

THE RELIGIOSITY OF VIETNAMESE AMERICANS

A Thesis

by

JENNIFER LINH LE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

May 2011

Major Subject: Sociology

The Religiosity of Vietnamese Americans

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Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee, Reuben A. Buford May
William Alex McIntosh

Committee Member, Sarah Gatson
Head of Department, Mark Fossett

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ABSTRACT

The Religiosity of Vietnamese Americans. (May 2011)

Jennifer Linh Le, B.A., University of St. Thomas

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee, Dr. Reuben A. Buford May

Dr. William Alex McIntosh

Religion is a deeply important tradition in many people's lives, especially for those forced to leave abruptly their homes and loved ones and resettle in a foreign land. Religion not only provides spiritual guidance but also social networks, comfort, and moral standards, among many others things. I chose to study the beliefs and practices of Vietnamese American Buddhists and Catholics as well as the relationship between those two groups in the U.S. The Vietnamese present an interesting case because of their collective status as a well-publicized immigrant, formerly refugee, population that is now well-established in this country. With my research, I was able to test five hypotheses. I wanted to determine the degree of transnationality, tension between the religious groups, conversion, and ancestor worship. Secondly, I assessed any differences regionally. In order to test my hypotheses, I conducted 60 quantitative surveys. I sampled from the Houston and Minneapolis-St. Paul Vietnamese communities.

Transnationality, or ties to the homeland, was more prevalent for Buddhists than Catholics as I had hypothesized. There was a minute degree of tension present, however, generally with older members of the first generation cohort. Traditional Vietnamese ancestor worship was not more prevalent with Buddhists than with Catholics. I was unable to sample enough religious converts in order to test my conversion hypothesis. In terms of differences across regions, all variables other than national identity as well as an indicator of transnationality

were statistically *insignificant*. This data helps fill a nearly 30-year gap in the research in this area and focuses specifically on the Vietnamese population which many studies have been unable to do.

In addition to my quantitative study, I also conducted qualitative fieldwork at four primary research and three secondary research sites in the Minneapolis-St. Paul and Houston metropolitan areas. Twenty-five to thirty hours were spent at each primary location observing the members, volunteers, dress, interactions, normative and deviant behaviors during services, socialization, languages spoken, attentiveness, racial diversity, and additional activities provided by the religious organization to the membership. This fieldwork gave me a better understanding of this community in a religious context.

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NOMENCLATURE

<i>Chùa Đất Nước</i>	Secondary Research Site, Houston, Buddhist Temple
<i>Chùa Giác Ngộ</i>	Secondary Research Site, Houston, Buddhist Temple
<i>Chùa Lớn</i>	Secondary Research Site, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Buddhist Temple
<i>Chùa Nhỏ</i>	Primary Research Site, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Buddhist Temple
<i>Chùa Thọ Long</i>	Primary Research Site, Houston, Buddhist Temple
Church of Fatima	Primary Research Site, Houston, Catholic Church
Church of St. Mary	Primary Research Site, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Catholic Church

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1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this research is on the religiosity of Vietnamese Americans, a former refugee population that has come to build a strong foundation for itself and future generations. The Vietnamese have an unfortunate past, a civil war tearing the nation in two and forcing many to leave their homes to avoid persecution and communist rule. Despite their history, the community has retained much of its cultural richness since relocation. Some of that richness is directly related to religion. As with many immigrant and refugee populations, religion is one of the most important aspects of their life during flight. The Vietnamese population, both in Vietnam and the U.S., are generally members of one of two religions: Buddhism or Catholicism (Pelzer 1992; Rutledge 1982). I chose to study the religious beliefs and practices of Vietnamese American Buddhists and Catholics as well as the relationship between these two groups in the U.S.

With my research, I tested five hypotheses. I examined the degree of tension between the religious groups, ancestral veneration, conversion, and transnationality. I specifically looked at the differences between religions. Secondarily, I assessed any regional differences. I used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in order to determine these relationships. With respect to the qualitative methods, I wanted to get an overall feel of the Vietnamese Buddhist and Catholic communities in a religious setting. I feel that it is important to get to know the communities one is researching on more than one level, through survey data and observations in order to fully understand them and the findings. It is readily believed that the South is more

This thesis follows the style of the *American Sociological Review*.

religious than the North (and Midwest). Therefore, I suggest that the atmosphere of the South, as opposed to the Midwest, will have influenced more participants into converting to a “Western” religion. By Western religion, I specifically mean Judeo-Christian religions which have become Americanized. I am also able to reason that transnationality and tension between the two groups will affect conversion rates. Weaker transnational ties and tension could possibly lead to higher rates of conversion.

As Christian Smith (2003) discusses in his book, *Moral Believing Animals*, humans have a propensity to believe in something. It is this believing function that distinguishes humans from other animals. There is inherently a moral order embedded in our social world; this directly affects our social action (Smith 2003). Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (2000) argue in *Acts of Faith* that there is moral or religious capital one builds over time. One is more likely to pursue rather than abandon that capital, which leads to religious participation. The more religious capital one shares with others, the more likely a community will form around those beliefs. As Emile Durkheim (1995) found in the aboriginal community he studied in Australia, as described in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, religion serves a very strong community building function, whether conscious or not. It is this very basic nature of religion in society which I find so profound and important to study.

2. EXISTING RESEARCH

Since the mass-arrival of the Indochinese refugees, namely the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong, on American soil beginning in the mid 1960s (Skinner and Hendricks 1979), there have been numerous studies on the effect of sudden flight from one's homeland and resettlement to a foreign land have on refugees' religiosity (Ano, Mathew, and Fukuyama 2009; Bankston and Zhou 1995; Bruce 2002; Burwell, Hill and Van Wicklin 1986; Gans 1994; Greeley 1972; Iwamura 2007 Klineberg 2004; Lewis, Fraser and Pecora 1988; Rutledge 1982; Skinner and Hendricks 1979; Stepick 2005). Religion is an important mechanism for individuals providing them with strength and meaning, helps them cope with their surroundings, make sense of the world and the afterlife, and connect to others around them. Religion is especially important for immigrants and refugees who are experiencing or have experienced the trauma of abruptly leaving their home. In some cases, religion is the only constant in these peoples' lives.

When integrating into a new society, immigrants and refugees can use their religious traditions to expand their limited social networks. Many researchers have cited that this trauma, of being removed from one's support groups of family, work, and religion can affect the refugee's acculturation or assimilation into the new society (Ano et al. 2009; Bankston and Zhou 1995; Bruce 2002; Burwell, Hill and Van Wicklin 1986; Gans 1994; Greeley 1972; Iwamura 2007 Klineberg 2004; Lewis et al. 1988; Rutledge 1982; Skinner and Hendricks 1979; Stepick 2005). Social and psychological issues frequently result from this process (Timberlake and Cook 1984). In terms of religion, there has been a trend for refugees to adopt religious structure and often times a religion of the host country (Chen 2008; Yang and Ebaugh 2001a), though not in all cases. This practice can lead to better assimilation into a new society (Klineberg 2004).

2.1 Vietnamese in the U.S.

My research focuses on the Vietnamese American population in two states, Texas and Minnesota, in order to assess city, state, and regional differences. While I chose to study just one metropolitan area in one state in each region (the South and the Midwest), I was better equipped to understand the implications of location on my sample.¹ The current foreign-born Vietnamese population resides mainly in California and Texas (Greico 2004; Migration Policy Institute 2011b). As of 2011, “in Texas, 17 percent of the foreign-born population were Asian” compared to 36.9 percent in Minnesota (Migration Policy Institute 2011a). Of all foreign-born Texas and Minnesota residents, the Vietnamese population ranks as the third largest in both states. However, this data would not take into account nomadic peoples who, although born in, or are from, Vietnam, do not identify themselves as Vietnamese, such as the Hmong, which are a significant portion of the Minnesota Asian population. Nationally, “the foreign born from Vietnam represent the fifth-largest immigrant group in the United States” with a total of over 988,000 immigrants (Greico 2004).

2.2 Religious History

Many centuries ago, the Chinese had much influence over the Vietnamese (Luce and Sommer 1969; Rutledge 1982). Throughout the centuries, certain factions of the Chinese migrated south into the lands occupied by the Khmer (or Cambodians) and the Cham (occupants of what is now central

¹ For an explanation regarding research sites, please refer to the Methodology section.

Vietnam) (Luce and Sommer 1969). Essentially, these migrants broke away from the Chinese to form their own, yet still very similar, cultural identity. However, through their Chinese heritage and their eventual and temporary Chinese rule, the Vietnamese and their way of life were shaped by the Chinese.

The Chinese influence consisted of not only economic and political ideologies, but also religious ones, and the influence is arguably ongoing. The most influential Chinese religious traditions, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have since been ingrained in Vietnamese culture (Denney 1990; Pelzer 1992; Rutledge 1982). “Religion is central to Vietnamese philosophy, social behavior, and ethnic awareness. It permeates every institution—political, cultural [and] theological” (Rutledge 1982:29). During the *Lý* Dynasty (1010-1225 AD) in Vietnam, Buddhism was the official state religion and therefore permeated every social institution (Lee 2003). Another—and non Asian—religious tradition has had significant impact on the nation. Around the seventeenth century, Catholicism was introduced and disseminated through the work of French missionaries (Pelzer 1992). Despite the incredible popularity Catholicism has seen in the nation, prior to the unification of North and South Vietnam in 1975, nearly 70 percent of the population consisted of Buddhists (Rutledge 1982). More recently, estimates of Buddhism are as high as nearly 90 percent (Denney 2006).

In Stephen Klineberg’s (2004) study of Houston Vietnamese, 40 percent of the population was Catholic and 44 percent was Buddhist.² Other estimates suggest that Catholics comprise nearly one-third of all Vietnamese living in the U.S. (Bankston and Zhou 2000;

² Vietnamese Buddhists in the U.S. practice traditional Vietnamese Buddhism as opposed to the more popularized, Americanized version of Buddhism. This Americanized version includes the practice of yoga, meditation, and other Zen Buddhist practices.

Leepson 2000; Rutledge 1982). However, the division is not always this equal, especially in areas with increased access to ethnic religious facilities and communities or a noticeable lack thereof (Lewis et al. 1988). In contrast, today Catholicism accounts for less than 10 percent of the population in Vietnam while Buddhism claims nearly 50 percent (Pelzer 1992; Pennsylvania State University 2008). “Most other citizens [who are not members of major religious groups] consider themselves non-religious, although many practice traditional beliefs such as veneration of ancestors and national heroes” (Pennsylvania State University 2008). Ancestral veneration is the remembrance of and prayer for one’s ancestors. Offerings of delicacies and fruit are often given along with burning incense (Iwamura 2007). This practice stems from the Confucian tradition of patriarchy and revering male relatives (Luce and Sommer 1969). However, today both males and females are the subject of this veneration. Since there is no formal doctrine or belief system which adherents to these practices follow, it is not often thought of as a formal religion but rather a spiritual practice (Pelzer 1992). Specific practices and offerings can differ dramatically between people from different nations, religions, cultures, and families (Pelzer 1992). As will be discussed shortly, many immigrants observe these secondary religious, spiritual, or cultural practices in addition to their official religion of either Buddhism or Catholicism.

There are stark differences between the organizational structure for Buddhists and Catholics. For Catholics, there is a central governing agency, the Vatican, which controls doctrinal issues among other things. Buddhists, however, do not have an overarching, worldwide system. While leaders of temples in the United States often travel to India, China, and Vietnam for consultation and blessing purposes, no formal governing body exists. Construction of new

temples, for example, can be initiated by a single monk. The construction of new Catholic churches, on the other hand, requires diocesan approval and eventual elevation to a full parish.

Buddhists and Catholics practice their religion in different ways. While Catholics have weekly, even daily, services for their congregation, Buddhists are less structured when it comes to worship (Chen 2008; Lee 2003). There are a few other marked differences between the two religious traditions and its followers. Buddhism can be treated as a formal religion, a spiritual tradition, or a philosophy. It is a very personal choice in the decision of how and what they wish to practice. Buddhists, with access to a plethora of worship facilities (generally in Asia), do not typically attend a single temple, rather they visit and engage in rituals at multiple sites on an irregular basis. This suggests that, in Vietnam, Buddhist temples serve less of a community-building function than Catholic churches (it can be argued that many U.S. Buddhists only visit a temple when an occasion for a ritual arises (Lee 2003)). In the U.S., however, temples are utilized by those who share a similar faith background but, in the case of Vietnamese immigrants, also as a means of maintaining their ethnic heritage and regaining their *Gemeinschaft* village (Bruce 2002; Chen 2008; Greeley 1972; Lee 2003). Christians, also including Catholics, tend to invite nonmembers to church functions more so than Buddhists; this is especially true for Evangelical Protestants (Chen 2008).

Also, for Buddhists, worship tends to take place in the home rather than at a public or communal religious facility (Stepick 2005; Warner 2000). Despite their lack of participation in a congregation, this should not be thought of as an indicator of lack of religiosity (Min 2002). For Buddhists, regular temple attendance is not an indication of piety (Chen 2008). When practiced in the U.S., however, Buddhism often adopts some host nation religious traditions, specifically having weekly services on Sundays and becoming more congregationally structured (Ebaugh and

Chafetz 2000; Stepick 2005; Warner 1998; Warner 2000; Yang and Ebaugh 2001a; Yang and Ebaugh 2001b). Of the many reasons given for this phenomenon, Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz (2000) have cited that new immigrants invest a great deal of time and money into these temples with a goal of maintaining their religious and ethnic ties and identities.

Immigrant Vietnamese Catholics also go through an adaptation in the U.S. Catholic churches in Vietnam are maintained by the state and thus receive financial support through such a relationship. Therefore members are not required to economically sustain their church through tithing or alms-giving; they also receive economic aid from the church itself (Stepick 2005). In the U.S., however, parishes are expected to help economically sustain their church and members are much more actively involved in volunteer positions at the church (Bankston and Zhou 2000).

2.3 Religious Asians

According to the 2008 American Religious Identification Survey, Asians had the highest percentage of respondents choosing “None” when asked what religious tradition they follow with 27 percent, while only 16 percent of White Non-Hispanics, 11 percent Black Non-Hispanics, and 12 percent of Hispanics responded None (Trinity College 2008). The 2008 Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reported similar results for its category “Unaffiliated,” but also included a category for Other/Mixed Race individuals of which 20 percent are religiously unaffiliated (Pew Research Center 2008). None indicates that the respondent self-identified as atheist, agnostic, or stated no religious preference; however, “most Nones are neither atheists nor theists but rather agnostics and deists (59%) and perhaps best described as skeptics” (Kosmin, Keysar, Cragun, and Navarro-Rivera 2009:2). This could be the result of Asians being less likely to

divulge information regarding religion or simply a lack of religious belief. Eastern religions, if lumped together, have the second highest percent of Asian followers, totaling 25 percent (Pew Research Center 2008; Trinity College 2008). High percentages are also reported for Asians affiliated with Protestantism or Catholicism, 27 percent and 17 percent respectively, with small percentages of affiliations with Islam, Judaism, and Christian sects like Mormonism or Jehovah's Witnesses (Pew Research Center 2008).

3. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Religious Tension

Over the centuries, the relationship between Vietnamese Catholics and Buddhists has fluctuated between relatively peaceful to deadly. “At times [Catholicism] has been severely persecuted, and at other times it has exercised influence far out of proportion to its population” (Denney 1990:270). Since the introduction of Catholicism into Vietnam and its spread by French missionaries, there has been significant conflict between these two major religious groups (Luce and Sommer 1969; Pelzer 1992). Most notably, tensions were high during the reign of influential Catholic *Ngô Đình Diệm*, the President of the Republic of [South] Vietnam beginning in 1955. At this time, numerous government, military, and police positions were won by Catholics who exerted their substantial influence on a population that was predominantly Buddhist (Luce and Sommer 1969). As a result, factions began to develop around these religions during the 1960s (Pelzer 1992; Rutledge 1982). Discrimination, intolerance, murders, immolation (i.e. suicide for a noble cause, as a sacrifice), protests, demonstrations, and feelings of oppression took place as a result of theological and religiously-infused political differences and resentment of others’ conversion (Luce and Sommer 1969). It is interesting to note that while the aforementioned acts were committed by both sides, it was in general a majority Buddhist population reacting to the discrimination and oppression dealt by a government-sponsored, minority, Catholic population (Luce and Sommer 1969). This hostility was intensified, and was thought to be directly linked, with the political turmoil the country was enduring throughout this time as well; Buddhism had come to be associated with Vietnamese nationalism and Catholicism with foreign power.

