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ABSTRACT

This study on the economic self-sufficiency of the Southeast Asian refugee household was conducted in order to gather information on the economic status of these refugees, the factors that contribute to self-sufficiency, and refugees' needs for services. A survey of 1,384 households of Vietnamese, Sino-Vietnamese, and Lao refugees who arrived in the United States after October 1978 was conducted. Interviews were held in the Fall of 1982 in five sites: Boston, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, and Orange County, California. It was found that Southeast Asian refugees have made steady progress in climbing out of dependency on transfer income and increasing their standard of living in relation to the official poverty level and that there is every indication that they will continue to progress in a positive direction. Virtually all the refugees studied relied on cash assistance at the beginning of their stay; dependency is apparently not by choice. Factors that were found to be important in the families' levels of self-sufficiency were household size and composition, the refugee community as a source of support, and participation in and effectiveness of English language programs and employment service programs. The study report contains extensive and detailed information on the design, implementation, and results of the study and uses many tables and charts to illustrate or present the information. (CG)

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January 1985

SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEE SELF-SUFFICIENCY STUDY

Executive Summary

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Social Security Administration
Office of Refugee Resettlement

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SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEE SELF-SUFFICIENCY STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 1985

Prepared for:

Office of Refugee Resettlement
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

330 C Street S W.
Switzer Building, Room 1319
Washington, D.C. 20201
Toyo Biddle, Government Project Officer

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Submitted by:

Nathan Caplan
John K. Whitmore
Quang L. Bui

The Institute for Social Research
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the United States embarked on a program of resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees which is now approaching a total of three-quarters of a million. Beginning in September 1978, a second major influx of refugees, including those Vietnamese and Chinese treated in the press as the "Boat People," began arriving in the United States. These more recent arrivals were moderately different in background characteristics by comparison with their earlier cohorts. While the earlier arrivals were largely Vietnamese who were educated, familiar with western culture, and possessed English language skills, those arriving in the Fall of 1978 and after were more varied in ethnicity and their skills. In addition to Vietnamese, this second wave of refugees included Chinese from Vietnam, Hmong and Mien from Laos, Khmer, Lao, and others. On average they were somewhat less educated and more limited in job skills, education, and English proficiency.

In order to facilitate the resettlement of refugees, the Refugee Act of 1980 was enacted, establishing a permanent mechanism for the admission of refugees to the United States and providing for a comprehensive and uniform program of assistance and services. In addition, the Act established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within HHS to administer the domestic resettlement program. Under the Refugee Resettlement program, refugees are eligible to receive cash assistance, medical assistance, and supportive services intended to ease their initial adjustment to the United States and to help them become economically self-sufficient. Included under support services are employment services, English language training, job training, orientation and other social services.

Currently, the information available on the economic status of refugees who have been served under the Refugee Act is limited. The largest such group comprises the Southeast Asian refugees arriving since the Fall of 1979, with their broad variety of cultural and educational background. Furthermore, little systematic analysis has been conducted on the process of becoming self-sufficient and the impact of refugee program services on this process. Finally, no analytical models have been developed which explain the relationship between refugee background, need for particular kinds and levels of service, and the achievement of economic self-sufficiency. The purpose of the research to be reviewed here was to address these issues.

In late summer, 1982, the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, fielded a survey among Southeast Asian refugees who had arrived in the United States from October 1978. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the degree of economic self-sufficiency achieved by these refugees at the time and the factors associated with it. Three groups of refugees (Vietnamese, Chinese from Vietnam, and lowland Lao) were interviewed in five sites across the country·

- Boston
- Chicago
- Seattle
- Houston
- Orange County, California.

The sites were chosen to represent the diversity of refugee communities and socioeconomic situations existing in the United States. The interviewing took place in the depth of the American recession and the economies of all the sites were suffering to one degree or another.

The survey resulted in 1384 household interviews conducted in the respondents' native languages which yield data on 4160 adults (aged 16 and over) and 2615 children. The adult population tended to be male (61 percent) and young, with an average age among adults of 31.

The household (that is, all the individuals living therein) was focused upon as the unit of analysis. Our definition of economic self-sufficiency looked at two different aspects: whether the household had anyone within it receiving public cash assistance, and how the total income of the household (including both assistance and earned) compared to the official poverty level (ca. $800 per month for a family of four). As it turned out, these aspects tended to be interrelated in regard to the economic self-sufficiency of the refugee household unit. The sampling was drawn from a combination of administrative lists and area probability sampling procedures.

I. Labor Force Participation

At the time of the survey, 44 percent (1,823) of the total adult population were in the job market. The unemployment rate among these was 42 percent (773) and 58 percent (1,050) had found jobs. This figure does not include the 56 percent (2337) of the total adult population not participating in the labor force: those simply not looking for work (12 percent), students (24 percent), housewives, the disabled, and the retired (20 percent).

While the unemployment rate is high, it must be recognized that it is an aggregate figure which includes all refugees seeking work from the moment they enter the United States. In order to gain a better understanding of the high unemployment rate, it is necessary to look at both time in the United States and site as variables affecting the rates. Figure 1 shows the sharp drop in the unemployment rate from the first months of resettlement (almost 90 percent) to over three years in the United States (about a third). Those refugees who had been in the United States between two and three years had an unemployment rate under 40 percent. Among the five sites, two had high unemployment rates for the refugees (Seattle 57 percent, Chicago 50 percent) and two had relatively moderate rates (Boston 39 percent, Orange County 36 percent), with only Houston's rate being relatively low (25 percent). Among the three ethnic groups, the unemployment rates were rather close: Lao 40 percent, Vietnamese 43 percent, and Chinese 45 percent.

Of those who were working, about two-thirds held low status jobs in the peripheral as opposed to the core sector of the economy. The occupations in the United States were consistently lower in status than the occupations held in Southeast Asia, and there appears to have been little direct transfer of the skills employed in Southeast Asia to the jobs obtained in the United States so far.

The economic future of the refugee households surveyed would not appear to lie in the movement of one individual up the ladder of success. In the short time that the refugees had been in the United States, the few refugees who have moved from one job to another had not advanced their economic position significantly, gaining on the average only a few cents an hour more: they move laterally, rom one-entry-level job to another.

The manner by which refugee households get ahead in the United States is by increasing the number of its occupants who are working and bringing in earned income --that is, by a multiple-job strategy. When seen from the standpoint of the household rather than the individual, a very different and far more encouraging picture emerges. Figure 2 shows changes in the percentage of the household sample with no job, one job, or two or more jobs over four month intervals. The steady, almost monotonic increase in the percent of households with two or more jobs is a most significant feature. It is the number of jobs per household rather than the character of the individual jobs themselves which makes the major difference in understanding the degree or economic self-sufficiency gained by the refugees, that is, the support willingness, cooperation, and diligence of a variety of household members to seek out and hold any kind of jobs, in order to achieve economic independence and to improve the economic standing of the household.

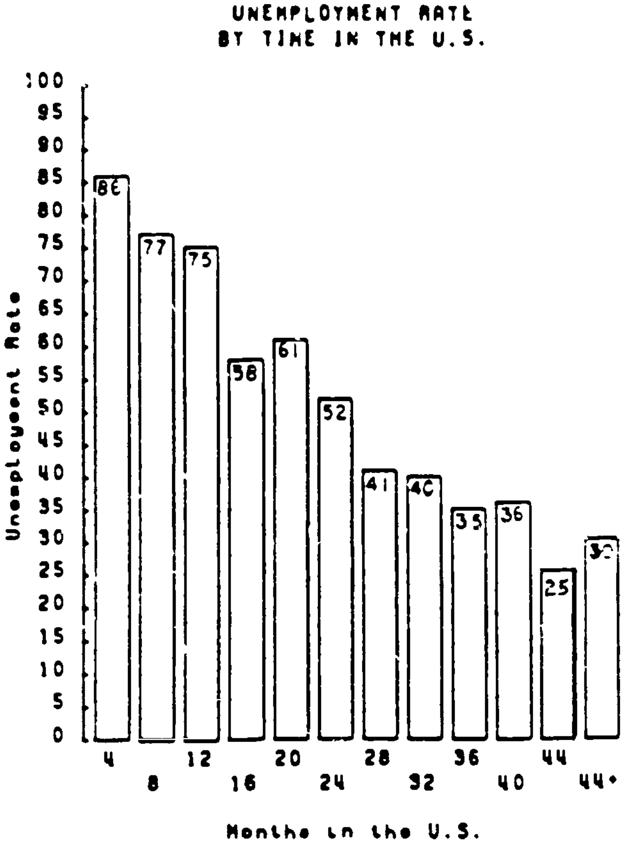

FIGURE 1

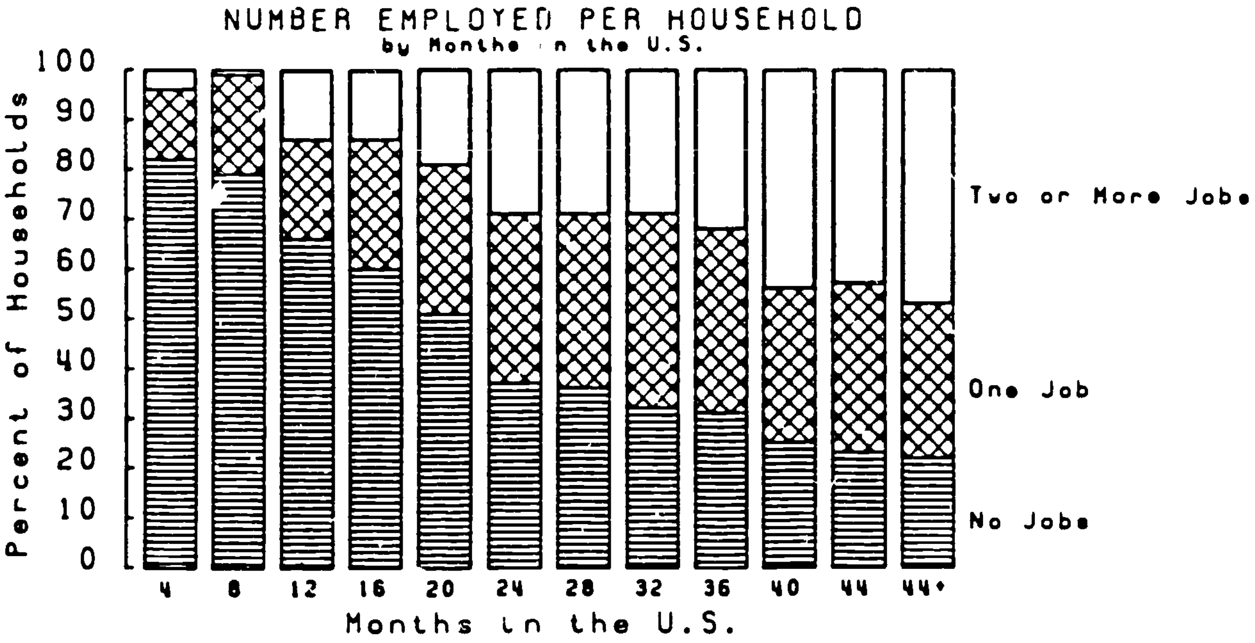

FIGURE 2

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II. Income Source

Virtually all Southeast Asian refugees begin their American lives on welfare. For most, getting off public assistance is a slow and gradual process, one made more difficult by the relatively poor economy into which many of those surveyed were originally thrust. A majority of the households in our sample (65 percent) received some kind of cash assistance at the time or the interview; 45 percent in this country over three years still got some cash assistance.

Yet what is important here is not the mere fact of one household getting cash assistance or not. Rather, it is more important whether such assistance is the only income received by the household. Our discussion will focus on three patterns of household income, according to the source of that income. The first pattern is transfer income --public assistance pure and simple; the second is a combination of public assistance (in whatever form) with earned income; and the third is earned income alone. A combined income for a household generally means that at least one individual is bringing earnings into the household at the same time that at least one other individual is bringing cash assistance into the same household. Occasionally, though rarely, the two cases might be the same person.

We should note at this point that the public assistance received by both the transfer and combined income groups involves a number of different forms. As noted above, 65 percent of the refugee households surveyed were getting cash assistance at the time of the interview. This cash assistance was mainly in the form of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Some also received General Assistance or SSI. Almost all of these households also received food stamps. In addition, another 10 percent of the households received food stamps alone, and thus three quarters of the refugee population were receiving, at least in part, some form of public assistance. Most of these households tended to receive more than one kind of assistance simultaneously. Besides the 10 percent of the households receiving food stamps alone, only 7 percent received one kind of assistance (RCA, AFDC, or SSI), leaving 58 percent who receive more than one type of public assistance.

Of the 1384 households surveyed, 43 percent subsisted solely on public assistance (whether cash or food stamps), almost a third (32 percent) combined earnings and some form of public assistance, and a quarter (25 percent) depended upon earnings alone. The importance of food stamps is illustrated by the fact that 94 percent of the households on transfer income alone got them, as did 79 percent of the households with combined income sources.

Not unexpectedly, the refugee households with earned income alone were the earliest arrivals, having been in the United States an average of 32 months. They were also the highest in arrival English proficiency and in education in Southeast Asia. The households with combined income had been in the United States an average of 26 months, had a higher percent of unrelated singles living with them, and their composition was generally larger and more complex. The households totally on public assistance had been in the United States, on the average, only 20 months, were lowest in arrival English proficiency and in Southeast Asian education, and were more likely to have come from rural areas in their homelands.

As the household members move from no jobs to one job and more enter into the labor force, there is a greater and greater chance for self-sufficiency. At the same time, there is an equally steady move from transfer to earned income, with or without a combined phase in between. Figure 3 shows the steady change, particularly in the first two years, for all three income groups.

Households totally on transfer income dropped from almost 80 percent in the first four months to around 30 percent after three years. Those on earned income alone rose fairly steadily from 3 percent in the first four months to about 50 percent after three years. The percentage of households with combined income rose from almost 20 percent in the first four months to double that from 16 to 32 months, before falling off to about 30 percent thereafter.

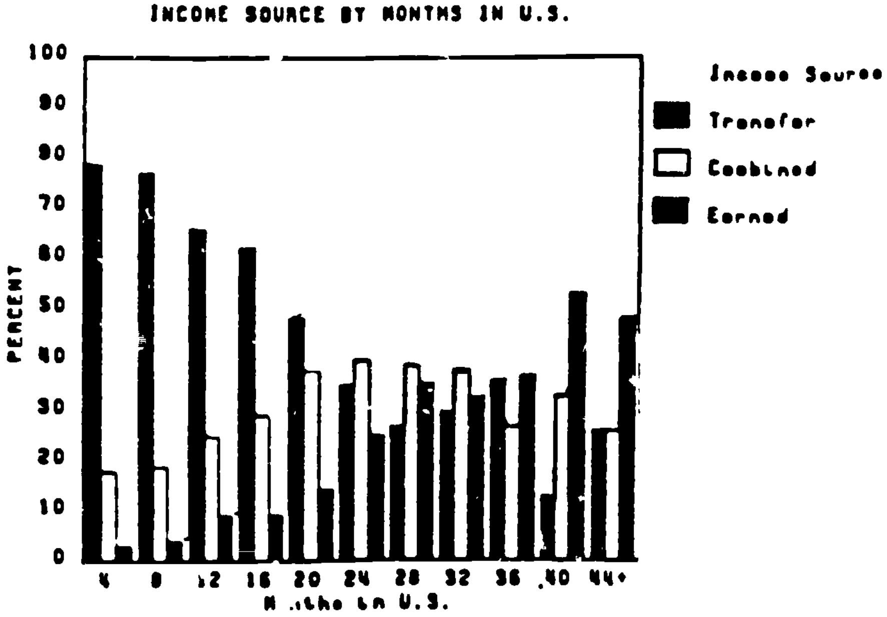

FIGURE 3

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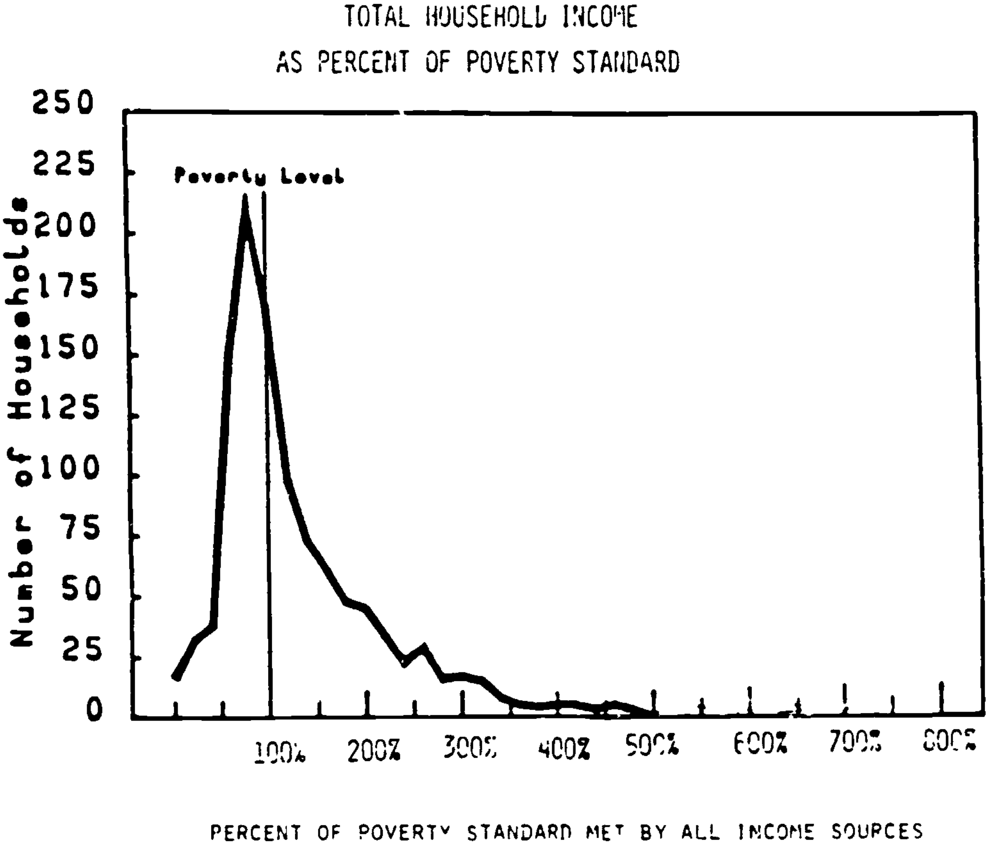
III. Economic status

Fifty percent of the households sampled fell below the Federal poverty level (about $800 per month for a family of four), and 8 percent had incomes at 50 percent or less of the poverty level. On the other hand, 20 percent had incomes which were at least twice the poverty level. Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 show the number of households above and below the poverty line according to income source. Clearly, the majority of households on transfer income were below the poverty line (Figure 5), while those with combined income tended to be just above the poverty line (Figure 6), and those with earned income alone were spread out well beyond the poverty line (Figure 7). Sixty-four percent of the transfer group, 28 percent of the combined group, and 12 percent of the earned group were under the line.



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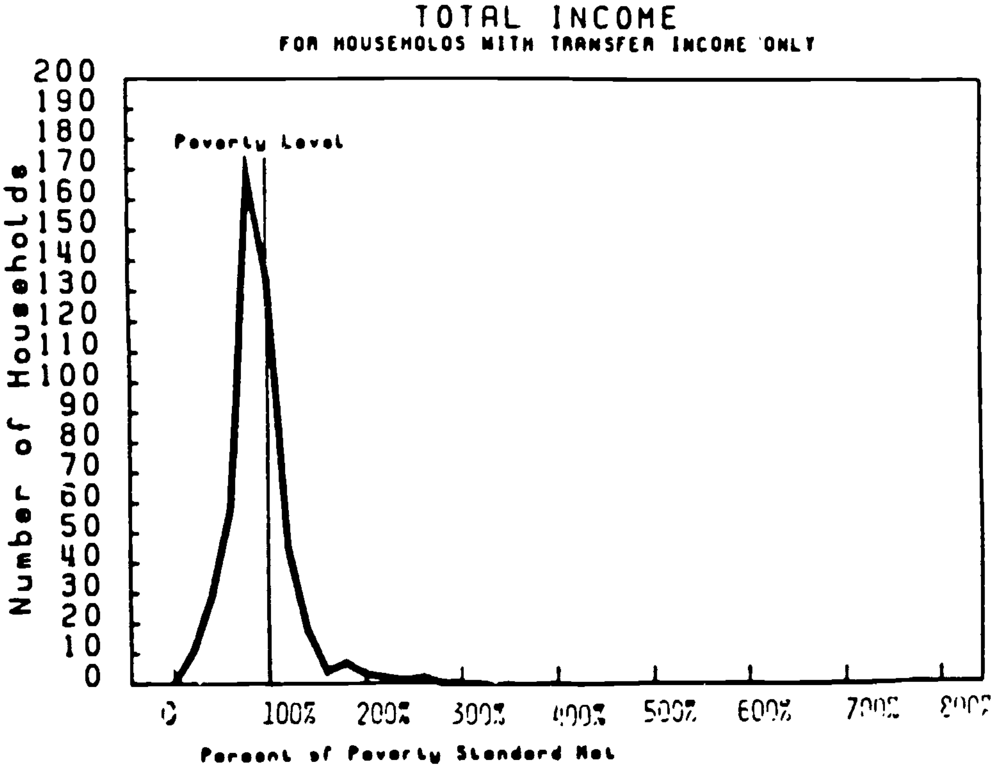

FIGURE 5

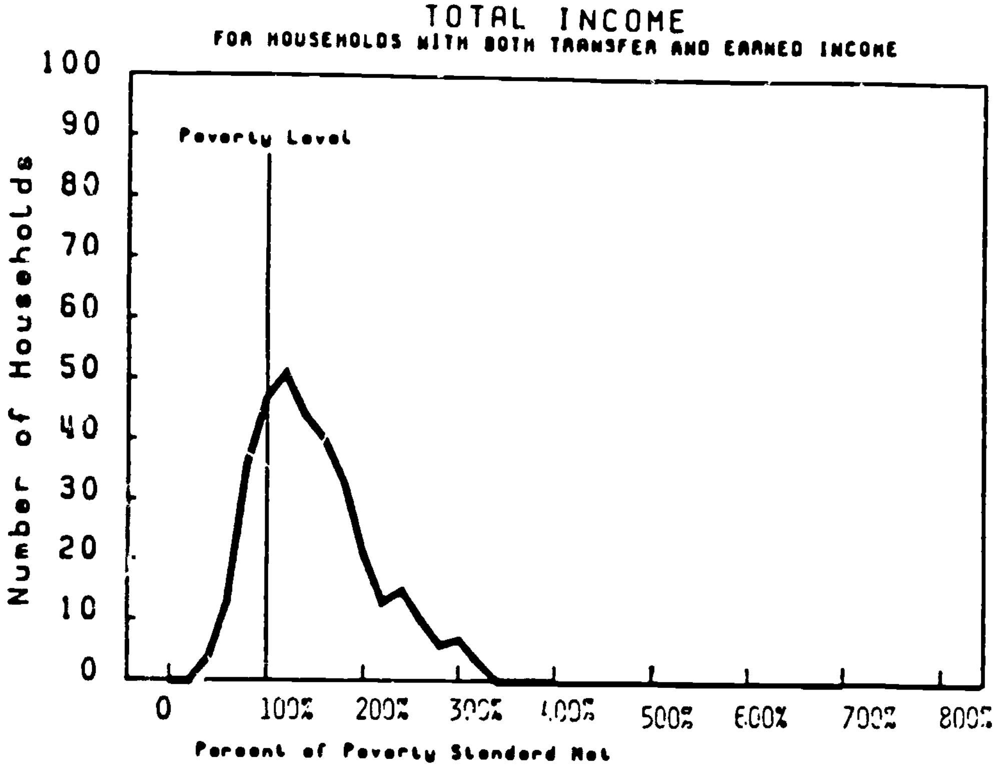

FIGURE 6

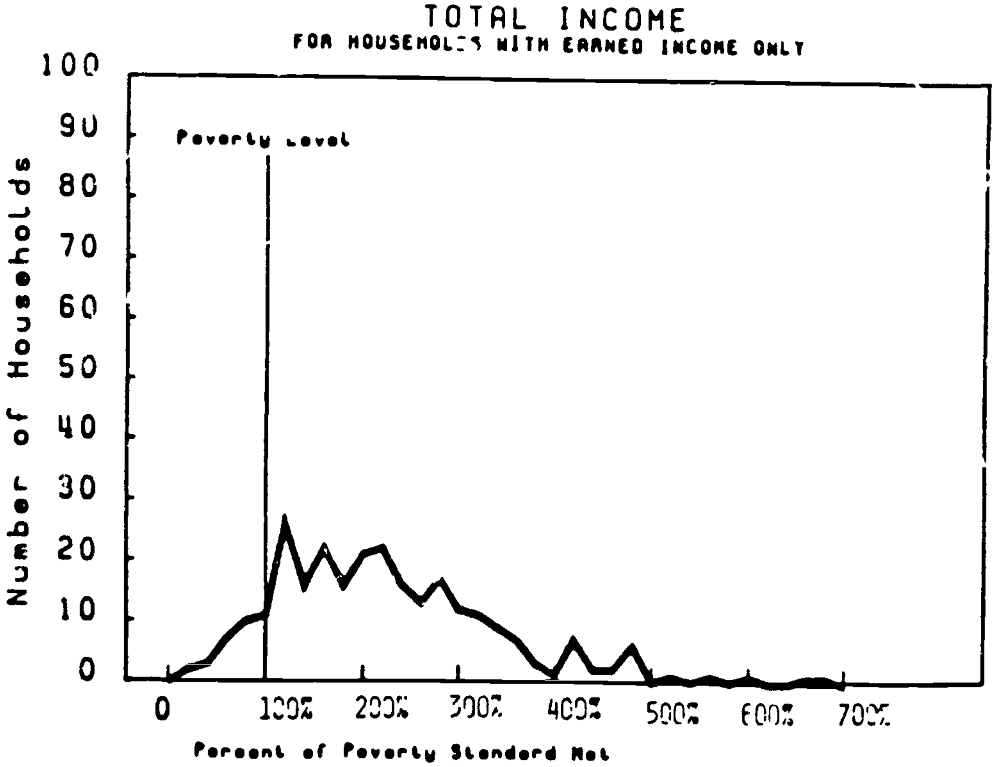

FIGURE 7

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Once again, if we move from the aggregate data to a time line, we see a steady growth in the ability of the households to meet the minimum poverty level and to go beyond it. As we might expect from Figure 3 above, the rise of households with earned income is matched by the rise in the percent of the poverty level met by the household income. Figure 8 shows that where households in the United States only four months or less met 46 percent of the poverty level requirement and those here four to eight months met 95 percent, households here three years were close to 150 percent and those here four years were almost at 200 percent. This change ties in with Figure 3 in

PERCENT OF POVERTY STANDARD MET
BY TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

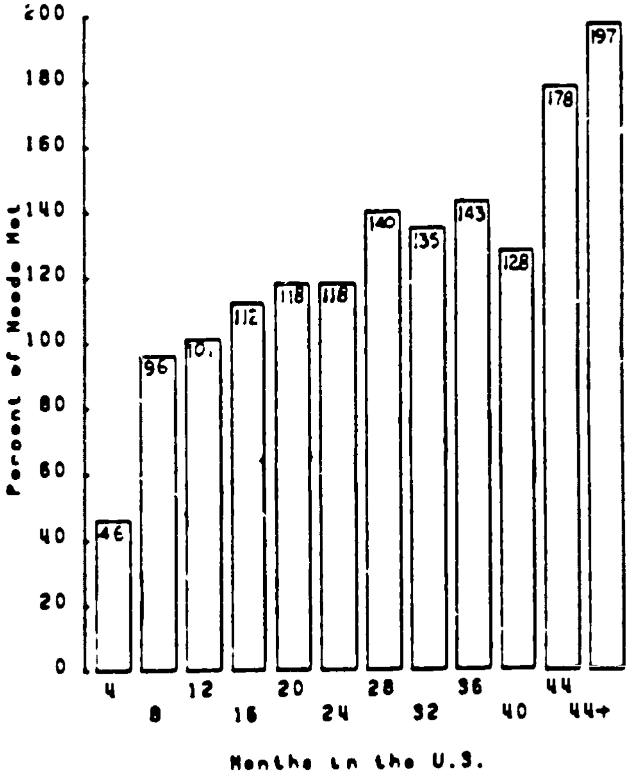

FIGURE 8

poverty-level standing as well as with the number of jobs per household over time (Figure 2). Thus, dramatic changes in economic status occur when addit. : people take jobs rather than from changes in wages through the job advancement of a single individual in the household. Seventeen percent of the households with no jobs were above the poverty level; 68 percent with one job and 93 percent with at least two jobs were above the poverty line. The steep rises in households with two or more jobs and the sharp advance in the percent of poverty level met together mean that more people working per household improves the standard of living.

Household composition is strongly associated with the potential to improvement in economic position. Table 1 shows that the nuclear family, the household group which constitutes the largest proportion of the total sample (about half, in fact), has also had the highest percentage of those below the poverty line. Sixty-one percent of these households did not obtain enough income to meet this level. The second largest segment of the sample, households made up of extended families, was somewhat better, 43 percent being below the poverty level. The main element reflected in Table 1 is the number of employable adults available in each type of household. Thus, those households with unrelated singles living in them did significantly better than the same type of household without such attached singles, 25 percent being below the poverty line.

