao was constantly sought by local, state, and federal government to lend his expertise on their behalf. He was an evaluation team member to Coffey Zimmerman and Associates, Inc. in Washington, D.C. to conduct an overall Highland Lao Initiative nationwide study contracted and funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, United States Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration from 1984-1985. He was Research Associate for the New TransCentury Foundation, Center for Migration Studies in Washington, D.C. to conduct a study titled "The Foreign-Born and Atlanta's Labor Market" for the National Commission for Employment Policy from July 1986 through August 1986. Extensive travels were made in the various states during these studies.

Mr. Thao was with the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service as Director of Outreach for the Chicago District Office from 1987-1992.
Mr. Thao is currently the Training and Research Specialist for the Multifunctional Resource Center for Bilingual Education - Service Area 6, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
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