Upon initial immigration to the U.S., there was “a subtle yet pervasive attitude which at times [denoted] a stratified Vietnamese community predicated upon one’s religious affiliation” (Rutledge 1982:78). This past conflict may be present in American society today, albeit subtler and possibly hidden, and is often unmentioned by researchers. However, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives, the relationship between religious groups in Vietnam as of 2008 was relatively amicable but “with exception” (Pennsylvania State University 2008). Therefore, it would be warranted for there to be a degree of tension between Vietnamese Catholics and Buddhists in the U.S.

As the literature suggests, there has been significant tension between the two religious groups in Vietnam. In my study, I wanted to assess the degree of tension present in the U.S. between Vietnamese American Buddhists and Catholics, if those tensions are present or if they are mostly nonexistent. Given the literature, I hypothesized that tensions will indeed be present, however slight. Formally stated, my first hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Tensions between Vietnamese American Buddhists and Vietnamese American Catholics will be present.

3.2 Ancestral Veneration

In addition to the organized forms of religion of Catholicism and Buddhism, many Vietnamese regularly practice ancestral veneration or what can be called “domestic religion” either in conjunction with an organized religion or separately (Iwamura 2007; Min 2002; Pelzer 1992). Ancestral veneration is different from traditional religions for a number of reasons. Traditional religions usually have a central deity to whom one prays or provides offerings. While

this may be an additional element to ancestral veneration, the ritual is typically performed for one's ancestors generally of close relation and/or recently deceased. Traditional ancestor worship in Vietnam has become a national custom over the centuries. "Ancestor veneration—rituals that honor the dead and ensure their continued existence—is an integral part of East Asian religious systems. . . . [which include] offering various sacrifices to deities on behalf of the ancestors and to the ancestors themselves in order to sustain their existence" (Iwamura 2007:107). The ritual which honors the memory of the deceased, usually taking place on the anniversary of an ancestor's death and on *Tết* (Lunar New Year), consists of offerings of the ancestor's favorite foods, burning incense and candles, the smoke from which carries the food to the spirits, and an invitation for the dead to enjoy the offerings before them (Lee 2003).

Ancestral veneration is very often overlooked in national and regional surveys of religion and is therefore more difficult to track (Iwamura, Yoon, Lim, and Kim 1996). However, it is a practice that, regardless of religious affiliation, many Vietnamese perform and consider it their duty to perform (Lee 2003; Pelzer 1992). In the 1978 United States President's Commission on Mental Health survey, 18 percent of respondents practiced ancestor worship (Rutledge 1982). This data, however, suggests that ancestor worship is a separate religion entirely rather than simply a tradition that is part of the Vietnamese cultural heritage and can be practiced jointly with a formal religion.

While Catholics have a separate and distinct form of ancestor worship, which involves the veneration of Catholic saints and lost loved ones, many Catholics in Vietnam hold onto the national customs (Iwamura 2007). After the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council met in 1962—albeit without a Vietnamese presence—Catholic leaders decided to allow traditional forms of ancestral veneration to be practiced in conjunction with the Catholic faith in Vietnam

(Denney 1990). The Church implemented this policy as a part of their worldwide enculturation efforts, efforts to integrate the Catholic faith with the local culture (Butcher 1994). This practice is allowed because ancestors are thought to be part of the “holy living dead” who are now with God, similar to traditional saints (Jebadu 2007:247). This includes using incense and praying to ancestors, which were practices previously deemed to be pagan (Denney 1990; Jebadu 2007). Alternatively, Catholics in the U.S. may shed these practices because they themselves as well as fellow Catholics continue to deem them as pagan.

Given the literature, I hypothesized that traditional Vietnamese ancestral religious practices will be more prevalent with Buddhists than with Catholics. Formally stated, my second hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Traditional Vietnamese ancestral veneration practices will be more prevalent with Buddhists than with Catholics

3.3 Conversion

Regarding conversion from one religious tradition to another, immigrants “do not make decisions in a vacuum but are informed by social and cultural contexts” (Chen 2008:160). It is readily hypothesized that flight and resettlement would have a dramatic influence on immigrant religious beliefs and affiliations (Ano et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 1988; Stark and Finke 2000). Lewis et al. (1988) found significant factors affecting change in religious affiliation including social adjustment, length of asylum, desire to fit in, religion of sponsor, and lack of ethnic religious facilities. Refugees tend to become more religious when in the U.S. This is manifested in increased participation in their ethnic religion or converting to a new religion, usually from an

Eastern religious tradition to a Western type (Burwell, Hill, and Van Wicklin 1986; Rutledge 1982). This conversion may be for social identity or convenience sake as opposed to actual change in their psychological or emotional beliefs (Burwell et al. 1986). This is not to suggest that conversion based on an actual change of religious beliefs does not occur. It has been suggested that joining or converting to another religion is a conscious, voluntary action that is very personal for the new American (Stark and Finke 2000; Yang and Ebaugh 2001a). It is argued that immigrants “become American by becoming religious” as a way to adjust in American society (Chen 2008).

This conversion, however, does not seem to affect the maintenance of ethnic associations in a negative way. Research suggests that the primary motivation behind conversion or an awakening of one’s beliefs in an ethnic religion was to reestablish their *Gemeinschaft* village, or their sense of organic community in which social bonds form (Chen 2008; Greeley 1972; Lewis et al. 1988; Timberlake and Cook 1984; Tönnies 2001; Zhai and Stokes 2009). Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (2000) argue that conversion occurs in order to maintain religious or social capital. Joining a Western religious community was an easier way to retrieve their lost social support networks because of the lack of Eastern religious facilities (Lewis et al. 1988). Their adaptation in a new society helps the refugee adjust to the new situation. Alternatively, reasons to convert for Asian American adolescents is very different. Despite a sense of cultural and familial obligations for the youth, Eastern religions can be too limiting and with limited focus on individual choice for the Americanized youth (Iwamura 2007). These religions may be less attractive because of the negative associations with “superstition” and “odd” practices not found in Western religions (Iwamura 2007; Jebadu 2007; Zhai and Stokes 2009).

After reviewing the literature, I hypothesize that if there is conversion, it will occur from Eastern religions to Western religions, including all Christian denominations in this hypothesis because of the wide array of religious options in the U.S. As Chen (2008) argued, immigrants will become more religious in an attempt to Americanize. Stark and Finke (2000) would then suggest that the immigrant would choose a more high tension religion, one that involves higher commitment. Catholicism in the United States arguably requires more commitment including weekly attendance, regular monetary giving, and participation in rituals. Catholicism would potentially have the most Vietnamese converts because of the Vietnamese community generally being either Buddhist or Catholic. As a result of the particular circumstances of wanting to integrate into American society and a lack of ethnic religious facilities, I feel that conversion will be in the direction of the religion with the greatest foundation in American society. Formally stated, my third hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Conversion will be from Eastern religions to Western religions.

3.4 Transnationalism

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in an attempt to acknowledge diverse immigrant populations, claims that “diversity makes America strong, but unity keeps America successful” (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2008:44). This indicates an effort to assimilate new immigrants to the American civic identity independent of their religion and culture. Upon their arrival in the United States, Vietnamese refugees were scattered all over the nation (Haines, Rutherford, and Thomas 1981; Lewis et al. 1988; Skinner and Hendricks 1979).

The U.S. Federal Policy on sponsorship was intended to disperse refugees so as to prevent the development of ethnic enclaves. The aim was to encourage more rapid

assimilation by forcing individuals away from other members of that same ethnic group. This policy failed, in part because of differences in the services and benefits offered by different states. California, for example, is known for its generous refugee assistance policy and welfare system. (Ui 1991:163)

After initial immigration some refugees engaged in secondary migration to connect with family members placed in other, perhaps more desirable, areas in the U.S. which resulted in the creation of ethnic enclaves (Haines et al. 1981; Skinner and Hendricks 1979; Timberlake and Cook 1984). They did this to regain the support networks that they lost during flight (Haines et al. 1981). This phenomenon has been called chain migration.

Despite efforts to integrate and thrive in a new society, immigrants still attempt to keep ties to their homeland (Min 2002; Stepick 2005). This phenomenon is called transnationalism. Both Buddhist and Catholic congregations maintain these ethnic ties. However, due to the history and nature of the organization and its ties to the homeland, Catholic churches are not able to maintain as strong of transnational ties. Buddhist organizations are able to maintain stronger ties because they are “inseparably tied to the central organizations” in Vietnam (Min 2002:28).

Based on my understanding of the literature, my study assessed the degree of transnationalism, or ties to the homeland. As the current research suggests, Vietnamese Catholics in the U.S. are not able to keep their ties to Vietnam as strongly because of the nature of their religious organization. I hypothesize that those who have strong transnational ties will not have converted religions, and Buddhists will have the strongest transnational ties. Formally stated, my fourth hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Buddhists will have stronger transnational ties than Catholics and religious converts.

3.5 Additional Research

Klineberg (2004) conducted a study aptly named “Religious Diversity and Social Integration” using data from the Houston Area Survey of public opinion in Houston, TX. He was able to gain an understanding of the Vietnamese population in that area because they were the largest ethnic Asian group. From his research and others (Bankston and Zhou 1995; Chen 2008; Lewis et al. 1988; Min 2002; Rutledge 1982; Stepick 2005), a pattern begins to develop: those with strong religious beliefs, regardless of religious affiliation, and who regularly attend religious services tend to be more integrated in society. “Religion simultaneously produces greater integration in the immigrants’ own ethnicity and in the greater society” (Klineberg 2004:256). It also has a positive effect on the adolescent population, their “ethnic identification in a Vietnamese-American community” (Bankston and Zhou 1995:532), and their integration into the dominant society.

Religious organizations differ in accommodations afforded to their Vietnamese members. At a Catholic church in Boston, where the newest priest is a Vietnamese man, services are offered both in English and Vietnamese (Legere 2009). This practice has been adopted by numerous Catholic churches in areas with large Vietnamese populations, and many immigrants take advantage of services in their native language. Vietnamese immigrants often attend religious services with others of their ethnicity, but this is not always the case (Rutledge 1982; Stepick 2005). Some congregations are pan-ethnic Asian while others are mostly Vietnamese and still others mostly Caucasian. When this new immigrant portion of the congregation emerges, conflicts often arise relating to a number of church functions and identity (Stepick 2005). For example, conflict often arises between the religious leaders and the immigrant population or over

service scheduling in terms of space allotment and time preference. It is still unknown what causes these conflicts, whether it is language differences, class differences, or issues of church leadership.

3.6 Regional Differences

Since 1965, when the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed to eliminate quotas on Asian immigrants, a huge influx of Indochinese refugees came to the United States; most notably after the 1975 fall of the South Vietnamese government to the North Vietnamese communists. Upon arrival, immigrants were dispersed throughout the country as a result of U.S. refugee placement policies, but after secondary migration enclaves began to form. One of the major areas where Vietnamese immigrants have formed communities is Houston, TX (Klineberg 2004; Migration Policy Institute 2011b). Additionally, while not one of the largest metropolitan areas in terms of Vietnamese population, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN also has a sizeable community.

In addition to the aforementioned hypotheses, I wanted to assess differences between these groups regionally. Since I studied Vietnamese in both Houston and Minneapolis-St. Paul, I was able to determine whether living in different states in different regions of the United States affects any facet of their religiosity. I hypothesize, however, that there will be no difference regionally on any of the aforementioned indicators. Formally stated, my fifth hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 5: Indicators of conversion, as well as other variables in this study, will not vary by region.

In addition to these formal hypotheses to be tested quantitatively, I conducted fieldwork in order to gain a better understanding of the Vietnamese community in a religious context from a qualitative perspective. The fieldwork also added to my understanding and interpretation of the fifth hypothesis. Specific behaviors and norms in religious contexts were studied. Further explanation of the qualitative aspect of my study can be found in the Methodology and the Qualitative Data Analysis sections.

3.7 Gap in the Research

There has been substantial research on Vietnamese, specifically as immigrants and refugees to the U.S., since the mass exodus from Vietnam in 1975, as well as research on other Asian groups. Unfortunately, much of the research that examines Asians in general cannot adequately acknowledge the vast differences between the numerous nationalities and regions of the Asian continent and its peoples. Even if focusing on Indochinese specifically, the research still lacks an adequate focus on the Vietnamese population. The Vietnamese tend to be markedly different than their Southeast Asian counterparts, those from Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia, (whom were greatly influenced by India) and much more similar to their East Asian neighbors to the north, the Chinese (Luce and Sommer 1969). Some of the differences between the Vietnamese and Laotians, Thai, and Cambodians include deference to males, a patriarchal orientation to family and society, and a different treatment of Buddhism. Specifically in contrast to Laotian Buddhists, in order to achieve enlightenment Vietnamese Buddhists will attend temple regularly, attempt to remove suffering in their lives, and change their overall mindset. More research would need to be conducted on the differences in the way people of these nationalities

practice Buddhism in order to determine if this is a Vietnamese anomaly compared to other Southeast Asians.

In terms of specific studies, many focus on how Vietnamese resettlement in a foreign land affects the refugee, including educational and economic gains as well as religious, social, and psychological impacts. A number of those studies focus mainly on generational differences. There have also been studies about changes in religious beliefs. These studies, however, are over 20 years old. There has not been a significant amount of research on the Vietnamese in the U.S. since they have become a well-established group in society. Other gaps in the research include the degree of transnationality, current ancestral veneration practices, and conflict between Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics, specifically for Vietnamese Americans. Also, there have not been any cross-regional studies on the religiosity of Vietnamese. There have also been very few qualitative studies on religious norms and customs of the Vietnamese population. My research attempts to fill this gap.

4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Rationale

In addition to my quantitative surveys, I also conducted qualitative fieldwork in order to observe members in their respective institutions. My fieldwork allowed to me to “get in” (Lofland and Lofland 1984) to the social group of the religious organization and reach members who I would then later talk to and potentially survey. However, this is not to suggest that the fieldwork served this purpose only. Fieldwork afforded me insight into these populations that surveys could not. For example, while I did not test formal hypotheses, I was able to observe members, volunteers, dress, normative behaviors during services, deviant behavior, additional activities provided by the organization, the compound, socialization, interaction, languages spoken, and the overall experience of what it is like to be a member at that particular church or temple. I felt that this aided in my understanding of the Vietnamese population with respect to their religious beliefs and behavior.

4.2 Discussion

Over the course of nine months, I attended a church or temple nearly every weekend. I spent 25 to 30 hours at each primary research site. Secondary research sites were frequented less often and warranted fewer hours of observation. In general, I spent four to six hours each Sunday at a particular location or multiple locations. At times I would take notes during the services. Other times I waited until I was home to write out my observations. I tried to take notes only

when they would not interfere with the services or become a distraction to those around me. While attending services, I usually sat near the back of the church or temple. From this vantage point, I was able to observe the parent room (if available), volunteer activity, arrivals and departures, the proceedings, as well as the majority of those in the audience. I carried a digital voice recorder with me in the event I interviewed someone face-to-face or there was a notable conversation I wanted recorded. I also voice recorded some of the telephone interviews upon permission of the participant.

Depending on my comfort level, I approached members about participation in my survey early on in the research process or near the end. At all three Minneapolis-St. Paul research sites, I waited a number of weeks before soliciting participants. Since this was the first leg of my study, I did not yet feel comfortable approaching members. Therefore, I waited until my presence was considered normal. At my Houston research sites, I attempted to recruit participants very early on, generally on the first or second visit. I was much more comfortable with approaching members at this point. I also felt that it was not necessary to wait until my presence was considered normal; considering most knew that I was a researcher, my presence would never be fully “normal.”

Throughout my study, I had a general routine I followed. I would arrive fifteen minutes before the first service that I would be attending. I would sit and begin observing right away. In the case of churches with multiple masses, I went to the lunch area and observed the socialization of members. This also gave me time to talk to some members and jot down any important notes. I would then stay until all the masses were finished and leave around fifteen minutes after that. At temples, I would stay through the service and lunch. I was able to observe many of the same things I did at churches during this time.

I took extensive fieldnotes at each research site. Reviewing these fieldnotes, I noticed a number of aspects of similarity and difference between Catholic churches and Buddhist temples and even between organizations of the same religious affiliation. I will begin my discussion by detailing each location, my experiences there, and the general patterns that developed at that institution. These locations include the Church of St. Mary in Minneapolis-St. Paul, *Chùa Nhỏ*—*Chùa* translating to the English word “temple”—in Minneapolis-St. Paul, *Chùa Lớn* another temple in Minneapolis-St. Paul and a secondary research site, the Church of Fatima in Houston, *Chùa Giác Ngộ* in Houston and a secondary research site, *Chùa Thọ Long* in Houston, and *Chùa Đất Nước* another secondary research site. I wanted to explore the realm of religious norms and customs in the Vietnamese community that little research has been able to pay specific attention. Important patterns I encountered or witnessed follow these explanations. These include ancestral veneration, ceremonies, distance, dress code, festivals, greetings and names, interaction, language, the lunch area, offerings, participation, response to my research, the school, and youth groups. While there were a number of other aspects that I coded, I found the aforementioned aspects most compelling with the richest data.