Of utmost importance to getting ahead economically is the multiple-wage earner strategy illustrated earlier in Figure 2. When one person gets a job the the household's ability to meet basic needs over the poverty-level standard is improved. But the big change in living standard occurs when a second person from the household finds gainful employment. This is particularly important for the single nuclear family and demonstrating the importance of the multiple-wage earner strategies in the rapid adaptation to the work force and in the achievement of early economic independence; it also demonstrates the willingness of both spouses to participate in the workforce; and it carries with it a policy implication -- namely, the possible importance of day-care.

TABLE 1

Total Household Composition by Poverty Level

Household Composition	Sample %	Percent Living Below Poverty Needs Standard
Unrelated Single(s)	(5.3)	9%
Extended Family and Single(s)	(3.9)	20%
Multiple Family and Single(s)	(3.9)	27%
Nuclear Family and Single(s)	(4.4)	29%
Single, living Alone	(5.3)	29%
Multiple Family	(2.2)	40%
Extended Family	(26.4)	43%
Nuclear Family	(52.3)	61%
Total Sample	100%	

English proficiency upon arrival in the U.S. is second only to household composition as a predictor to later self-sufficiency. For nuclear family households, it is the best predictor. Even minimal English proficiency beyond "none" greatly enhances the likelihood of achieving self-sufficiency. Yet, over half those sampled had no English proficiency upon arrival. Arrival English was a far better predictor than prior education, prior occupation, or current English. Thus, it did not matter how a person acquired English proficiency before arrival (i.e., educational or occupational background) nor how much or by what means proficiency was improved by post-arrival experience.

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The important predictor of economic self-sufficiency, at least during this early stage of resettlement, was proficiency upon arrival.

Other factors that did not play significant roles in determining economic status were urban or rural background, ethnicity and sex, health, and secondary migration.

The research findings raise two issues concerning the effectiveness of refugee service programs. First those who manage to avail themselves of such services and programs are those who are already advantaged i.e. the better educated and those free of immediate family responsibilities; conversely, those who are unable to enter them are the persons who would benefit most if rapid economic adaptation is the main goal of such programs.

The refugees who are in programs report that they value them and they rank employment and language programs very high when asked what they see as necessary to getting ahead in life. On the other hand, it is difficult to point to specific outcomes which would attest to the value of these programs to the attainment of economic self-sufficiency. We can say that vocational training (the most/person-intensive) does result in some benefits. But we would hesitate to say how much difference it makes and what its potential would be if such programs were available to other than the more select segment of the refugee population.

Possibly it is the resourcefulness of the refugees who do not have access to service programs that makes program effects appear so weak. That is, their ability to husband their own resources, mutual interdependence, etc. have resulted in them being able to cope far more successfully with the adverse economic conditions and the other problems associated with resettlement than would have been expected possible when left to their own devices, at least with respect to the attainment of economic self-sufficiency during the early phase of resettlement.

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SELF-SUFFICIENCY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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Nathan Caplan
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NOTES TO RESEARCHERS

Listed below are several methodological documents and other materials relating to this study which are not included with this report but which are available to researchers who might want to refer to them. All 9 items are available at the Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Items 1-8 are also available at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, 330 C Street, SW, Switzer Bldg., Room 1229, Washington, D.C. 20201. These items may be used at these locations. Items 1-7 are also available at the Resource Center of the Refugee Policy Group, 1424 16th Street, NW, Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20036. The Resource Center will make available copies of any of the 7 items located there. The number of pages of each item are given to indicate a probable cost. Current (February 1985) cost is approximately $.20 per page and is subject to change.

1. Survey instruments

   There are two basic instruments, a "Questionnaire for Respondent" administered to the main respondent (133 pages) and a "Household Member Supplement" questionnaire administered to the main respondent but requesting a set of information about each of the other adults in the household. (63 pages). The questionnaires are in English, Lao, Vietnamese and Chinese.

2. Community Profiles (99 pages)

   The Community Profiles are a brief description of each of the sites (Seattle, Boston, Houston, Chicago, and Orange County) where the interviewing took place. The Profiles include such information as population characteristics, general features of the local economy, social features -- e.g. crime, available services, education and health resources -- and features of refugee resettlement -- e.g., public and private resettlement programs, extent and types of coordination among resettlement service providers, etc.

3. Site Selection Criteria/Process. (25 pages)
   Discussion of site selection criteria and process

4. Weighted and Unweighted Sampling Frames by Sites and Source, Plus Sampling Source Codes by Site (15 pages)

5. Univariates: Codes, Frequency Distribution, and Percentages for All Variables (479 pages)

6. Code Book (173 pages)
   Lists all variables analyzed

7. Correlation Matrices (9 pages)

   Includes list of variables with means and standard deviations and two correlation matrix tables, 1 with two dependent variables (percent of poverty needs standard earned and household receipt or non-receipt of cash assistance) and 1 with the dependent variable of English improvement.

8. Data Tape, Dictionary, Specifications, and Instructions

9. Interviewers Training Manual

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the United States embarked on a program of resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees which is now approaching a total of three-quarters of a million. Beginning in September 1978, a second major influx of refugees, including those Vietnamese and Chinese generally treated in the press as the "Boat People," began arriving in the United States. These more recent arrivals were significantly different in background characteristics by comparison with their earlier cohorts. While the earlier arrivals were largely Vietnamese who were educated, familiar with western culture, and possessed English language skills, those arriving in the Fall of 1978 and after were more varied in ethnicity and their skills. In addition to Vietnamese, this second wave of refugees included Chinese from Vietnam, Hmong and Mien from Laos, Khmer, Lao, and others. On average they were somewhat less educated and more limited in job skills, education, and English proficiency.

In order to facilitate the resettlement of refugees, the Refugee Act of 1980 was enacted, establishing a permanent mechanism for the admission of refugees to the United States and providing for a comprehensive and uniform program of assistance and services. In addition, the Act established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within HHS to administer the domestic resettlement program. Under the Refugee Resettlement program, refugees are eligible to receive cash assistance, medical assistance, and supportive services intended to ease their initial adjustment to the United States and to help them become economically self-sufficient. Included under support services are employment services, English language training, job training, orientation and other social services.

Currently, information available on the economic status of refugees who have been served under the Refugee Act is limited. The largest such group comprises the Southeast Asian refugees arriving since the Fall of 1979, with their broader variety of cultural and educational background. Furthermore, little systematic analysis has been conducted on the process of becoming self-sufficient and the impact of refugee program services on this process. Finally, no analytical models have been developed which explain the relationship between refugee background, need for particular kinds and levels of service, and the achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

A. RELATED STUDIES

Several surveys of Southeast Asian refugees have been conducted in the past five years. These include: (Aames et al., 1977; Meredith et al., 1981; Whitmore et al., unpublished; Kim and Nicassio, 1980; OSI, 1981; BSSR 1982, and Jones, 1982. ((Data are only partially available from Whitmore et al. and Jones.) Table I.1 (pages 4-5) gives the design parameters and major findings of each study, especially with regard to indices and predictors of economic self-sufficiency.

Comparisons are difficult because studies of refugee resettlement in the U.S. tend to use different kinds of data as indicators of employment, income and assistance.[1] Together, however, the various studies suggest that roughly 40 percent of Southeast Asian refugee household heads are employed, most at near minimum-wage level, and that approximately two-thirds of refugee households receive some form of cash assistance, foodstamps, or both. This does not mean, however that 60 percent are "dependent" and 40 percent "self-sufficient." Many of those totally dependent on support are the most recent arrivals, and many of those totally self-sufficient came here in 1975. It appears that the "typical" refugee household combines both earned and transfer incomes.

---

[1] For example, although the OSI study gives estimates of the proportion of income attributable to both assistance and employed income, it is not clear in their data that all income sources have been included. Kim et al. reports low response rates on items dealing with dollar amounts of public assistance.

Table 1.1

PARAMETERS AND MAJOR FINDINGS FROM OTHER STUDIES*

	Aames et al. (1977)	Kim et al (1980)	OSI (1981)	Meredith et al. (1981)
N (Households)	829	1,627	1,032	115
N (Total persons)	4,188	d.k.	4,586	586
Sample Source	N/A	INS/Agencies/MAA	INS Records	N/A
Date	1977	1979	1980	1981
Location	California	Illinois	National	Nebraska
Method	Personal interviews	Mail Questionnaire & Personal interviews	Phone interviews	Personal interviews
Waves	All	All	All	All
Nationality	Vietnamese Lao Cambodian	Vietnamese Lao Cambodian	Vietnamese Lao Cambodian	Vietnamese Lao Cambodian
Economic Status Measures	Dichotomous: receipt of government transfer payments, excepting Food Stamps, qualifies household as non-self-sufficient	Index of "socio-economic adjustment" composed of employment, income level, transfer payments, housing, appliance ownership, etc.	Separate variables: labor force participation, employment (of those "in labor force") transfer payments, income	N/A - was "needs assessment" asked opinions of income adequacy
Major Predictors of Self-Sufficiency	English fluency, car ownership, family size	English fluency, motive to acculturate, no immediate family left behind --family size not important; this index correlated with indexes of "psychological" and "cultural" adjustment	English fluency, education level, (for males), occupation in Vietnam not significant	N/A, but English fluency and transportation rated as "problems" by refugees

*Complete citations of these works are listed in the Reference section, p. 246 below.

TABLE 1.1
(continued)

	BSSR (1982)	Jones (1982)	Whitmore et al. (Unpublished)
N (Households)	N/A	1,530	421
N (Total Persons)	500	6,592	1920
Sample Source	INS Records	Joint Committee for Vietnamese Refugee Lists	N/A
Date	[illegible]	1982	1980
Location	Several Sites	United Kingdom	Michigan
Method	Personal Interviews	Mail Questionnaire Personal Interview	Personal Interviews
Waves	1975-1979	All	All
Nationality	Vietnamese Lao Cambodian	Vietnamese	Vietnamese Lao
Economic Status Measures	N/A	See page 8 below	Dichotomous. receipt of government transfer payments qualified as not self-efficient
Major Predictors of Self-Sufficiency	N/A	See page 8 below	Data not yet available

Statistically, the most powerful predictor of economic performance has been "date of arrival." But, the earlier refugee arrivals appear to differ substantially from more recent refugees on what might be termed "preparedness" factors -- such as English proficiency, educational level, job experience, familiarity with Western culture, etc. at the time of their arrival -- and no study has estimated the relative contribution of these factors compared to acculturation processes that occur in this country "naturally" with the passage of time. We do not know whether the critical skills are those "naturally" acquired in time (English proficiency, knowledge of American culture, etc.), or those which are not likely to show dramatic short-term improvement (general educational level, complex job skills or experience, etc.). At this point, we simply know that those who arrive with greater skills are currently faring better, as are those who arrived earlier. The studies also suggest that although there are important differences among ethnic groups, the extent to which these differences may be attributed to different arrival dates, differences in relatively ameliorable skills and knowledge levels, or relatively immutable factors is uncertain. Aames _et al_. did not include ethnicity in their multivariate analysis, but they did find sizable differences in the regression coefficients of their self-sufficiency model for each nationality group.

The findings of these studies point toward several central predictors of self-sufficiency. The Aames _et al_. and Kim and Nicassio studies provided the best data available to date. First, these studies consistently point to the overriding importance of English language proficiency. The current study went beyond such findings, examining both how much difference English proficiency makes and how refugees become proficient in English -- e.g. through sponsors, ESL classes, instruction from an MAA, on the job, or through informal acculturation and socialization processes.

The earlier studies also found education to be an important predictor of self-sufficiency. The current study examined this variable with some specificity. In particular, we need to investigate to what extent education differences are correlated with factors such as English competence and job-related skills. A crucial variable that we could not measure was the extent to which the wide variety of educational opportunities in this country were available to refugees, and the impact of such programs and institutions on refugees' strategies for attaining self-sufficiency.

Finally, none of the earlier studies appears to have examined the possible impact of the refugee experience itself (its ease or difficulty, duration, etc.), but at least one (Kim and Nicassio) found that refugees who have close family members still residing in Vietnam, and those who held out hope that their immigration would be temporary, tended to fare less well on indices of emotional, cultural and economic "adjustment" in this country.

It is useful to compare these studies with a recent study of Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese refugees in Great Britain conducted by Peter R. Jones for the Home Office of the United Kingdom. The study had two major areas of inquiry: the effectiveness of the refugee programs [illegible] resettlement status. The study is based on the mail questionnaires and personal interviews.

The major findings of that study follow.

1) The lengths of time in the reception stage is negatively correlated with the refugee's becoming more self-sufficient.
2) The majority of the refugees tend to settle in the urban regions, particularly where refugee concentrations already exist.

3) A small proportion (5 percent) of the refugees interviewed possess a high level of English proficiency, the major predictor of self-sufficiency. Women, particularly women with families, are the least proficient in English.

4) The unemployment rate is high for the refugees: Only 16 percent of those who were employable were employed when interviewed.

In general, these studies imply that the focus on economic performance requires greater precision in the study of economic self-sufficiency and the determinants of the factors related to it. Only in this manner can the effects of programs be distinguished from those of "natural" processes. Even the best studies were designed to produce a dichotomous self-sufficiency/dependency measure, rather than a more fine-grained index of economic performance. The studies with data available (Aames *et al.*, Litwin and Gim, and Kim and Nicassio) investigate program involvement only by asking refugees if they have had contact with programs and for their opinions of the services they received. There appear to be no adequate measures of program involvement, and these remain to be developed. There are, by contrast, several good series of items concerning pre-immigration status and pre/post-discrepancy. Finally, while all these studies use the household as the economic unit, they consider the focal respondent as the bearer of its resources. In other words, while they include income earned by and transferred to other family members, they do not include the English competence, job skills, program involvement or education level of other family or household members in the predictor variables.

B. THE CURRENT STUDY

The data reported here are derived from a survey of 1384 households of Vietnamese, Sino-Vietnamese and Lao refugees who arrived in the United States after October 1978. The interviews were conducted during the late summer and fall of 1982 in five sites: Boston, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, and Orange County.

In each household one person was identified to be interviewed on the basis of sampling procedures. That person was also asked to provide information on all other members of the household. In all, we have data on 6,775 individuals in 1,384 households. The data on the person interviewed (i.e., "respondent") is, of course, more extensive than that for other household members. We have used households, and when appropriate, individuals as the unit of analysis. In some instances we have data only on the main respondent and in those cases the 1,384 main respondents constitute the unit of analysis.

The main differences between the respondents and other adults in the households (N=2,776) is that the main respondents are slightly older (34.5 years of age versus 28.9 F=103.7, p<.01). The other adults do not differ from the main respondent on date of arrival and are very likely members of their extended family. Although this difference in age is a statistically reliable difference, it is not of practical significance and therefore generalizations made to all adults (1,384 + 2,776 = 4,160) should hold for main respondents and other household adults alike. Bivariate and multivariate analyses both show age is not a key variable in economic achievement except at the extremes, i.e. the very young and the very old.

Site-specific effects can be identified and are discussed as such where relevant. In some instances, however, we have combined the data across sites even when not using multivariate procedures. We have done this because: (1) The analyses indicate greater similarity among refugees and their resettlement experience than initially expected; (2) factors specific to the sites are often so powerful that they can be easily isolated by applying deductive logic to simple bi-variate analyses using the combined data; and (3) the combined data set allows for the detection of weak effects (including site) and more precise description of sample characteristics than would be possible using a site-by-site approach to the analysis.

The data are presented unweighted. We have run many analyses using weighted data (weighted by probability of selection by sampling frame for each respondent) and, with only minor exceptions, the weighted and unweighted analyses show the same pattern and magnitude of relationships. Not only is this important because unweighted data are far easier to present and understand than weighted data, but it means that the combination of area probability and other sampling procedures have resulted in a data set relatively free of sampling bias.

One additional comment on the relative importance of site characteristics. The site that is most distinct from the others on important variables such as employment and cash assistance is Houston. It is also the site where we had the greatest difficulty locating respondents. This sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish differences in policy (e.g., cash assistance) at the site level from individual differences among refugees. Compared to refugees in other sites, those in Houston whom we interviewed have fared well. But we caution against rushing to conclusions regarding Houston since we know too little about those refugees who either left the site or, for whatever reasons, could not be traced by our interviewers.

The data reported here have approximately 7 percent missing data cases on some of the dependent variables. This falls within tolerable limits, but is still less than ideal. Most of the missing data have resulted from the process of aggregation, in which information on all household members is combined into a household-level variable. For the present, we have defined a household as missing data if we lack information on any of its members. Typically, this occurred when respondents failed or refused to report on other members of their households. Values have been implied to those individuals (following procedures which preserve means and variances), so that household values could be computed and the information we have on other household members preserved.

The focus of the survey is on the economic self-sufficiency of the Southeast Asian refugee household. Our definition of this dependent variable includes whether the household received any cash assistance, whether the household received any earned income, and whether the total income of the household was above or below the Federal poverty level. This is discussed in more detail in Section IV.A below.

1. SITE SELECTION

The procedure for selecting the five sites of the survey (see Appendix III) was meant to achieve a variability in a number of primary and secondary criteria. We wanted sites which were major resettlement areas for Southeast Asian refugees who had arrived in the U.S. after September 1978 and which had significant communities of at least two of the three refugee groups being studied: Vietnamese, Lao, and Chinese from Vietnam. We recognized that only five sites would not provide an area probability sample for the entire country, representative of ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao refugees who were recently resettled in the U.S. Yet we thought it possible to make a selection of sites which would maximize the opportunity for findings with a meaning broader tnan just the five sites themselves even though the validity of each generalization would be difficult to assess by analyzing the strict rules of sampling statistics alone.

The variables we looked at in selecting the sites included the characteristics of (1) the refugee population at the site, 2) the site as a whole, and 3) the site's refugee service programs. Thus, we first examined the ethnic component of each refugee community and the ratio of recent arrivals to earlier arrivals (pre-October 1978). We then took into consideration the demographic, economic, and public assistance situation of the site as a whole, and finally we looked at the types of vocational programs designed specifically for the refugee population at the site.

By gaining as much variation as possible in these site characteristics, we hoped to broaden as best we could the coverage of experiences undergone by the Southeast Asian refugees in this country.

We began by selecting 32 counties across the country which had major settlements of recent Southeast Asian refugees.[2] We then reduced the number of counties to 14 by looking more closely at the numbers of recent refugees and more specifically at ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao at the sites, as well as the nature of the site population and its location in the country. For these 14 sites, we looked at their economic and assistance characteristics (unemployment rate, AFDC and Refugee Cash Assistance eligibility and benefits, and refugee vocational services). We also examined (1) the nature of the local Southeast Asian refugee population (Did the population consist more of earlier or later arrivals? Had many moved into or out of the site to or from elsewhere in the U.S.?); (2) the existence of other minority groups at the site and the site's general population and employment growth or decline; and (3) whether job development programs existed for the refugee community.

The final five sites were then chosen in the effort to gain variation in all the criteria, primary and secondary. One each of the five sites had to be in California and Texas, since half of the 14 sites were in these two states.

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[2] Drawn from NACR, Inc., "Summary of Data on Counties Most Heavily Impacted by Southeast Asian Refugees and Cuban/Haitian Entrants", October 1981.

The five sites chosen represent, we believe, a good balance of the criteria by which we narrowed the field from 32 to 14, a good variation of the primary criteria, and a good range of the secondary criteria.

The final choices were:

Boston, Massachusetts (Suffolk County)
Chicago, Illinois (Cook County)
Houston, Texas (Harris County)
Seattle, Washington (King County)
Orange County, California

2. FIELDING THE SURVEY

a. Survey Instrument. The questionnaire designed for the study is both descriptive and inferential. The descriptive goals of the research are to learn basic facts about those refugees who arrived in the U.S. after 1 October 1978, and their adaptation to life in this country, particularly with respect to economic status and the achievement of self-sufficiency. We sought information on educational and occupational backgrounds, household composition, family size, secondary migration, English proficiency, health problems, employment status, and the use of various forms of income and program assistance services. The inferential goals are to learn why some refugees do well and others do less well or not well at all. Therefore, one purpose of the interview was to gather information which would allow us to identify factors which promote or hinder refugees in the quest for economic self-sufficiency -- for example: how do factors such as education, family size, health, English proficiency, etc., affect unemployment and economic status? In addition to the interview used for the main respondent, a supplement, or shortened version was used to gather data on other household members (see Appendix I) both versions are organized as follows:

1. Section A - Household Information: This section contains questions about background information on each household member and on the household in general. Pp. 1-8.
2. Section B - Employment: This section focuses on jobs and employment characteristics for those refugees who are currently in the labor force. Questions about income earned through employment are also contained in this section. Pp. 9-17.
3. Sections C,D,E,F, - Unemployment: These sections contain work-related questions for those who are currently (a) unemployed but looking for work, (b) unemployed and not looking for work, (c) students, and (d) not working because they are retired, disabled, or housewives. Pp 18-28.
4. Section G - Employment History: This section contains questions about previous jobs the main respondent may have held. These questions are not asked of other household members. Pp. 29-32.
5. Section H - Income: The questions in this section are designed to help us estimate the household's income from all sources other than employment such as assistance from voluntary agencies or individuals and government support programs. Pp. 33-41.
6. Section J - Expenses: This section contains questions about the estimated household income, the pattern of expenses, and household strategies to become self-sufficient. Pp. 42-44.
7. Section K - English Ability: The questions in this section concern level of English proficiency and environmental factors which promote or hinder that proficiency level (e.g., ESL classes vs. work vs. speaking English at home, etc.). Pp. 45-53.

8. Section L - Employment Services: This section contains questions designed to determine what kind of assistance refugees have received in learning about jobs, evaluating job skills, finding work, etc. Pp. 54-57.

9. Section M - Vocational Training: The questions in this section concern the amount and the types of vocational and on-the-job training received. Pp. 58-65.

10. Section N - Health: The questions in this section are about health problems, health care and insurance coverage. Pp. 66-68.

11. Section R - Attitude and Social Behavior: This section contains questions on the process of resettlement, and refugees' perceptions of their status, the problems faced, and their progress in resettlement. Pp. 69-74.

b. Site Coordinators. We began the data gathering procedures with the search for a competent study coordinator in each site who would be familiar with social science research and would possess a good knowledge of the culture of the three ethnic groups and the community in which they live. The selection of five coordinators was followed by a one-week, twelve-hour per day workshop held at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. The workshop's program focused mainly on interviewing techniques and was conducted by the staff of the Institute's Survey Research Center. The coordinators were also introduced to the study: its methodology, objectives, and importance. In addition, all five coordinators participated in a discussion of cultural considerations in doing survey research on the Southeast Asian refugees, and various types of government assistance programs available to the post-October 1978 refugees.

c. Interviewers and Training. A program to hire about 15 bilingual interviewers at each site was immediately instituted following the workshop. First, formal letters were sent to various local agencies such as community colleges, voluntary agencies (VOLAGs), and Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) to publicize the study in the community and to invite those interested in participating as interviewers to attend meetings about the study and to apply. The ISR staff and the local coordinators worked to discuss the study with community leaders and to secure their cooperation, both to find quality interviewers and to gain as broad an acceptance as possible within the community.

Interviewers were selected according to the following criteria:

1) literacy and proficiency in native language;
2) literacy and proficiency in English;
3) general education level (some college and familiarity with social science concepts and research);
4) good standing in the community;
5) ability to work without supervision;
6) Concern for detail and accuracy;
7) availability for full-time employment;
8) access to car or other transportation;
9) past experience in related work;
10) willingness to interview in all areas of the refugee community
11) appreciation of the study's goals;

In the final selection, the study coordinator in each site selected 15 interviewers (Lao, Vietnamese and Chinese-Vietnamese). These interviewers would also assist in sampling.

The study coordinator in each site also conducted a six-day training program for the new interviewers. The format of the training was similar to the Coordinator's training held earlier at the Institute for Social Research. It included (1) a further explication of the study and the survey research methodology by members of the Ann Arbor-based project staff; (2) presentations on the local assistance programs available to the refugees at each site by local and state welfare department staff; and (3) training in interviewing techniques and practice interviews with the actual questionnaire. In the training, the manual followed was prepared by the Survey Research Center's staff: General Interviewing Technique (Survey Research Center, The University of Michigan - July 1982).

d. Translations. Next, the interviewer training sessions were also used to test and to improve the quality of the three questionnaires: (1) interviewers conducted practice interviews in their native languages using the translated versions; (2) interviewers commented on the translations and offered suggestions for improvement, and (3) study coordinators collected these suggestions and sent them to the Institute for final changes. The English version of the questionnaire was translated into the three languages -- Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao -- by native speakers of each language. Second, the Vietnamese, Chinese and Lao version were backtranslated into English by other translators and compared. Finally, several rounds of translation refinements were made by native speakers in Ann Arbor immediately before the survey began.

During the six-day training, a considerable amount of attention was placed on the importance of developing good rapport between interviewers and respondents to minimize potential age and class differences. Furthermore, since speculated the purpose and concept of social-scientific survey research on a large scale might be unfamiliar to most of our respondents, and this lack of understanding might lead them to refuse to cooperate, study coordinators had interviewers conduct practice interviews in the refugee community. Special sessions were organized in which the study coordinator, Michigan-based research staff, and interviewers participated in discussions to develop strategies to deal with special "cultural" problems and difficulties that became apparent during these practice interviews. Thus, interviewers were trained not only in basic interviewing techniques but also in strategies for dealing with special problems.

Actual interviewing began in early July, 1982, and lasted until October 1982. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. Coordinators closely supervised the work of the interviewers. They gave the interviewers a package of materials for each household that included questionnaire supplements for the other adult household members. On completing each of their assignments, interviewers edited the completed questionnaires and translated the responses into English. Completed interviews were then turned over to the study coordinators.

When interviewers encountered a respondent who refused to participate or cooperate in the interview, the study coordinators generally sent out a second interviewer, and finally, a third attempt was made. After three attempts, if cooperation was still not forthcoming, the respondent was declared as a non-response case.

e. Verification and Quality Control. After the interview was completed, another interviewer verified it to determine the following: (1) whether the interview had actually taken place, (2) whether all appropriate questions had been filled out, and (3) whether the interviewer had completed all the necessary editing and translating tasks for the respondents' responses.

The first three interviews of every interviewer were verified and examined for quality. After that, the verification procedure went as follows:

1. Every fifth respondent was selected for verification.
2. The selected respondent's name was assigned to another interviewer of the same ethnicity.
3. The verification interviewer phoned the responde (or made a personal visit, if R had no phone) and asked the questions on the verification form.
4. The verification form collected information on household members; this information was used to check if the proper number of household member supplements were completed and contained accurate information. All interviews were reviewed for quality control by the site supervisors. The data gathering procedures were finalized when study coordinators logged completed interviews and sent them back to the Institute for analysis.

Experienced coders at the Coding Section at the Institute for Social Research coded the interview responses into numerical measures for later statistical analysis. Professional members of the research staff and translators for the three languages worked with coders during the entire coding operation.

3. SAMPLING

Two types of sampling frames are used for this study: (1) lists comprised of data from government agencies, Volags, MAA organizat [illegible], and support service organizations; and (2) area probability frames.

a. List frames. Lists of refugees maintained for administrative purposes offered certain advantages. They could provide respondent addresses and additional information, such as date of arrival and ethnicity, which could be used to stratify the sample.

In each of the five sites, an effort was made to determine what administrative lists existed, their completeness, their currency and their availability. We are most grateful for the generous aid provided in this for us by the personnel of the service agencies, (see Appendix II for a list of these agencies). After obtaining the lists, we estimated (1) the proportion of the site universe covered by the names on all the lists, (2) the proportion of the site universe covered by the names on each individual list, and (3) the extent of overlap among lists. Such information provided the basis for developing procedures for selecting respondents from each list. After the sampling procedures were instituted and interviewing began, the information from the lists was continually updated to improve the accuracy of our probability estimates and the area probability frames for each site.

To make certain that there were enough people with service experience in the sample, we initially oversampled service provider lists and weighted these subsamples when aggregating the data.

Often, there were statistical and practical problems associated with using the lists. Each list provided only partial coverage of the study population. Furthermore, the addresses and other information provided on the lists might not be current and concerns about confidentiality either prevented the staff from getting access to lists or required that the agency contact the eligible respondents to find out if they would be willing to be included in the sample.

Having encountered such difficulties, it became necessary to resort to area probability sampling earlier and more heavily than originally expected.

Weighting proved largely unnecessary because the major portion of the sample came from the area frame.

b. Area Probability Sampling. The area frame is a consistent, well-structured tool for developing probability samples of general household populations. However, it is costly and time consuming. It requires that one use household enumeration and screening methods. With the aid of disproportionate sampling methods, the efficiency of the household screening can be improved, but it still remains a relatively costly and time-consuming procedure. If conducted properly, the area frame approach provides the best coverage of the survey population and permits more generalizable findings and safer inferences. In studies like the present one, where lists for a variety of reasons had their limits, the area probability approach is the only supplemental sampling procedure that should be relied upon to maintain scientific integrity. Thus at each site, when the limits of available lists were reached, or if conditions precluded the practical use of the lists, the staff shifted to area probability sampling.

Theoretically, area probability methods can offer complete coverage by identifying areas where persons with certain similar characteristics can be linked (usually through their area of primary residence). Most probability samples are stratified multi-stage cluster samples. The samples are stratified into distinct groups and each group is sampled independently to improve the precision of the estimates. The design ensures that each of the groups are presented in the sample in the proper proportion.

In the present study, those proportions were determined on the basis of the degree and type of success achieved by sampling from lists by site. The multi-stage cluster nature of the sample refers to the successive sampling and subsampling of area units in order to group sample persons close together.

Such stratification was used in the present study to locate areas within each site containing high, medium and low-level densities of eligible persons. The team used local informants and cross-reference phone books to develop this information and relied on community leaders to spread the word about the nature and value of the survey.

As Appendix II shows, there is variation from site to site in the percentages of respondents drawn from the List Frame and the Area Probability Sample. Three sites had a high percentage of respondents drawn from a list frame (mainly from local affiliates of voluntary agencies): Boston 65 percent, Seattle 60 percent, and Houston 50 percent. In the other two sites, a high percentage of respondents came from an area probability sample: Chicago 49 percent and Orange County 65 percent. No site had its respondents drawn totally from either a list frame or an area probability sample.

The procedures used for listing households and for determining eligible respondents were worked out with the individual agencies. The actual enumerations and screenings were conducted by the interviewers under the supervision of field coordinators and university-based staff. The problem of determining how many and which persons should be interviewed by area probability procedures was based on the success of the list sampling frame at each site. Where necessary, by relying heavily upon the area probability sampling and by reducing dependency upon available lists for single selection, there can be no doubt that sampling error was reduced. Any departure that increases the amount of area frame over list frame is generally a positive step in achieving optimal allocation to dual frame designs. Out of necessity, we had to take that step in order to locate eligible respondents. Appendix II also provides the relevant statistical analysis to determine the differences between weighted and unweighted results for our assorted sources. Because the results are virtually the same, we have chosen to conduct and present the analyses of the study using unweighted procedures (as noted above, page 8)

How representative is our sample for the refugee communities of the Vietnamese, Lao, and Chinese from Vietnam in the United States? This is difficult to say. Our site selection procedure (Section I.B.1 above, pages 11 to 13) focused on counties having high concentrations of Southeast Asian refugees and the five sites chosen are all areas of urban and suburban nature. Our sample appears to be fairly representative of the Vietnamese, Lao, and Chinese from Vietnam who live in large American cities and the suburban areas surrounding them. The results of this survey may not carry over to refugees living in medium and small towns or in rural areas. Nevertheless, the findings reveal a great amount of commonality for the refugees across all five sites and, therefore, indicate a broader relationship and greater generalizability than initially foreseen.

Only the data for Boston raise particular questions with regard to length of time in the United States, household composition, and the characteristics of its Southeast Asian refugee population. The sample here was somewhat different from those in the other four sites (being more heavily based on local voluntary agency lists). Yet, list and area probability samples are statistically very similar. Thus, we feel confident that our sample is not out of the ordinary for Boston.

At places in the tables and figures below, the numbers used will vary. This is because all 1,384 questionnaires do not contain uniform data for all their questions. Indeed, the respondents were told they did not have to answer any question they did not want to. Thus, any one topic is likely to have missing data from certain questionnaires. The N will represent those households or individuals for whom data exist in the questionnaires on the topic under discussion.

CHAPTER II

THE REFUGEES: BACKGROUND VARIABLES

The analysis of the survey data in this study is primarily based on multivariate analysis, the simultaneous processing and interrelating of many variables in relation to self-sufficiency measures. In this chapter are presented the more significant variables linked to the refugees' personal characteristics, their existence in Southeast Asia, and their personal and programmatic situation in the United States. Their work, economic status, and income in this country are examined in Chapter III and the importance of the predictor variables in in Chapter IV. The refugees studied in this survey are from three ethnic groups (Vietnamese, Chinese from Vietnam, and Lao), live in five sites (Boston, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, and Orange County, California), and arrived over the span of four years (October 1978 - October 1982). Described below are the sample's characteristics which form a background to their economic situation.

A. SITE

The five sites covered in this survey represent a variety of locations throughout the country, two being in the Sun Belt, one in the Northern Pacific Coast, one in the Midwest, and one in the Northeast Corridor. Two of the sites -- Orange County, California and Houston -- have major settlements of the 1975-1978 Southeast Asian refugees and heavy secondary migration. In contrast, the refugee communities in Chicago, Seattle, and especially Boston consist of a higher percentage of post-1978 arrivals with relatively fewer secondary migrants. The five Community Profiles contain more specific detail and may be found in in Appendix IV; here, we discuss in a comparative way characteristics of the five sites and the situations in which the refugees found themselves.

1. Community

Chicago (Cook County) has a large urban population of 5.3 million, Seattle (King County) and Houston (Harris County) medium urban populations of 1.3 and 2.4 million respectively, Boston (Suffolk County) a small urban population of .65 million, and Orange County a medium suburban population of 1.9 million. Houston and Orange County have been growing (38% and 36% increases since 1970 respectively); Seattle has had a slight gain (9.5% increase); and Chicago and Boston have been shrinking (by 4% and 12% respectively). Chicago and Houston have high percentages of minority population (over 30 percent), Boston, Orange County, and Seattle medium percentages (15 - 30 percent). Yet the size of the Asian communities is generally small in Boston, Chicago and Houston, and medium in Seattle and Orange County.[3] Local Asian-American organizations have, however, been particularly active in aiding the refugees in Chicago, Boston, and Seattle.

The growing Southeast Asian refugee communities form an increasingly large part of the local Asian population. Both Houston and Orange County have well over 30,000 refugees. They form most of the local Asian communities. The refugee populations of Chicago and Seattle are less than half the size of those in Houston and Orange County and exist within larger Asian communities. Boston has a small refugee population -- less than half of Chicago's and Seattle's -- as well as a small Asian community. Houston, with one of the oldest Southeast Asian refugee populations, and Boston, with the newest, both have a strong predominance of Vietnamese. Seattle has the most ethnically diverse refugee population (Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao among others) of the five sites. Chicago and Orange County have a higher percentage of Vietnamese in their refugee population than Seattle, but a greater ethnic mix than Houston and Boston.

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[3] PC-80-S1-5, U.S Bureau of the Census, published October 1981.

The existence of refugee organizations among the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao varies by site depending upon the length of time the refugee community has existed at the site and the ability of local refugees to get things going. In addition, federal and state efforts to form Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), especially in Seattle, have helped bring about such local organizations. Thus, ethnic organizations exist to some degree in four of the five sites. Only in Boston, with the most recent refugee community, were the local refugee organizations still in the nascent stage. Only 16% of the households in the survey reported members belonging to a club or organization. Most of these belonged to only one organization, which was, half the time (52%)specifically an ethnic association. Others were religious (20%), job or sports related (6% each), and scholastic (PTA, 4%). Forty-six percent of the reported organizations were Lao, 34 percent Vietnamese, and 8 percent Chinese. (Ten percent had no ethnic link). Almost half of the households (46 percent) reported spending no more than an hour a week on such activities, almost two fifths (38 percent) two or three hours a week, and about 15 percent anywhere from four to twenty hours a week.

The refugees in these sites, including Orange County, live in urban settings. Houston, with its own particular geography, appears to have the most scattered refugee population, while Orange County's refugees are concentrated in a number of urban centers (Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Westminster, etc.). The refugees in Seattle and Boston are in scattered parts of the cities -- generally in the poorer areas with mixed minority groups (such as Rainier

Valley and Dorchester respectively). Both cities also have some refugee settlement in and around the already existing Asian communities (the International District for Seattle, Chinatown for Boston). Chicago has a more concentrated refugee settlement: the Vietnamese mainly in the poorer Uptown area, the Chinese in the Chinatown area of Southtown, and the Lao in the suburbs of Elgin and Hanover Park. All three of these sites have fairly dependable public transportation -- the subways of Boston and Chicago, and the buses of Seattle.

Houston had the highest Consumer Price Index[4] figure (317.6) of the five sites in the fall of 1982, up almost 6 percent from the year before. The costs of food, housing, clothes, medical care, and especially utilities were highest among the sites, and only transportation cost was lowest. Boston had the lowest CPI figure (282.9) as well as a low percentage increase (less than 4 percent). The costs of food, housing, and medical care were lowest, and transportation highest, among the five sites. The other sites ranged in between these two extremes (Seattle 302.2, Chicago 294.4, and Orange County 289.5). Chicago was close to the national average, but its rise (almost 7 percent) was highest among the sites. Orange County's utilities were lowest and rental housing highest, while rental housing and clothes were lowest and public transportation highest in Chicago.

The educational situations of the five sites were reasonably beneficial for the Southeast Asian refugee communities. Chicago and Boston are probably the best; both sites have a variety of good public facilities which are easily accessible by subway. English and vocational training are available in these schools, particularly in Chicago. Seattle has both public and private schools for vocational training, though the bus system may not provide as easy access as Boston and Chicago furnish. The two recently growing areas, Houston and Orange County, have newer community college systems, though access to them is more difficult because of the need for cars.

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[4] The Consumer Price Index is a relative measure of general and specific "breadbasket" categories of expenses for different standard metropolitan areas. The CPI's are published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Monthly Labor Review, U.S. Department of Labor.

Tensions between Southeast Asian refugees and the communities in which they live existed at certain times and places, but negative feelings have not dominated overall relations with the refugees.

2. Economy

The major recession of the early 1980s affected all five sites. Chicago had already felt it in the late 1970s. Manufacturing, once its major economic sector, fell off in seven of the ten main job areas. Blue collar jobs dropped greatly and white collar jobs fell slightly. Seattle was hit hard in 1981 and 1982. Timber, construction, and the aerospace industry all suffered. In Boston, the old manufacturing sector had long been in decline, but the rise of the high technology industry around the city and the strength of the banking and insurance fields downtown meant that the local economy did not suffer like the economies of many of the other northeastern cities. Orange County's economy had perhaps the steadiest growth in the country since World War II, with modern industries like aerospace and electronics leading the way. The recession, however, hit almost every industry, particularly construction, slowing what was otherwise a healthy economy. Of all the sites, Houston had a booming economy, based on petrochemicals and a good deal of construction. The world oil glut ended the boom suddenly in the summer of 1982, and the work force began to suffer.

Overall, the unemployment rate rose steeply in 1981 and 1982 in four of the five sites. In Houston, it doubled, going from 4 percent to 8 percent in a year's time -- a rate almost duplicated in Orange County (from 4.5 percent to 8 percent). Chicago saw an increase from under 8 percent to over 11 percent, while Seattle went from under 8 percent to almost 11 percent. Only in Boston was the economy performing well; while the unemployment rate rose from just over 6 percent to almost 8 percent, it then dropped off again to almost 6 percent.

Jobs the refugees have been able to obtain tend to be low level. Earlier immigrants had relied on the old industrial sector for jobs, but in the locations of this sector, like Chicago and Boston, such industry was in decline. The new industrial sector -- including aerospace, electronics, and high technology, in Orange County, Seattle, and Boston -- was difficult for the refugees to break into so soon after their arrival, though some jobs in light industry (electronics, sewing) were available. Houston, with its booming petrochemical industry, had supplied many jobs, but even this industry began having problems.

Already existing Asian communities have offered other possibilities for the newly arrived refugees. Thus, the stores and restaurants of the Chinatowns in Boston and Houston, the International District in Seattle, and Southtown in Chicago, have provided some employment opportunities for the refugees, but nowhere do these opportunities seem to have been very great.

In recession-ravaged Chicago and Seattle, refugees (mainly Vietnamese and Chinese) have set up small enterprises, including restaurants, neighborhood stores (handling such items as foodstuffs and jewelry), and import-export businesses. In Houston, with its long-standing refugee community, refugees have become dominant in running convenience stores like Wrangler, Totem, and 7-11. An entire shopping arcade called "The Glass Palace" consists of twenty to thirty shops owned by Vietnamese. Orange County, however, has the most extensive development of refugee businesses, given the length of time the community has existed and the nature of the community. Hundreds of stores, even large Vietnamese shopping centers, provide not only the above types of businesses, but also medical and dental clinics, herbal and acupuncture parlors. Boston has had little growth in this direction, owing mainly to the recent arrival of most of the community.

3. Refugee Services

The development of services specifically for the refugees paralleled the growth of the refugee communities themselves. Initial efforts for the 1975 refugees laid the foundation for expanded services once the post-1978 surge of refugees arrived. Thus, in all five sites a number of the first national voluntary agencies (VOLAGS) involved (such as Catholic Charities) continued through the slack period of 1976 and 1977, to be joined by other agencies (International Rescue Committee-IRC, Church World Service-CWS, etc.) in 1978-1979 through their local branches. Chicago had a strong program start with the early formation of the Refugee Social Services Consortium (centered around the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago), and Seattle had strong early state support. The heavy secondary migration into Southern California led to continual local program development in Orange County. Only in Boston, with its late formation of a refugee community, were local support offices late to arrive.

The upsurge of refugee arrivals after 1978 thus built on the earlier local efforts. At the same time the massive influx of refugees required a greater federal effort, and this grew using state government agencies as intermediaries. The Refugee Act of 1980 formalized the federal government participation in serving the refugees (through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Department of Health and Human Services) and brought imp ted state governments more directly into the operation. Federally funded local refugee programs emerged in all the sites, selected and administered by state refugee offices. These programs, many at community colleges, offered a variety of social and vocational services, including English language training.

All five states seek to help the refugee become self-sufficient, economically and socially, as rapidly as possible. Each state has by statute a Refugee State Coordinator, an office which focuses on the refugees and with which the particular Regional Office of ORR works. The administration of the refugee programs varies from site to site. In Orange County, the county administration handles these programs. Seattle's Refugee Service Center is set up by the state for the city, and the city administration is actively involved. In Chicago, the Consortium of private agencies takes care of refugee programs as directed by the state, while in Boston the state agency deals directly with the individual agencies involved in the refugee effort. Houston has local offices of the Department of Human Resources which oversee direct delivery of services to the refugees.

The services -- language, social, and vocational --offered in the five sites in 1980-81 were cut back considerably in 1981-1982 due to the problems of the recession and state and federal budget reductions. In the process, the main priority of the refugee programs came increasingly to be employment rather than broader social aid. Even in programs related to employment, such as English and vocational training, budget restraints often forced restrictions in time and access. In Orange County, for example, priority went to refugees in the U.S. less than three months or more than 36 months.

The basic effort for refugee resettlement continues to come from the private agencies, generally local affiliates of the national Volags. Some, like IRC, use funds from their national offices to offer broad social services, information, referral, and some employment aid to the refugees they resettle. Others, as noted above, also sign contracts with the state for specific services. The local private agencies themselves may be divided into those favoring a local, congregational model of resettlement (as Lutheran International Refugee Services (LIRS), Church World Service (CWS), and World Relief Refugee Service (WRRS) and those with an agency model of professionally accredited service providers like United States Catholic Conference (USCC), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), IRC and American Council for Nationality Services (ACNS). In both cases, they supply initial resettlement services (housing, food, utensils, etc.), orientation. counseling, and referral. Individual agencies at particular sites may also offer specific services like English classes, job development, or programs for women or the elderly. Many of the local agencies have Southeast Asian staff with the language and cultural capabilities for aiding their fellow refugees.

Each of the sites has its own system to provide English language training and employment services for the refugees. In Houston and Chicago, local colleges provide the main English classes (Houston Community College and Truman College respectively). Boston has the International Institute, a local affiliate of ACNS, while in Seattle, the state contracted with the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide English classes through subcontracts with local institutions. Thus, several Seattle community colleges hold classes, as do some private vocational schools. Local resettlement agencies in Orange County conduct English classes as do Rancho Santiago Community College and local school districts.

ne employment programs also vary greatly from site to site in terms of the type of agency contracted to run them. Everywhere but Seattle the major employment programs are administered by local branches of the Volags, and in

Seattle such a branch ran the program until 1981. In its place, the state selected Economic Opportunity Center, Inc. for job counseling, orientation, preparation, development, placement, and follow-up. In Orange County, the local diocese of the Catholic Church runs the Job Center and the World of Work; in Chicago, the Jewish Vocational Service handles the Indochinese Employment Program; in Boston, the International Institute provides employment services and vocational training; and in Houston the YMCA supplies the major program in job counseling and development. A variety of other programs involving job-related activities can be found in the five sites, particularly at local colleges. Vocational training in Orange County has been strengthened by developing on-the-job training (without pay) with local employers.

The pattern of coordinating refugee-oriented activities also differs from site to site. Texas has a 167-member statewide Refugee Task Force, and Houston itself has an active Refugee Council with 25 members who include representatives from a variety of interested parties. California also has a State Council with up to 25 members from throughout the state, as well as the Governor's Refugee Task Force, a Citizen's Advisory Committee, and a Forum on Refugee Affairs, consisting of representatives from local forums. A Refugee Affairs Management Team in Orange County aids the interaction of public and private agencies. Washington has a state Refugee Advisory Council (22 members) as well, and Seattle has both the Refugee Forum of King County and a resettlement agencies' monthly round table. A special assistant to the mayor is involved in these meetings. Because most of Illinois' refugees reside within Chicago or the immediate area the meetings of the Consortium have become the major form of coordination. The Consortium has existed since 1975, and the meetings include representatives of its constituent private agencies and public offices at the city, state, and federal levels. To an even greater extent than Chicago, Boston has federal, state, and local offices in close proximity. Constant changes in the government have hampered coordination efforts, and most activities involve direct contacts between the state office and the individual agencies. Only a steering committee existed for the Boston area.

Public assistance programs vary somewhat from site to site, a fact partly reflective of differences in State philosophies on social welfare in general. The primary public assistance program is a joint Federal-State program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which provides assistance to single parent families or families in which the second parent is "unemployable" (incapacitated). Monthly payment levels for a family of four on AFDC in the study sites are approximately $601 in California and $118 in Texas, with Washington ($541), Massachusetts ($445) and Illinois ($368) falling between these two extremes. Massachusetts, Illinois, and California also have the "unemployed Parent (UP)" option in AFDC which allows eligibility for families with both parents living in the household, if the parent who is designated as primary wage-earner meets criteria which demonstrate his or her temporary unemployed status.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) is a federal program made available through States at the State-established AFDC payment levels as above to refugees who do not meet the family composition requirement of AFDC or AFDC-UP, but who otherwise meet all of the income and resource eligibility criteria for AFDC or AFDC-UP. RCA is now available to eligible refugees during the first 18 months after their arrival in the United States (until mid-1982 during the first 36 months) and takes into account the inappropriateness of the family composition policies of AFDC to the goals of the refugee program. Payment levels are slightly more restrictive than those for AFDC, but otherwise, the benefit structure is the same.

The greatest variation among sites with regard to assistance exists in the area of State or local General Assistance programs. Whereas AFDC and RCA are of federal origin and involve federal funds, GA programs originate in State or local laws, and therefore provide for the needs of poor residents in differing ways and to greater or lesser degrees.

All five sites also require some form of unemployment registration for those receiving cash assistance. In Houston, the refugees must register for work with the Texas Employment Commission. In Orange County and Chicago, they must report periodically to job counsellors and demonstrate that they are seeking work. In Seattle, the application for assistance requires a refugee service worker to interview all adults in the household, with the result being a Personal Employment Plan. Once they receive cash assistance they must report monthly to the EOC employment program. In Boston, almost all employable adults (aged 16 to 65) on cash assistance have employment forms at the Department of Employment Security which are updated weekly.

In mid-1982, the Federal government began to require everyone on AFDC and RCA to submit monthly reports on their eligibility. Only Washington had implemented this requirement by the time of the survey. The complexity of the form resulted in a good deal of confusion among the refugees, and some 150 families lost their eligibility that fall because they did not submit the proper forms (Seattle Times, 10/4/82: 10/19/82).

B. ETHNICITY, SEX, AND AGE

The survey includes interviews with 1,384 main respondents and, hence, an equal number of households (Table II.1, page 38). We located 4,160 adults in these households, including the main respondents, and the sample includes

2,615 children (under the age of 16), for a total sample of 6,775 individuals. Of the adults in the sample 2,079 were Vietnamese, 836 Chinese from Vietnam, and 1,230 Lao.[5] Thus half were Vietnamese, almost a third Lao, and a fifth Chinese. Among all adults, 61 percent (2,526) were male and 1,608 female. As indicated by the distribution section of Table II.1 (page 38), there are high numbers of refugees in their twenties. The mean age for all adults was 30.8 (for Chinese 33.0, Lao 31.5, and Vietnamese 29.5). The children were more evenly divided between male and female, with 1,429 boys and 1,168 girls, and averaged eight years of age.

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[5] The Lao sample includes only lowland Lao and none of the upland Laotians (Hmong, Mien, Tai Dam, et al.).

Table II 1

Site Demographics

	HH	Adults	Viet-namese	Lao	Chi-nese	Male	Fe-male	Chil-dren	1-5	6-11	12-15	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Boston	310	1214	70%	22%	8%	72%	28%	100%	47%	34%	19%	14%	51%	18%	6%	4%	1%
Chicago	298	825	46%	25%	29%	58%	42%	100%	36%	40%	24%	18%	40%	19%	11%	7%	6%
Houston	188	470	53%	38%	9%	53%	47%	100%	31%	40%	29%	13%	36%	28%	13%	8%	2%
Orange County	304	855	45%	38%	18%	53%	46%	100%	29%	40%	31%	15%	29%	28%	13%	8%	5%
Seattle	284	796	28%	33%	39%	55%	44%	100%	36%	36%	28%	14%	38%	22%	12%	6%	6%
Total	1,384	4,160	50%	30%	20%	61%	39%	2615	36%	38%	26%	15%	41%	22%	11%	6%	4%

When examined according to site, Boston stands out for its young, male refugee population. Almost three quarters of the sample there were men, and over half of the sample were in their twenties (barely more than one-tenth were forty or higher). Orange County, on the other hand, shows the flattest distribution across the adult age group.

C. TIME IN THE UNITED STATES

From the summer of 1978 to the summer of 1982, the pattern of Southeast Asian immigration into the five sites varied from month to month. Nevertheless, the movement of the refugees from camps to the United States took place in three well-defined periods, and the characteristics of each period relative to the five survey sites are displayed in Tables II.2 through II.4 (pages 40-41).[4] The first period began in October 1978 and ended in June 1980. During Period One, the vast majority of refugees came from Vietnam and in all sites except Seattle (where the proportions were approximately equal) the refugees from Vietnam made up at least two-thirds of the total. The remainder were from Laos. Orange County received the greatest number of Southeast Asian refugees during the first period (averaging 178 arrivals per month) and Boston the fewest (with only 26 per month).

Table II.3 (page 41), covering the period from July 1980 through September 1981, shows that both Orange County and Boston retained their ranking among the five sites in terms of the number of arrivals they accepted monthly, but that the pace increased in all sites. Although the rates of immigration throughout this period were more consistent, there was more diversity with regard to the countries of origin of the immigrants. Cambodians and Laotians made up a greater percentage than in Period One, but those from Vietnam remained the majority in Boston, Orange County and Houston. In both Chicago and Seattle, refugees from Vietnam made up 44 percent of the total who were resettled there; in Chicago, over a quarter were from Cambodia.[7]

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[4] This discussion is based on our analysis of county arrival statistics provided by ORR. The data do not differentiate Chinese Vietnamese from other Vietnamese or Lao from Hmong and other highland Laotian groups. Also, although Cambodians were not surveyed in the present study, their arrival patterns are described here for comparative purposes.

The third period (see Table II.4, page 41), from October 1981 through March 1982, witnessed a significant decline in the numbers of Southeast Asian refugees coming into the United States. Also, the proportion of refugees from Cambodia was much higher, with a decline in the percentage from Laos. Houston, rather than Orange County, accepted the most refugees per month during this period.

Table II.2

Patterns of Southeast Asian Immigration Into the Five Sites
Period One: October 1978 to June 1980

	Chicago	Boston	Seattle	Houston	Orange County
Average Number Per Month	99	26	103	118	178
Percent from Vietnam	62%	70%	51%	84%	63%
Percent from Laos	38%	30%	49%	16%	36%
Percent from Cambodia	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: ORR County Arrival Statistics

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[7] The refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia include Chinese as well as, respectively, Vietnamese and Khmer. Those from Laos include Hmong and other highland groups as well as lowland Lao.

Table II.3

Patterns of Southeast Asian Immigration Into the Five Sites
Period Two: July 1980 to September 1981

	Chicago	Boston	Seattle	Houston	Orange County
Average Number Per Month	214	204	288	383	445
Percent from Vietnam	44%	53%	44%	63%	70%
Percent from Laos	30%	26%	41%	17%	18%
Percent from Cambodia	26%	22%	15%	20%	12%

Source: ORR County Arrival Statistics

Table II.4

Patterns of Southeast Asian Immigration Into the Five Sites
Period Three: October 1981 Through March, 1982

	Chicago	Boston	Seattle	Houston	Orange County
Average Number Per Month	129	141	151	217	186
Percent from Vietnam	37%	50%	46%	61%	60%
Percent from Laos	7%	9%	26%	5%	12%
Percent from Cambodia	56%	41%	28%	34%	28%

Source: ORR County Arrival Statistics

Our sample drew somewhat more heavily from the first period (44 percent), while 42 percent arrived in period two and 1 percent in the last period. By specific year of entry, 4 percent of our respondents arrived in 1978, 21 percent in 1979, 37 percent in 1980, 31 percent in 1981, and only 8 percent in 1982. Two percent of all adults in the households had arrived before 1978, and they were included in the general adult sample.

In terms of ethnicity (Table II.5, page 43), the Chinese from Vietnam tended to arrive earliest with 63 percent in the U.S. for more than two years. The Lao were the next highest in this regard, with 55 percent here over two years, while only 43 percent of the Vietnamese had been here that long. The Chinese registered the most arrivals in the first period and the Vietnamese the most in the third period. Thus, 57 percent of our Vietnamese respondents, 45 percent of the Lao, and only 37 percent of the Chinese arrived between mid-1980 and mid-1982. The Chinese had thus been in the U.S. an average of 28.5 months; the Lao 25, and the Vietnamese 23.

The mean ages at the time of the interview of the main respondents decline with each of the three periods. Those in the first period were about 36.8 years old, those in the second 33.7, and those in the third 30.8.

The average length of time the refugees have been in the United States varies by site. At the time of the survey, refugees surveyed in Houston had been in this country for over two and a half years (31 months), those in Orange County, Chicago, and Seattle between two and two and a half years (28, 27, and 25 months respectively), and those in Boston less than a year and a half (17 months). Table II.6 (page 45) shows the variation of time in this country for respondents by site. Boston stands out once again, with over a third of its refugees here less than a year (and less than a twentieth here over three years). Almost half of the sample in Houston had been here between two and three years, and over 40 percent in Seattle between one and two years. Again, Orange County shows a relatively flat distribution among the four cohorts.

Table II 5

Ethnicity by Time in the U.S (Main Respondent)

	Months in the U S.													
	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	48+	Totals
Vietnamese	3.5% (24)	7.8% (53)	13 7% (93)	11.7% (79)	8 4% (57)	11.8% (80)	11.1% (75)	11.1% (75)	9.5% (64)	3.8% (26)	4.2% (29)	2.7% (19)	0.4% (3)	100.0% (677)
Chinese	0 3% (1)	3.1% (9)	5 2% (15)	9 6% (28)	8 9% (26)	9.9% (29)	13.4% (39)	13.4% (39)	14.8% (43)	7.9% (23)	7.9% (23)	4.1% (12)	1.2% (4)	100.0% (291)
Lao	1 1% (4)	4.6% (18)	6 1% (24)	12.4% (49)	10 4% (41)	10 8% (43)	16.9% (67)	15.6% (62)	10.9% (43)	4.6% (18)	2.2% (8)	3.5% (14)	1.4% (5)	100.0% (396)
Totals	2 1% (29)	5.3% (180)	9 7% (132)	11 4% (156)	9.1% (124)	11 1% (152)	13.1% (181)	12.9% (176)	10.9% (150)	4.9% (67)	4.5% (60)	3.3% (45)	0.8% (12)	100 0% (1,364)

Table II.6

Percent of Refugees in Each of the Sites by
Different Spans of Time Since Arrival
(N=1,384)

	<1 year	1-2 Years	2-3 Years	>3 Years
Boston	34%	33%	29%	4%
Chicago	14%	31%	37%	19%
Houston	10%	24%	49%	17%
Orange County	13%	26%	41%	20%
Seattle	15%	42%	35%	7%
Total	18%	32%	37%	13%

Chi square = 128.78   p = .00

D. SPONSORSHIP

In their placement at the local level, 510 (38 percent) of our respondents were sponsored by relatives, 388 (29 percent) by local branches of the voluntary agencies, 207 (16 percent) by local churches, 108 (4 percent) by individual Americans, and 102 (8 percent) by an unrelated Southeast Asian (Table II.7, page 45). The pattern of sponsorship suggests a tendency for earlier arrivals to have more individual, local sponsors (churches, American families) in a manner similar to that which pertained in 1975. As the influx grew, the burden of sponsorship shifted more directly to local offices of the voluntary agencies and to previously settled refugee families. This pattern is evidenced by the fact that 46 percent of the earliest arrivals were sponsored by local American individuals and churches. In contrast, Vietnamese, who had more relatives already here, had only 16 percent thus sponsored, while 46 percent were sponsored by relatives and 19 percent by local offices of the voluntary agencies. Individuals and churches sponsored 20 percent of the Lao, while 42 percent were settled by local voluntary agencies, and 30 percent by relatives. Among the Chinese, 33 percent were sponsored by relatives and only 12 percent by the local voluntary agencies. Thus, as the refugees continued to migrate to this country from 1978 on, sponsorship tended to shift away from individuals and churches to more institutionalized efforts, particularly that of the Volags.