4.3 Church of St. Mary

The Church of St. Mary was chosen as my first location in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. After reviewing their website and leaving a message for the priest, I drove to this church early on a Sunday morning. The church is located in the heart of Minneapolis, in a residential area. The church’s architecture is Romanesque. The adjacent buildings, the office and school, are a repurposed older house and modern school building, respectively. I entered the

church building before the first of three masses began. I saw a priest going about his morning duties and approached him. The priest, *Cha* (Father) *Lạc*, a thin man of short stature and wearing glasses, referred to himself being identifiable as the “the ugly one.” *Cha Lạc* and I discussed my research, of which he was very receptive.

After the first mass, *Cha Lạc* introduced me to a number of volunteers. One of the volunteers, *Bác Đình*, a balding, stocky gentleman, is the secretary of the Church of St. Mary. He became my designated tour guide for the day. For the rest of the day, *Bác Đình* showed me around the buildings, told me about the church and its members, and introduced me to many members. I had not expected this excellent and open level of treatment. However, I could not pass up this opportunity to receive insight into the inner workings of the church and its community. In addition to this warm reception, the priest introduced me to the congregation and briefly explained my research in each of the three masses.

This church has an interesting history. St. Mary’s began as a traditional neighborhood church with mostly whites as members. As the congregation began to deplete and a burgeoning Vietnamese Catholic church nearby was outgrowing its facility, the two merged. The “old” members, from the original St. Mary’s, number from 100 to 150 while the Vietnamese portion of the parish number over 1,000. There was initial conflict between leadership roles, mass times and languages. However, it seems that the merger has been very successful and has given life back to St. Mary’s. Many members, both white and Vietnamese, have expressed joy at the merger.

In addition to my fieldwork, I also conducted quantitative surveys as part of my study. Therefore I needed access to the church member directory. *Cha Lạc* and *Bác Đình* gave me indirect access to that information through one of the church’s secretaries. I was unable to take

possession of their directory and would need to come back to the church if I wanted names, numbers, and addresses of potential participants. To obtain this information, I came to the office during normal business hours during the week. *Chi Quynh*, the secretary, a dolled up woman wearing glittering traditionally Asian-styled clothing, and I sat down and used a table of numbers to get a random sample which I could solicit for my study. Through this relatively easy process, I was able to get a list of 25 names and addresses of eligible participants to solicit through the mail. However, mail solicitation proved spectacularly unsuccessful. I received only one response. After this failure, I changed tactics to face-to-face solicitation and snowball sampling. By snowball sampling I mean two things. My first and most successful tactic involved asking participants if they knew anyone that would be interested, who I then approached for participation in person or after receiving their contact information. The second tactic involved past participants emailing their friends and family, with the survey attached, trying to solicit their participation. Interestingly, this second method was not my idea. Past participants asked if I needed more people and offered this as a solution. Unfortunately, this method did not work.

Sunday mornings and early afternoons at the Church of St. Mary consisted of three masses and Sunday school. The first mass was for the “American” members of the church, as it was in English. Many Vietnamese members referred to the white members (*very* few people of other ethnicities are members) of the church as American and themselves as Vietnamese. The volunteers and the majority of the congregation for this mass are white. There was an average of 40 to 60 parishioners present. The second mass was in the Vietnamese language. The volunteers and vast majority of the congregation were Vietnamese. The average attendance of this mass was 700, which filled all the pews to capacity. The third mass was also in Vietnamese. Children who took classes on Sundays attended this mass together. There were also a few mixed race families

in the congregation. The average attendance of this third mass was also 700 unless school was out for the summer; students and their families did not attend as regularly in those months. Again, the majority of the congregation was Vietnamese, as were the volunteers—with the exception of the first mass in which all volunteers, but not clergy, were all white.

The white members of St. Mary's tend to be of an older demographic, generally middle aged and older. Those that attend the first mass regularly are usually there alone, elderly, and former volunteers. The Vietnamese members encompass all ages and Vietnamese ethnicities (North, Central, and South Vietnamese). The third mass differs from the other two by its demographics. Young families, school children, and teenagers attend this mass regularly. Throughout the summer of 2010, I spent every other Sunday at St. Mary's for these three masses, including time before, between, and after them.

4.4 *Chùa Nhỏ*

The Buddhist temple I chose in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area was *Chùa Nhỏ*. The origins of this temple stem from a rift in the Vietnamese community in the area. The monks had differences in the way they wanted to run their temple. Therefore, the monk that presides over this temple, *Thầy Ngẩn*, established a new temple in another city in the metro area. It is run slightly different than its sister temple, *Chùa Lớn*, which will be explained below. Although they are now competing temples in the area, there is still a sense of community between the two. In fact, *Chùa Nhỏ* raised \$7,000 towards the construction of the new temple being built at *Chùa Lớn*.

This small temple is nestled in a suburb and caters to a small population of area Vietnamese Buddhists. As you are driving, one could easily pass right by it and not notice. What the temple lacks in size and population, however, it makes up in décor. The compound, which includes a house, gazebo, private parking lot, and temple building, is decorated on nearly every surface, inside and out, with Buddhist and Vietnamese cultural paraphernalia. The façade has a pond with numerous statues and large letters on the wall in Vietnamese. The corners of the roof, also called the hip, have metal dragon statues fastened to them.

The inside of the temple is no different. *Chùa Nhỏ* seems to subscribe to the “more is more” mantra of interior design. The main altar is covered with artificial lotus flowers and orchids, all sizes of Buddha statues, fresh fruit, tea sets, candles, and incense. There are three large Buddha statues with large neon lights behind them. The temple is on the first floor with a basement used for the school and other activities underneath. The back of the main altar wall that the audience faces during services includes two small altars for ancestral veneration. This space is rather cramped and can only accommodate two mourners at a time, one at each altar. A breezeway connects the temple to the house. In the breezeway, one will put a gray robe on and remove one’s shoes before entering the temple. The house contains the kitchen and monk’s quarters. The basement of the house is the lunch area.

On my first visit to this temple, I did not approach the monk to ask for permission to use *Chùa Nhỏ* as a research site. I found out through other members of the temple that he did not speak much English. Therefore I decided to bring my translator with me on my next visit. Two weeks later, my translator spoke to the monk and explained my research. Without hesitation, *Thầy Ngẩn* granted me permission to conduct my study. *Thầy Ngẩn* is a very small, elderly man with a kind smile. He walks around the compound freely, smiling to members as they pass.

The services at *Chùa Nhỏ* generally run two hours. This service includes a lecture, which can run from 15 minutes to two hours, rituals of bowing and chanting, ancestral veneration of the recently deceased, and an informal talk at the close. The length of the lecture was based on the whim of the monk and the particular schedule of that day. On the first Sunday of each month, there would be meditation for approximately 10 minutes before any other part of the service is conducted. For every service, members sit on round orange and red striped cushions on the floor with book stands in front of them. Front-facing chairs and tables are also available along the walls of the temple for those who prefer it. Women and men are separated by a center aisle.

On average, there were 30 members present each Sunday, many dressed in gray robes. These robes are intended to be a reminder for the mental state one should be in within the temple, one of reflection and unconcerned with ego or the outside world. These robes are also used for modesty when one bows to the floor. Ages of those present ranged from toddlers to the elderly. Nearly two-thirds of the members are women. The monk and his helpers are male for the service. The temple also has a regular staff, which includes women. One older white man would come to the services often. He would generally arrive with 10 to 15 minutes left of the service and stay through lunch. There were a number of irregular members, people I saw only once or twice. However, the majority of people I saw attended every week.

4.5 *Chùa Lớn*

Since the population of *Chùa Nhỏ* is relatively small and I would no longer be using the mail as a method of recruiting participants, I needed to choose a secondary research site. *Chùa Lớn* was chosen because it is the only other Vietnamese Buddhist temple in the area. It also

happens to be much larger than *Chùa Nhỏ*. The monks that preside over this temple are the same that had a falling out with *Thầy Ngẩn* of *Chùa Nhỏ*. While I attended *Chùa Nhỏ* the weeks that I was not at the Church of St. Mary, I occasionally went to *Chùa Lớn* instead or afterwards. I did not spend as much time at this location as I did the others because I considered it a supplemental research site.

Growing up, my father would take me and my brother to *Chùa Lớn* on Sundays to take Vietnamese classes. I got to know the leadership and the grounds very well. (It is for this reason that I did not choose *Chùa Lớn* to be a primary research site.) I have not attended this temple for over a decade and the buildings, member demographics, and school have changed significantly. Many of the rooms have been repurposed and a separate school building and facility for visiting and permanent monks to stay has been built. They are currently in the process of building a new temple in the center of the compound to better utilize their limited free space and to accommodate their growing membership. Currently, all buildings are connected with hallways in a square shape. A beautiful courtyard with trellises and statues decorate the space. The regular volunteers from my childhood are now older and have been replaced by younger men and women. The school, which started out as a haphazardly run organization, is now a streamlined, efficient organization. They have entrance exams, summer holidays, and strict attendance policies. While these changes have all happened slowly over the span of 10 years, there is a significant difference from my childhood.

Since the leadership and monks were already aware of my research through my father, who had spoken to them and other members previously, I did not feel the need to formally ask permission to use *Chùa Lớn* as a research site. Additionally, I did not require access to a directory of members. Therefore, I attended as though a regular member of the temple. The

service is entirely in the Vietnamese language. The lecture usually lasts 30 minutes with 30 minutes of ritual, which includes bowing and chanting. Any ancestral veneration usually happens after the service has ended. Attendance for the service is on average 100 or more members. The men and women are seated on cushions but are separated by gender. Lining the walls are front-facing chairs for extra seating. There tend to be more women than men at the services. The ages of members attending the service, for there are many that socialize around the compound throughout the day, range from young adult to elderly with many more being elderly. Those that do not attend the service but prefer to socialize are generally young to middle aged adults or young families.

4.6 Church of Fatima

After researching the many Vietnamese Catholic churches in the Houston metropolitan area, I selected the Church of Fatima for its location and size. The Church of Fatima is located in northwest Houston, approximately 30 minutes outside of the downtown area. Fatima's is able to boast a membership base of over 1,000 families. To begin my research, I had called before my first visit to find out mass times and if I would be able to speak to the pastor, or someone in a leadership position. My call was forwarded to a recorded message with mass times. Sundays at Fatima's consist of an early mass in Vietnamese, a late morning mass in Vietnamese, and an early afternoon mass in English in which school children are present. There is also an evening mass; however, I would be unable to attend it due to time and resource constraints.

I arrived between the first two services on Sunday morning. As I took the exit off the freeway, I could see the beautiful spires of a French Romanesque cathedral. When I tried to drive

into the parking lot, however, I found my way blocked. I drove around to the back of the church and saw many vehicles and people walking into a large modern building. Deciding to follow suit, I entered the modern building and quickly realized that this was the church. The cathedral was in construction, to be opened in five months later in February 2011. The cathedral would hold up to 1,200 members while the capacity of the current church is around 700 members.

Upon entering the foyer of the church, a large glass case holds the scale model of the cathedral next to tables with the day's mass handouts on them. I approached a volunteer, *Chi Thuy*, to help me locate a priest with whom I could discuss my research. *Chi Thuy* claimed to be the secretary of the pastor. She kept asking what specifically I needed from him as she waited for him to emerge from his chamber. She seemed reluctant to allow me to speak to him. When she gave up waiting and a related search, I resorted to asking her my question, fully prepared to ask a priest when I saw one next. She considered it a moment and then agreed to my observation and survey solicitation. For the rest of the day, I observed in the church area and outside. After the English mass, I approached an associate pastor and asked about my research. He agreed to both aspects of my research after a short pause. Because of some misfortune finding a suitable Vietnamese Buddhist temple in the area, I visited the Church of Fatima for four weeks in a row. Once a suitable temple was found, I began going once every two weeks.

On my subsequent visits, I explored more of the grounds. The parish hall, adjacent to the church, was a space for lunch, indoor recreation, and the school. I also used these visits to ask permission from other members of the church about my research, including nuns and other associate pastors. I was given the phone number of the pastor, *Cha Thur*, and was told to contact him directly. Unfortunately, the call was never answered nor returned. Since I had been given permission from two church leaders already, I felt that my research activities were permissible.

There was a stark difference between St. Mary's and Fatima's in the reception I received. I am still unclear as to the reason behind this difference. Perhaps it was the regional idiosyncrasies, my current or former university affiliations, or the particular nature of each church.

I regularly attended the second and third masses. I did not attend the first mass because of the length of the commute I had from my home to Houston. The second mass was very well attended and regularly had approximately 700 members in the congregation. Every week this mass required around 15 Eucharistic ministers, nine altar servers, and two priests. The choir consisted of male and female middle aged adults. There was a wide range of ages in the congregation. It was much more difficult to assess the proportion of the congregation that was male and female because of the number of people. At a quick glance, they seemed rather equal. Surprisingly, there was sometimes a rare non-Vietnamese person in the audience for this Vietnamese language mass.

The third mass was different from the first two for two reasons. First, this mass was in English. Second, this mass was mandatory for students taking classes. Every week this mass required around 10 Eucharistic ministers, five altar servers, and two priests. When school was in session, the front half of the pews were taken up completely by school children. Sunday classes were for teenagers while Saturday classes were for younger children. When there was school, this mass was well attended. Similar to the previous mass, there were nearly 700 people in attendance. However, when school was out for the summer, the number of attendees reduced to 200 to 300. There were markedly more non-Vietnamese in the audience at the English mass; however, still a scant minority. The congregation for this mass was noticeably younger. The choir consisted of leaders of the school, older teens, and young adults, all Vietnamese.

4.7 Chùa Giác Ngộ

I began my search for a Vietnamese Buddhist Temple in the Houston area online. There were many from which to choose. Therefore, I started calling each institution in the order Google Maps[®] gave them to me. The first temple that answered my call was *Chùa Giác Ngộ*. I spoke to a man about doing research at the temple and coming the following Sunday to speak to the monk. He seemed very receptive to my research and gave me directions to the facility. *Chùa Giác Ngộ* is located in a neighborhood in an inner-ring suburb of Houston. The entire compound is fenced in with high decorative wrought iron fencing and brick. Near the parking area there was a beautiful plant and flower garden. The two buildings on the compound are large and stark white with three large wooden doors for their entrances. I walked up to the first building to find all the doors locked. As I walked up to the second building, a monk emerged from the side of it and asked if I needed help. I greeted him by bowing with my hands in a prayer position at my chest and saying “*thưa Thầy.*”

The monk brings me into his sitting room for our meeting. I explained my research and proposed *Chùa Giác Ngộ* as one of my research sites. He said I would be welcome to observe but said the members of this temple would be too busy to complete my survey, in fact, they would refuse. The people at this temple, he said, are concerned with Buddhism and Enlightenment; they are not concerned with the outside world. If I tried to recruit participants, I would not succeed. After a few attempts for him to change his mind, I stood up and thanked him for his time. Later I would learn from other Vietnamese Buddhists in the area that people at *Chùa Giác Ngộ* are “different” for the very reasons the monk told me. Considering the reception I

received at this temple, I decided a better course of action would be to choose another temple as a research site. Therefore, I never returned to *Chùa Giác Ngộ*.

4.8 *Chùa Thọ Long*

Through my contacts in Minnesota, I was able to arrange a meeting with my contacts' relatives, *Bác Dao* and *Cô Ha*, that live in Houston and attend their temple with them. We first met at their house and got to know one another. In 1975, *Bác Dao* and *Cô Ha*, already married for three years, were forced to leave their home in Vietnam. They settled in Minnesota with *Cô Ha*'s brothers and sisters. Four years later, fed up with the cold and snow, they moved south to Houston where a large Vietnamese population had formed. *Bác Dao* is a skinny man, with exceptionally cheerful eyes and a hearty laugh. His wife, *Cô Ha*, is a stockier woman with a husky voice and an equally hearty laugh. They are both very outgoing and cheerful people. Since moving to Houston, they have been members of three different temples, each subsequent temple was closer to their home. *Chùa Thọ Long* was a short 10 minute drive from their home in a northwest inner-ring suburb of Houston. This temple is an offshoot of a temple 40 minutes away. This expansion offers residents of Houston a temple closer to home with similar leadership. Interestingly, this was the only temple in which a specific form of Buddhism was mentioned. *Chùa Thọ Long* focuses on Mahayana Buddhism. One major tenet of Mahayana Buddhism is that anyone can achieve enlightenment and become a Buddha.