Table II.7

ber and Percent of Refugees by Resettlement Sponsoring Groups

Sponsorship	N	Percent
Relatives	510	38%
Voluntary agencies	388	29%
Local churches	207	16%
Americans	108	9%
Unrelated Southeast Asians	102	8%

E. TIME SPENT IN THE CAMPS

Only 3 percent of the respondents were in the camps for less than three months. Almost two-thirds (64 percent) had spent from three months to a year awaiting their move. The remaining third waited from just over a year for up to five years and more before coming to the United States (Table II.8, page 46). If we break these figures down according to ethnicity, we can see that the Lao were in the camps the longest. On the average, they spent over a year and a half (almost 20 months) in the camps of northeast Thailand. The Chinese were in the camps around the South China Sea for an average of 12 months, while the Vietnamese were in these same camps for an average of only nine months. Indeed, 81 percent of the Vietnamese were in the camps for a year or less, compared to 62 percent of the Chinese and 47 percent of the Lao. Thirty-six percent of the Chinese, 31 percent of the Lao, and only 18 percent of the Vietnamese spent between one and two years in the camps. Twenty-three percent of the Lao spent more than two years in the camps, compared to less than 3 percent of the Chinese and just over 1 percent of the Vietnamese.

Table II.8

Time in Camps by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	1 Year	1-2 Years	More Than 2 Years	Totals
Vietnamese	80.8% (n=551)	17.9% (n=122)	1.3% (n=9)	100% (n=682)
Chinese	61.5% (n=179)	35.7% (n=104)	2.7% (n=8)	100% (n=291)
Lao	46.8% (n=187)	30.5% (n=122)	22.8% (n=91)	100% (n=400)
Total	66.8% (n=917)	25.3% (n=348)	7.9% (n=108)	100% (N=1373)

F. URBAN/RURAL

Over three-fourths of the adult refugees in the survey (77 percent) came from urban areas in Southeast Asia (by their own definition) and the remainder in the countryside. The Chinese included the highest percentage of city dwellers (87 percent) followed by the Vietnamese at 83 percent, while the Lao had the smallest percentage (62 percent). Thus, the Lao comprised the highest proportion from rural areas (38 percent), representing half of all those in the survey from the countryside. Seventeen percent of the Vietnamese and 13 percent of the Chinese were rural.

G. EDUCATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

When we examine the background characteristics of the ethnic groups in the sample, the Vietnamese appear to have attained a higher educational level than the Chinese or Lao. Men were also more likely to have higher education than women. A' ble II.9 (page 48) illustrates, over three quarters of the Lao adults had not advanced beyond the primary level of education, compared to 57 percent of the Chinese and only 36 percent of the Vietnamese. An almost equal proportion of Chinese and Vietnamese had attended some secondary school without graduating (27 percent and 24 percent respectively), while just 12 percent of the Lao had achieved this level of education. For those who had graduated from high school and those who had had some higher education, the relatively greater extent of Vietnamese education is most apparent, with a much greater percentage of Vietnamese at all advanced levels. Looking at all those who had gone beyond primary school, exactly half of the Vietnamese had received secondary education but no more and another 14 percent had studied at a university. For the Chinese, the figures are 40 percent and 4 percent, and for the Lao, 17 percent and 5 percent. Only a third of the women in the sample had gone beyond elementary school, while this was true of just over half (55 percent) of the men. Males were predominant at all levels of advanced education.

Table II.9

Education in Southeast Asia by Ethnicity
(All adults)

Levels of Education	Vietnamese	Chinese	Lao	Totals
None	1.6% (30)	6.5% (49)	21% (234)	8.3% (313)
Elementary	34.5% (657)	50.3% (381)	56.6% (631)	44.2% (1.670)
Secondary	27.4% (521)	24% (182)	12.2% (136)	22.2% (839)
High School	22.6% (430)	15.5% (117)	4.9% (55)	15.9% (602)
College	7.9% (150)	2.2% (17)	4.1% (46)	5.6% (213)
College Graduate	4.8% (92)	1.3% (10)	.3% (3)	2.8% (105)
Advanced Degree	1.1% (20)	.1% (1)	.7% (8)	.8% (29)
Totals	100% (1903)	100% (757)	100% (1114)	100% (3775)

H. OCCUPATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Table II.10 (page 50) presents the occupations held by the adults in Southeast Asia and shows that the Vietnamese refugees tended to have higher status occupations in their homeland more often than the other ethnic groups (e.g., professionals: doctors, architects, professors, judges). The greatest proportion of farmers and housewives were Lao (17 percent in each category), while the Chinese often held urban jobs -- 31 percent were proprietors, clerks, assistants, construction workers, auto mechanics, machine operators, and factory workers.

A great many of the respondents (31 percent) were classified as students in Southeast Asia. These comprised about an equal proportion of each of the three ethnic groups in the study: 33 percent of the Chinese, 32 percent of the Vietnamese, and 27 percent of the Lao. In general, the occupational status of the refugees confirms the relatively rural nature of the Lao and indicates patterns of urban residence among the Chinese. The Vietnamese we interviewed came from coastal as well as urban areas -- a characteristic that is reflected in the higher proportion among them who worked in the fishing industry.

Women predominated as nurses, teachers, in business, secretaries, clerks, maids, and barbers. Women and men were about equally likely to have worked as farmers, proprietors, and factory workers. A quarter of the women were students as compared to a third of the men. In Section III.A., we shall discuss the refugees' previous occupations as they relate to their current occupational status in more detail.

Table II.10

Occupation in Southeast Asia by Ethnicity (All Adults)

	Vietnamese	Chinese	Lao	Totals
Professional	10.6% (201)	4.3% (33)	7.5% (84)	8.4% (318)
Officer	4.2% (82)	.4% (3)	1.0% (11)	2.5% (96)
Manager	5.3% (100)	12.9% (98)	2.8% (31)	6.1% (229)
Student	31.9% (605)	33.4% (254)	27.2% (304)	30.8% (1,163)
Clericals	1.8% (34)	1.8% (14)	1.9% (21)	1.8% (69)
Sales	3.7% (70)	6.1% (46)	2.5% (28)	3.8% (144)
Crafts	4.6% (87)	8.0% (61)	4.5% (50)	5.2% (198)
Operative	7.0% (133)	11.1% (84)	3.0% (34)	6.6% (251)
Military Enlisted	8.8% (166)	2.5% (19)	12.2% (136)	8.5% (321)
Service	.8% (16)	1.1% (8)	1.2% (13)	1.0% (37)
Farmer	2.9% (55)	1.4% (11)	16.8% (188)	6.7% (254)
Fisher	8.1% (153)	5% (4)	.1% (1)	4.2% (158)
Laborer	.6% (12)	.7% (5)	.4% (4)	.6% (21)
Totals	90.3% (1714)	84.2% (640)	80.9% (905)	86.2% (3259)

I. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

In this section we shall focus at length on the composition of the refugees' households for several reasons. One is that the refugee households are now constituted differently than they were in Southeast Asia. Also, certain differences exist among their households from the "average" American's in terms of extended families, temporary or transitional arrangements, and single parents. Finally, we provide this detailed description of household composition because it is one of the most important determinants of economic performance.

In our analyses of self-sufficiency, we measured household composition in two ways. First, we used a variab which classifies households as consisting of: a single respondent; a group of unrelated singles; a nuclear family; a nuclear family plus unrelated single(s); an extended family; an extended family plus unrelated single(s); multiple families; or multiple families plus unrelated single(s).* Second, we used a similar variable which represents the percentage of employable adults -- that is, the ratio of potential or current workers to all household members, including dependents. Below, we shall discuss the characteristics of our sample according to these dimensions because of their importance not only for the current circumstances of the refugees,

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*Definitions (as determined from the main respondent's reply):

Single(s) - unrelated single individual(s)

Nuclear Family - Husband and wife
parent(s) and child(ren)
possibly one grandparent

Extended - combination of nuclear family + others related by blood or marriage or a household of relateds without a nuclear family being present.

Multiple - any combination of unrelated second parent/child or husband/wife or any combination of unrelated + extended but also for their potential future. In characterizing the nature of households in the sample, we comment upon ethnic differences and conclude by comparing each of the five sites with respect to household composition.

Despite more complex patterns of social organization in their homelands, the rules of immigration into the United States allowed only the immediate family to enter together. Thus, initial households tended to consist of just such nuclear families. With the passage of time, secondary migration and family reunification brought divers members of the large family organizations together. Thus, 1,713 of the adults in the respondents' households are immediate family members (spouses, children, siblings, parents, and grandparents); there are 187 relatives outside the nuclear family (aunts/uncles, cousins, nieces/nephews, et al.), and 158 in-laws. In addition, 698 in our sample live alone or are unrelated to other household members with whom they share quarters.

The overwhelming majority of the adults in our sample live in nuclear families (39 percent) or extended families (31 percent). Another 2 percent live alone and 6.5 percent with other unrelated singles. Table II.11 (page 53) displays this information for all adults, and also shows the distribution of the sample when the household is the unit of analysis. The proportion of all adults who are unrelated singles is not large --less than one-sixth, but the total proportion of households which include a single or singles is 22 percent, or nearly a quarter of the households in the sample.

Virtually all the households we surveyed include two or more adults (persons aged 16 or older, and thus potentially employable); only 9 percent of the households have one adult, 40 percent have two and the remainder at least three adults.

The children in the sample are important for several reasons. For one thing, the number of children is significant because with little earning power, the refugees will have trouble supporting them. But the ages of the children in our sample, not their presence alone, may be crucial to the refugees' current or potential self-sufficiency, since young children in the home may preclude the opportunity for adults (especially women) to prepare for or take jobs. Throughout our discussion of household composition, then, we will report the characteristics of the children in the sample.

Table II.11

Household Composition for All Adults and All Households

	Percent of All Adults (N=4,160)	Percent of All Households (N=1,384)
Single (one)	1.7	4.7
Unrelated Singles	6.4	5.5
Nuclear Family	39.0	48.2
Nuclear Family Plus Single(s)	6.5	5.1
Extended Family	31.2	27.2
Extended Family Plus Single(s)	7.4	4.8
Multiple Families	3.9	2.6
Multiple Families Plus Single(s)	3.8	1.9

About 70 percent of the households include at least one child (less than 16 years old). Only 4 percent (55) are single-parent households. Among the entire sample 17 percent of the households have one child, 20 percent have two, 14 percent have three and another 14 percent have four or five; 5 percent of the households include between six and nine children. Forty-two percent (577) of the households had children under the age of six and thus needed someone -- presumably an adult household member - to care for their preschoolers. If we assume that children six years and older do not need full-time adult supervision, and add the number of childless households to the total, we find that in 58 percent of the households the need to care for children should not, in theory, be a hindrance to labor force participation by the adults (unless they are over 65, disabled, etc).

Another way of considering how household composition may influence employment is by calculating the percentage of "employable" household members. We counted any household member between the ages of 16 and 60 as employable, unless he or she were retired or disabled. Further, if there were preschool children age five or younger in the household, we assigned one adult per household as a child caretaker rather than a potential worker.[9] Using this measure, we found that 52 percent of the members in our sample's average household are "employable."

When we examine household composition by ethnicity of the respondents, other differences emerge. Table II.12 (page 55) shows the distribution of the household composition variable for each of the three groups. On this dimension, the Vietnamese refugees are most likely to have households which include a single person -- one household in four, compared to 13 percent for the Chinese households and 11 percent for the Lao. On the other hand, 12 percent of the Vietnamese refugee population in the sample live in households consisting only of a single person or unrelated singles and are therefore less likely than the other two ethnic groups to live in nuclear families. The high number of singles in Boston (see Table II.14, page 58 below) partly accounts for this fact; nevertheless, the Vietnamese households still have a tendency in this direction. The households are otherwise indistinguishable from those of the Chinese on variables such as household size, the ratio of adults to children, and thus, the percentage of employable adults.

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[9] We checked to be sure that when those who did not meet our criteria were employed, we counted them as "employable." Clearly, disabled persons are not always "unemployable," and outside care for preschoolers is occasionally available. We therefore adjusted our rigid "employability" criteria when the situation required it: employed people were considered "employable."

Table II.12

Household Composition by Ethnicity
(N=1,384 Households)

	Vietnamese (N=690)	Chinese (N=294)	Lao (N=400)
Single (one)	5%	7%	3%
Unrelated Singles	7%	5%	3%
Nuclear Family	44%	50%	54%
Nuclear Family Plus Single(s)	6%	4%	5%
Extended Family	26%	29%	28%
Extended Family Plus Single(s)	7%	3%	2%
Multiple Families	2%	1%	4%
Multiple Families Plus Single(s)	3%	0%	2%

With regard to household composition, Chinese respondents live alone a little more often. and most often constitute extended families. When extended families and single(s) are included, however, their majority in this regard is lost to the Vietnamese. Among the three groups, the Chinese households are smallest, the number of youngsters aged one to five the fewest, with the

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youngest child in the average household over six years old. They include comparatively more adults and fewer children.

Conversely, as Table II.13 (page 57) shows, the Lao tend to have larger households, with an average of 5.5 ($p < .01$). Twenty percent of the Lao adults live in households with nine to 19 people, as opposed to only 13 percent of the Vietnamese adults and 11 percent of the Chinese adults. The Lao have slightly more adults per household (2.9). They also have more children (2.5), and the most children aged one to five. Indeed, in every age category, the Lao have more children, and their children tend to be younger.

Consistent with these observations, there is a statistically significant difference ($p < .01$) among the three ethnic groups in terms of the percentage of household members who are employable. In Vietnamese households 56 percent of all members are employable -- almost equal to the percentage in Chinese households. The Lao tend to have the lowest percentage (43 percent), which means that they have fewer people available to get jobs. If and when they do find work, they must support more people. Important differences also emerge when we compare household composition in each of the five sites, although there are only a few clear patterns. Using the households as the level of analysis, we draw the following observations from Table II.14 (page 58).

Table II 13

Characteristics of Household Composition by Ethnicity

N=1,384 Households

Ethnicity	Average Number of Persons in Household	Average Number of Adults in Household	Average Number of Children (less than 16) per Household	Average Number of Children (age 1-5) per Household	Average Number of Children (age 6-11) per Household	Average Number of Children (age 12-15) per Household	Average Age of Youngest Child in Household	Percent of Adults in Household	Percent of "Employable" Household Members
Vietnamese	4 7	2 8	1 7	63	65	.42	5.0	70%	56%
Chinese	4.5	2.7	1 6	44	65	.	6 2	71%	57%
Lao	5.5	2 9	2 5	.93	.85	.65	4 8	60%	43%
	(p <.01)	(ns)	(p < 01)	(p < 01)	(< 01)	(p < 01)	(p < 01)	(p <.01)	(p <.01)

N=

Table II.14

Household Composition by Site
(N=1,384)

	Houston	Orange County	Chicago	Seattle	Boston
Single (one)	7%	3%	6%	4%	4%
Unrelated Singles	6%	2%	3%	5%	12%
Nuclear Family	50%	64%	53%	51%	26%
Nuclear Family Plus Single(s)	6%	2%	3%	4%	10%
Extended Family	27%	26%	31%	31%	22%
Extended Family Plus Single(s)	2%	1%	4%	3%	14%
Multiple Families	2%	3%	0.3%	2%	6%
Multiple Families Plus Single(s)	1.1%	0%	0%	1%	7%

a. Families without Unrelated Singles. Nuclear families without singles are the norm in all sites except Boston, where only a quarter (25.5 percent) of the households are thus constituted. Conversely, in Orange County, the households comprised only of nuclear families represent almost two-thirds of those sampled. Boston also has comparatively fewer extended families (without singles), but extended families are an important group in all sites. In both Chicago and Seattle, they comprise nearly a third (31 percent) of the total. Multiple families together in a household are uncommon, but nearly half are in Boston. As noted in Section I.3, the Boston sampling procedures differed somewhat from those in the other sites; yet the comparison of list sample and area probability sample shows them to be sufficiently similar to rule out sampling error as being responsible for the differences between Boston and the other sites.

b. Unrelated Singles. In virtually every household composition classification, the presence of singles in Boston is remarkable. Although Houston has the highest percentage of households in which a single respondent lives alone, nearly half of the households in Boston (47 percent) include at least one single, and fully 16 percent of the households there are comprised of a single or unrelated singles living together.

In Tables II.14 (page 58) and 15 (page 60), we may compare the sites on a number of dimensions which give depth to our understanding of the circumstances in which the refugees now find themselves, and which have implications for current or eventual self-sufficiency.

c. Household Size. The households in Boston tend to be significantly larger than those in the other sites, with an average of 5.6 people in each. As Table II.16 (page 61) shows, in Boston, almost 80 percent of the households include at least four persons, almost a fifth contain eight to ten people, and 4 percent have over ten people sharing living quarters. Boston's household density is unique among the sites due to the high number of unrelated singles, while Seattle had the highest percentage of households with four to seven people (over 60 percent). The lowest extreme (Houston) had almost 40 percent living in households of three or less. The average household in Houston was smallest, with 4.4 persons.

Table II.15

Characteristics of Household Composition by Site

N=1,384 Households

Site	Average Number of Persons in Household	Average Number of Adults in Household	Average Number of Children (less than) per Household	Average Number of Children (age 1-5) per Household	Average Number of Children (age 6-11 per Household	Average Number of Children (age 12-15) per Household	Average Age of Youngest Child in Household	Average Percent of Adults in Household	Average Percent of "Employable" Household Members
Houston	4.4	2.5	1.9	.60	.77	.55	6.1	.66	53
Orange County	5.0	2.8	2.2	.63	.84	.65	5.7	.63	46
Chicago	4.6	2.8	1.8	.67	.73	.44	4.9	68	52
Seattle	4.6	2.8	1.8	.65	.64	.51	5.5	66	48
Boston	5.6	3.9	1.7	.78	.58	.52	3.8	74	62
	(p <.01)	(p <.01)	(p <.05)	(ns)	(p <.01)	(p <.01)	(p <.01)	(p <.01)	(p <.01)

N =

Table II.16

Household Size by Site

	Household Size				Totals
	1-3	4-7	8-10	11+	
Boston	21% (65)	57% (177)	18% (55)	4% (13)	100% (310)
Chicago	31% (109)	51% (151)	11% (33)	2% (5)	100% (298)
Houston	39% (74)	50% (94)	10% (19)	1% (1)	100% (188)
Orange County	29% (89)	57% (173)	12% (36)	2% (6)	100% (304)
Seattle	30% (84)	62% (177)	7% (20)	1% (3)	100% (284)
Totals	30% (421)	56% (772)	12% (163)	2% (28)	100% (1,384)

d. Children and Adults. On the average, adults form the majority of the household in each survey site, with Orange County's percentage the lowest (63 percent) and Boston's the highest (74 percent). Consistent with these observations, the number of children per household is largest in Orange County and smallest in Boston. Yet Boston households have the youngest children, and more of them, with the most children aged five or less (though the difference is not statistically significant) and the least in the older age classifications. Orange County has the most children between the ages of six and seventeen. The average age of the youngest child in Boston is less than four years old; in Houston the youngest is over six. Chicago shares with Boston a younger age distribution among children; in both sites the youngest child is still too young to attend school.

J. HEALTH

Health problems potentially preclude individuals from successfully entering and staying in the labor force. Therefore, we asked main respondents to report on their health needs as well as on their medical problems upon arrival. We also asked them about health insurance coverage, or lack thereof, for every individual in their households.

Less than a quarter (22 percent) of the main respondents report medical problems upon their arrival in the U.S., ranging from flu-like symptoms to severe and permanent war injuries. This breaks down fairly evenly across both ethnicity and sex. Twenty percent of the Vietnamese, 24 percent of the Lao, and 26 percent of the Chinese said they had medical problems, and 21 percent of the males and 29 percent of the females reported such problems. A strong correlation exists between age and health on arrival. Ten percent of those still in their teens had health problems when they came here, as did 19 percent of those now in their 20s, 18 percent of those in their 30s, a quarter of those in their 40s, 37 percent of those in their 50s, and more than half of those 60 or older (51 percent). The percentage reporting illnesses by site run from a low of 17 percent in Houston and Orange County, to a high of 29 percent in Chicago. The major problems were active and inactive tuberculosis (43 cases), affecting all age groups, and stomach ailments (51 cases), mainly affecting those now in their 20s. Other ailments of note (11-30 cases) included colds, hypertension, malaria, kidney, head, eye, dental, and lung problems, and arthritis.

Fifty-seven percent of these individuals (175 - 13 percent of all respondents) have not recovered from the health problems they had when they immigrated, and about the same percentage of those with and without health insurance report persisting problems, met or unmet. Because the reported ailments range so widely, there is no clear pattern with regard to the types of chronic illness. Among the most commonly cited problems, however, only 15 of the 43 reported cases of inactive TB still test positive, while 38 of 51 stomach problems and all cases of hypertension are said to continue.

Despite the minority who report the persistence of arrival health problems, the Medicaid-insured refugee population does appear to have need of health care. In the month prior to the interview, it was reported that 68 percent of the main respondents used their Medicaid cards.

Eighty-four respondents (7 percent) said they had noninsured medical expenses within the past year, and these ranged in cost from $10 to $3000. Another 111 respondents (8 percent) reported unmet health needs, most commonly dental problems (39). (Only 147 respondents have dental insurance as part of an employer-paid benefit package, 22 percent of those with such packages.) The onset of unmet health problems appears to be relatively recent (i.e., post-immigration), with most beginning in 1981 (22 percent of those with unmet health problems) and 1982 (33 percent). For 74 respondents, health problems go untreated because they lack the resources either money or medical coverage. Not surprisingly, as Tables 11.17 (page 64) shows, a greater proportion of the 366 respondents (26 percent) lacking health insurance had both noninsured medical expenses and unmet health problems (even though few overall cited such difficulties) than the 1,017 respondents (73 percent) with health insurance.

Table 11.17

Health Insurance Coverage by Prevalence of Health Problems (Main Respondents, N=1,384)

	With Health Insurance (N=1,017); 73 percent)	
	N	P
Non--Insured Medical Expense	53	5%
Unmet Health Needs	60	6%

	Without Health Insurance (N=366; 26 percent)	
	N	P
Non-Insured Medical Expense	31	8%
Unmet Health Needs	51	14%

Most respondents (87 percent) who have been in the U.S. 18 months or less are likely to have some form of coverage (Medicaid or private insurance). Eighty-two percent of those are covered by Medicaid. Of those in the U.S. longer than 18 months, only 40 percent have Medicaid coverage, an additional 30 percent are covered through employer paid plans, and the remaining 30 percent are without coverage. Since only 70 percent of those in the U.S. longer than 18 months are insured, they are more likely to have both noninsured medical expenses and untreated health problems (see Table 11.18, page 65).

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Table II.18

Time in U.S. by Prevalence of Health Problems
(Main Respondents, N=1,384)

	In U.S. 18 Months or Less (N=448; 32 percent)	
	N	P
Non--Insured Medical Expense	13	3%
Unmet Health Needs	22	5%

	In U.S. Over 18 Months (N=916; 66 percent)	
	N	P
Non-Insured Medical Expense	71	8%
Unmet Health Needs	88	10%

When we asked refugees about "financial setbacks," 41 (3%) respondents spontaneously mentioned health problems. In this category, medical problems were second in number only to a general "lack of money" among the 175 who reported financial setbacks. Additionally, 11 percent of the main respondents said medical services were among the most important they received upon arrival. Finally, while slightly more than half (53 percent) of the main respondents said there were things they wanted but could not afford, access to health care was mentioned only 14 times.

The data on the health insurance coverage held by everyone in the sample -- 6,769 individuals -- show that 67 percent have some kind of health insurance. Of these, 80 percent are covered by Medicaid, 14 percent by employer-paid plans and 1 percent by a miscellany of "other" kinds of third-party coverage. Coverage for adults and for children break down in the following way.

- Among all adults, 70 percent have medical coverage. Medicaid is the principal third-party payor for 53 percent, employer-paid plans for 16 percent, and "other" sources cover 1 percent.
- The majority of children are covered by health insurance (64 percent). Eighty-three percent of the insured children in the sample are covered by Medicaid, only 16 percent through a parent's or guardian's employer-paid plan, and less than 1 percent by "other" insurance.

Thus, nearly a third of the refugees in our sample lack health insurance coverage. However, only one in ten of the uncovered population reported having unmet health needs. A minority report they had medical problems on arrival which still persist. Over half (57 percent) of the refugees with jobs have some kind of health insurance (see Table III.A.10, page 134 below). Overall, there is little appearance that health problems affect labor force participation significantly.

K. SECONDARY MIGRATION.

Once refugees were placed with a local sponsor, they could choose to migrate to another city or another part of the country. An unknown number of refugees have migrated since their arrival, tending to go South and West. Among the main respondents in the survey, 212 (15 percent) had moved at least once. Of these, 23 had moved twice and seven had moved three or four times. Forty of the 251 total moves were within the same site, 32 from a different site in the same state, and almost three quarters (179 - 71 percent) from a different state, including 23 (13 percent) from Texas and 10 (6 percent) from California. Close to half the moves (46 percent) were made between June and September, possibly because children are usually out of school during those months. More than three quarters of the moves (79 percent) were in 1980 and 1981. By ethnicity, we see similar levels of secondary migration -- slightly more Chinese and Vietnamese having moved than Lao (17 percent, 16 percent, and 13 percent respectively).

Another source of information on secondary migration derives from an examination of data collected when our interviewers could not locate potential respondents. In 143 instances when the refugee had moved, our interviewers were able to discover his or her destination, and a pattern emerges from these examples. California was the goal in 41 percent of the cases, 20 percent to Seattle, 15 percent to Houston, 6 percent to Boston, and 19 percent to other locations). Chicago's sampling procedure did not allow us to glean such information. In three of the states -- Texas, Washington, and California (and perhaps Illinois, as well) -- refugees moved to another place within the same state. Massachusetts appears to be an exception to this situation. This pattern is also reflected in our data on those who have moved by site: 29 percent of the respondents in Orange County had moved, while the percentage for Houston (14 percent), Chicago and Seattle (13 percent), and Boston (8 percent) are, at most, not even half as high.

The reasons for these moves varied from family, work, and education, to better climate and sociocultural situations. Those most cited were to go to a better climate (19 percent), and to join other family members or to get work (each 17 percent). Another 13 percent moved for educational reasons and 10 percent to be near other members of their own ethnic group. Small numbers moved because of poor or good financial situations (4-5 percent each), to obtain vocational training or to get into a better neighborhood (2 percent each). Only 1 percent said they moved to get public assistance.

When we asked the respondents what plans they had to move, 8% indicated they were thinking of doing so in the following 12 months. Some (4 percent) were planning to move later in 1982, and 3 percent at some time in 1983. Of the possible destinations listed by these respondents and others who planned to move later (12 percent in all), 41 percent were within the same site, 12 percent to another site in the same state, and 47 percent out of state (18 percent to California and 14 percent in Texas). Getting work (45 percent) was the major reason for a possible move given by 14 percent of these respondents, while good or bad finance (10 percent each), better climate (8 percent), family (6 percent), education, and better neighborhood (each 5 percent) were others. Again, only 1 percent reported public assistance as a reason for possibly moving.

L. ENGLISH

While in the Asian camps, some of the refugees had the opportunity to study English. Twenty-three percent (310) of the main respondents took English classes there -- 24 percent of the 1,108 male respondents and 20 percent of the 176 female respondents. Those who took the classes were almost five years younger than those who did not (31, as compared to 36). Twenty-six percent of the Lao and 25 percent of the Vietnamese took advantage of these classes, compared to only 14 percent of the Chinese. the classes in the camps.

missing

1. Arrival English

In Table 11.19 (page 70), we employ three measures which illustrate the level of English for the whole sample. In Tables 11.20 (page 70) and 11.21 (page 71) this information is displayed by ethnicity and site. The first two measures are derived from our index of arrival English proficiency. First, we asked how well all adults read and spoke when they arrived in the United States. The responses to these closed-ended questions could range from one -- "not at all," to five -- "very well." Our index also includes the responses to seven other questions relating to specific tasks in which English might be necessary, also scaled from one to five. We took the average score on these seven items, added them to the scores on the "reading" and "speaking" scale, and divided by three. Thus, our index is also scaled from one to five, and it is from this that we derive the measures appearing in Tables 11.16-18 (page 61, 64-65).

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Table 11.19

Arrival English Proficiency for All Households
(N=1,384)

Percent Which Had Someone Who Knew "Some" English	57%
Percent Which Had Someone Who Knew English At least "Fairly Well"	13%
Percent of Households In Which At Least Half the Adults Knew "Some" English	27%

Table 11.20

Arrival English Proficiency for All Households by Ethnicity
(N=1,384)

	Vietnamese	Chinese	Lao	(significance level)
Percent Which Had Someone Who Knew "some" English	68%	47%	45.5%	(p <.01)
Percent Which Had Someone Who Knew English at Least "Fairly Well"	18%	8%	9%	(p <.01)
Percent of Households in which at least Half the Adults Knew "Some"English	37%	17%	18%	(p <.01)

Table II.21

Arrival English Proficiency for All Households by Site
(N=1,384)

	Houston	Orange County	Chicago	Seattle	Boston	(Significance Level)
Percent Which Had Someone Who Knew "Some" English	61%	51%	67%	52%	63%	(p <.05)
Percent Which Had Someone Who Knew English At least "Fairly Well"	22%	10.5%	12%	8.5%	16%	(p <.01)
Percent of Households In Which At Least Half the Adults Know "Some" English	37%	27%	25.5%	22%	26.5%	(P<.05)

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The first item in Tables 11.19-21 (page 70-71) shows the percent of the households in which someone had "any" English ability -- that is, the proportion of households in which at least one individual scored better than one ("not at all"). We can see that in nearly two-thirds of the households sampled, at least one household member had some familiarity with English upon arrival. In the second item, we use the same index but more narrow criteria to show that only 13 percent of the household sample contained someone who knew English at least "fairly well."

The third item in the tables uses the same measure of English proficiency on arrival but here we are interested in the percentage of the adults in the household whose English ability was above a minimum -- more specifically, the proportion of households in which at least half the adults had "any" English at all. Table II.19 (page 70) shows that only 27 percent of the households sampled meet this standard; in other words, in nearly three-fourths of the households, the majority of the adults, by their own reports, had no English ability when they arrived.

More specifically, only 36 percent of the individual adults in the survey had English ability at all when they arrived here (see Table II.23 below, page 75). Of these individuals with English on arrival, close to two-thirds (23 percent of all adults) hardly spoke the language, and another quarter (9 percent of all adults) did not speak it well. Thus, barely more than a tenth of those who had any acquaintance with English said they spoke it reasonably well -- a mere 4 percent of all adults. Their reading ability (see Table II.24, page 75) was slightly higher, 5 percent of all adults saying they could read it adequately on arrival. As Table II.25 (page 76) shows, about 30 percent of all adults said they could have shopped for food and gotten around in the city when they arrived here, but less than a fifth (18 percent) said they could have asked for help from the police or fire departments. Thirteen percent felt confident about applying for aid at an agency, 11 percent could have described health problems or read a newspaper, and only 6 percent felt they could have held jobs in sales.

The overall measure of general English proficiency on arrival for the adult refugee shows a somewhat higher level: 6 percent of all refugees had at least a reasonable grasp of the language, 10 percent did not know it well, 20 percent knew it hardly at all, and 64 percent had no proficiency at all.

In Tables II.19 through II.21 (pages 70-71) we use the household as the unit of analysis because our findings support the view that the refugee household represents a collection of resources upon which each individual may draw. Initially at least, all household members can survive if only one of them knows enough English to shop for food, or to interact with people such as agency personnel and landlords. (To a lesser degree, this is also true if only one member has job skills.) While this situation is hardly ideal, our approach here incorporates the practical realities of the transition the refugees are undergoing.

Table II.20 (page 70), which compares the three ethnic groups on these measures, shows that the Vietnamese have consistently higher scores than the other groups (significant at $p < .01$ on all three measures). The Lao and Chinese share equally low scores. In over a third of the Vietnamese households, the majority of adults knew at least some English when they arrived.

The site comparisons, in Table II.21 (page 71), are less dramatic, and it is only when we compare the percentage who knew English at least "fairly well" that the differences are statistically significant (at $p < .01$). Nevertheless, the Southeast Asian households in Houston, with fewer adults, appear to have had a slightly higher percentage with the majority of the adults knowing "some" English than in the other sites; they were in sharpest contrast to the refugee households in Seattle.

Overall, few households had persons who knew English when they arrived, and the overwhelming majority of adults had none. The Vietnamese arrived with greater English skills than the Chinese or Lao; refugees who settled in Houston had more English ability than those at other sites; men reported higher proficiency than women; former urban dwellers more than rural residents; those in their 30s and 40s more than either older or younger refugees; and those with higher levels of education and occupational status (especially professionals and military officers) had much greater proficiency on arrival than those of lower educational and occupational backgrounds.

2. Current English

Thus, nearly two-thirds of the adult refugees reported knowing no English when they arrived in the U.S. Another 20 percent knew "hardly" any English, and 17 percent reported some proficiency. As a group, they have learned a considerable amount of English (only 12 percent report they currently know no English), but appear far from having a command of the language (a third know "hardly" any English, and less than 5 percent report speaking it "very well"). Tables II.22-25 (pages 75-76) show comparisons of arrival and current English proficiency.

Table II.22

Arrival and Current English Proficiency

	Some English Ability	No English Ability
On Arrival (N=3930)	37%	63%
Current (N=3947)	88%	12%

Table II.23

Arrival and Current Ability to Speak English

	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Very Well	Hardly	Not at all
Arrival (N=3923)	1%	3%	9%	23%	64%
Current (N=3944)	3%	17%	31%	36%	13%

Table II.24
Arrival and Current Ability to Read English

	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Very Well	Hardly	Not at all
Arrival (N=3919)	1%	4%	10%	19%	65%
Current (N=3936)	4%	20%	28%	32%	17%

We also asked whether respondents possessed sufficient English proficiency to perform the "daily living" tasks. As Table II.25 (page 76) shows, most now know enough to shop for food, travel in their city, and phone police or fire departments. But fewer than half can read a newspaper, explain their health problems to medical personnel, apply for public aid, or hold a job as a salesperson.

Table 11.25

English Ability for Daily Life Tasks
(N=3,919)

Task	Percent With English Proficiency Sufficient to Perform These Tasks	
	Arrival	Current
Shop for Food	32%	92%
Travel in City	30%	81%
Phone Police or Fire Depts.	18%	65%
Apply for Aid	13%	45%
Explain Health Problems to a Doctor	11%	41%
Read a Newspaper	11%	32%
Hold a Job as a Salesperson	6%	23%

As noted above, we constructed indices of English proficiency at arrival and current English proficiency from parallel series of questions as the mean of self-reported (1) speaking ability, (2) reading ability and (3) the average of the seven daily-life tasks items. The relationships between these indices and relevant background factors are displayed in Figures II.1-8 (pages 79-86) and may be summarized as follows:

Ethnicity: While the gap between Vietnamese arrival English and that of the Chinese or Lao appears to have diminished somewhat it remains statistically significant for current proficiency as well as arrival proficiency (see Figure II.1, page 79).

Site: Refugees in Houston arrived with better than average English, and those in Seattle with worse ($p < .01$). These differences attenuate over time, but refugees in Orange County where it is easier to have little contact with English speakers remain slightly but significantly less proficient ($p <.01$) (see Figure II.2, page 80).

Sex: Men arrived with significantly better English skills than women ($p <.01$), and this gap has increased over time ($p <.01$) (see Figure II.3, page 81).

Urban/Rural: Refugees from cities arrived with significantly better English than those from the countryside ($p <.01$), and this difference remains associated with current English skill ($p <.01$) (see Figure II.4, page 82).

Education: Educated refugees arrived with a much greater command of English than those with little or no education ($p <.01$), and this difference remains for current proficiency ($p <.01$) (see Figure II.5, page 83).

Occupation in Southeast Asia: Former professionals, military personnel, clericals and students arrived with significantly better English ($p <.01$), and those differences are increased in current proficiency ($p <.01$) (see Figure II.6, page 84).

Age: Refugees over 50 arrived with significantly less skill in English ($p <.01$), and the effects of age differences increase dramatically for current proficiency, with the youngest learning the most ($p <.01$) (see Figure II.7, page 85).

Time in the U.S.: Those who arrived before 1978 (people living in the households of our post-1978 main respondents) had slightly but significantly better English skills when they arrived than those who arrived later (p <.01). In terms of current English, those who have been in the country longer are, of course, significantly more fluent (p <.01) (see Figure II.8, page 86).

In sum, refugees who were more advantaged in Southeast Asia (with regard to gender, education [illegible]ation and urban residence) arrived with considerably better English proficiency, and this gap has widened in current proficiency. At the same time (and as could be expected), the young have learned much more rapidly than older refugees.

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
BY ETHNICITY
(N=3,919)

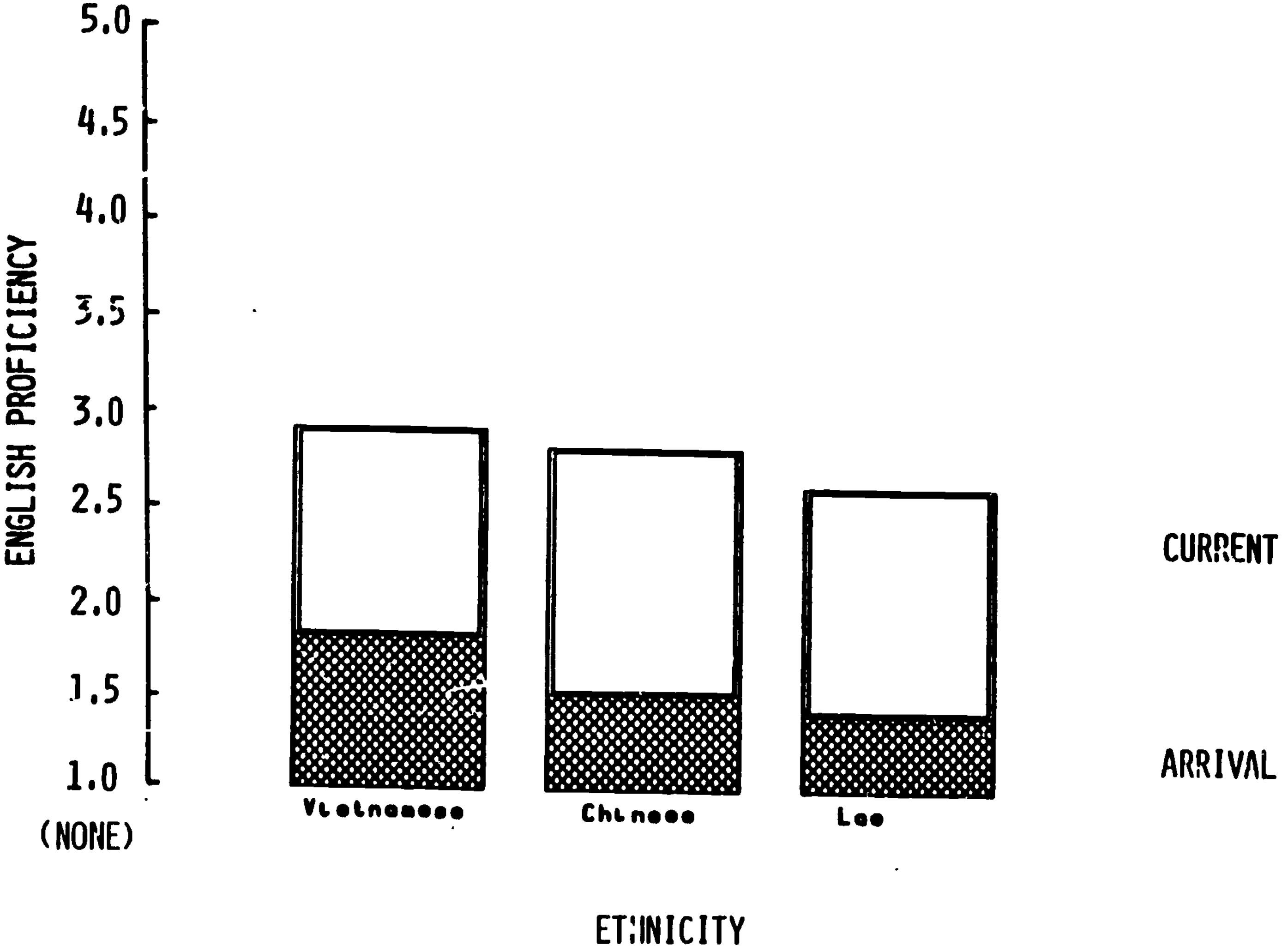


Figure II.1

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
BY SITE
(N=3,919)

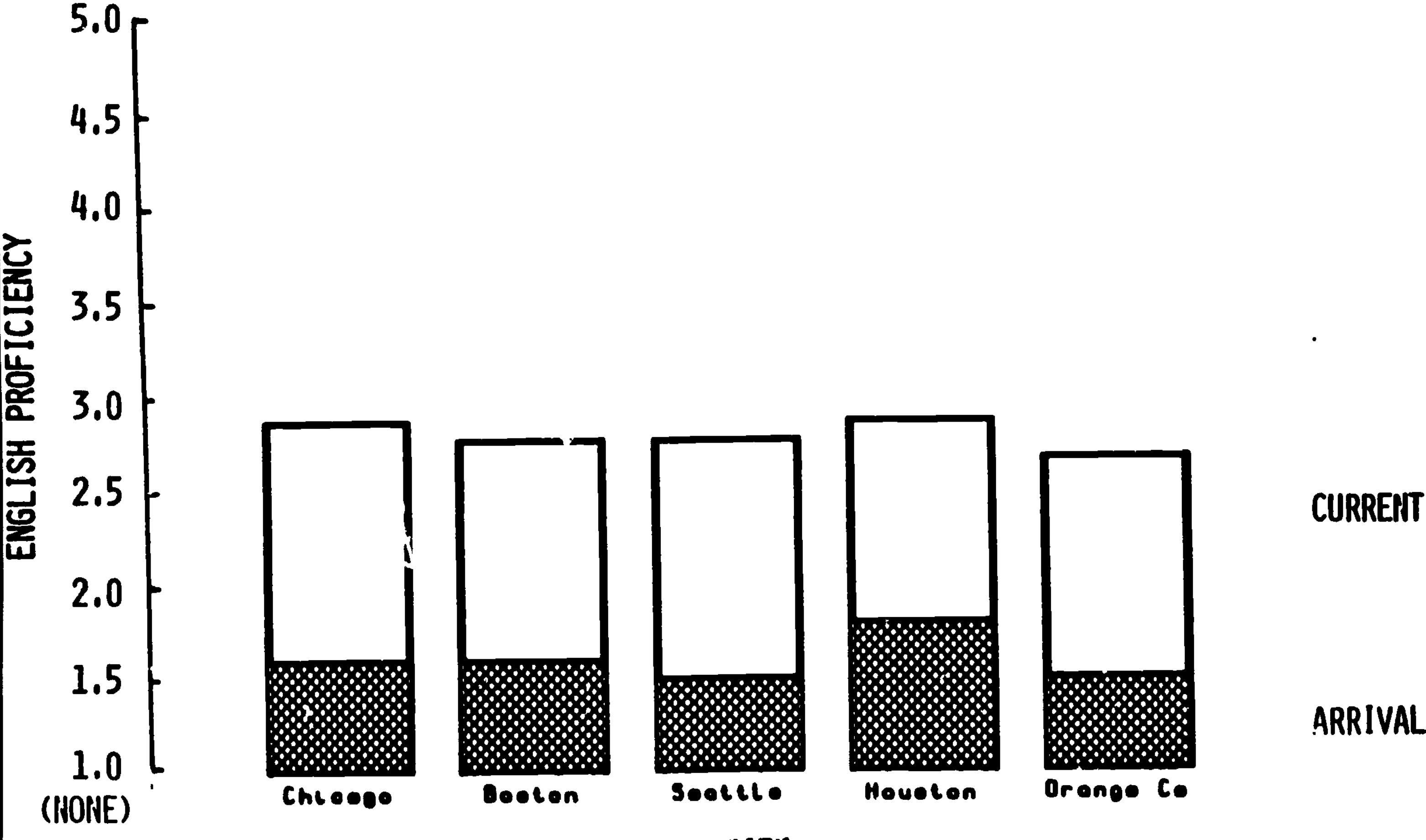


Figure II.2

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
BY SEX
(N=3,919)

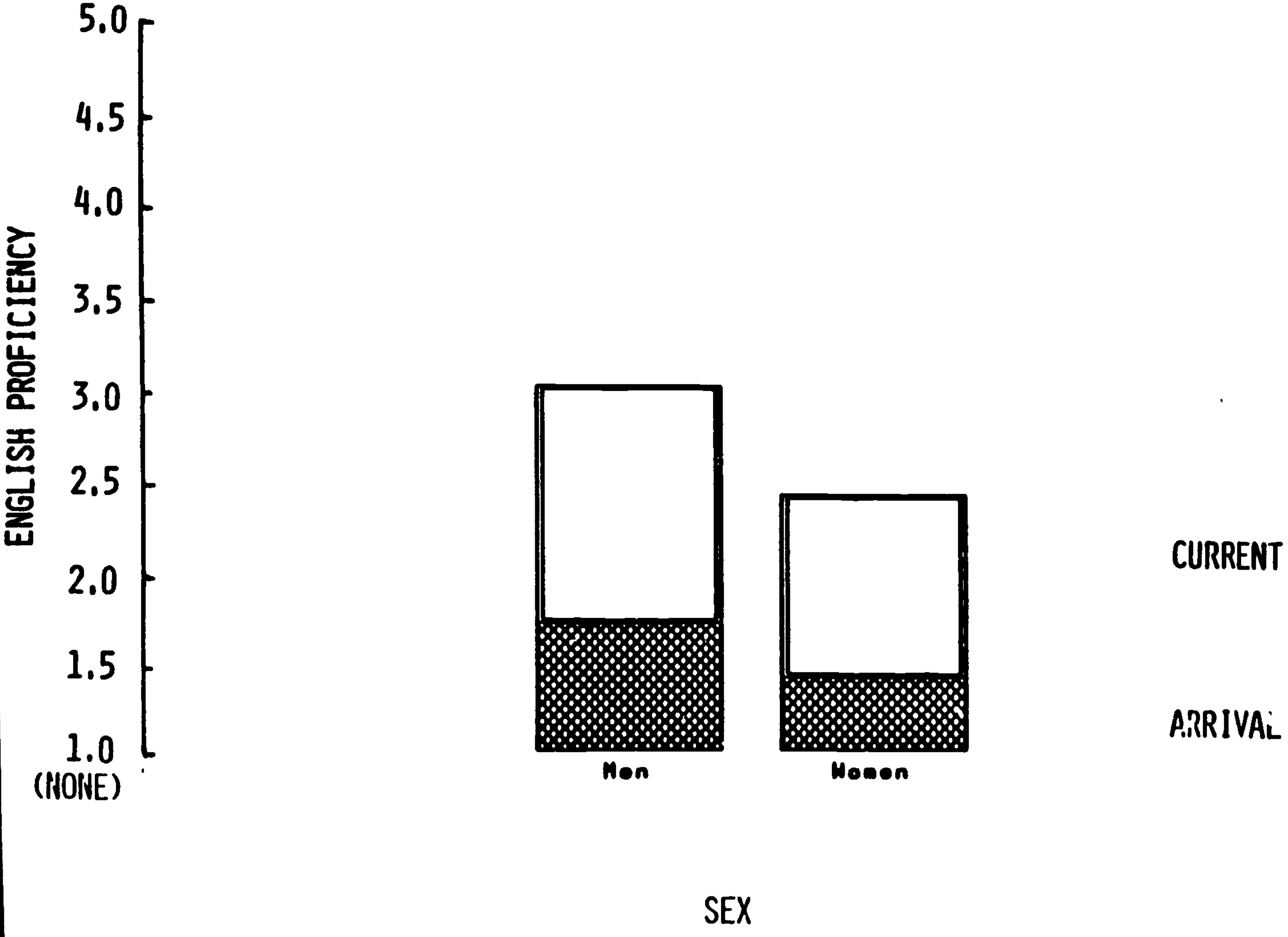


Figure II.3

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
BY URBAN vs. RURAL RESIDENCE IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
(N=3,919)

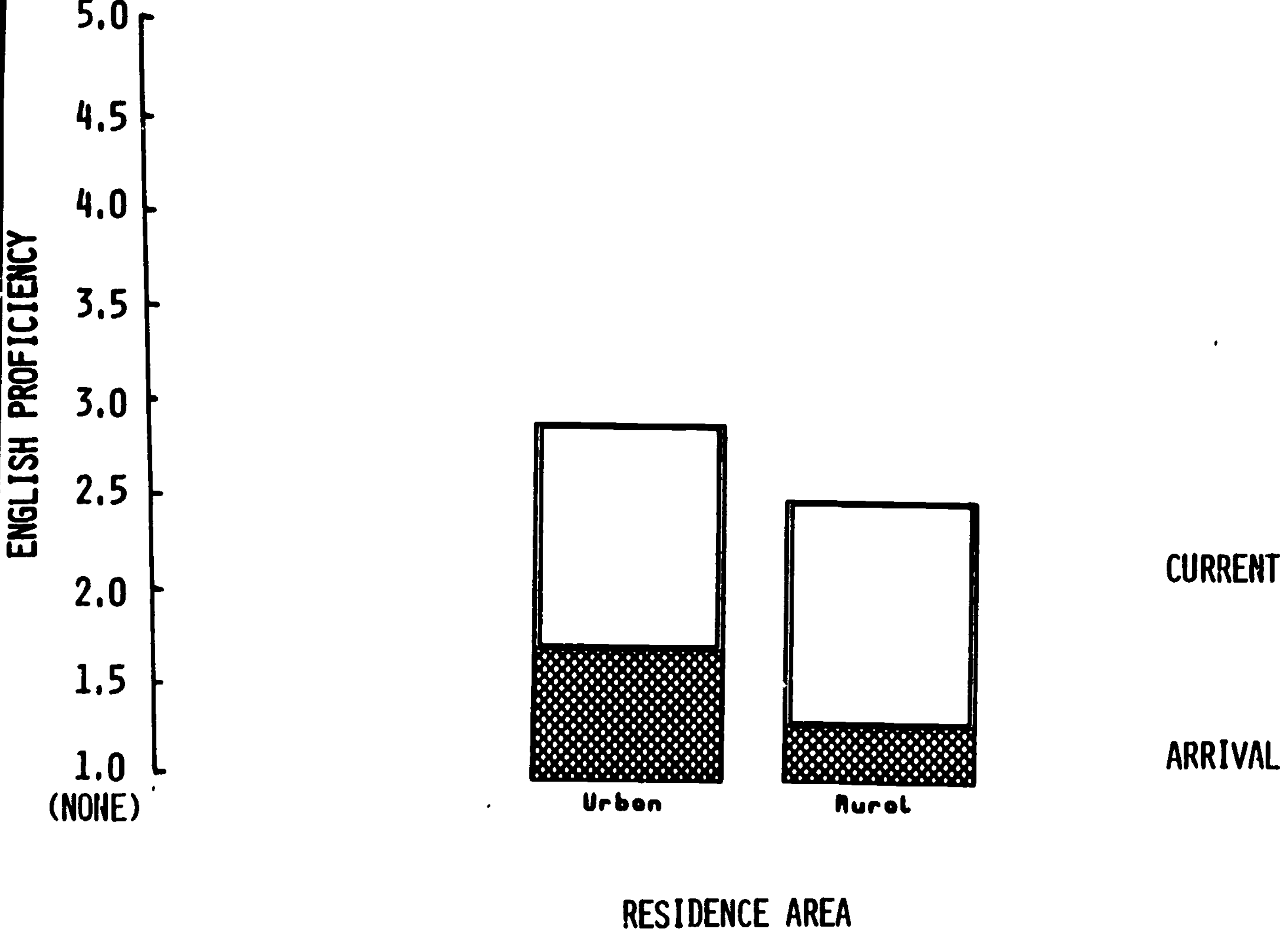


Figure 11.4

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
BY EDUCATION IN S.F. ASIA
(N=3,919)

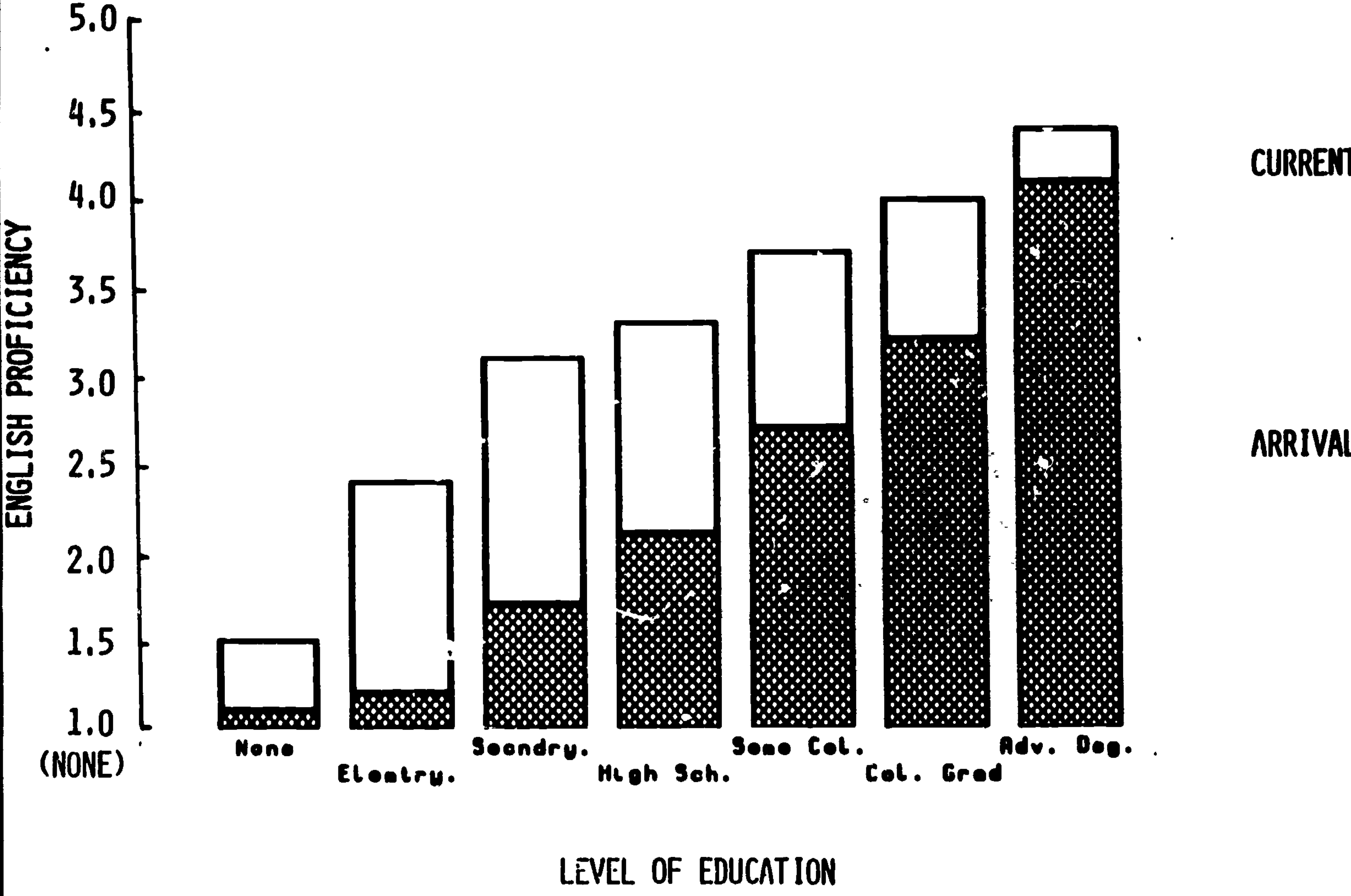
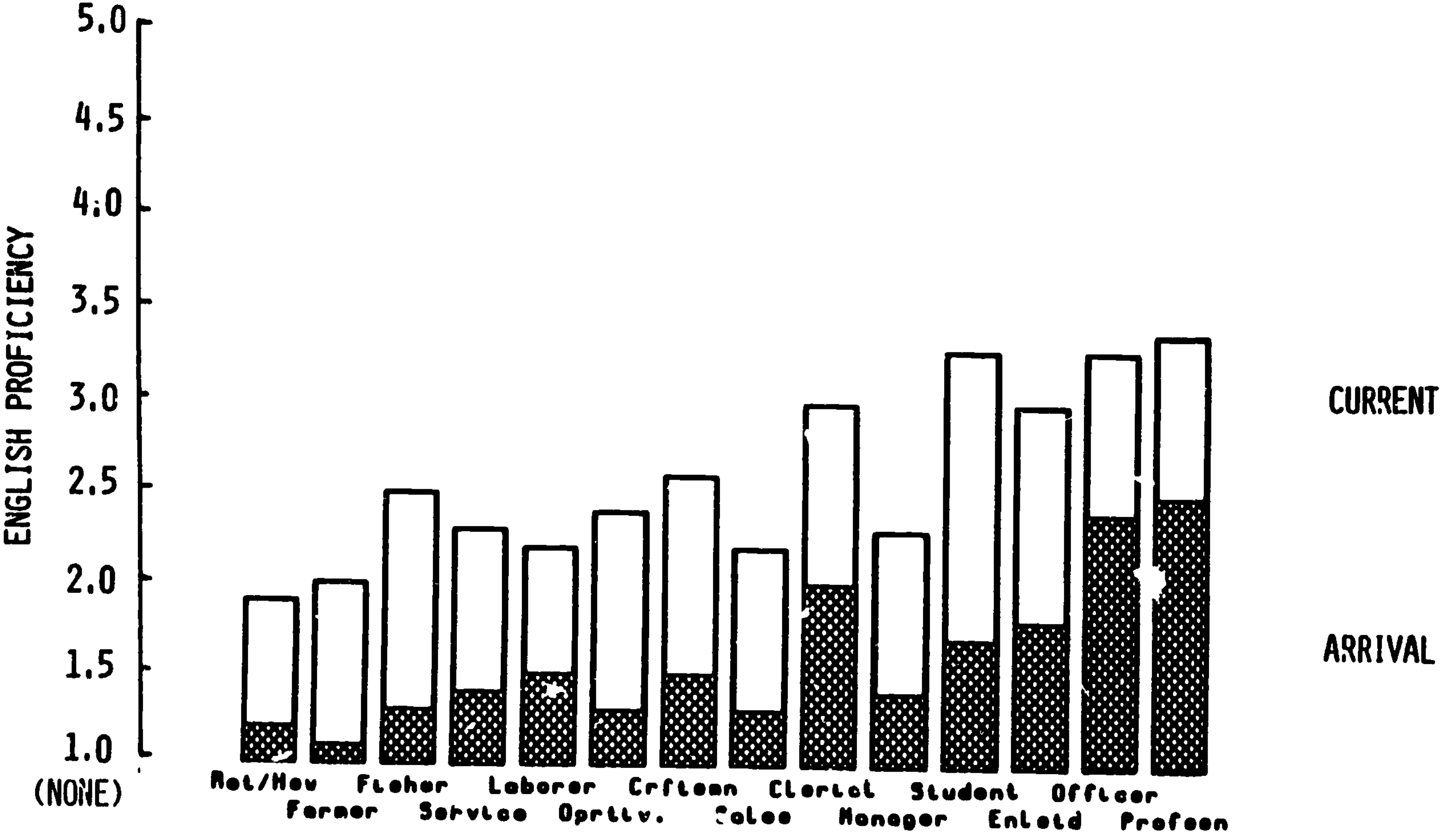