As we drove up to *Chùa Thọ Long*, I immediately noticed the construction. A new temple was being built and much of the grounds were dirt. Temporary buildings were set up and used as a temple, kitchen, school, and monks' quarters until the new temple was ready. A new large,

open air building had been built for recreation and festivals. The temporary structures were nothing more than glorified trailer homes. However, the new temple was made of corrugated steel, to be covered in stucco, with traditional arches, and curved roof corners. The new structure would hold four to five times the number of people than the current temple. On the busiest day, the first Sunday of each month, the current temple holds around 100 people. There is also an outdoor lunch and food prep area. Lunch is served formally in the temple for those wishing to dine with the monks. Informally, lunch is also served in this outdoor area for those taking classes, including children and adults.

The services generally begin around 9:00 a.m. each Sunday. A lecture starts out the day. After the lecture, rituals including bowing and chanting begin. At 11:30 a.m., ancestral veneration begins and lasts for 30 minutes; participation is entirely voluntary. During this time, lunch is quietly being set up in the temple. Lunch immediately follows ancestor worship. Lunch can last 30 minutes to nearly one hour, depending on how long the monk speaks afterwards. During this time, the children attend Vietnamese classes. After lunch and class, many of the kids don their karate uniforms and go to Wushu practice, a type of karate made popular by Bruce Lee. Kids of all ages and races, and even some adults as well, join the Wushu Master in practice. The traditional dragon dance that is performed at the New Year Festival for *Tết*, the Lunar New Year, is performed by members of the Wushu group.

On average, there are approximately 30 to 40 people attending the lecture. The majority of members have covered their everyday clothing with gray robes. Fewer people attend the ancestor worship ceremonies. There are noticeably more women than men in attendance and most are older or elderly. As previously mentioned, the first Sunday of the month attracts more members for the monthly ritual of bowing. Members come to atone for their past sins by bowing

108 times with the 108 chanted names of Buddha. These bows, which last for nearly one hour, consist of placing your hands in the prayer position at your chest and bringing them up to your head. Next, you drop to your knees, lay your hands on the floor and bring your head to your hands. You are to remain in this position until the beginning of the repeat of that name of Buddha. Once back in a standing position, another small bow or a head nod and hand movement is made. This cycle is repeated until all the names of Buddha have been read; it is physically exhausting. Some of the more elderly people chose to sit in chairs and bow. Others, which one might think are too fragile to complete this ritual, do so better than younger members.

Bác Dao, a regular volunteer at *Chùa Thọ Long*, spoke to some of the monks about me before my first visit. They had all agreed to my research activities. When I arrived, I spoke to the Master, the lead monk, of the sister temple that is 40 minutes away. He suggested I speak to the Master of this temple so that he may announce to the members my needs and therefore recruit more participants. Unfortunately, this monk was on a visit to China to ask for a blessing for the new temple. The members at *Chùa Thọ Long* were very receptive to my research, especially after I was introduced to them by *Bác Dao*, a trusted member of the community.

Bác Dao was my unofficial “key informant” in Houston providing me with insider information on a multitude of topics (Tremblay 1957:688). Many of my Houston trips included unstructured interviews with him. My translator served as a key informant at times in Minneapolis-St. Paul; however, I could have been considered my own key informant for the knowledge base I already had about the Minnesota Vietnamese community and familiarity of *Chùa Lớn*. An interesting issue arises when my knowledge base of Vietnamese Americans is analyzed. One must consider what I observed. Were there particular things I saw that I would not have noticed had I not been a member of the community or familiar with Buddhist temples and

Catholic churches? On the other hand, what did I miss because of that familiarity and thus take for granted?

4.9 *Chùa Đất Nước*

On my first visit to *Chùa Thọ Long, Bác Đảo* thought it would be good for me to visit the largest temple in Houston. We took a three hour break from his temple to visit *Chùa Đất Nước* in a very wealthy area of Houston. This temple hosts the annual Vietnamese Buddhist convention; Buddhists from all around the country flock to this temple for the festivities. Upon arrival, I understood why. The compound is enormous, with many buildings in traditional pagoda architecture, ornate statues, and a large pond populated by turtles and fish. The most impressive statue is the near 80 foot high statue of *Quan Âm*, a Buddhist goddess, made by one woman as a testament to her commitment to Buddhism and becoming a monk. The architecture of the buildings and the upkeep and design of the grounds was highly impressive. The beauty of this temple may not be matched by any other in the United States.

The most striking difference about this temple than any other I have encountered is its use of the English language. As this temple is a Vietnamese Buddhist temple, I expected the singular use of the Vietnamese language. However, this temple seems to cater to a wider population. Not only do many of the statues have English translations of its Vietnamese text, but English is spoken during the lecture and rituals, however only slightly; Vietnamese is the main language of the services with occasional English translation. It was a nice change to be able to understand some of the chants, which are in a dialect of Vietnamese rarely used in speech. The

translation also, I assume, helped the non-Vietnamese in the audience to better understand the proceedings.

The seating inside the temple is also different than any temple I have encountered. The normal front-facing chairs that are placed along the side of the temple have been replaced by dark stained cabinets. The feet of many of the people sitting on these are dangling off the ground. Instead of cushions and book stands being used by individuals, low cushioned benches are used for seats. Book stands have been replaced by a long low bench with a lipped edge for reading material and shelf underneath for books. These benches span half the room in width. There are two sections, not separated by gender, with a center aisle down the middle. The audience was mostly Vietnamese with a few whites mixed in throughout. No one in the audience is wearing a gray robe.

Since *Chùa Đất Nước* serves a larger population, there are more monks in attendance. Both male and female monks emerge from their quarters, 12 men and 10 women. The men sit up on the altar while the women sit in front of the audience on cushions facing the altar. They also differ in dress. Male monks wear orange shirts and orange robes while the women wear gray shirts and orange robes. As I was not recruiting participants at *Chùa Đất Nước* and I only planned on attending that once, I did not feel the need to ask permission for my observation which was very brief, relative to my other research sites.

4.10 Ancestral Veneration

Ancestral veneration or ancestor worship is a practice that can be performed by both Buddhists and Catholics. For a complete explanation of the traditional *cúng* ceremony and its

meaning, please refer to the Background and Significance section under the subheading Ancestral Veneration. As I only encountered these *cúng* ceremonies at Buddhist temples, I will focus my discussion on these.

These ceremonies differed at each temple; perhaps at the whim or training of the Master. At *Chùa Nhỏ*, the ceremony was embedded within the day's service. Names were read off a sheet; the more names that must be read and thus prayed for, the longer this service lasted. The average ceremony lasted 10 minutes. The families of the deceased performed no special tasks and were not wearing white garments or any other signification that they were mourners. Simple attendance was often all that was required of mourners. However, there were no strict attendance policies during the mourning period. Despite the absence or presence of a mourner, the names of the recently deceased were read aloud. The monk leaves his desk where he lectures and sits on a cushion on the floor for this ceremony. To have a deceased relative's name included in the ceremony, one must inform the temple leadership. Typically, monetary donations are given as compensation to the temple for their service in helping their relative move on to a better place.

While I did not witness ancestral veneration at *Chùa Lớn* during my research visits, I had participated in a *cúng* ceremony a few years ago when a close relative of mine passed away. This ceremony occurs after the service. Monks and church leaders perform the ceremony behind the main altar where the ancestral altars are located. The family would join them and kneel. A framed picture of the recently deceased was placed on the altar as well as fresh fruit, vegetarian dishes, lit incense in a large pot, and fresh flower arrangements. All younger kin of the deceased wrap a white scarf around their head. During the ceremony, traditional Buddhist phrases are chanted along with the name, place, and date of death (on the Lunar calendar) of the deceased. During the chanting, the next youngest kin of the deceased will fill teacups with hot tea and

symbolically “feed” a bowl of rice to the deceased’s spirit. Incense is used to bring the offerings to the deceased. It is said that if the smoke swirls, the deceased is receiving that gift. Once the ceremony is finished, the scarves are removed and everyone leaves the temple. The entire service generally takes 20 to 30 minutes.

This ceremony occurs every Sunday for seven weeks after the death occurred, during the traditional mourning period. On the 100th day (or Sunday nearest it), the family returns for a final ceremony. They family brings vegetarian food prepared at home and places it on the altar. After the ceremony, those in attendance all share the food. If there is more than one deceased person to be mourned, each family will kneel at the respective altar—which at *Chùa Lớn* are separated by gender—and perform the ceremony at the same time as the other family. Ancestral altars are arranged by preference of the temple, with the combination of genders on both altars or one for each gender. These altars can be visited at any time after death and incense is generally placed in the incense holder after a short prayer and bow. Small photos of all the deceased relatives of the members that have been mourned at that temple are placed behind the altar on the wall. Large framed photos of the recently deceased are on the altar itself.

Ancestor worship at *Chùa Thọ Long* in Houston is scheduled every Sunday for 30 minutes beginning at 11:30 a.m. Those in attendance are the mourning families, kneeling in front of the respective altars. At *Chùa Thọ Long*, the altars are separated by gender. Also in attendance are any other members who wish to “transfer their merits” and provide additional help to the deceased. Card stock printed with the chants is passed out. The audience sits on cushions with book stands in front of them.

All four monks enter the room. The audience stands, facing the center aisle with hands in the prayer position. As each monk passes, a small bow is made. Once the monks are situated at

the front of the temple—one at each ancestral altar, another at a drum, and another at a gong—the audience sits. Microphones have been set up so the audience can clearly hear the proceedings. The Master begins the chants. The card indicates when the audience is to read along with the monk. Throughout the chanting, the mourners pour tea into teacups and offer bowls of rice to their ancestor. There is less uniformity in the signification of the deceased's younger kin. Some people wore white scarves while others wore paper thin white jackets. Outside of the ceremony, one family wore black clips on their clothing to signify that they were in mourning. At the end of the 30 minute ceremony, all the chants have been read and rituals performed. The audience helps clear up the cushions and book stands.

During my brief visit to *Chùa Đất Nước*, I witnessed a *cúng* ceremony. Very much like *Chùa Nhỏ*, ancestral veneration was embedded within the service. Those mourning would have some sort of designation of their status such as white scarves tied around their heads. There was no specific location for them to sit; some were in the front and others were in the back. Before the ceremony began, a volunteer handed out long yellow card stock that had clips on them. The mourners would clip those cards to their hair. Names of the recently deceased were then read along with other chanting. After the ceremony was over, the man came back around and collected the cards. This ceremony was relatively quick, lasting less than 10 minutes.

While Catholics do not participate in the traditional *cúng* ceremony in churches, they do perform something else for mourners. Occasionally at the Church of St. Mary, I would see a group of people sitting in the very first pews that had white scarves on their head. From my past experience, I knew that these people were mourners of a relative recently deceased. Before and after each Vietnamese mass, nearly everyone present would kneel on the pews' kneelers and recite a prayer together. Some of these prayers lasted over 30 minutes while others were only

five minutes long. It seemed that the mourners need not be present for the prayers to be said. In addition to prayers for the family and deceased, prayers for the Eucharist were also said on certain holy days.

When examining the differences between Buddhist *cúng* ceremonies and Catholic group prayers, it seemed that they both had similar aims. Buddhists come together in order to give offerings to the deceased and to transfer their merits. Catholics come together to pray as a large group to pray for the family and the deceased. In both cases, the more the merrier. Despite the religious affiliation of the mourners, it seems that culture-wide, this is a community effort. Although the ceremonies are always voluntary, the majority of those present participate.

As an aside, some Catholics attended Buddhist temples in order to *cúng* for a Buddhist family member. While I am not aware of priests' feelings of such participation by their parishioners, it seems to be generally accepted. In the case of one woman, who had converted to Catholicism from Buddhism, she and her family skipped church on Sunday in order to perform this ceremony at a temple. It seems, in all instances I witnessed, Catholics would attend only on the seventh week of mourning.

4.11 Ceremonies

Ceremonies are a traditional part of every religion. While Buddhists and Catholic ceremonies sometimes serve similar purposes such as community building or reverence, the rituals may differ. Many of the special ceremonies I witnessed for Catholics, understandably, revolved around the Eucharist. Rituals for Buddhists often revolve around the individual's openness, meditation, and symbolic gestures serving Buddha. For instance, at a relic exhibit at

Chùa Thọ Long in Houston—showcasing relics from cremations of monks and lamas including hair, bone, and clothing—participants were told to pour blessed nectar water over a medium sized statue of a young Buddha; this is symbolic of cleansing. At the same ceremony there were gongs to ring while thinking of your spiritual leader.

One difference I noticed was with the nature of the ceremony, or the feeling associated with them. Buddhist ceremonies are symbolic in nature which requires a particular mindset and the actions are more individual. Catholics tend to be more group oriented. For example, for mourners and recently deceased, the entire church prays out loud together. When these ceremonies coincide with regular church and temple services, concessions are made for the extra people and additional fixtures in the service area which may impede normal operations. This occurred at St. Mary's during First Communion to adapt to a slower communion than usual because of the children's procession through the church as well as their taking of communion; Fatima's baptism to accommodate extra people; and *Chùa Thọ Long*'s relic exhibit to accommodate the exhibit and nearly one hundred extra people.

4.12 Distance

As previously mentioned, *Bác Dao* changed temples three times in order to attend one close to home. While it is usually the case that people attend churches and temples close to their homes—and in the past neighborhood churches were the norm—some travel relatively far to attend the temple of their choice. In the case of Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics, if they wish to attend a church or temple with other Vietnamese and/or in the Vietnamese language they may have to travel farther depending on the number of facilities available. At the Church of St. Mary,

many people residing in Greater Minnesota would travel to the Twin Cities for the weekend in order to attend classes and activities on Saturdays and Sundays. This was the major reason behind the significant difference in attendance during the summer when school is not in session. During those summer months, I was told, the members who live far away attend a non-Vietnamese Catholic church much closer to home. The Church of Fatima did not encounter this problem to the same degree because most of its members live relatively close. However, because there are so few Vietnamese Catholic churches in Minnesota, especially outside the metropolitan area, those residents must travel farther. This demonstrates the importance of those extra activities for community building, cultural preservation, and other personal needs.

In Asia, it is typical that one would visit a temple far away, sometimes several hours travel, to pay homage. This common practice also translates to the United States. At *Chùa Thọ Long* I met a woman who lives in Austin, TX. Every first Sunday of the month she travels over three hours to Houston to attend *Chùa Thọ Long*. I asked her if there were not any Vietnamese temples in Austin. She replied, “No, there are about six or seven.” This surprised me at first. *Bác Dao* then explained to me that when you come here, you forget about all your worries and just focus on the teaching. Therefore, the long drive is justified on at least two counts, it is culturally acceptable and this temple may meet different spiritual needs for her.

4.13 Dress Code

My expectations for the dress code at each of my research sites turned out to be off the mark, more so for churches. Since I had attended a Buddhist temple regularly as a child to attend Vietnamese language classes, I had become accustomed to the dress of the members. People

varied slightly but the general state of dress was business casual to casual. The clothing at the temples in both Minneapolis-St. Paul and Houston mostly reflected my past experiences. The only difference I noticed was that some Buddhists cover their everyday clothes with gray robes. Also, children and teens dressed much more casually than their elders.

The expectation I had for Catholic churches was the stereotypical “Sunday best.” While some members still held this value, others clearly did not. There was incredible variety in what members wore to mass. Suits, dresses, and large decorative hats were generally worn by older members and the select non-Vietnamese members. In general, teens followed a very strict unspoken dress code. Teenage girls wore skinny jeans with tight shirts and Converse® sneakers or sandals; most had long dark hair with side swept bangs. Teenage boys differed slightly more. Faux hawks and Ed Hardy t-shirts were very common, as were tight pants and Converse® sneakers. Young and middle aged adults varied significantly in dress but hovered around casual to business casual much like Buddhists. I was surprised at the variety of dress; more surprised, however, when a parishioner came to mass wearing clothes very similar to pajamas.

4.14 Festivals

During my research two festivals occurred. The first, at the Church of Fatima, was held over Thanksgiving weekend. The second, at *Chùa Thọ Long*, was a New Year Festival for *Tết*, the Lunar New Year. Both of the festivals were on the church or temple grounds and well attended, and not just by the organizations’ own members. People of all ages and races came to enjoy the event; however, Vietnamese people still constituted an overwhelming majority. The language spoken most often by attendees and volunteers was Vietnamese. Because Buddhist

temples serve only vegetarian food, as it is a Buddhist precept not to kill, the food served at the festival was vegetarian versions of classic Vietnamese dishes, including *phở*. Fatima's served meat of all kinds. All food, however, was made in-house and very delicious.