Figure II.5

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
BY OCCUPATION IN S.E. ASIA
(N=3,919)



OCCUPATION

Figure II.6

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

BY AGE

(N=3,919)

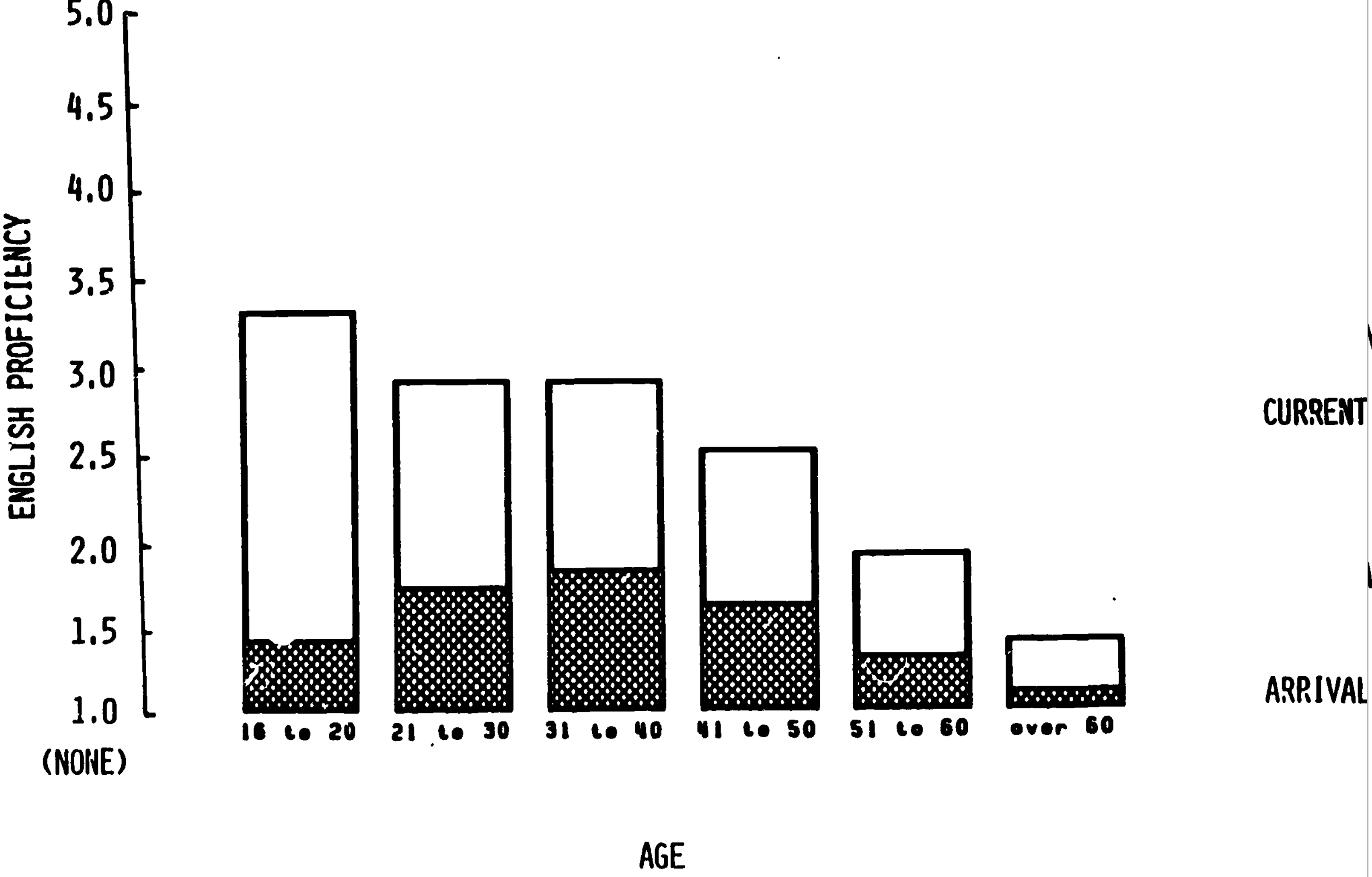


Figure 11.7

ARRIVAL AND CURRENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY MONTHS IN THE U.S.

(N=3,919)

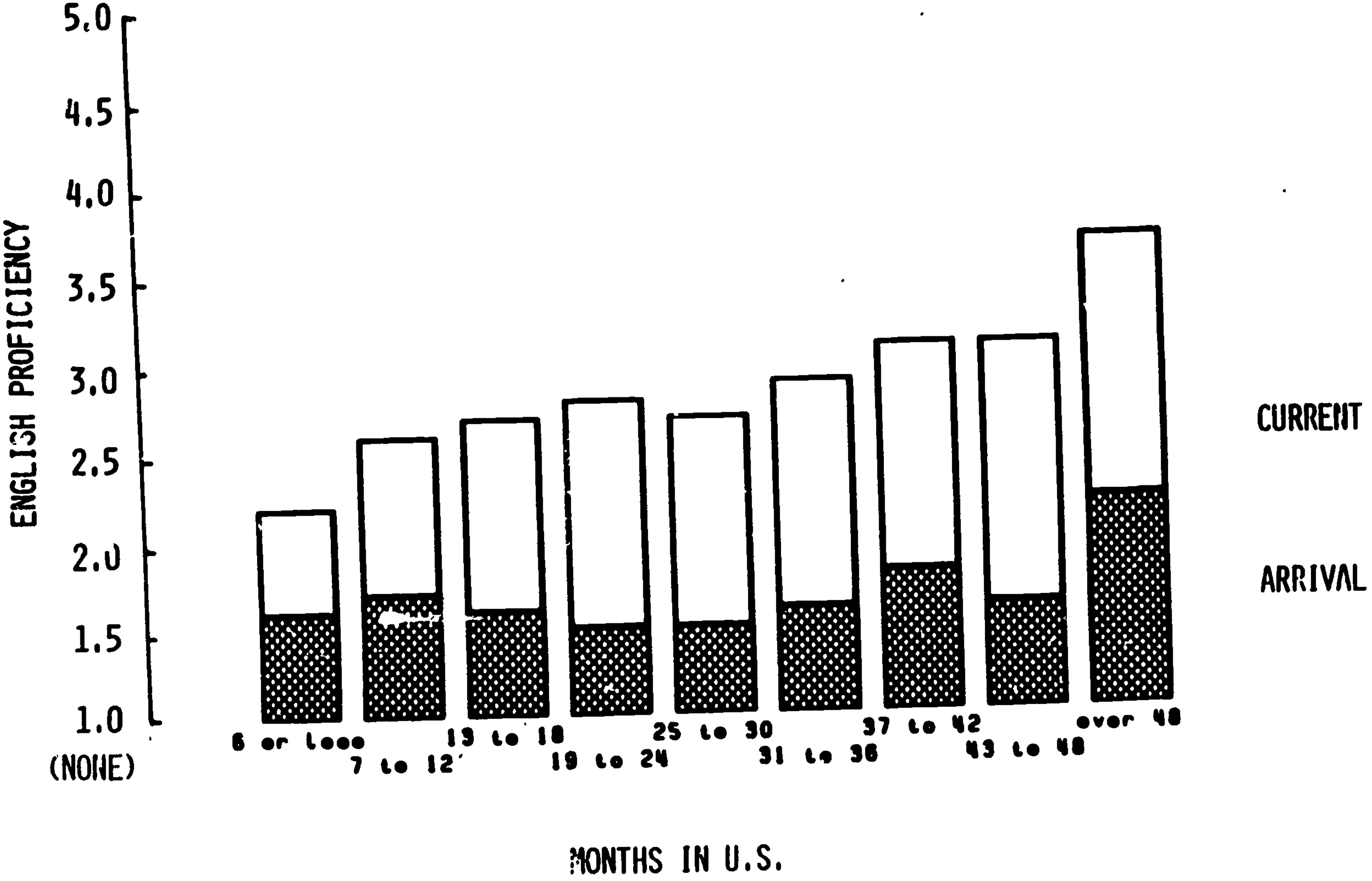


Figure 11.8

M. PROGRAM USE

1. English as a Second Language (ESL)

Respondents were asked which of several strategies they had followed in order to develop their English. Roughly 10 percent said that they chose to live in a predominantly American area; 40 percent that they practiced with Americans; 10 percent that they employed a tutor; 20 percent that they practiced with members of their own household; 66 percent that they watched T.V. and listened to radio broadcasts; and 75 percent that they attended ESL classes. This mix of learning techniques must be kept in mind when considering the nature of English improvement.

Forty percent of all adult refugees are currently attending ESL classes, for an average of 28 weeks and 13 hours per week. Of these, 47 percent are taking classes at the "elementary level," 41 percent "intermediate," and 12 percent "advanced." Providers of these classes are shown in Table II.26.

Table II.26

Enrollment By Provider of Current ESL Classes
(N=1541)

Provider	Percent Enrolled
VOLAG	9%
Public School District	31%
Community College	36%
Refugee Association	5%
Other	19%

Only main respondents were asked about ESL classes attended in the past. Fifty-eight percent reported past ESL training, and about a third of those are currently in classes as well. This means that about half of those currently in ESL also took it in the past. Those with past ESL reported an average of 600 hours of attendance (N=749). Thus, slightly over three-fourths of the main respondents either had or now have ESL, and at the time of the interview had attended an average of 620 hours. Sixty-five percent took "elementary" class, 25 percent "intermediate," and 10 percent "advanced."

To the extent that we can extrapolate about past ESL among household members other than main respondents (and we have little reason to expect the percentage of these groups to differ with regard to ESL attendance), it appears that most adult refugees (probably around 70 percent) have had ESL instruction.

Main respondents who attended ESL in the past do not differ from those who did not by ethnicity, arrival-English proficiency, months in the U.S., occupational skill (Southeast Asian), or household composition. They do differ from those without past ESL in the following ways:

- a higher percentage of men (61 percent) than women (46 percent) reported past ESL ($p < .01$);
- those with no education were less likely to report past ESL than those with some ($p < .05$), although college graduates and those with advanced degrees also had past ESL less frequently; and
- those who reported past ESL were slightly younger, averaging 33 years of age, than those reporting no past ESL, who averaged 36 years of age.

This means that women and those with no pre-immigration education, all of whom entered the country with less proficiency in English, are less likely to have had past ESL.

Those currently attending ESL classes do not differ from others by ethnicity, urban or rural background, or current English proficiency. (This is according to data gathered on all adults, not just main respondents.) They do differ by site (in a manner possibly, and inversely, related to local economic conditions), as Table II.27 shows:

Table II.27

Current ESL Enrollment by site
(N=3954)

Site	Percent Currently in ESL
Orange County	49%
Chicago	48%
Seattle	35%
Boston	27%
Houston	23%

Table II.28 shows that younger refugees are more likely to be in ESL than older. It should be noted that many of the teenagers attend ESL classes at their high schools, where they are regularly enrolled students.

Table II.28

Current ESL Enrollment by Age
(N=3906)

Age	Percent Currently Taking ESL
16-19	56%
20-30	29%
31-40	36%
41-50	40%
51-60	31%
Over 6?	14%

In addition, as Table II.29 shows, recent arrivals are more likely to be in ESL classes than earlier arrivals:

Table II.29

Current ESL Enrollment by Months in the U.S.
(N=3806)

Months in the U.S.	Percent Currently Taking ESL
6 or less	57%
7-12	56%
13-18	52%
19-24	38%
25-30	35%
31-36	32%
37-42	27%
43-48	27%
over 48	15%

Refugees currently taking ESL also differ from those who do not in the following ways:

- men (42 percent) are more likely than women (35 percent) to be in ESL ($p < .01$);
- those with no education (30 percent) and those with college degrees (20 percent), are less likely to be in ESL than those with other levels of education, ranging from some elementary to some college (40 percent) ($p < .01$);
- refugees who were students in Southeast Asia (46 percent) are more likely, and housewives and retired persons (27 percent) less likely than other occupational groups (40 percent) to be in ESL ($p < .01$);

- those with less English proficiency on arrival are more likely to be taking ESL ($p < .01$).

Thus, the refugees who have taken or are now in ESL classes generally appear to be those more in need (i.e., who arrived with little proficiency -- which also means the less educated). Nevertheless, women, those with no education at all, and older refugees appear under-represented in ESL classes.

2. Employment Services

The category "employment services" includes a broad array of services ranging from general orientation to the American job market and workplace practices, and from assistance in locating potential jobs to actual placement in specific jobs. It does not include vocational training or Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL). The extent of assistance provided to refugees who used employment services differs widely. Some refugees reported receiving no more than a card to fill out or the classified section of a newspaper; others received counseling, referrals, preparation for interviews, transportation, and intercession with employers when problems arose. In general, however, the information is insufficient to make discriminations of this sort concerning either the precise nature of the services received or the quality of assistance. As with ESL, then, we will focus simply on the use or non-use of employment services.

In addition, no distinction was made in the questionnaire between "current" and "past" employment services, since virtually all such services are episodic and "past." It should be kept in mind, however, that some refugees may have received employment services in the very recent past. To the extent that reported services are really "current," their effectiveness will be underestimated, since we can expect current users to be unemployed.

Thirty percent of all adults reported the use of employment services. Of these, 31 percent received services from VOLAGS, 31 percent from government agencies (such as social service or welfare offices, state employment services, etc.), 18 percent from schools (high schools, community colleges, vocational programs, etc.), and 20 percent from an assortment of other providers. As Table II.30 shows, half or nearly half of the refugees in Chicago and Seattle have received employment services; the percentages in other sites are considerably smaller, in an apparent inverse relationship to local economic conditions.

Table II.30

Reported Past Use of Employment Services by Site

Site	All Adults
Chicago	50% (406)
Boston	20% (228)
Seattle	46% (360)
Houston	9% (40)
Orange County	22% (163)

Those who have received employment services differ from those who have not in several respects. Fewer of those who were students, farmers, housewives or retired have received employment services than other refugees, as Table II.31 (page 93) shows.

Table II.31

Reported Past Use of Employment Services by Southeast Asian Occupation

Occupational Group	All Adults
Professionals	38% (118)
Officers	38% (35)
Enlisted	41% (129)
Manager	39% (88)
Clerical	35% (23)
Craftsman	42% (83)
Sales	35% (49)
Service	35% (49)
Student	28% (312)
Operative	35% (87)
Farmer	20% (49)
Fisher	40% (61)
Laborer	30% (61)
Housewives, Retired, etc.	19% (82)

And as Table II.32 (page 94) shows, those with no education received employment services less frequently than others:

Table II.32

Reported Past Use of Employment Services
by Southeast Asian Education

Educational Level	All Adults
None	17% (52)
Elementary	32% (516)
Secondary	32% (256)
High School	34% (199)
Some College	36% (72)
College Graduate	39% (39)

Other differences in the use of employment services are as follows:

- a higher percentage of Chinese (40 percent) used employment services than Lao (29 percent) or Vietnamese (28 percent);
- a higher percentage of men (34 percent) than women (25 percent) report employment service use;
- those using employment services have been in the U.S. slightly longer than those who have not (an average of 27 months vs. 24 months);
- users of employment services have slightly better English proficiency than non-users ($p < .01$), but the two groups had identical English skills on arrival.

While site is the primary determinant of whether or not refugees receive any kind of employment services, these services appear to be used somewhat more by those from advantaged backgrounds (i.e. those who have at least some education, who had higher status occupations, and who are male). This differential usage also appears to be somewhat greater than for ESL.

3. Vocational Training

Roughly 7 percent of all adults were currently enrolled in some type of vocational training program when interviewed. These are provided primarily by government programs such as CETA and Job Corps (16 percent), schools -- largely community colleges -- (58 percent), a variety of other programs identified only as "vocational school" (presumed to be private) or "vocational training" (20 percent), and an assortment of unspecified agencies (6 percent). The most frequently reported fields of study were electronics, computers, and electrical assembly (33 percent) skilled trades such as auto mechanic, welding, machine operation, and lathe operation (33 percent); and clerical or office skills such as secretarial and accounting (9 percent). In addition to those currently in vocational training, 15 percent of the main respondents reported receiving such training in the past.

Table II.33 (page 96) shows that compared to the average, a higher percentage of refugees in Orange County and a smaller percentage of those in Houston have taken or are currently enrolled in vocational training programs.

Table II.34 (page 97) shows a strong relationship between enrollment in vocational training programs and education in Southeast Asia: many more of those with higher education received vocational training than those with little or no education who rarely received such training.

Table II.35 (page 98) shows that those with higher occupational backgrounds more frequently received vocational training.

Table II.33

Use of Vocational Training by Site

Site	Percent of Adults Currently Enrolled	Percent of Main Respondents Enrolled in the Past
Chicago	6% (52)	18% (53)
Boston	5% (59)	13% (40)
Seattle	7% (51)	12% (33)
Houston	4% (16)	13% (25)
Orange County	11% (85)	19% (59)

Table II.34

Use of Vocational Training by Education in Southeast Asia

Education Level	Percent of Adults Currently Enrolled	Percent of Respondents Enrolled in the Past
None	0%	3% (2)
Elementary	4% (61)	10% (56)
Secondary	8% (67)	19% (59)
High School Grad	14% (80)	19% ([illegible]2)
Some College	11% (22)	22% (24)
College Graduate	13% (4)	22% (11)

Table II.35

Use of Vocational Training by Occupation in Southeast Asia

Occupation	Percent of All Adults Currently Enrolled	Percent of Main Respondents Enrolled in the Past
Professional	12% (36)	18% (30)
Officers	12% (11)	25% (16)
Enlisted	9% (27)	21% (42)
Students	8% (86)	13% (32)
Managers	6% (14)	15% (18)
Clericals	8% (5)	8% (2)
Sales	3% (5)	12% (7)
Craftsmen	7% (14)	13% (16)
Operatives	5% (11)	9% (9)
Laborers	0% (2)	8% (1)
Service	0% (0)	11% (2)
Fishers	6% (9)	15% (10)
Farmers	4% (9)	9% (6)
Retired and Housewives	2% (9)	10% (5)

Thus, while former professionals, military personnel, and students comprise half of all adults, they make up 58 percent of those currently in vocational training programs. And while those with high school educations and above comprise a quarter of the sample, they make up half of those receiving vocational training,

Those reporting vocational training also differ from those who do not in the following ways.

- A higher percentage of men (9 percent) than women (3 percent) are currently in vocational training programs (p <.01). This holds for past vocational programs as well, which were reported by 18 percent of the men and 6 percent of the women (p <.01).
- A higher percentage of Vietnamese (9 percent) are currently receiving vocational training than Chinese (6 percent) or Lao (4 percent) -- (p <.01). Ethnic differences in past vocational training use follow this pattern, but are not statistically significant.
- Those currently in vocational training programs have greater English proficiency and were more proficient when they arrived (p <.01, with regard to both current and arrival proficiency). Main respondents who received vocational training in the past also had better arrival and current English (p <.01 for both comparisons).
- Those currently in vocational training programs and those enrolled in such programs in the past have been in the U.S. roughly six months longer than those who have not (p <.01 for all comparisons). This is as expected: the majority of those currently in vocational training have been in the U.S. between six and 24 months. Few got into these programs immediately (2 percent of all adults in the first six

months), and enrollment remains relatively stable -- roughly 6-7 percert -- through 48 months.

In general, access to vocational training programs for all adults appears to be limited to males with at least secondary school educations, higher occupational status or skills in Southeast Asia, and some English proficiency when they arrive.

4. Comparative Conclusions

In reviewing our findings on the use of programs, it must be kept in mind that the majority of refugees arrived unable to speak any English. Slightly fewer than half of the adults are currently attending ESL classes, and we estimate that two-thirds have received substantial ESL instruction since leaving their homelands. Roughly a third of all adults have received employment services of some sort, 7 percent are currently in vocational training programs, and 15 percent of main respondents have received vocational training in the past. Given the need, this level of services rendered is certainly inadequate to bring "the refugees" into the mainstream of American society. But given the enormity of this task, it clearly represents a substantial effort: in a relatively short period of time, these services have been provided to a substantial proportion of refugees.

The programs are not, however, equally available in all sites (Figure II.9, page 102) or equally used by all refugees. Figures II.10-12 (pages 103-105) show that program use differs little among ethnic groups, is heaviest among those 2[illegible] to 50 years of age, and is generally cumulative by time in the U.S. The following figures tell a rather different story, however.

Figure II.13 (page 106) shows that a higher proportion of men receive all types of services than women. This is cause for concern, and not just because it appears to violate the ideal of providing equal opportunity for both men and women. As we shall see, women constitute an important part of the refugee work force and an important economic resource -- especially in view of the finding that the majority of households require two employed persons to move above the poverty level.

Figures 11.14, page 107, (showing program use by education) and 11.15, page 108 (showing program use by Southeast Asian occupation) give cause for concern of another sort. These demonstrate that those with little education and who held low status or skill occupations in Southeast Asia are much less likely to be receiving the services they need than the more advantaged refugees. This is especially true for the most important service: vocational training. While ESL appears most democratic in being available to all who need it, employment services appear slightly more restrictive in that they are rarely used by those with no education or by those who were housewives or farmers. Vocational training seems to be most restrictive in that its use is largely confined to those with at least some secondary education, and who were professionals, military personnel, or students.

This presents something of a paradox. On the one hand, it makes sense to provide the services to those best prepared to make good use of them; on the other hand, this pattern of use will hasten the assimilation of the more advantaged, and leave the less advantaged to their own devices.

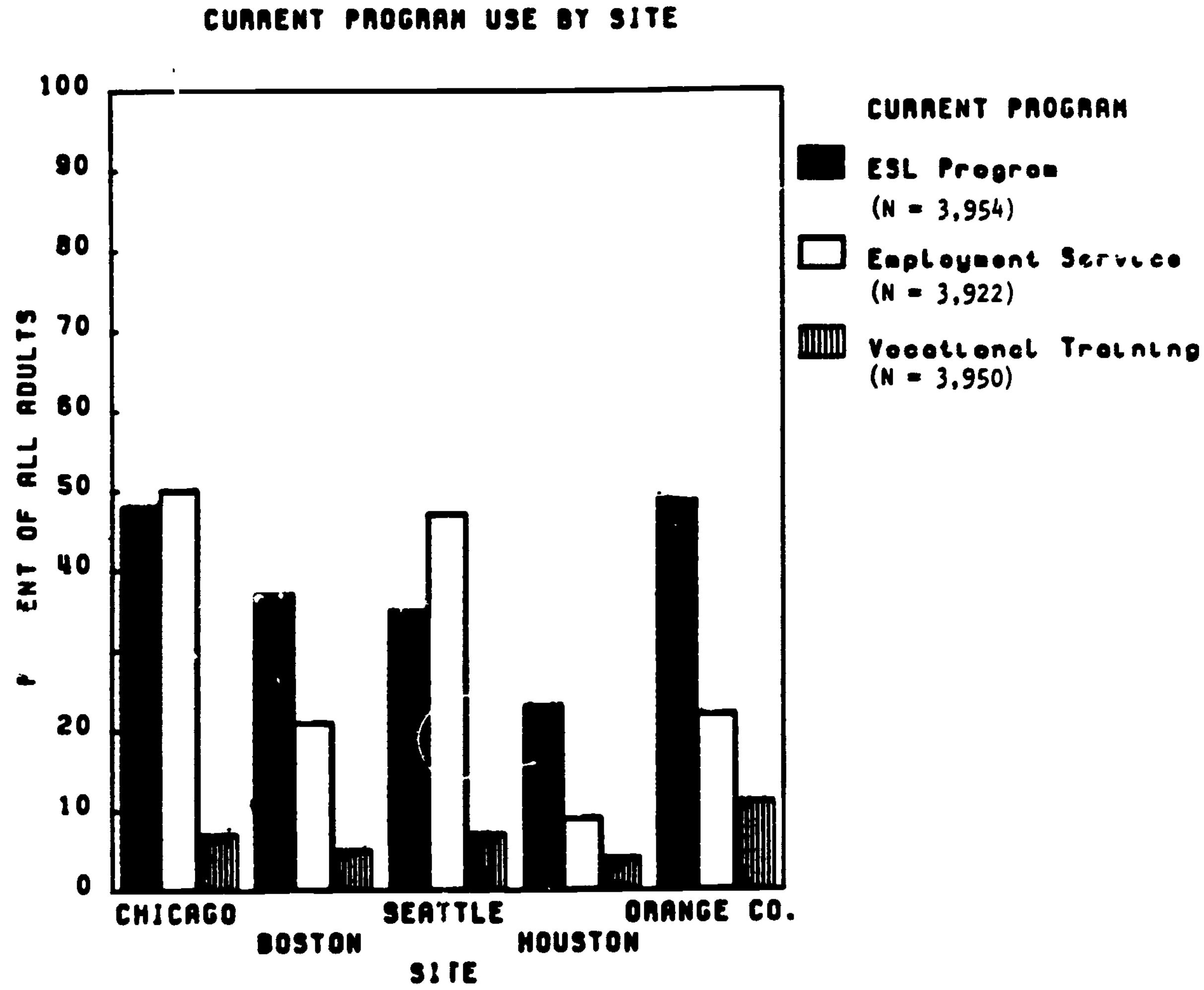

CURRENT PROGRAM USE BY SITE
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
20
10
0
ENT OF ALL ADULTS
CHICAGO
BOSTON
SEATTLE
HOUSTON
ORANGE CO.
SITE
CURRENT PROGRAM
ESL Program
(N = 3,954)
Employment Service
(N = 3,922)
Vocational Training
(N = 3,950)

FIGURE II.9

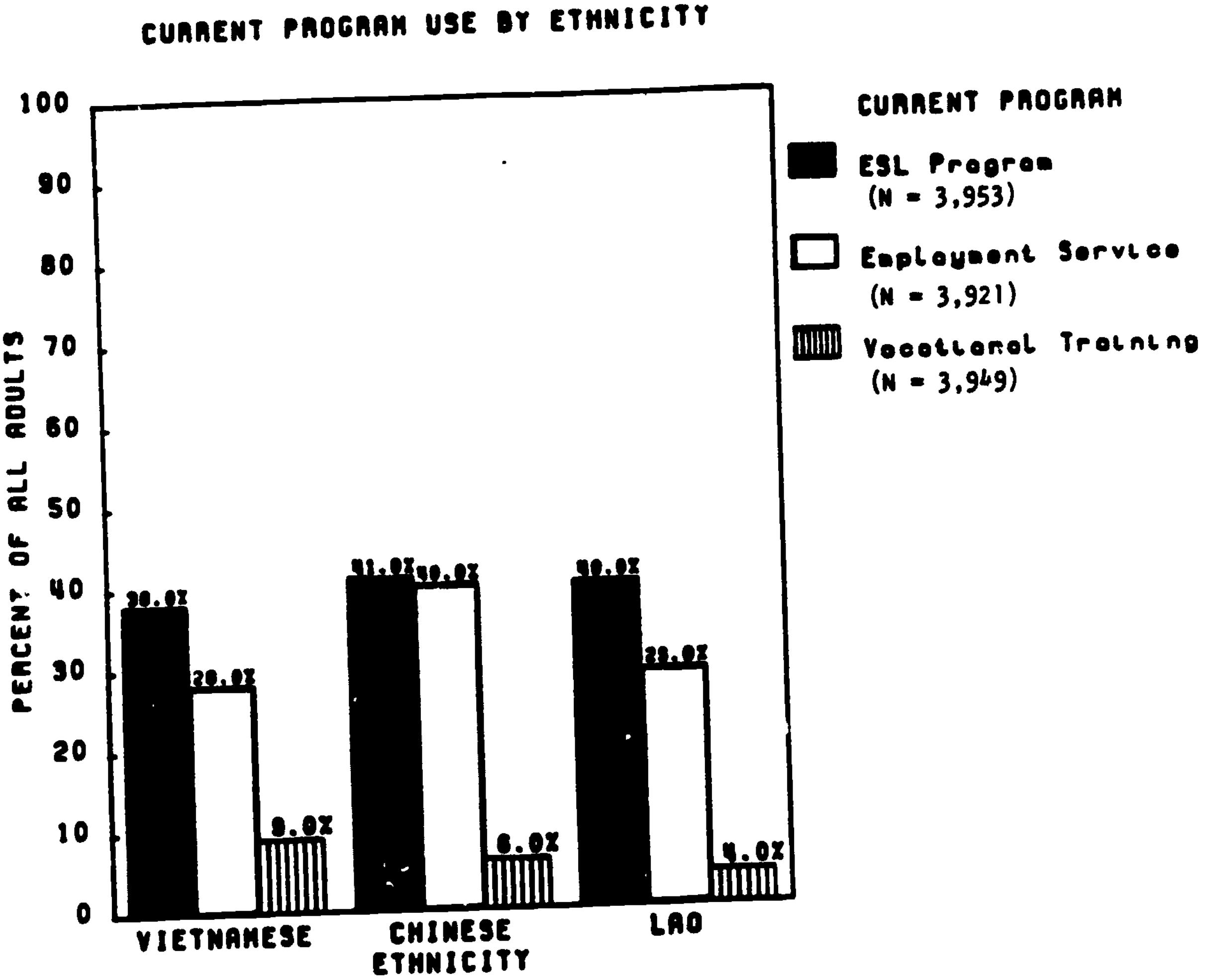

CURRENT PROGRAM USE BY ETHNICITY
PERCENT OF ALL ADULTS
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
38.0%
28.0%
9.0%
41.0%
40.0%
6.0%
40.0%
29.0%
4.0%
VIETNAMESE
CHINESE ETHNICITY
LAO
CURRENT PROGRAM
ESL Program (N = 3,953)
Employment Service (N = 3,921)
Vocational Training (N = 3,949)