Each festival had a different personality and focus. The *Tết* festival's focus was on the Lunar New Year, for obvious reasons. This included the traditional dragon dance, firecrackers, *lì xì* (small red envelopes with money or fortunes in them), traditional Vietnamese cuisine, Chinese fortune sticks which corresponded to a numbered fortune, and offerings of incense, flowers, vegetarian food, and fresh fruit. The festival was also very musically focused with dozens of performers from Vietnam and Houston. The Thanksgiving festival had a bit more organization in terms of games, which the *Tết* festival also had, and booths for local philanthropic organizations. There were also more options for food at the Thanksgiving festival. Each festival sold American food including nachos, pizza, chicken fingers, burgers, chips, etc. In order to buy food, Catholics simply exchanged cash. Buddhists chose to exchange cash for tokens and tokens for food. The explanation for this was to keep from soiling the server's hands and to keep food sanitary. As these festivals are occurring at religious facilities, services continued as per usual. Some services were better attended than others due to attendance of the festival.

4.15 Greetings and Names

In traditional Vietnamese culture, people are greeted and addressed in a formal manner. There are many conventions to this tradition (many more than are included here). Elders are to be bowed to with one's hands in a prayer position while saying *thưa* first followed by the title one is supposed to call them. For example, *Bác* literally translates to uncle but simply represents

a man older than your father; *Thầy* and *Cha* are used for monks and priests, respectively. This demonstrates the value of filial piety in Asian cultures, or respect for one's parents and ancestors, which includes all elders. I did not witness this tradition often throughout my entire study. On two separate occasions, I overheard a young person using a formal title for an elder. On one other occasion, I witnessed a young man greeting an associate pastor using the aforementioned customs.

Aside from greetings being more Americanized, people's names have also been affected. Both young and old have become accustomed to giving their American name when asked, in the case that they were born with a Vietnamese name. *Bác Dao* revealed that it is simply easier for people to pronounce and remember an American name. He tells non-Vietnamese Americans that his name is Dan. A woman from St. Mary's introduced herself to me as Erica. When I probed further about her name, she told me that when she was in her teens she tried to make herself more like her American friends and began using the name Erica. However, as an adult she wishes she could go back to her given Vietnamese name. Unfortunately, she intimated, far too many people know her by her American name now that she would not be able to change it. One young woman at Fatima's, *Anh*, uses the Vietnamese spelling of her name but with an American pronunciation, Anne. I am curious about the internal debate that undoubtedly occurs during all of these processes.

4.16 Interaction

During my observations, I paid close attention to interaction between clergy and members as well as interracial interaction. I noticed a significant difference between the

interaction between monks and priests and their respective members. Outside of lecture, monks are generally sequestered, bowed to when present, and revered. The interaction is much more formal than during the lecture portion of the service. Some temples have very informal lectures, and monks even make jokes. On the other hand, during mass, priests are very formal. Outside of mass, however, priests are very friendly and father-like. While there are exceptions to this pattern that I witnessed, including more informality when priests read announcements and when monks preside over a festival, these church and temple leaders generally interact with members in this way.

Throughout my study, I witnessed relatively little interracial interaction. The white members of St. Mary's seem to have made their peace with the merger; however, I did detect some latent tension perhaps because they have become a secondary population in their church. At temples, fewer non-Vietnamese attended regularly. *Chùa Đất Nước* is a major exception in that there are more regular non-Vietnamese members. To a lesser degree, *Chùa Lớn* has classes available to non-Vietnamese adults and *Chùa Thọ Long*'s Wushu classes are attended by a few non-Vietnamese. Interracial families were only seen at churches. Regardless of time and place, interracial interaction seemed rare unless they were already acquainted.

4.17 Language

Both the Church of St. Mary and the Church of Fatima offered two masses in Vietnamese and one in English on Sunday morning and early afternoon. With the exception of *Chùa Đất Nước*, no other temples included English during the regular services. These infrequent translations were very helpful for non-Vietnamese speakers in the audience. It seems that

churches understand the need for English for the benefit of its younger members. However, classes are offered to perpetuate the Vietnamese language among future generations. These competing needs are demonstrated by school leaders wearing lanyards with “I heart Jesus” stitched on them, a call to attention after classes and before mass of “God is good, all the time,” and an extra prayer in the church before mass recited in Vietnamese. Two girls I spoke with who attend the Vietnamese mass claimed they do not need to understand what is being said for the most part; this is because the handouts include the day’s readings in both Vietnamese and English. Interestingly, these girls speak Vietnamese in their home and take Vietnamese classes at church. Perhaps they rely heavily on English and do not feel that Vietnamese is as valuable. In general, younger members, typically 30 years of age and under, speak English while at temple or church. Older members will speak both English and Vietnamese to those younger members and Vietnamese to their peers.

4.18 Lunch

As previously mentioned, the biggest differences between Catholics and Buddhists in the food that they serve are the use of meat and exchange of money. Buddhists serve only hot vegetarian food on the temple compound and it is free to all who wish to eat. Catholics sell food of all kinds, with and without meat and both hot and cold. All food served, however, is Vietnamese. At St. Mary’s, women volunteers make the food at home. The food is served lunch counter style and boasts an \$800 a week profit for the church. *Chùa Nhỏ*’s lunch is made in one of its member’s restaurants and is served buffet style. Fatima’s lunch is made in the kitchen in the parish hall. There is a lunch counter selling prepackaged foods and vegetables. Hot soups are

bought at the open window to the kitchen and brought back to tables with traditional Vietnamese condiments and utensils at the ready. Both *Chùa Lớn* and *Chùa Thọ Long* prepare their lunch in their respective kitchens and serve it buffet style.

4.19 Offerings

Every religious organization, in their non-profit tradition, relies heavily on donations from members. Catholics and Buddhists differ sharply in this respect. Collections are taken during mass by handing around baskets and cloth bags. There can be multiple collections. For example, there is almost always a collection for church operating costs and services. Extra collections are sometimes taken specifically for the poor in the community, missionary work, or other philanthropic activities. Similarly, on special days there are special collections; on Good Friday, for example, a collection is taken in virtually every Catholic Church specifically to support the Church in the Holy Land. Catholics, as well as other Christians, are encouraged to tithe, or give 10 percent of their income to the church. While this may be impractical for some, those people can volunteer their time and talents as well. In Buddhist temples, there is a table where donations are made. If no receipt is needed by the donor for tax purposes, an envelope is placed in a wooden box. As previously mentioned, mourners will donate relatively large sums of money for funeral services and related activities. In some temples, a list of members is publicly displayed detailing their contributions or volunteering. This could also encourage members to donate or volunteer more to look better among their peers. Despite the differences in collection of donations, giving is a normal part of membership at every location for sustaining the church and helping others.

4.20 Participation

In every service, there are many rituals to perform and recitations to be said. It is clearly up to the individual what verbal participation they choose to give that day. I saw a surprising number of people who did not recite the Lord's Prayer at mass or the ritual chanting at the Buddhist service. In one instance, the associate pastor admonished the crowd for their lack of verbal participation. The following week, there was a marked difference in the volume of recitations. Interestingly, in terms of physical participation, bowing, kneeling, and standing in prayer virtually everyone participates. Perhaps social desirability is involved with the physical aspect because it is more obvious if one does not participate. The vast differences I saw in both churches and temples make me question if there is a self-policing effect, a sense of obligation, or audience size that affects the response level.

4.21 Response to My Research

As with all fieldwork when the researcher is not a covert observer, there will be some kind of reaction from those that you are observing. When soliciting participants for my quantitative survey, I garnered many responses. A great many people declined to participate, some referring me to temple or church leaders or older (supposedly wiser) members because they are "experts" and "they know more." The most common excuse was lack of free time. Many people shared that they work six days a week and Sundays are their only day off. Younger people—teenagers and unmarried young adults without children—were much more willing to take my survey. This could have been because they understand the need I had to get survey

participants, because at one time or another they have had to do a survey project themselves for school. They wholly preferred the email method versus a face-to-face method. However, as many researchers know, simply because someone agrees to do a survey, there is no guarantee that they will return it. I encountered this problem from people of all ages and religions.

4.22 Schools

All locations offer school for children in the community, and some adults as well. Buddhists offer classes teaching the Vietnamese language. Catholics have both religious education and Vietnamese language classes combined. These classes occur on-site on Saturday and/or Sunday. These groups serve more than just educational purposes. There is also the obvious element of group solidarity and cultural perpetuation, especially since this is a minority group. Classes at churches are scheduled so mass can be attended afterwards. Temples hold classes during the service. This difference illustrates the desire for the perpetuation of the Catholic faith by parents and church leaders. On the other hand, Buddhists take a more relaxed (perhaps arguably relativistic) stance when it comes to the religious affiliation of their younger generations. This is also reflected in the fact that young children attend churches with their parents; very few young children are present at temples. This suggests a strong family orientation within the Catholic faith.

4.23 Youth Groups

There were a few youth groups that I encountered during my study. The most organized was the Eucharistic Youth at St. Mary's. There was a clear Catholic focus and in exploring their faith. The Eucharistic Youth is very structured with different groups within it that are defined by age; there is a significant amount of group cohesion. Other youth groups were either choirs or sports related including Wushu at *Chùa Thọ Long*, Vovinam karate at Fatima's, and an intramural sports league also at Fatima's. Some of these groups, namely choirs and Eucharistic Youth, have events off-site such as attending an amusement park or camping trips.

5. QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

5.1 Sampling

In order to test the hypotheses located in the Existing Research section, I conducted quantitative surveys. Fieldwork was also conducted in order to get a better understanding of the Vietnamese communities with respect to their location and religious affiliation and to address the fifth hypothesis regarding regional differences. Fieldwork was conducted at the sites from which I sampled. I sampled from the Houston and Minneapolis-St. Paul Vietnamese communities. Minnesota was chosen as a data collection site, as opposed to another area well-known for its large population of Vietnamese like California, because of the convenience it offers me as a permanent resident of the state. Houston, as previously mentioned, was chosen because of its large Vietnamese population but also for the convenience of being relatively close to my school residence. I collected four separate samples: Houston Catholics, Minneapolis-St. Paul Catholics, Houston Buddhists, and Minneapolis-St. Paul Buddhists. I chose only churches and temples within the greater metropolitan areas, including inner-ring suburbs and thus excluding rural areas. I had to be selective in my sampling by church or temple in order to reach the Vietnamese population within the chosen religious facilities. In order to be considered for this study, a church or temple must have a substantial portion of Vietnamese members, preferably over half. Church or temple services must occur regularly as well; if not occurring weekly, meetings must meet at a minimum of bi-weekly.

After identifying the particular churches and temples from which to sample, I had planned to meet with the leaders of the churches and temples. At the first church, the Church of

St. Mary's³ in Minneapolis, this brief meeting went particularly well, and was accompanied by a warm reception from the church community. Attempts at meetings with religious leaders were made at every other location but none matched the success at St. Mary's.⁴ With the meetings, I was hoping to gain access to a directory or list of members of the congregation that I might contact for participation in my survey. With a list, I would then use simple random sampling to choose which respondents I would be contacting. I only used this method once, to great failure. Because of the lack of success, I resorted to an alternative method of face-to-face solicitation and snowball sampling. The survey was administered in person, over the telephone, and through email.

The four separate sample cohorts, while required to be Vietnamese and either Buddhist or Catholic, varied in terms of gender, level of education, and socioeconomic status as well as other basic demographic categories—with the exception of age which had a minimum requirement of 18 years of age. I attempted to get respondents from both the first generation and second generation cohorts. However, it was much easier to get younger respondents because of language ability and a willingness to give me their spare time; therefore, my sample has more respondents from the 18-25 age group than I was hoping. By sampling only at religious institutions, unaffiliated peoples and those who do not or cannot attend a religious institution regardless of belief or affiliation were thus eliminated from the prospective pool of respondents because of an inability to recruit them. My sample was 61.67 percent male, 35.59 percent were 18-25 years of age, 70 percent were first generation immigrant, and 55.36 percent identified as South Vietnamese.

³ Pseudonyms are used for research sites and participants.

⁴ For a more detailed account of these meetings, please see the Qualitative Data Analysis section.

5.2 Statistical Power

Based on the reported effect sizes in the literature, effect sizes are *very* high suggesting sample sizes as low as 15 (Lewis et al. 1988). Unfortunately, I did not expect to find values as high as these. As an alternative, I employed an effect size of .40 because it is the average of three more modest values from the literature. For testing my hypotheses, t-tests, chi-squared tests, logistic regression, and OLS regression were used. To achieve a statistical power of .80, statistical tables suggest sample sizes of 80, 50, 80, and 60 for each of the four hypotheses from the literature, respectively (Clark-Carter 2004). Therefore, by averaging, I would need an overall sample size of 68, and approximately 17 for each sample. Throughout my study, I was only able to recruit 60 participants.

5.3 Survey Instrument

The survey instrument is designed to be given to one specific religious group at a time. Questions are tailored to each group and therefore require separate surveys. The reason for this is that the language required to discuss religious beliefs and practices for Buddhists is not similar enough to that of Catholics and vice versa. The major advantage of doing surveys is to better understand each religious community and to get quantifiable data. Each hypothesis is operationalized by a specific set of questions with the exception of the regional hypothesis. For the survey instrument, please refer to Appendix B and Appendix C.

The first section asks the respondent about their religious beliefs specifically and practices generally. For example, questions four and five require the respondent to indicate their

agreement with statements regarding intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and particular Catholic or Buddhist beliefs; questions six through 10 inquire about attendance of religious institutions.

For the first hypothesis regarding tension between the Buddhist and Catholic religious groups, questions 11 through 16 are used to determine the relationship. These questions include asking the respondent briefly about their social networks and whether that includes those outside their religious group. Other questions are more specific: asking about their opinion of the other religious group and why. It is my intention to have the respondent think deeply about this open ended question and give a thoughtful response. However, I realize that this may not occur and a social desirability effect may, thus skewing my data.

The second hypothesis, regarding ancestral veneration, includes three questions for Buddhists and four questions for Catholics. There are numerous sub points in this section. These questions ask specifically if the respondent engages in certain religious or cultural practices at home, however they can also be practiced anywhere including at religious facilities. The questions range from traditional Vietnamese practices to lunar observational customs, as well as Catholic practices where appropriate. Buddhists are asked fewer questions in this section because of the extra form of ancestral veneration that Catholics may practice. There was a lack of operationalized concepts of ancestral veneration in the existing research. Therefore, I was forced to create one myself.

The third hypothesis, regarding conversion, is operationalized with a single question, including two sub points. This is a result, first, of my anticipation that there would be fewer converts from my sample. Second, it is much simpler to determine conversion than the other variables I am testing.

The fourth hypothesis, regarding transnationality, is operationalized with seven questions and four sub points. Similar to ancestral veneration, the existing research does not include operationalization of transnationality; therefore, I created my own. Six questions relate specifically to ties with family and religious institutions in Vietnam. The remaining questions ask the respondent about the importance of remaining in contact with Vietnamese in their nearby community. The existing research has not provided examples of their operationalization of transnationalism; therefore, it was necessary to create my own. I was able to determine my own operationalizations by including questions that pertained directly to one's transnationality. These include asking the respondent if they remain in contact with their church or temple and family members in Vietnam, if they have the same religion as their family in Vietnam, and if they provide financial assistance to their relatives. I also ask the respondent about their own lives in the U.S. and the importance of Vietnamese culture in their lives which includes language, access to a religious institution, and cultural maintenance over generations. Together these questions will give me a sense of their degree of transnationality.

The final hypothesis regarding differences across regions does not have any additional questions. The only distinction necessary is the data that will be previously known: the region in which the respondent lives. This would be superfluous to ask the respondent.

I also included a section on demographics which includes eight questions and eight sub points. Included in this set of questions are national identity (Vietnamese, American, or Vietnamese American), political leanings and affiliations, and country of birth among the basic demographic questions of age, sex, etc. For the demographic makeup of my sample, please refer to Appendix D.