FIGURE II.10

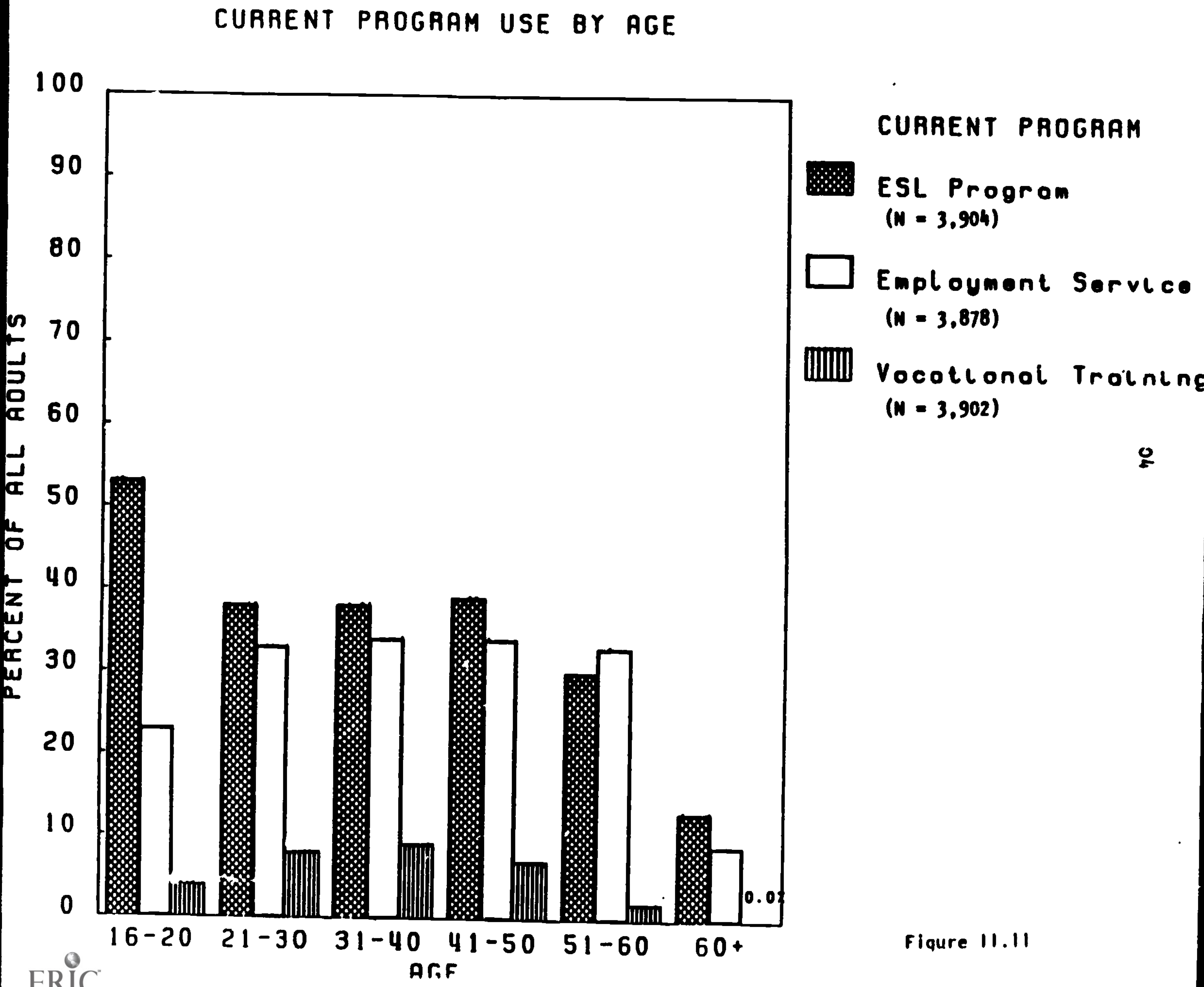


Figure 11.11

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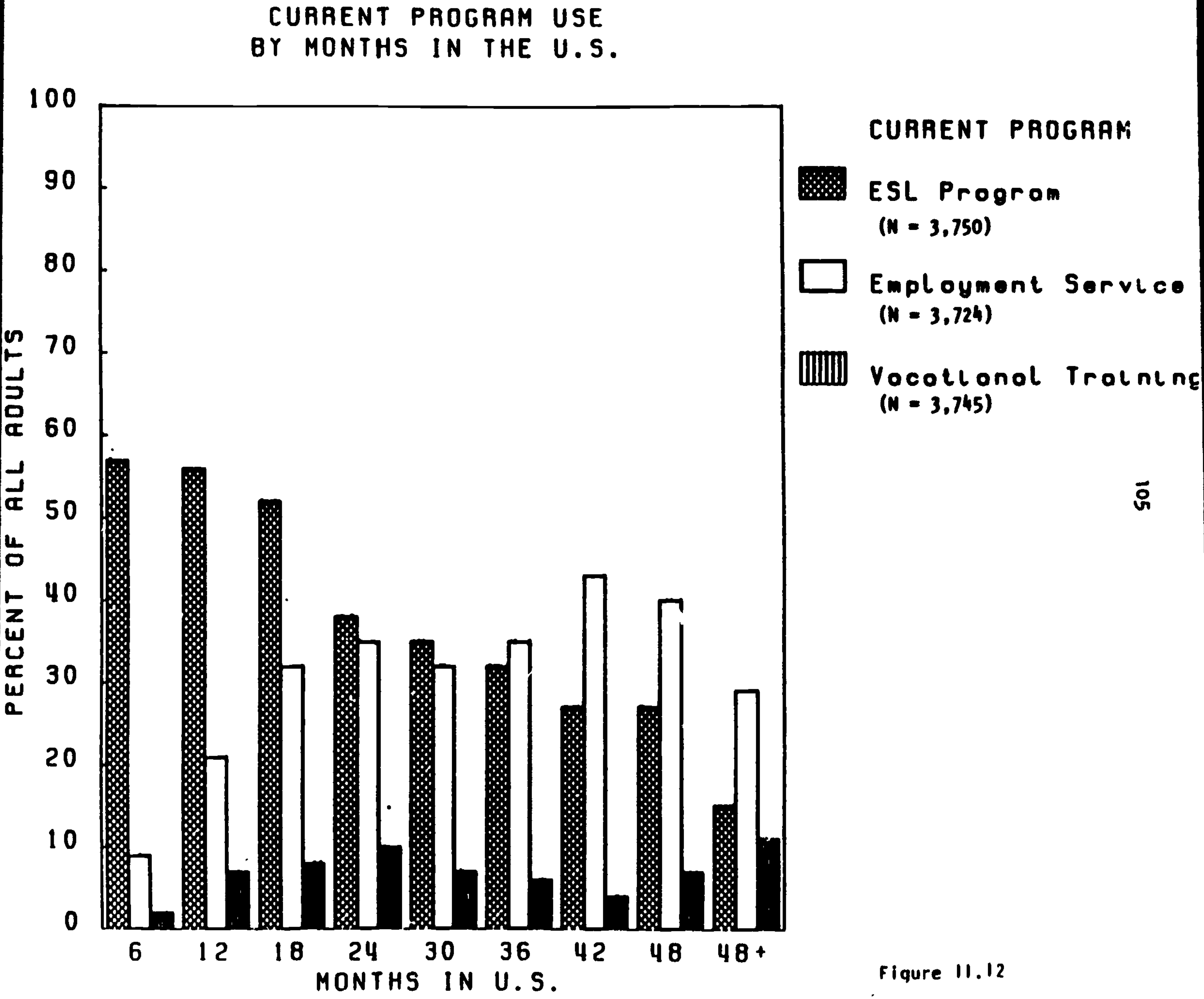
CURRENT PROGRAM USE
BY MONTHS IN THE U.S.
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
PERCENT OF ALL ADULTS
6
12
18
24
30
36
42
48
48+
MONTHS IN U.S.
CURRENT PROGRAM
ESL Program
(N = 3,750)
Employment Service
(N = 3,724)
Vocational Training
(N = 3,745)

Figure II.12

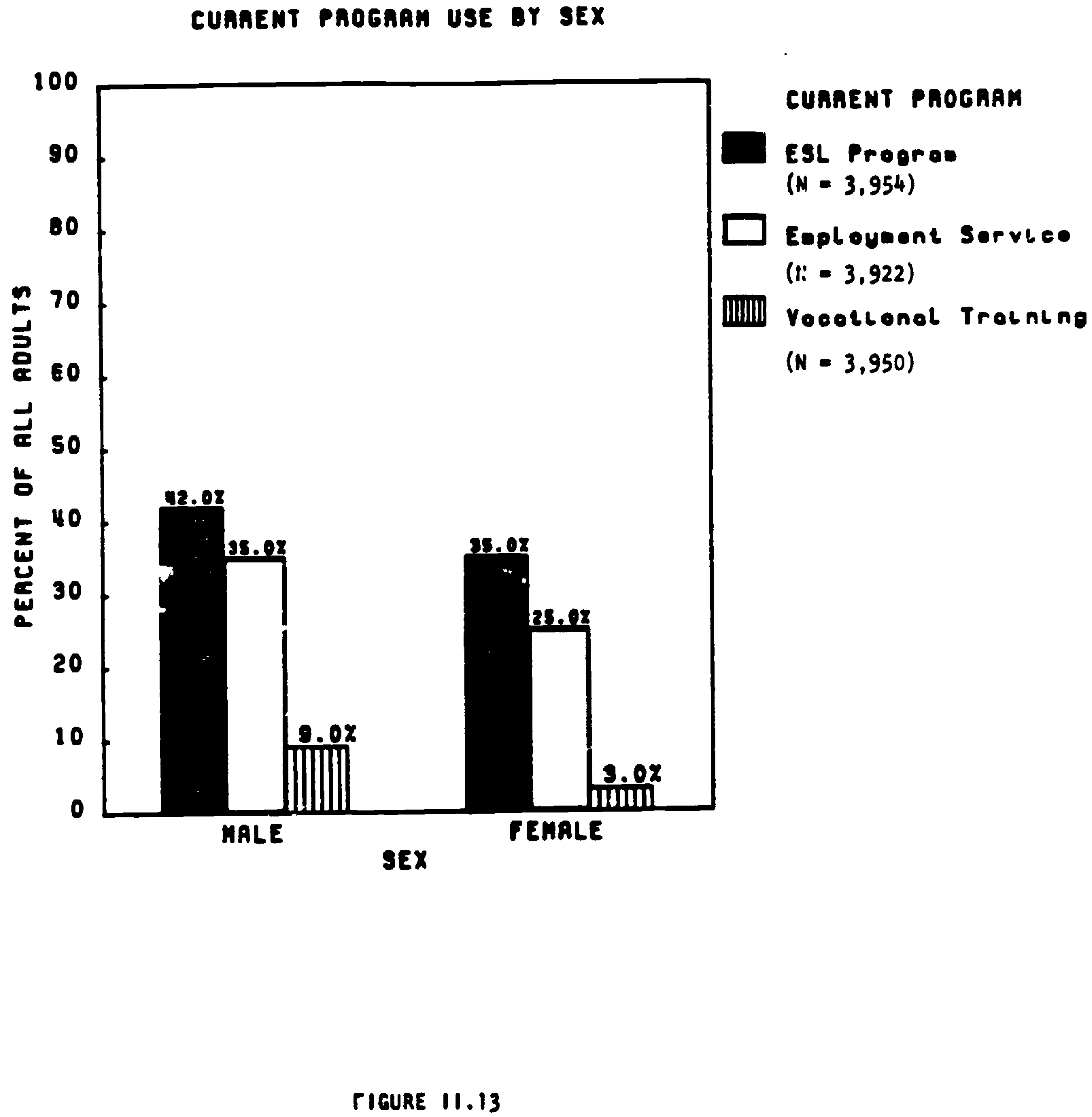
CURRENT PROGRAM USE BY SEX
PERCENT OF ALL ADULTS
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
42.0%
35.0%
9.0%
35.0%
25.0%
3.0%
MALE
FEMALE
SEX
CURRENT PROGRAM
ESL Program
(N = 3,954)
Employment Service
(N = 3,922)
Vocational Training
(N = 3,950)

FIGURE II.13

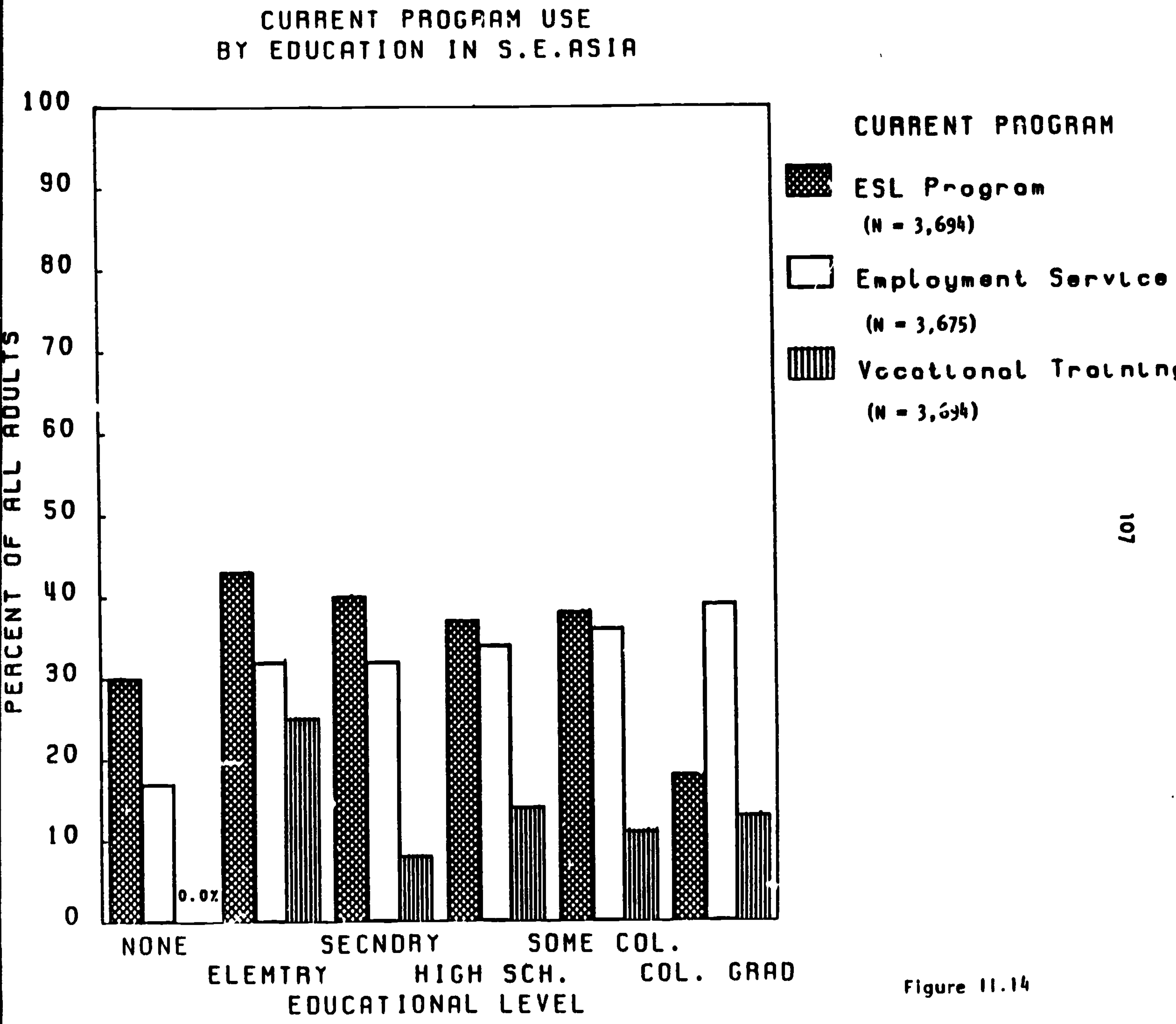

Figure 11.14

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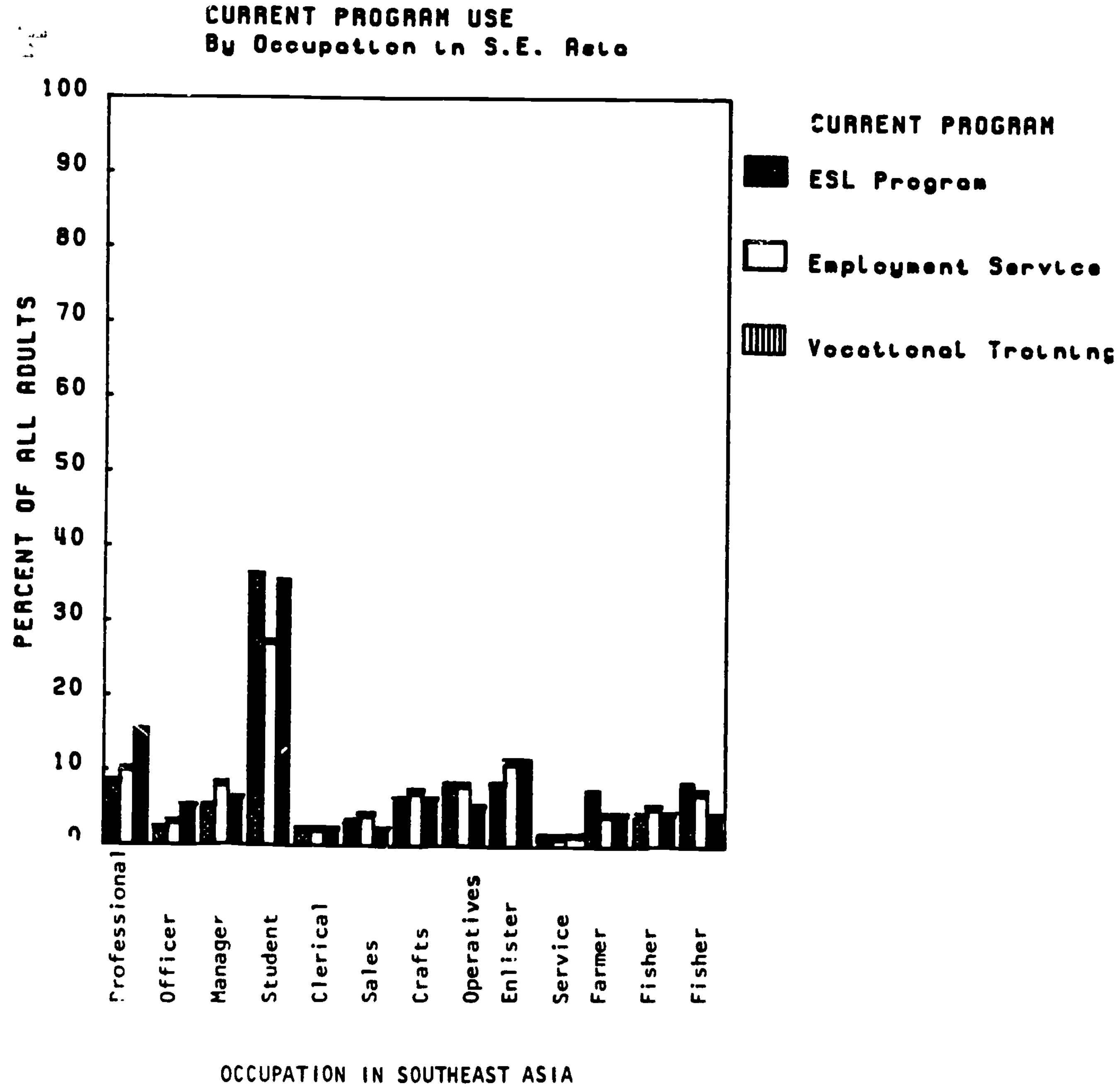

Figure 11.15

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CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC STATUS

With the background characteristics in hand, we now turn to the economic situation of the Southeast Asian refugees in the United States. We approach this topic here in three ways - the question of employment, and the source of income for the household and the position of the household relative to the Federal poverty level. In this chapter, we present descriptive bivariate profiles of certain economic situations in terms of the significant variables linked to them, while in the following chapter we give the multivariate analyses pointing to the major variables predicting to economic self-sufficiency.

A. LABOR FORCE STATUS

Of the 4,160 adults in the sample, 1,823 adults (44 percent) were in the labor force at the time of the study-- 1,050 who were working and 773 who were unemployed but seeking work. Thus, more than half (58 percent) of all adult refugees in the labor force held jobs and the unemployment rate was 42 percent. Figure, III.A.1 (page 110) and Table III.A.1 (page 111) indicate the current labor force status for all adults.

CURRENT LABOR FORCE STATUS OF ALL ADULTS
(N-4,160)

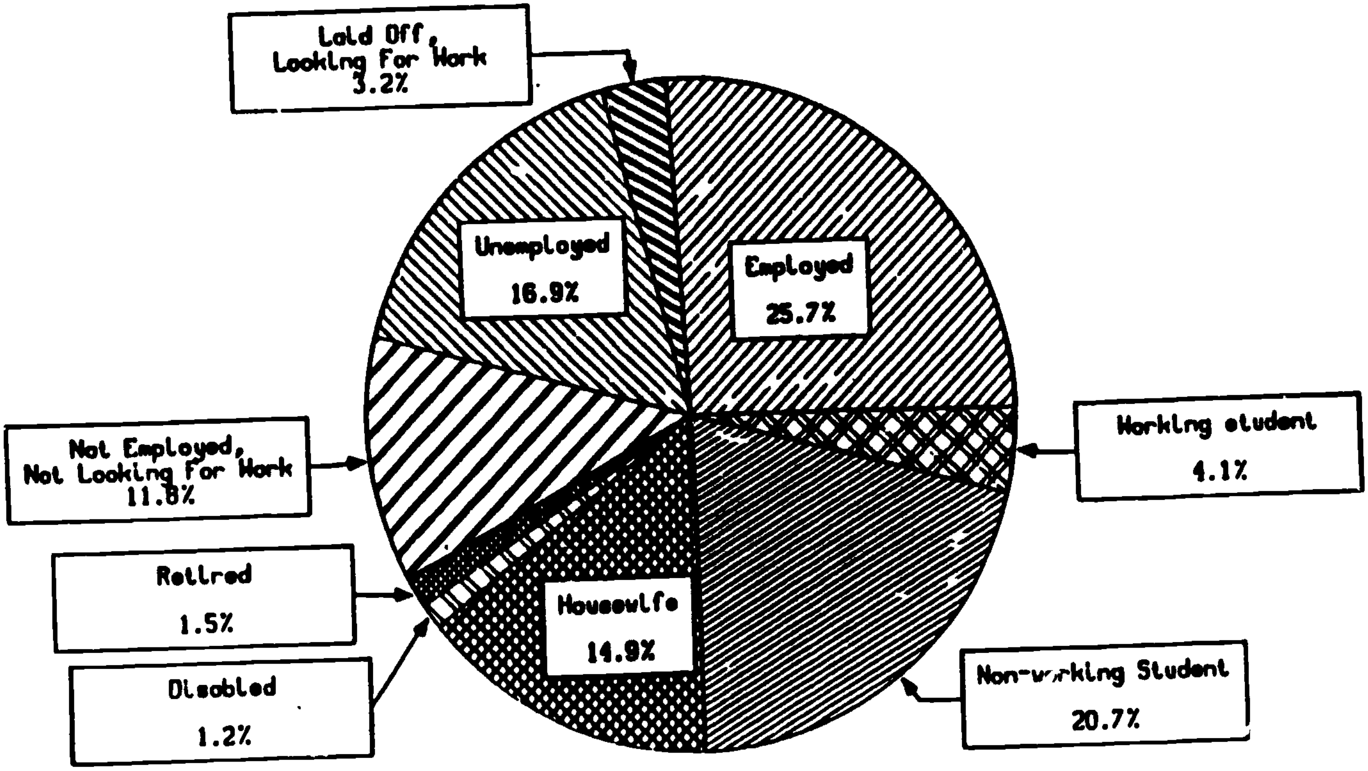

FIGURE III.A.1

Table III.A.1

Labor Force Status For All Adults

Employment Status	N	Percent
Employed	1,050	26.3%
Unemployed	773	19.4%
Non-job Seekers*	479	12.0%
Non-working Students	352	8.8%
Working Students	182	4.6%
High School Students	466	11.7%
Housewives	568	14.2%
Retired	63	1.6%
Other**	56	1.4%
Totals	3,989	100%

*Non-job-seekers are those who not working and not seeking work
**Mainly the temporarily ill or permanently disabled.

We shall first examine the situation of those in the labor force (employed and unemployed) and then look at those officially not in the labor force (not looking for work, students, housewives, and the retired). We shall next discuss the quality of jobs held by the refugees and the development of refugee employment over time.

1. The Employed and the Unemployed

a. Site. When broken down according to site, the unemployment rate among the refugees was much lower in Houston (25 percent) than it was in the other four sites. As Table III.A.2 (page 113) indicates, Orange County's rate of 36 percent was the second lowest, and Boston (whose refugees had been here the shortest length of time) registered 39 percent. Chicago's rate was much higher at 50 percent, while Seattle (whose economy was poorest of the five) had the highest rate at 57 percent.

There are only 15 self-employed refugees in the entire sample, and seven of these live in Houston.

The types of jobs refugees have found vary by te (Table III.A.2; page 113). The jobs held by the refugees in Orange County appear to have better potential for eventual success and job stability, even though slightly fewer of the refugees are employed and their wages lag somewhat behind the other sites. In contrast, and if current trends continue, Seattle seems to offer the grimmest employment picture for the future.

More than 16 percent of employed refugees in Orange County have professional or managerial positions, as compared to 10 percent in Chicago and Houston, 7 percent in Boston and only 5 percent in Seattle. Also, a large number (37 percent) work in the computer industry in Orange County, whereas only 4 percent are employed in that field in Seattle; conversely, only 1 percent of workers in Orange County work in the restaurant business compared to 23 percent in Seattle. It follows, then, that Orange County has the highest percentage in high status jobs (19 percent), with the low of 8 percent in Seattle. Orange County also has the highest percentage in core-economy jobs (68 percent), in contrast to Seattle which registers the lowest at 22 percent.

Those in Houston earn slightly higher wages -- $5.50 per hour --compared to $5.40 in Chicago, $5.03 in Orange County, $4.60 in Boston and $4.46 in Seattle.[10] The difference in hourly wages may be related to the length of time on the job, but this relationship appears to be weak. On the average, those in Houston have been employed 17 months, followed by 16 months in Orange County, 15 in Chicago, 10 in Seattle and only 7 in Boston. The receipt of

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[10] All wages have been changed to hour for ease in comparison.

Table III.A.2

Employment by Site (all adults)

Sites	Unemployment Rate N=3,989	High Status Jobs N=1,105	Core Economy N=1,190	Mean Wages/hour N=1,210	Average Months on job N=1,193	Employment Benefits N=1,197
Chicago	49.9	11% (23)	46% (106)	$5.40	15	71% (160)
Boston	38.6	10% (25)	46% (127)	4.60	7	50% (155)
Seattle	56.9	8% (17)	22% (55)	4.40	10	46% (101)
Houston	24.9	11% (2)	44% (108)	5.50	17	78% (191)
Orange C.	36.4	1[illegible]% (35)	68% (133)	5.03	16	74% (146)

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employment benefits may also be related, although again rather weakly, to the duration of employment: refugees in Boston and Seattle are less likely to have employment benefits (50 percent and 46 percent, respectively), whereas 78 percent in Houston have benefits, 74 percent in Orange County and 71 percent in Chicago.

b. Sex. Overall, as Table III.A.3 shows, male refugees in the labor force are less likely to have found jobs than female refugees in the labor force (44 percent unemployment rate for men, 39 percent for women), though women often classify themselves as housewives when work is not available to them. Women and men are about equally likely to have high status jobs (13 percent of women versus 11 percent of men), to be professionals or managers (10 percent versus 9 percent), and to have been professionals or managers in Southeast Asia (20 percent versus 17 percent), a not uncommon occurrence there. Although they have also been employed the same number of months as men, women earn almost 20 percent less per hour ($4.40 versus $5.30) and are less likely to have employment benefits (55 percent versus 66 percent).

Table III.A.3

Unemployment Rate by Sex

Sex	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force
Male	566	44%	1,293
Female	207	39%	530

c. Ethnicity. Overall, the Lao are more likely to have found jobs than the Vietnamese or Chinese-Vietnamese: 59.8 percent of the Lao are employed, compared with 56.7 percent of the Vietnamese and 55.2 percent of the Chinese-Vietnamese. Thus, the unemployment rate for the Lao is 40 percent, for the

Vietnamese 43 percent, and for the Chinese 45 percent (Figure III.A.5, page 126).