5.4 Validity and Reliability

Throughout the survey, questions are asked of the respondents that attempt to ensure validity. For example, in order to assess the degree of religiosity in the beginning of the survey, numerous questions are asked that contribute to different aspects of religiosity. Those additional questions are also present as a system of checks and balances. Rather than solely asking “How religious are you?” I attempt to gauge that myself by asking related but less specific questions. To develop this list of questions, I reviewed John Maltby and Christopher A. Lewis’ (1996) and Richard L. Gorsuch and G. Daniel Venable’s (1983) measures of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity. These questions are written as statements requiring a Likert-scale type of response. There are also reverse items in this set to help eliminate acquiescence bias (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepowski, Singer, and Tourangeau 2009). While there is much contention about the best measure to use in order to assess religiosity in the literature, I found that a combination of these measures, with their intrinsic and extrinsic measures, and the inclusion of a self-report measure produced a reliable test (see Quantitative Data Analysis section under the subheading Religiosity for further explanation).

To ensure test reliability, I implemented a form of the test-retest reliability measure. In Rutledge’s (1982) study, similar concepts are used in his qualitative interview guide to assess tensions between the religious groups and religiosity. While I did not have the resources or time to retest my own measure, in a sense I retested Rutledge’s original concepts. This will also be a second measure of validity.

5.5 Limitations

As previously mentioned, this study has a few limitations. In terms of my sample, I limited my potential respondents to those individuals who attend or are members of a religious institution that I have selected to study. Also, because of the nature of Vietnamese culture, outsiders and strangers are looked upon with, at best, mild curiosity and, at worst, distrust. This severely limited my ability to recruit respondents through mail solicitation. Even face-to-face solicitation failed at times, generally with older members, because of a lack of familiarity and a language barrier. The statistical significance of my data may have been affected by my sample size which, due to financial and time constraints, I had to keep relatively small.

Notably, another limitation of my study is the potential to elicit a social desirability effect from my respondents on the section of the survey instrument regarding tensions between religious groups. This could potentially dramatically skew my data. Although there may be a negative relationship between the two groups, that may be unobserved. This would be a Type II error (Clark-Carter 2004). Also, because my study is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, I was unable to assess cause and effect. A longitudinal study, in this case, would serve as a test for future generations compared to the current sample. This would assess change over generations as opposed to change in one individual over time.

6. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

For the aforementioned hypothesis and dependent variables, namely religious tension, degree of ancestral veneration, degree of conversion, degree of transnationality, and regional difference, I utilized a number of independent variables. In my tests I used combinations of the following control variables: gender (measured as a binary variable: Male = 0, Female = 1), political leanings (measured as a categorical variable: Liberal, Moderate, Conservative, Other, Don't Know), political affiliation (measured as a categorical variable: Democrat, Independent, Republican, Not Affiliated, Other, Don't Know), age (an interval level variable measured by the respondent's age in years), income (interval level variable measured in terms of annual household income before taxes for 2009 in dollars), generational status (an ordinal level variable based on generation since immigration: First/Second/Third Generation Immigrant), and national identity (measured as a categorical variable: Vietnamese, American, or Vietnamese American). I tested these variables for multicollinearity and found no such issues. In terms of age and income, these variables were not transformed (age being squared and income using a log transformation) as is usually the case. This was because in their untransformed state, they were more or less normally distributed, more so than they were upon transformation.

I expected to find that traditional Vietnamese ancestral religious practices would be more prevalent with Buddhists than with Catholics; conversion would be from a Eastern religious tradition to a "Western" religious tradition (specifically Judeo-Christian Americanized religions); tensions would be present between the two religious groups; Buddhists will have stronger transnational ties than Catholics; and that there would be no differences by region. The data have shown that traditional ancestral veneration was *not* more prevalent with Buddhists than with

Catholics. With the qualitative data I was able to gather, I have determined that there may have been an interpretation issue with this hypothesis and its operationalization. In terms of conversion, I was unable to collect enough cases of converts to test my hypothesis. Therefore, I was forced to remove this hypothesis from the study. There was a minute degree of tension present, however generally with older members of the first generation cohort collected through my fieldwork. Additional studies on these converts would do well to seek out converts specifically in order to get a representative sample. With random or snowball sampling, I found just two converts. Transnationality was indeed more prevalent for Buddhists than Catholics. In terms of differences across regions, all variables other than national identity and an indicator of transnationality were statistically *insignificant*. For all statistical tables regarding the aforementioned hypothesis, please refer to Appendix A.

6.1 Religiosity

My survey instrument included a few measures of religiosity. I included two scales to perform a check on the self-reported religiosity item. I performed a principal components analysis on the religiosity scale included on the survey instrument (question four; see Appendix B and Appendix C). Principal components analyses are used to reduce the amount of data from a scale of items into a one, more manageable item. It is also used to see if all items in the scale represent the same measure (Acock 2008). Since the principal components analysis for religiosity had eigenvalues greater than one for three factors, in addition to accounting for 65 percent of the variance (with a general cutoff of 70 percent), these factors will be retained. All items in the scale were included because each item loaded highly on at least one factor (at least

.4). Data need to be rotated in a principal components analysis when more than one factor is included in the analysis; I chose to do a varimax rotation because the data is easier to interpret (**Table A-1** through **A-3**). These factors represent groupings of the items in the scale in meaningful ways using a mathematical formula such as intrinsic religiosity and passing religion through generations. If any of the factors did not have interpretable results, based on the loadings, I would omit that factor. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .809, indicating that the scale was reliable. Generally, anything with an alpha lower than .8, or .7 in some cases, is not considered a reliable measure.

The correlation between the factor score, the composite score given to each case including weights for each variable, and the self-reported religiosity item was .506, indicating a strong correlation between the two. A mean score was also computed, however, the correlation to the self-reported item was only moderate (**Table A-4**). Also, a factor score is preferred because it does not require the assumption that all the items in the scale have the same variance. When the factor score of religiosity was regressed on religious affiliation, to determine whether one religion is more religious than the other, no significant effect was detected ($p=.213$; **Table A-13**). I used the factor score instead of the self-reported score because I find the composite measure to be more accurate. For all statistical tables, please refer to Appendix A.

A principal components analysis was also conducted separately on the scale for alignment with religious beliefs (question five on the survey instrument), one for Catholics and one for Buddhists (**Tables A-5** through **A-11**). As with the religiosity measure, none of the items on the scale were dropped because each loaded highly on at least one factor. The factors that were retained accounted for 73 percent of the variance for Catholics and 71 percent of the variance for Buddhists; therefore a single factor and four factors were retained, respectively. The

Cronbach's alpha for the scale for Catholics was .942, a very reliable scale. I anticipated this because there is a very strict doctrine that Catholics are to follow. There was a strong correlation between the factor score for the Catholic scale and the religiosity factor score ($r=.622$, **Table A-12**). Therefore, greater religiosity leads to greater loyalty to Catholic beliefs and practices or vice versa. Since this is a correlation matrix, causality cannot be assessed, only the strength of the association.

Conversely, I did not anticipate a very high alpha for the Buddhist scale because there seems to be incredible variability with individuals' beliefs and individuals' practices. There is no strict doctrine per se. One may choose a strict doctrine if they wish; however, that is a personal choice. Consistent with my assumption, the Cronbach's alpha for the Buddhist scale was .422. Interestingly, there was a moderate correlation for the factor score for the Buddhist scale and the religiosity factor score despite the measure being unreliable ($r=.409$; **Table A-8**). For the following analyses, basic religiosity was the only composite measure used.

It is commonly held that the southern states are known for being more religious than their northern counterparts; this may introduce a slight difference regionally. This assumption partially led to the inclusion of regional differences in the design of the research project. However, I found no statistical significance in the data to support such an assumption ($p=.438$; **Table A-14**). I did not use the factor score of religiosity for this test because the results were much less interpretable.

6.2 Religious Tension

While I expected to find tensions between the two religions, I thought it would be subtle. I anticipated the presence of this tension because of the history of tension between these two religions in Vietnam which has persisted in flux for centuries. It is probable that some immigrants would have internalized this conflict and held onto those beliefs throughout resettlement. If that is the case, the children of those immigrants may have adopted those sentiments as well. I anticipated the tension would be subtle not only due to the fact that not all participants hold negative beliefs about Vietnamese in another religious group but there may also be a social desirability effect during this section of the survey. In fact, 25 percent of respondents chose to skip some or all of the questions in this section.

According to the data collected, over 75 percent of the respondents who answered this question cited that they felt no ill feeling towards the other religious group of Vietnamese. Religious affiliation, region, generational status, sex, income, political leanings and affiliations, etc. had no effect on this outcome. The majority of respondents have friends from multiple religious groups and therefore do not hold negative beliefs about the person and rarely about their friends' religion. While there was some tension present in a few of the respondents, it was not statistically significant. I would therefore argue that the historical tension between these two groups of Vietnamese is all but nonexistent in the U.S.

When asked about perceived tension between Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics in Vietnam, there was a moderate effect of .39 between the two religious groups using a two-sample test of group means ($t(53) = 1.75, p < 0.05$; **Table A-15**). There was relatively no significant effect when asked about perceived tension in the U.S. ($t(53) = -0.32, p = 0.376$; **Table A-16**) with

the majority indicating a friendly relationship between the two groups. Since the size of my sample was small, I tested the variances of the two groups to determine if they were heterogeneous; in this case, they were equal.

6.3 Ancestral Veneration

In Vietnam, the influence of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism have resulted in much of the population practicing ancestor worship in one form or another (Luce and Sommer 1969). This can include veneration of ancestors as well as holy figures associated with Eastern religious traditions, including Buddha and lesser deities. In Vietnam, Catholics and Buddhists alike participate in this traditional ancestor worship (Denney 1990). However, in the U.S., I expected to find a greater presence of traditional Vietnamese ancestral veneration for those practicing Buddhism rather than Catholicism. Catholics' peers in the U.S. may not be as approving of Vietnamese Catholics practicing foreign customs which may be thought to be associated with paganism. The Vietnamese Catholics may abstain from this practice in order to be perceived as a "better" Catholic.

Upon direct questioning, the relationship between religion and the practice of ancestral veneration is not statistically significant (Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 1.35$, $p=0.245$; **Table A-17**) nor when asked about praying for ancestors generally (Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 0.26$, $p= 0.611$; **Table A-18**). Logistic regression, which afforded the inclusion of control variables, did not yield statistically significant results either. Therefore, I am not able to reject the null hypothesis. However, when I was able to probe further in telephone or face-to-face interviews, Catholic respondents did not practice traditional ancestor worship ceremonies (*cúng*) but rather kept their ancestors in their

prayers. Therefore the interpretation of the question by the respondents was not the same interpretation that I had in mind. After I had realized this possible interpretation error, every subsequent face-to-face or telephone survey included further probing to determine whether they performed a *cúng* ceremony. One respondent confided that her parents who live in Vietnam, although Catholic, still *cúng* because it is a normative practice for Catholics there. My respondent, however, does not. It seems that Catholics will only *cúng* if they have been raised in the tradition and continue to live in a community that allows and/or encourages it.

6.4 Conversion

As I stated previously, due to the lack of converts in my sample, I was forced to remove the conversion hypothesis from further study.

6.5 Transnationalism

In terms of transnationality, the existing research suggests it is more difficult for members of a “Western” congregation, which I extend and Protestant denominations as well, to maintain transnational ties because of the nature of the religious organization (Min 2002). Therefore, members of an Eastern religious organization are more likely to maintain transnational ties. It is for this reason that I expected Buddhists to have stronger transnational ties.

For the questions in which I specifically operationalized different aspects of transnationality, only one was statistically significant. Buddhists are 82.14 percent more likely to

remain in contact with family in Vietnam (Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 8.62$, $p < 0.05$; **Table A-19**) with no statistical significance by region. There was no significant difference between religious groups when asked about sending money to their family back in Vietnam (Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 2.28$, $p = 0.131$; **Table A-20**). The data suggest that both Catholics and Buddhists feel that it is important to live near a religious facility without a significant difference between the two (Pearson $\chi^2(4) = 6.53$, $p = 0.163$; **Table A-21**). The same can be said for living near other Vietnamese (Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 7.54$, $p = 0.11$; **Table A-22**), the respondent's children maintaining their Vietnamese culture and heritage (Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 2.25$, $p = 0.813$; **Table A-23**), and the respondents themselves feeling it important to maintain their culture (Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 3.71$, $p = 0.446$; **Table A-24**).

6.6 Regional Differences

I did not expect to find any differences regionally. Both of the regions in which I sampled have similar kinds of structures in place to support religions based loosely on the amount of the population actively practicing those beliefs. The Vietnamese population in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area is much smaller than that of Houston; therefore, there were more Vietnamese specific Buddhist temples and Catholic churches in Houston. Most notably, there are only two Vietnamese Buddhist temples in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, *Chùa Nhỏ* and *Chùa Lớn*, while Houston has many more to accommodate a greater Vietnamese population; I attended *Chùa Thọ Long*.

There were two statistically significant relationships I found based on region. The first was national identity. Houston Vietnamese are more likely to identify as Vietnamese American

as opposed to Vietnamese or American holding constant income and religious affiliation ($p < 0.05$; **Table A-25**). Perhaps the nature of pride Texans have in their country and state have affected the Vietnamese community to adopt that prideful affiliation as well. The second statistically significant relationship was a measure of transnationality. Houston Vietnamese are more likely to frequently contact their relatives in Vietnam than their Minneapolis-St. Paul counterparts holding age, sex, and generational status constant ($p < 0.05$; **Table A-26**). Many factors could influence this including strength of the local Vietnamese community as well as cost of living and socioeconomic adaptability since immigration.

No other indicator was statistically significant, however three approached significance. These included tests of the practice of ancestor worship ($p = .133$; **Table A-27**) which means that other things being equal, the odds of practicing ancestor worship are 21.35 times as likely for Minneapolis versus Houston Vietnamese, controlling for sex and generation; perceived tension in the U.S. ($p = .178$; **Table A-28**) which means that Minneapolis Vietnamese are more likely to think there is tension between Buddhists and Catholics in the U.S. than are Houston Vietnamese; and the importance of living near their other Vietnamese ($p = .161$; **Table A-29**) which means that Houston Vietnamese feel that it is more important to live near other Vietnamese than do Minneapolis Vietnamese.

Using these numerous tests, including two statistically significant relationships and four that approach significance, I am not able to reject the null hypothesis which suggested there would be differences present by region. There were a number of other variables that I regressed on the region variable which were statistically insignificant. One possible reason behind these many insignificant findings could be directly related to the size of the communities from which I sampled. Size could have potentially superseded the regional differences. The insignificant

findings include sending money to family back in Vietnam ($p=.381$; **Table A-30**), the importance of living near religious facility ($p=.326$; **Table A-31**), the importance of maintaining Vietnamese culture by the respondent ($p=.202$; **Table A-32**), the importance of maintaining Vietnamese culture by the respondent's children ($p=.416$; **Table A-33**), respondent's perceived tension in Vietnam ($p=.189$; **Table A-34**), language spoken in respondent's home ($p=.284$; **Table A-35**), remaining in contact with church or temple in Vietnam ($p=.213$; **Table A-36**), same religion as family in Vietnam ($p=.466$; **Table A-37**), remain in contact with family in Vietnam ($p=.297$; **Table A-38**), pray for or remember ancestors ($p=.433$; **Table A-39**), and religiosity⁵ ($p=.196$; **Table A-40**). Unfortunately, null findings are difficult to interpret. It is difficult to explain the relationship because other factors may or may not be involved. Therefore, the above insignificant findings do not necessitate statistical interpretations.

6.7 Implications

While there were some methodological issues with my ancestral veneration and conversion hypotheses, three were able to be tested as originally planned. In terms of the hypothesis regarding tension between Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics, I did not find significant results. As I stated previously, this could have been due to a social desirability effect. However, another interpretation of the non-significant findings could be that I wrongly hypothesized that relationship. Perhaps the tension that was present in Vietnam when these immigrants used to live there *is* nonexistent now. With a lack of animosity between these two

⁵ For this test of religiosity, I used the factor score obtained during a principal components analysis based on the religiosity scale in the survey instrument. I found it a more accurate measure of the respondent's religiosity than the self-reported value.

groups in the U.S., a more unified group has formed. Therefore, should the need arise, a larger, collective Vietnamese group could advocate for their wishes more effectively.

In terms of the hypothesis regarding transnationality, only one indicator of transnationality was significant: remaining in contact with family in Vietnam suggesting Buddhists have stronger transnational ties. The other five indicators were insignificant across religious affiliation. Since only one indicator is significant, I am not fully able to accept the hypothesized relationship. There must be something else at play here. Perhaps there was an anomaly with my sample, whereby a repeat study would disagree with the significant finding. Perhaps the operationalizations that I created for this test were insufficient measures. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the reason behind insignificant findings.

In terms of the tests regarding regional differences, two out of the 16 tests were significant. Since the sizes of each of the communities from which I sampled were so different, perhaps my study actually captured differences between ethnic community sizes rather than regional differences. Additional tests would require the communities to be relatively equal in size in order to determine if that indeed was the case. If that were the case, and significant differences were found regionally, one could argue that the region in which the immigrant found themselves affected the immigrants' assimilation. If one were to intentionally study the differences that result from community size, the smaller community could increase their level of resources so that similar structures and supports would be in place for each community.

7. CONCLUSION

The Houston and Minneapolis-St. Paul Vietnamese communities share many things in common, as do Vietnamese Catholics and Buddhists. Despite the difference in size of the populations and the respective support networks available, the people I came into contact with share a very rich and proud history. Many have the same religion as their family in Vietnam but have shed the prejudicial thoughts and tensions about the other religious group. They now see themselves as a Vietnamese American community rather than North Vietnamese, South Vietnamese, Catholic, or Buddhist. They have become a distinct, Americanized group of Vietnamese. This group has been navigating their way through American's insistence on assimilation but seem to have found a balance that respects and upholds their cultural traditions, shedding some and perpetuating others. Although, the two religious groups' networks do not seem to overlap much, a sense of solidarity remains. They have come a long way from their homeland, through a difficult journey, and now have a place to call home. Not only did my research allow me to test hypotheses about this group, it also gave me access to the many stories and points of view of this resilient group of people.

With my quantitative research, I tested five hypotheses with specific regard to Vietnamese religiosity. I specifically examined the degree of tension between the religious groups and found little; ancestral veneration was not more common for either religious group; conversion was unable to be tested for lack of cases; and Buddhists have stronger transnational ties than Catholics based on one indicator of transnationality. Secondly, I assessed any regional differences between the Vietnamese Buddhist and Catholic communities in Houston and Minneapolis-St. Paul through both quantitative and qualitative methods. National identity and

frequency of contact with family in Vietnam were the only significant variables. I will need to retest the degree of ancestral veneration with this population in order to determine whether there is a significant difference between Catholics and Buddhist practicing *traditional* ancestor worship ceremonies. From my experience with this population and conversations I have had, I hypothesize, yet again, that these practices will be most prevalent with Buddhists.

While there were differences between Vietnamese Buddhists and Catholics, as evidenced through my fieldwork, those differences generally stem from the religious traditions they follow. Religion may define who some people are and for others provide structure for a way of life and meaning. Regardless of religious affiliation, however, the most important identifier these communities have is Vietnamese. It defines who, as a collective, they were, where they came from, and where they will go.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table A-1. Eigenvalues from Principal Components Analysis of Religiosity

Factor	Eigenvalue
1	4.090
2	1.414
3	1.002
4	.817
5	.685
6	.655
7	.472
8	.330
9	.278
10	.254

Table A-2. Proportion of Variance Explained by Each Factor of the Religiosity

Factor	Proportion of Variance	Cumulative Variance
1	.409	.409
2	.141	.550
3	.100	.651
4	.082	.732
5	.069	.801
6	.066	.867
7	.047	.914
8	.033	.947
9	.028	.975
10	.025	1.00

Table A-3. Rotated (Varimax) Factor Loadings for Each Religiosity Item

Item Description	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
My religious beliefs are similar to my religion's teachings.	.768	-.005	.124
My whole approach to life is based on my religion.	.822	.211	-.076
I go to temple mostly to spend time with my friends.	.214	-.062	.826
I pray mainly because I have been taught to pray.	-.162	.248	.795
It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer.	.659	.341	.117
Prayer is for peace and happiness.	.412	.405	.268
What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.	.578	.219	.456
It is important to marry someone with the same religion as me.	.332	.683	.207
I have become more religious over time.	.769	.313	.060
It is important to me that my children have the same religious beliefs I have.	.150	.910	.037

Table A-4. Correlation Matrix of Religiosity Variables

Variable	Religiosity	Religiosity Factor Score	Religiosity Mean Score
Religiosity	1.000		
Religiosity Factor Score	.506	1.000	
Religiosity Mean Score	.472	.977	1.000

Table A-5. Eigenvalues from a Principal Components Analysis of Buddhist Beliefs

Factor	Eigenvalue
1	2.332
2	2.105
3	1.704
4	1.151
5	.821
6	.690
7	.445
8	.352
9	.307
10	.092

Table A-6. Proportion of Variance Explained by Each Factor of Buddhist Beliefs

Factor	Proportion of Variance	Cumulative Variance
1	.233	.233
2	.211	.444
3	.170	.614
4	.115	.730
5	.082	.811
6	.069	.880
7	.045	.925
8	.035	.960
9	.031	.991
10	.009	1.000

Table A-7. Rotated (Varimax) Factor Loadings for each Buddhist Belief Item

Item Description	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Buddha is a holy figure.	-.166	.330	.745	.120
Enlightenment (or nirvana) will end the cycle of reincarnation.	.239	-.198	.517	.373
Suffering is universal.	.065	-.048	.022	.927
I should try to avoid or eliminate suffering in the world and in my life.	.903	.191	.089	.166
All people can achieve Enlightenment.	.594	-.177	.476	.226
Meditation is used for living in harmony with your environment.	.802	.010	-.254	-.246
The purpose of life is to end suffering.	.320	.721	.018	-.412
Buddhism is a philosophy more than it is a religion.	.238	-.779	-.114	-.339
To remember or pray for my ancestors is important to my religion.	.037	-.207	.700	-.213
It is very important to go to temple in order to be a good Buddhist.	.257	.790	-.120	-.187

Table A-8. Correlation Matrix of Buddhist Belief Factor Score and Religiosity Variables

Variable	Buddhist Factor Score	Religiosity	Religiosity Factor Score
Buddhist Factor Score	1.000		
Religiosity	.240	1.000	
Religiosity Factor Score	.412	.516	1.000

Table A-9. Eigenvalues from a Principal Components Analysis of Catholic Beliefs

Factor	Eigenvalue
1	7.106
2	.950
3	.632
4	.489
5	.309
6	.192
7	.166
8	.076
9	.052
10	.029

Table A-10. Proportion of Variance Explained by Each Factor of Catholic Beliefs

Factor	Proportion of Variance	Cumulative Variance
1	.711	.711
2	.095	.806
3	.063	.869
4	.049	.918
5	.031	.949
6	.019	.968
7	.017	.984
8	.008	.992
9	.005	.997
10	.003	1.000

Table A-11. Factor Loadings for Each Catholic Belief Item

Item Description	Factor 1
The belief in Jesus as my Lord and Savior will save me a place in Heaven	.580
God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit forms the Holy Trinity	.878
God created the Earth and mankind	.830
Jesus died for our sins	.886
Jesus rose from the dead in the Resurrection	.926
Jesus will return to Earth one day	.681
Mary is the virgin mother of Jesus	.928
When receiving communion, I am consuming the body and blood of Christ.	.877
Baptism washes away original sin	.844
The Pope is the highest authority of the Catholic Church on Earth	.928

Table A-12. Correlation Matrix of Catholic Belief Factor Score and Religiosity Variables

Variable	Catholic Factor Score	Religiosity	Religiosity Factor Score
Catholic Factor Score	1.000		
Religiosity	.292	1.000	
Religiosity Factor Score	.622	.437	1.000

Table A-13. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Religiosity⁺ Regressed on Region and Sex

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	.328 (.260)	.165	.213
Age	-.708 (.268)	-.347	.011
Intercept	.286		.241
R ²	.144		
Adjusted R ²	.109		
N	53		

⁺Religiosity measure is factor score from Principal Components Analysis based on the religiosity scale in the survey instrument

Table A-14. T Test of Religiosity and Region

Variable	Buddhist		Catholic	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Religiosity	3.750	1.073	3.710	.824

**p* < 0.05

Table A-15. T Test of Perceived Tension in Vietnam by Religious Affiliation

Variable	Buddhist		Catholic	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Perceived Tension in Vietnam	3.458*	1.179	4.129*	1.565

**p* < 0.05

Table A-16. T Test of Perceived Tension in the United States by Religious Affiliation

Variable	Buddhist		Catholic	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Perceived Tension in U.S.	3.875	.797	3.806	.792

**p* < 0.05

Table A-17. The Practice of Home-Based Religious or Cultural Traditions by Religious Affiliation with Control Variables Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Buddhist	6.430 (7.710)	.121
Male	.229 (.224)	.937
Political Affiliation	.959 (.508)	.132
χ^2/df	5.58/3	
Pseudo R ²	0.159	
n	28	

Table A-18. Praying for or Remembering Ancestors by Religious Affiliation with Control Variables Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Buddhist	1.471 (1.107)	.608
Male	1.063 (.846)	.939
χ^2/df	0.26/2	
Pseudo R ²	0.0057	
n	48	

Table A-19. Chi Squared Tests of Remaining in Contact with Family in Vietnam by Religious Affiliation Including Percentages

Variable	Remains in Contact	No Contact	No Family Left in Vietnam
Buddhist	23 (82.14%)	2 (7.14%)	3 (10.71%)
Catholic	18 (58.06%)	12 (38.71%)	1 (3.23%)

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 8.6224, p < 0.05$

Table A-20. Chi Squared Tests of Sending Money Back to Family in Vietnam by Religious Affiliation Including Percentages

Variable	Yes	No
Buddhist	18 (75.00%)	6 (25.00%)
Catholic	13 (54.17%)	11 (45.83%)

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 2.2770, p = 0.131$

Table A-21. Chi Squared Tests of the Importance of Living near Religious Facility by Religious Affiliation Including Percentages

Variable	Not Important	A Little Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Buddhist	1 (3.85%)	3 (11.54%)	5 (19.23%)	8 (30.77%)	9 (34.62%)
Catholic	2 (6.45%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (6.45%)	12 (38.71%)	15 (48.39%)

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 6.5307$, $p=0.163$

Table A-22. Chi Squared Tests of the Importance of Living near Other Vietnamese by Religious Affiliation including Percentages Including Percentages

Variable	Not Important	A Little Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Buddhist	4 (15.38%)	4 (15.38%)	7 (26.92%)	8 (30.77%)	3 (11.54%)
Catholic	12 (38.71%)	5 (16.13%)	8 (25.81%)	2 (6.45%)	4 (12.90%)

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 7.5401$, $p=0.110$

Table A-23. Chi Squared Tests of the Importance of Maintaining Vietnamese Culture by Respondent's Children by Religious Affiliation Including Percentages

Variable	Not Important	A Little Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Buddhist	0 (0.00%)	2 (8.00%)	1 (4.00%)	5 (20.00%)	17 (68.00%)
Catholic	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)	4 (13.33%)	20 (66.67%)

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 2.2518$, $p=0.813$

Table A-24. Chi Squared Tests of the Importance of Maintaining Vietnamese Culture by Respondent by Religious Affiliation Including Percentages

Variable	Not Important	A Little Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Buddhist	1 (3.85%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (3.85%)	10 (38.46%)	14 (53.85%)
Catholic	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (26.67%)	19 (63.33%)

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 3.7130$, $p=0.446$

Table A-25. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Respondent's National Identity Regressed on Region and Income

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	p-value
Minneapolis	-.326 (.134)	-.333	.018
Income	-.021 (.035)	-.082	.555
Buddhist	-.114 (.134)	-.118	.398
Intercept	1.998		.000
R ²	.131		
Adjusted R ²	.076		
n	51		

Table A-26. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Frequency of Contact with Family in Vietnam Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	-1.579 (.589)	-.388	.011
Age	.184 (.206)	.155	.376
Male	-1.077 (.578)	-.267	.070
Generation	1.252 (.744)	.288	.101
Intercept	2.650		.065
R ²	.261		
Adjusted R ²	.181		
N	42		

Table A-27. The Practice of Home-Based Religious or Cultural Traditions by Region with Control Variables Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	3.061 (2.280)	.133
Male	.337 (.265)	.166
Generation	3.917 (3.545)	.131
χ^2/df	5.13/3	
Pseudo R ²	.087	
n	58	

Table A-28. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Respondent's Perceived Tension in the United States Regressed on Region

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	.290 (.213)	.184	.178
Intercept	3.710		.000
R ²	.034		
Adjusted R ²	.016		
n	55		

Table A-29. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Importance of Living near Other Vietnamese Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	-.686 (.473)	-.284	.161
Age	.285 (.173)	.370	.133
Income	.082 (.143)	.131	.573
Political Affiliation	-.248 (.276)	-.178	.378
Intercept	2.436		.003
R ²	.216		
Adjusted R ²	.080		
n	28		

Table A-30. Sending Money back to Family in Vietnam by Region and Sex Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	1.726 (1.076)	.381
Male	.935 (.579)	.914
χ^2/df	.78/2	
Pseudo R ²	.013	
n	48	

Table A-31. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Importance of Living near a Religious Facility Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	-.308 (.310)	-.136	.326
Generation	-.324 (.334)	-.138	.337
Income	.124 (.083)	.208	.142
Buddhist	-.672 (.309)	-.300	.035
Intercept	4.412		.000
R ²	.138		
Adjusted R ²	.066		
n	53		

Table A-32. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Importance of Maintaining Vietnamese Culture by the Respondent Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	.356 (.276)	.180	.202
Male	-.556 (.271)	-.279	.046
National Identity	-.082 (.296)	-.039	.783
Intercept	4.748		.000
R ²	.100		
Adjusted R ²	.046		
n	54		

Table A-33. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Importance of Maintaining Vietnamese Culture by the Respondent's Children Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	-.503 (.603)	-.215	.416
Male	-.126 (.546)	-.055	.820
Political Leanings	-.174 (.466)	-.118	.713
Political Affiliation	.536 (.442)	.389	.243
Intercept	3.840		.001
R ²	.122		
Adjusted R ²	-.098		
n	21		

Table A-34. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Respondent's Perceived Tension in Vietnam Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	.698 (.516)	.231	.189
Age	-.076 (.188)	-.080	.687
Political Affiliation	-.100 (.281)	-.059	.725
Generation	1.889 (.605)	.589	.005
Intercept	1.231		.318
R ²	.401		
Adjusted R ²	.297		
n	28		

Table A-35. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Language Spoken in Respondent's Home Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	.238 (.219)	.171	.284
Male	.084 (.217)	.062	.701
Political Leanings	-.327 (.141)	-.369	.026
Intercept	3.23		.000
R ²	.174		
Adjusted R ²	.101		
n	38		

Table A-36 Remaining in Contact with Church or Temple in Vietnam by Region and Control Variables Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	3.931 (4.326)	.213
Male	.101 (.105)	.092
National Identity	.078 (.067)	.047
Buddhist	.042 (15.480)	.064
χ^2/df	11.89/4	
Pseudo R ²	.331	
n	37	

Table A-37. Same Religion as Family in Vietnam by Region and Control Variables Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	2.621 (3.463)	.466
Age	.595 (.285)	.278
Male	.609 (.795)	.704
Buddhist	5.646 (9.383)	.298
χ^2/df	1.99/4	
Pseudo R ²	.080	
n	46	

Table A-38. Remaining in Contact with Family in Vietnam by Region and Sex Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	1.976 (1.290)	.297
Male	.311 (.227)	.110
χ^2/df	3.65/2	
Pseudo R ²	.057	
n	59	

Table A-39. Praying for or Remembering Ancestors by Region with Control Variables Using Logistic Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Odds Ratio (Standard Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	1.921 (1.599)	.433
Male	.672 (.607)	.660
National Identity	1.119 (.934)	.893
χ^2/df	.85/3	
Pseudo R ²	.021	
n	44	

Table A-40. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Religiosity⁺ Regressed on Region and Control Variables

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Regression Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Minneapolis	.348 (.263)	.215	.196
Male	-.568 (.334)	-.370	.035
Political Leanings	.376 (.274)	.380	.028
Intercept	-.586		.131
R ²	.217		
Adjusted R ²	.141		
n	35		

⁺Religiosity measure is factor score from Principal Components Analysis based on the religiosity scale in the survey instrument

D. I pray mainly because I have been taught to pray.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Prayer is for peace and happiness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. It is important to marry someone with the same religion as me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. I have become more religious over time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. It is important to me that my children have the same religious beliefs I have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about beliefs associated with Buddhism.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
A. Buddha is a holy figure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Enlightenment (or nirvana) will end the cycle of reincarnation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Suffering is universal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. I should try to avoid or eliminate suffering in the world and in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. All people can achieve Enlightenment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Meditation is used for living in harmony with your environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. The purpose of life is to end suffering.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Buddhism is a philosophy more than it is a religion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. To remember or pray for my ancestors is important to my religion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. It is very important to go to temple in order to be a good Buddhist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Do you attend a temple?

- a. Yes
 - b. No → **If NO, please skip to Question #11**
7. How often do you attend this temple for religious services?
- a. Weekly or more
 - b. Bi-weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Bi-monthly
 - e. A few times a year
 - f. Annually
 - g. Never
8. What language do you speak at temple?
- a. English only
 - b. Vietnamese only
 - c. English and Vietnamese
 - d. None of the above, please explain _____
9. How far do you travel to attend this temple?
- a. Less than 5 miles
 - b. 6-10 miles
 - c. 11-30 miles
 - d. Over 30 miles
10. The other members of my temple who attend services are :
- a. All Vietnamese
 - b. Mostly Vietnamese
 - c. Mostly Caucasian
 - d. All Caucasian → **If All Caucasian, please skip to Question #11**
- 10.a. If there are Vietnamese at your temple, what ethnicity are they?
- a. North Vietnamese
 - b. Central Vietnamese
 - c. South Vietnamese
 - d. All of the above
 - e. A and B
 - f. B and C
 - g. A and C
 - h. Don't know

RELATIONSHIP with CATHOLICS

11. Have you ever met any Vietnamese of a religious group other than yours?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
12. Are you friends with any people in other religious groups (both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No → **If NO, please skip to Question #13**
- 12.a. If YES, what religion are they?
- a. I have friends from multiple groups
 - b. Catholic
 - c. Christian – Protestant

- d. Other, please explain _____
- e. Don't know

12.b. If YES, are they:

- a. Vietnamese
- b. Non-Vietnamese
- c. I have friends from both groups

13. What do you think of the Vietnamese Catholics?

14. Why do you feel that way?

15. In my opinion, the relationship between Vietnamese Buddhists and Vietnamese Catholics in **Vietnam** is:

- a. Very unfriendly
- b. Unfriendly
- c. Neutral
- d. Friendly
- e. Very friendly
- f. Don't know

16. In my opinion, the relationship between Vietnamese Buddhists and Vietnamese Catholics in **America** is:

- a. Very unfriendly
- b. Unfriendly
- c. Neutral
- d. Friendly
- e. Very friendly
- f. Don't know

RELIGION at HOME

17. Do you participate in home-based religious practices or cultural traditions? (These include celebrations or practices you may do at home as opposed to a temple that are related to your religion or culture.)

- a. Yes
- b. No → **If NO, please skip to Question #18.a.**

18. If YES to 17, are these Buddhist or Lunar practices?

- a. Yes
- b. No, please explain

18.a. Do you remember or pray for your ancestors?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18.b. Do you celebrate Buddhist holidays? (Buddha's birthday, etc.)

- a. Yes

b. No

18.c. Do you celebrate Lunar holidays? (Lunar New Year, days of moon cycle, etc.)

a. Yes

b. No

18.d. Do you pray to Buddha's mother?

a. Yes

b. No

18.e. Do you have statues, figurines or pictures of Buddha, Buddha's mother or lesser buddhas (Bồ Tát) in your home?

a. Yes

b. No

19. If your traditions at home include anything that was not previously mentioned, please explain below what it includes.

TRANSNATIONAL TIES

20. Do you remain in contact with your family members in Vietnam?

a. Yes

b. No

c. No family left in Vietnam → **If NO FAMILY LEFT IN VIETNAM, please skip to Question #21**

20.a. How do you remain in contact with your family back in Vietnam?

a. Phone

b. Email

c. Visits to Vietnam

d. Family visits to the U.S.

e. All of the Above

f. None of the Above

g. Multiple methods

h. Other, please explain _____

20.b. If you do remain in contact with your family back in Vietnam, how often do you connect?

a. Weekly

b. Bi-weekly

c. Monthly

d. Bi-monthly

e. A few times a year

f. Annually

g. Never

20.c. Do you send money to family back Vietnam?

a. Yes

b. No

20.d. Do you have the same religion as your family in Vietnam?

a. Yes

- b. No
21. Do you remain in contact with your temple in Vietnam?
- Yes
 - No
22. How important is it for you to live near other Vietnamese?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
23. How important is it for you to have access to a temple?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
24. What language is spoken in your home?
- Vietnamese
 - English
 - Both Vietnamese and English
25. How important is it to maintain your Vietnamese culture?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
26. How important is it for your children (if you have or may have children) to understand Vietnamese culture and for it to be important to them?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
 - I do not have children

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

27. What ethnicity are you?
- North Vietnamese
 - Central Vietnamese
 - South Vietnamese
 - Other, please explain _____
28. Are you:
- Vietnam born
 - U.S. born → **If U.S. born, please skip to Question #27.f.**
 - Other, please explain _____ → **If OTHER, please skip to Question #28**
- 27.a. If BORN IN VIETNAM, how long have you been in the U.S.?

- a. 5 years or less
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 11-20 years
- d. 21-30 years
- e. 31-40 years
- f. More than 40 years

27.b. If BORN IN VIETNAM, do you have children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27.c. If BORN IN VIETNAM, is your religion any different than the way it was in Vietnam?

- a. Yes, please explain _____
- b. No

27.d. If BORN IN VIETNAM, did you consciously move to an area in the U.S. where others of your ethnic group live?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27.e. If BORN IN VIETNAM, did you consciously move to an area in the U.S. where others of your religious group live?

- a. Yes → **If born in Vietnam, please skip to Question #30**
- b. No → **If born in Vietnam, please skip to Question #30**

27.f. If U.S. BORN, are you the child of a U.S. Born Vietnamese?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27.g. If U.S. BORN, are you parents:

- a. Both Vietnamese
- b. Vietnamese mother and non-Vietnamese father
- c. Vietnamese father and non-Vietnamese mother
- d. Other, please explain _____

27.h. If U.S. BORN, do you have children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29. Do you think of yourself as:

- a. Vietnamese
- b. American
- c. Vietnamese-American
- d. Other, please explain _____

30. Are you:

- a. Liberal
- b. Moderate
- c. Conservative
- d. Other, please explain _____
- e. Don't know

31. Are you:

- a. Democrat
- b. Independent

- c. Republican
 - d. Not affiliated
 - e. Other, please explain _____
 - f. Don't know
- 32.** What is your age?
- a. 18-25
 - b. 26-30
 - c. 31-40
 - d. 41-50
 - e. 51-60
 - f. 61-70
 - g. 70+
- 33.** Are you:
- a. Male
 - b. Female
- 34.** What is your average annual household income *before* taxes for 2009?
- a. Less than \$15,000
 - b. \$15,000-\$29,999
 - c. \$30,000-\$49,999
 - d. \$50,000-\$74,999
 - e. \$75,000-\$99,999
 - f. \$100,000-\$150,000
 - g. Over \$150,000

D. I pray mainly because I have been taught to pray.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Prayer is for peace and happiness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. It is important to marry someone with the same religion as me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. I have become more religious over time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. It is important to me that my children have the same religious beliefs I have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about beliefs associated with Catholicism.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
A. The belief in Jesus as my Lord and Savior will save me a place in Heaven	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit forms the Holy Trinity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. God created the Earth and mankind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Jesus died for our sins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Jesus rose from the dead in the Resurrection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Jesus will return to Earth one day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Mary is the virgin mother of Jesus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. When receiving communion, I am consuming the body and blood of Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Baptism washes away original sin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. The Pope is the highest authority of the Catholic Church on Earth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Do you attend a church?

- a. Yes
 - b. No → **If NO, please skip to Question #11**
7. How often do you attend this church for religious services?
- a. Weekly or more
 - b. Bi-weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Bi-monthly
 - e. A few times a year
 - f. Annually
 - g. Never
8. What language do you speak at church?
- a. English only
 - b. Vietnamese only
 - c. English and Vietnamese
 - d. None of the above, please explain _____
9. How far do you travel to attend this church?
- a. Less than 5 miles
 - b. 6-10 miles
 - c. 11-30 miles
 - d. Over 30 miles
10. The other members of my church who attend services are :
- a. All Vietnamese
 - b. Mostly Vietnamese
 - c. Mostly Caucasian
 - d. All Caucasian → **If All Caucasian, please skip to Question #11**
- 10.a. If there are Vietnamese at your church, what ethnicity are they?
- a. North Vietnamese
 - b. Central Vietnamese
 - c. South Vietnamese
 - d. All of the above
 - e. A and B
 - f. B and C
 - g. A and C
 - h. Don't know

RELATIONSHIP with BUDDHISTS

11. Have you ever met any Vietnamese of a religious group other than yours?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
12. Are you friends with any people in other religious groups (both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No → **If NO, please skip to Question #13**
- 12.a. If YES, what religion are they?
- a. I have friends from multiple groups
 - b. Buddhist
 - c. Christian – Protestant

- d. Other, please explain _____
- e. Don't know

12.b. If YES, are they:

- a. Vietnamese
- b. Non-Vietnamese
- c. I have friends from both groups

13. What do you think of the Vietnamese Buddhists?

14. Why do you feel that way?

15. In my opinion, the relationship between Vietnamese Buddhists and Vietnamese Catholics in **Vietnam** is:

- a. Very unfriendly
- b. Unfriendly
- c. Neutral
- d. Friendly
- e. Very friendly
- f. Don't know

16. In my opinion, the relationship between Vietnamese Buddhists and Vietnamese Catholics in **America** is:

- a. Very unfriendly
- b. Unfriendly
- c. Neutral
- d. Friendly
- e. Very friendly
- f. Don't know

RELIGION at HOME

17. Do you participate in home-based religious practices or cultural traditions? (These include celebrations or practices you may do at home as opposed to a church that are related to your religion or culture.)

- a. Yes
- b. No → **If NO, please skip to Question #18.a**

18. If YES to 17, are these Catholic practices?

- a. Yes, please explain _____
- b. No

18.a. Do you participate in major Catholic holidays **at home**? (Christmas, Easter, etc.)

- a. Yes
- b. No

- 18.b.** Do you have statues, figurines or pictures of Jesus, saints or Mary in your home?
- Yes
 - No
- 18.c.** Do you give anything up for Lent?
- Yes
 - No
- 19.** If YES to 17, are these Buddhist or Lunar practices?
- Yes
 - No
- 19.a.** Do you remember or pray for your ancestors?
- Yes
 - No
- 19.b.** Do you celebrate Buddhist holidays? (Buddha's birthday, etc.)
- Yes
 - No
- 19.c.** Do you celebrate Lunar holidays? (Lunar New Year, days of moon cycle, etc.)
- Yes
 - No
- 19.d.** Do you pray to Buddha's mother?
- Yes
 - No
- 19.e.** Do you have statues, figurines or pictures of Buddha, Buddha's mother or lesser buddhas (Bồ Tát) in your home?
- Yes
 - No
- 20.** If your traditions at home include anything that was not previously mentioned, please explain below what it includes.

TRANSNATIONAL TIES

- 21.** Do you remain in contact with your family members in Vietnam?
- Yes
 - No
 - No family left in Vietnam → **If NO FAMILY LEFT IN VIETNAM, please skip to Question #22**
- 21.a.** How do you remain in contact with your family back in Vietnam?
- Phone
 - Email
 - Visits to Vietnam
 - Family visits to the U.S.
 - All of the Above
 - None of the Above
 - Multiple methods

h. Other, please explain _____

- 21.b.** If you do remain in contact with your family back in Vietnam, how often do you connect?
- Weekly
 - Bi-weekly
 - Monthly
 - Bi-monthly
 - A few times a year
 - Annually
 - Never
- 21.c.** Do you send money to family back Vietnam?
- Yes
 - No
- 21.d.** Do you have the same religion as your family in Vietnam?
- Yes
 - No
- 22.** Do you remain in contact with your church in Vietnam?
- Yes
 - No
- 23.** How important is it for you to live near other Vietnamese?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
- 24.** How important is it for you to have access to a church?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
- 25.** What language is spoken in your home?
- Vietnamese
 - English
 - Both Vietnamese and English
- 26.** How important is it to maintain your Vietnamese culture?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
- 27.** How important is it for your children (if you have or may have children) to understand Vietnamese culture and for it to be important to them?
- Not important
 - A little important
 - Neutral

- d. Somewhat important
- e. Very important
- f. I do not have children

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

28. What ethnicity are you?

- a. North Vietnamese
- b. Central Vietnamese
- c. South Vietnamese
- d. Other, please explain _____

29. Are you:

- a. Vietnam born
- b. U.S. born → **If U.S. born, please skip to Question #29.f.**
- c. Other, please explain _____ → **If OTHER, please skip to Question #30**

29.a. If BORN IN VIETNAM, how long have you been in the U.S.?

- a. 5 years or less
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 11-20 years
- d. 21-30 years
- e. 31-40 years
- f. More than 40 years

29.b. If BORN IN VIETNAM, do you have children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29.c. If BORN IN VIETNAM, is your religion any different than the way it was in Vietnam?

- a. Yes, please explain _____
- b. No

29.d. If BORN IN VIETNAM, did you consciously move to an area in the U.S. where others of your ethnic group live?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29.e. If BORN IN VIETNAM, did you consciously move to an area in the U.S. where others of your religious group live?

- a. Yes → **If born in Vietnam, please skip to Question #30**
- b. No → **If born in Vietnam, please skip to Question #30**

29.f. If U.S. BORN, are you the child of a U.S. Born Vietnamese?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29.g. If U.S. BORN, are you parents:

- a. Both Vietnamese
- b. Vietnamese mother and non-Vietnamese father
- c. Vietnamese father and non-Vietnamese mother
- d. Other, please explain _____

29.h. If U.S. BORN, do you have children?

- a. Yes

b. No

- 30.** Do you think of yourself as:
- a. Vietnamese
 - b. American
 - c. Vietnamese-American
 - d. Other, please explain _____
- 31.** Are you:
- a. Liberal
 - b. Moderate
 - c. Conservative
 - d. Other, please explain _____
 - e. Don't know
- 32.** Are you:
- a. Democrat
 - b. Independent
 - c. Republican
 - d. Not affiliated
 - e. Other, please explain _____
 - f. Don't know
- 33.** What is your age?
- a. 18-25
 - b. 26-30
 - c. 31-40
 - d. 41-50
 - e. 51-60
 - f. 61-70
 - g. 70+
- 34.** Are you:
- a. Male
 - b. Female
- 35.** What is your average annual household income *before* taxes for 2009?
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 - b. \$15,000-\$29,999
 - c. \$30,000-\$49,999
 - d. \$50,000-\$74,999
 - e. \$75,000-\$99,999
 - f. \$100,000-\$150,000
 - g. Over \$150,000

APPENDIX D
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table D-1. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables Used in the Analysis

Variable	Description	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Range
Age	Respondent's age	2.881	1.723	1-7
Male (%)	Respondent's sex (female = 0; male = 1)	61.7		0-1
Income	Respondent's income	3.709	1.873	1-7
Political Leanings	Political leanings (liberal = 1; moderate = 2; conservative = 3)	2.158	.754	1-3
Political Affiliation	Political affiliation (democrat = 1; independent = 2; republican = 3; unaffiliated = 4)	2.172	.889	1-4
Generation	Generational status (first generation = 1; second generation = 2)	1.3	.462	1-2
Identity	National identity (Vietnamese = 1; American = 2; Vietnamese American = 3)	2.473	.879	1-3
Buddhist (%)	Religious Affiliation (Catholic = 0; Buddhist = 1)	48.3		0-1
Minneapolis (%)	Respondent's Region (Houston = 0; Minneapolis = 1)	46.7		0-1

VITA

Name: Jennifer Linh Lê

Address: Department of Sociology, c/o Wm. Alex McIntosh, 311 Academic Building,
College Station, TX 77843

Email Address: jennyle@tamu.edu

Education: B.A., Sociology, Magna Cum Laude, University of St. Thomas, 2008
B.A., Advertising, Magna Cum Laude, University of St. Thomas, 2008
M.S., Sociology, Texas A&M University, 2011

Research Interests: Religion, Race and Ethnicity, Social Psychology, Media Studies

Conference Presentations: American Sociological Association, Las Vegas, NV, 2011
The Religiosity of Vietnamese Americans – A Quantitative Study
Association for Asian American Studies, New Orleans, LA, 2011
The Religiosity of Vietnamese Americans
Pacific Sociological Association, Oakland, CA, 2010
Limited Portrayals of Asians in the Media
Southwestern Sociological Association, Houston, TX, 2010
Race Relations: The Portrayal of Asians in Film, TV and Ads
Sociologists of Minnesota Conference, Minneapolis, MN, 2007
Never Again is Again: Bringing an End to Genocide
Metropolitan State University Conference, St. Paul, MN, 2006
Never Again, All Over Again: Teaching and Learning about the Legacy of Genocide
Sociologists of Minnesota Conference, River Falls, WI, 2006
Public Sociology in Action

Committee Memberships: Sociologists of Minnesota Student Paper Competition Committee, 2009-2010
Jay and Rose Phillips Scholarship Selection Committee, Minnesota Private College Fund, 2010-2011