The Vietnamese in the sample have been employed for the shortest time (12 months, as compared to 14 months for the Chinese-Vietnamese and 13 months for the Lao), but they tend to have higher wages and better jobs than their Lao or Chinese-Vietnamese counterparts. A greater percentage of the Lao have found work, but they earn less than either of the other two groups and tend to be in lower-status jobs. The Vietnamese have the highest wages ($5.26 per hour), the Chinese-Vietnamese $4.89 per hour and the Lao $4.76 per hour. The Vietnamese are also more likely to be professionals or managers (15 percent as compared to 9 percent for the Chinese-Vietnamese and 2 percent for the Lao), and to have high-status jobs (17 percent versus 11 percent and 3 percent). However, the Lao are more likely to have employment benefits (73 percent) as compared with 59 percent of the Vietnamese and 55 percent of the Chinese-Vietnamese. Even though the Lao work more hours per week than the Vietnamese or the Chinese-Vietnamese (37.2 hours versus 36.7 and 35.2 respectively), they are much more likely to want to work even more hours: 79 percent versus 56 percent and 61 percent (Table III.A.4, page 115).

Table III.A.4

Employment By Ethnicity
(N=1,823)

Ethnicity	Unemployment Rate	High Status Jobs	Mean Wage/ Hour	Average Months on Job	Employment Benefits
Vietnamese	43%	17%	$5.26	12	59%
Chinese	45%	11%	$4.89	14	55%
Lao	40%	3%	$4.76	13	63%

d. Household Composition. If we look at the employment status in terms of household composition, Table III.A.5 (page 117) indicates that the unemployment rate was lowest among those living alone (31 percent), while the rate among households comprised of unrelated singles or of nuclear families was the highest (44 percent). Multiple families, with or without singles, had lower unemployment rates than extended families (with or without singles) which in turn had lower unemployment rates than the single nuclear families (with or without singles).

Table III.A.5

Unemployment Rate by Household Composition

Household Composition	Unemployment Rate	Size of Labor Force*
Single (living alone)	31.1% (14)	45
Unrelated Singles	43.9% (61)	139
Multiple Family plus Single(s)	37.7% (20)	53
Extended Family plus Single(s)	40.0% (44)	110
Nuclear Family plus Single(s)	42.2% (54)	128
Multiple Family	36.5% (23)	63
Extended Family	42.5% (237)	557
Nuclear Family	43.9% (319)	727
Totals	42.4% (772)	1822

*Labor force here means those employed or unemployed (but available for work).

e. The Unemployed. Of the 773 refugee adults currently unemployed and looking for work (see Table III.A.1, page 111), almost half (49 percent) have been looking for three months or less, and most (76 percent) have been looking for six months or less. The most common types of jobs being sought are assembly workers (8 percent), factory workers (8 percent), waiters (7 percent), and janitors or maids (6 percent); 31 percent report that they will take any work they can find. Most seek help in finding jobs from friends or relatives (25 percent), or from the state employment agencies (10 percent), while 33 percent rely on their own initiative. Only 12 percent pick up any kind of pay on the side.

2. The Non-Employed

The non-employed population in the sample consists of those who are not in the labor force.

First, let us examine the adults in the sample: 479 (male-373, female-106) are currently unemployed but not looking for work; 352 (male-277, female-75) are non-working students; 182 (male-130, female-52) are working students; 466 are high school students; 568 are housewives; and 63 (male-30, female-33) are retired.

Of those not currently looking for work for whom there are data, 81 percent intend to enter the labor force (i.e. to look for work) in the future. Most are studying English or doing some schoolwork.

Of those who are not classified as potential workers, (i.e. the retired, disabled, and housewives), 59 percent (primarily housewives) intend to participate in the labor force in the future. Ten percent of these are waiting until their children are older. Nearly half (43 percent) are preparing for work, mostly by learning English or going to school.

a. Nonemployed, Not Looking for Work. The main distinguishing feature of this group of 479 adults appears to be the length of time they have been in the U.S.: they tend to be the more recently arrived refugees. The mean number of months since arrival in the U.S. for this group is 15.8, compared to 23.1 for those in the labor force but unemployed, and 27.8 for the employed.

b. Students. Of the 4160 adults in the sample, 1000 (24 percent) are students. Of those, 182 classify themselves as doing some work, 352 as not working, and 466 as high school students overall; 70 percent of the students are male and 30 percent female, as opposed to 61 percent and 39 percent for the entire sample of adults. A slightly higher proportion of the Vietnamese tend to be students: whereas Vietnamese make up 50 percent of the entire sample, they constitute 59 percent of all students. The Chinese-Vietnamese are 20 percent of the sample and 23 percent of the students. The Lao are least likely to be students, comprising 30 percent of all adults and 18 percent of all students. Likewise, the proportion of students per site is not directly proportional to the whole sample. As our sample would lead us to expect, there is a higher percentage of students in Boston (34 percent of the total students versus 29 percent of the total adults) and a slightly lower percentage in Houston (7 percent of the students versus 11 percent of the adults). The students average 22 years of age.

The majority (57 percent) of the non-working students are high school students; 13 percent attend vocational schools, 12 percent attend community colleges, and 11 percent attend four-year colleges. Most (93 percent) attend full time. Aside from the high school and vocational school students, the most popular main area of study is math and science. The majority of students (68 percent) do not pay for their schooling (primarily those attending high school), but those who do pay most often receive Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG) funds (16 percent of all non-working students). The majority of students found out about their programs either through friends and relatives (59 percent) or through their own initiative (16 percent). Of those students who classified themselves as "working," 16 percent are in vocational education and 3 percent are taking on-the-job training programs.

3. Jobs

a. Past and Present Occupation. Before turning to the types of jobs held by the refugees in the United States, it is important to have a perspective on the jobs they held in Southeast Asia. The data (as described in Chapter II.B) show that almost a third of the adults (persons age 16 or older) in the sample were students in Southeast Asia (N=1,163 or 30.8 percent). Out of the total sample, 447 (11.8 percent) were housewives. The types of employment which figure importantly in the sample are enlistment in the military professional, farming and machine operative. Past employment data are presented in Table III.A.6.

Table III.A.6

Employment in Southeast Asia

Occupation	N	Percent
Professional	318	15.2
Officer	97	4.6
Manager	229	10.9
Clerical	69	3.3
Sales	144	6.9
Crafts	198	9.4
Operative	252	12.0
Enlisted Military	321	15.3
Service	37	1.8
Farmer	254	12.1
Fisher	158	7.5
Labor	21	1.0
Total	2,098	100%

The adults employed in the U.S. mentioned a multitude of occupations, which we originally coded according to two-digit U.S. Census categories. But for ease of presentation and discussion, we have collapsed these job types (and those of the refugees' previous occupations) into the broadest census job families, and routinely report upon them in this manner. Figure III.A.2 (page 123) shows the occupations in which the refugees now work, and reveals that most who are employed work as operatives, in service industries, or in crafts.[11]

We group the current job classifications into three major occupational categories to show the percentages now employed either as "professional or managers," as "clericals, salespeople or craftspersons," and as "operatives, service workers, or laborers." Our purpose in presenting current occupation information in this way is not merely for simplicity, but to illustrate the extent to which the refugees have found lower level jobs. These jobs contrast with the occupations respondents held in Southeast Asia, where only 14 percent were operatives, service workers or craftspersons. In Figures III.A.3 through III.A.8 (pages 124-129), we show current refugee occupations by refugees' Southeast Asian occupations. These figures not only display the percentage who consider themselves unemployed or non-working students, but also show their occupations. Thus, for each former occupational group, we have a comprehensive picture of the refugees' adjustment to the American economy.

Current unemployment rates vary somewhat depending on the previous occupation of the respondents, but as we observed earlier, among all former occupational groups, those who have jobs often work as operatives or in the service sector. Managers, professionals, and clerical workers in Southeast

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[11] More specifically, 21 percent of the working refugees hold jobs in factories and 12 percent in restaurants, 17 percent are janitors or maids, and 4 percent are machine operators or mechanics.

Asia have had more success finding work in the U.S. than those in other occupations. Farmers, laborers, and fishers have the highest unemployment rates, but when they do have jobs their occupational patterns approximate those of other groups.

Table III.A.7 (page 130) indicates that unemployment rates are about as low for those who were operative workers, military enlisted, and service workers in Southeast Asia as for those who were professionals, officers, managers, and students. The unemployment rates are relatively high for those who worked in Southeast Asia as clerks, salespersons and craftspersons; and particularly for those who were farmers, fishers, and laborers (55.8 percent). It is interesting to note that a number who were housewives in Southeast Asia are working here (see Table III.A.8, page 131). Their unemployment rate among such housewives as noted on page 130 is 37.9 percent. Those who were retired remain either "retired" or non-labor-force participants.

CURRENT OCCUPATION

(N = 1,050)

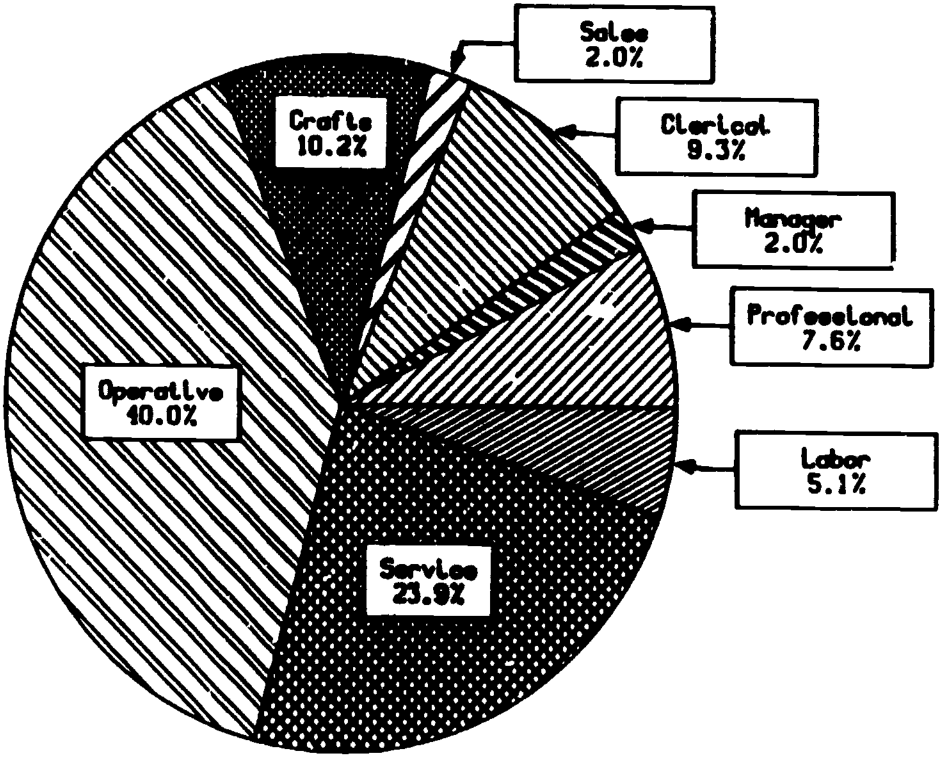

FIGURE III.A.2

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF
PROFESSIONALS, OFFICERS, MANAGERS IN S.E. ASIA

(N = 644)

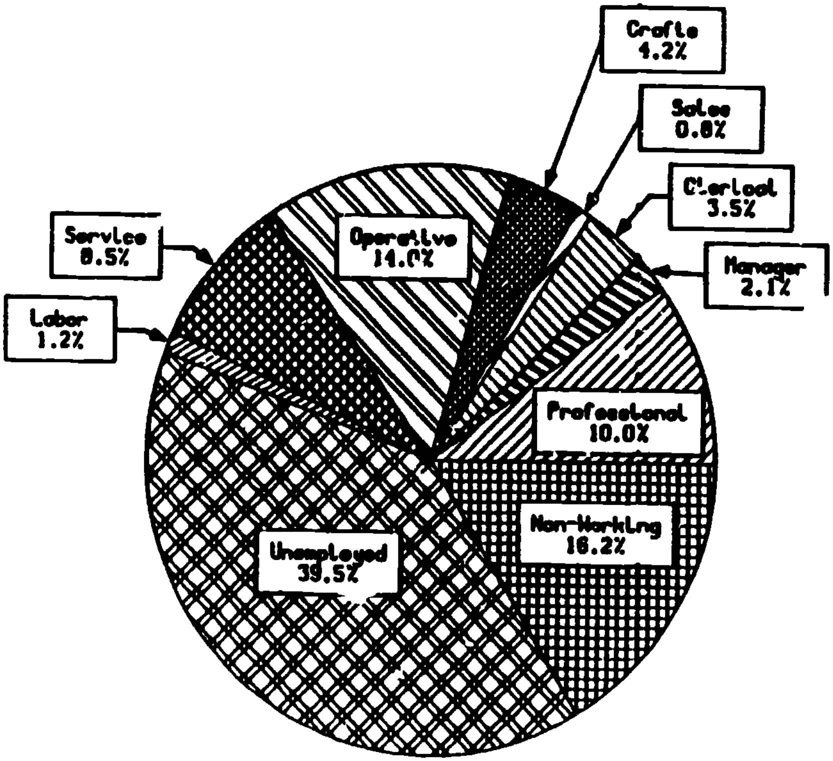

FIGURE III.A.3

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HOUSEWIVES IN S.E. ASIA

(N = 447)

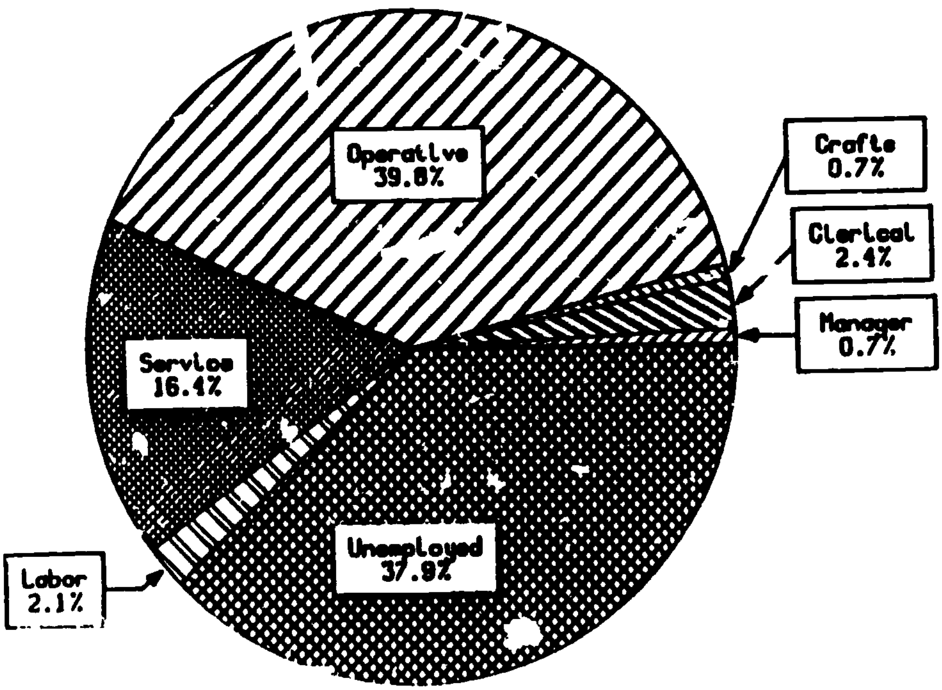

FIGURE III.A.4

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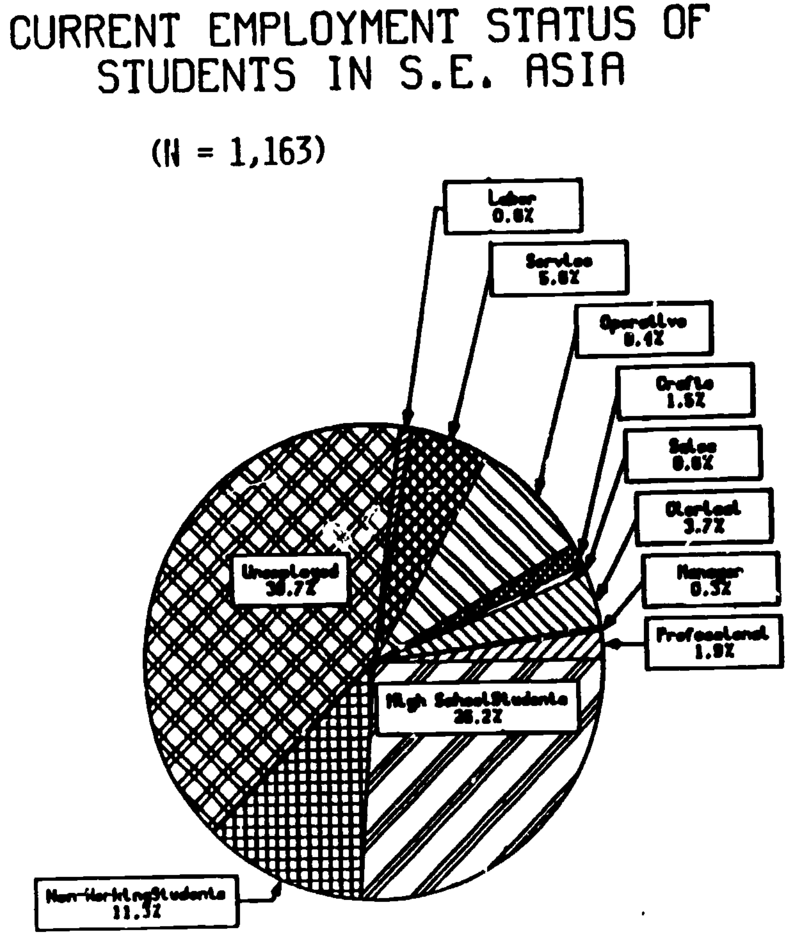

Figure III.A.5

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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF
OPERATIVES, MILITARY ENLISTEDS, SERVICE WORKERS IN S.E. ASIA

(N = 620)

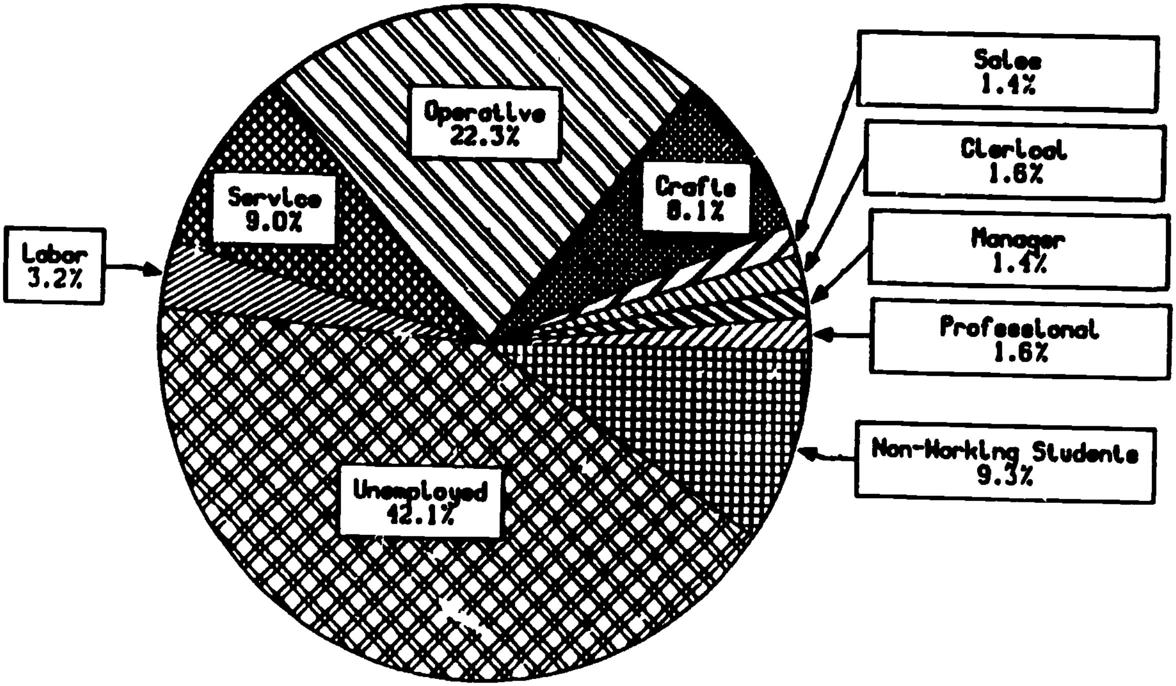

FIGURE III.A.6

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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FARMERS, FISHERMEN, LABORERS IN S.E. ASIA

(N = 433)

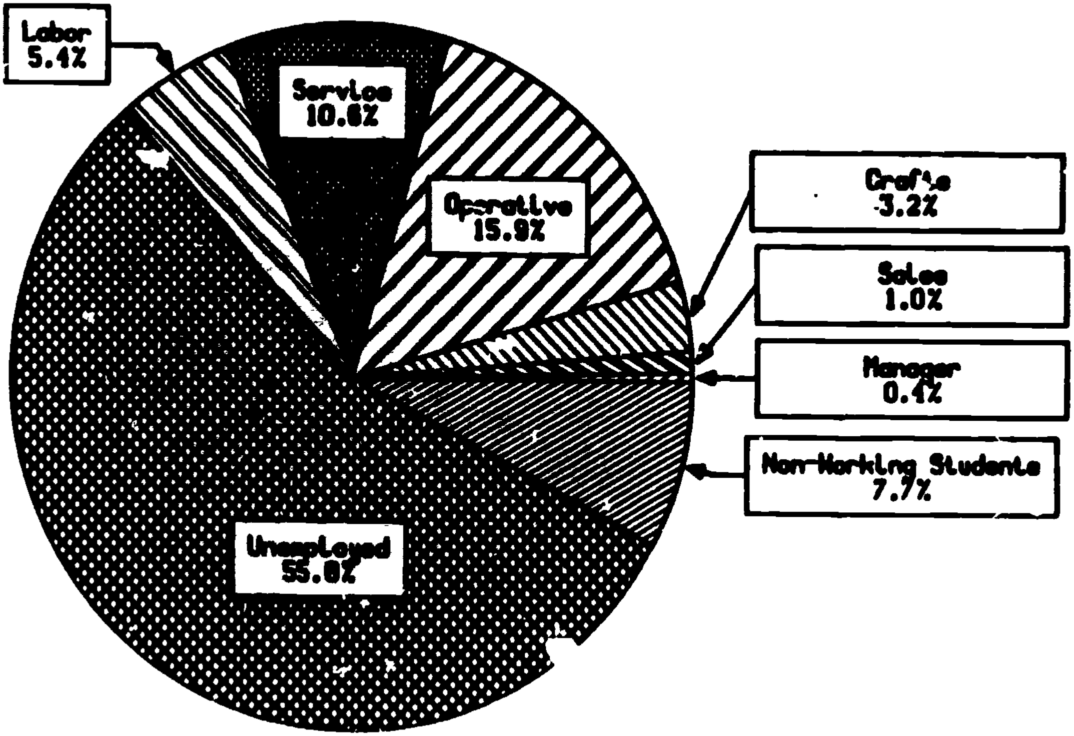

FIGURE III.A.7

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF CLERICALS, SALESPEOPLE, CRAFTSPEOPLE IN S.E. ASIA

(N = 411)

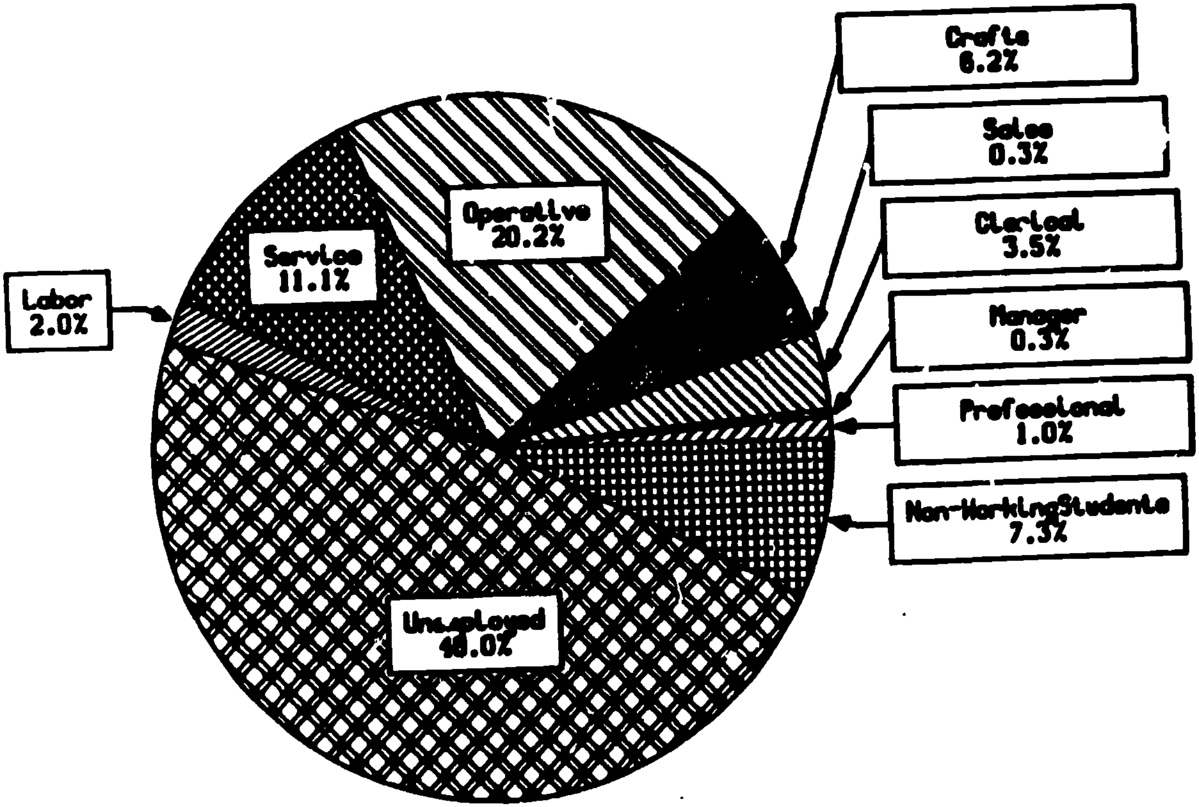

FIGURE III.A.8

Table III.A.7

Unemployment Rate by Occupational Groups in Southeast Asia

Occupations in Southeast Asia	Unemployment Rate	Totals
Housewives	37.9% (53)	140
Professional/Officer/ Manager	39.5% (138)	349
Student	39.7% (145)	365
Operative/Mil. Enlisted/ Service Workers	42.1% (155)	368
Clerical/Sales/ Craftspersons	48% (120)	250
Farmer/Fisher/ Laborer	55.8% (115)	206

Yet, even among the Southeast Asian occupational groups which have lower unemployment rates, the jobs they hold tend to be at a lower level than those held in Southeast Asia. For instance, as Figure III.A.3 (page 124) shows, farmers, professionals, officers, and managers may have a relatively low rate of unemployment, but they also tend to work more as operatives (with industrial machinery) than in any other occupational category. That is, while former professionals, officers, and managers do find work more often than other groups, the work they find is often of lower status than their original occupation. This holds true for other former occupational groups as well - lower status occupations generally have higher percentages for each group at present, even among those which had formerly held higher status jobs. (Figure III.A.3-8, pages 124-129).

Table III.A.8

Current Occupations of Those Who Were Housewives in Southeast Asia and Now Working in the U.S. Labor Force

Types of Job	N	Percent
Professional	0	0%
Manager	1	1.1%
Clerical	4	4.1%
Sales	0	0.0%
Crafts	1	1.1%
Operative	56	62.2%
Service	23	25.6%
Labor	3	3.3%
Not Mentioned	2	2.3%
Total	90	100%

These figures suggest that at this stage in resettlement, current unemployment and underemployment among the different Southeast Asian occupational groups may be a rather poor guide to their eventual self-sufficiency. They have not, as yet, been able to bring their background skills fully to bear on their circumstances. The occupational groups which have better employment rates in the U.S. appear to have lower-level or lower-status jobs in the U.S. -- Figures III.A.3-8 (pages 124-129) suggest that the transferability of skills is low at present. An ironic illustration is the employment and occupational status of former operatives. Despite the strong tendency for employed refugees to find jobs as operatives in the U.S., those who worked as operatives in their homeland are comparatively unsuccessful at finding jobs here --only 25 percent are employed.

For the sample as a whole, unemployment rates seem to vary somewhat depending on the refugees' previous employment, but there are uniform occupational patterns among those who have found jobs: regardless of their previous occupation, the refugees tend to be both unemployed and underemployed.

b. Job Status. In order to estimate with more precision the refugees' prospects for stable employment and advancement, we constructed indices of occupational status and economic sectors. For the first, we assigned Duncan Socio-Economic Index[12] (SEI) job prestige scores to each occupational category.

The second derives from recent work by "dual labor market"[13] economists who hold that the American economic system is split into two sectors: a "core" sector of stable or rising industries in which employment tends to be full-time and stable, and a "peripheral" sector of less stable or declining industries in which work tends to be irregular, seasonal and part-time. Typically, white males tend to be employed in the core, and women, teenagers and minorities in the periphery. The industries in which refugees work have thus been coded core or periphery (according to the factor-analytic work of Tolbert et al.).

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[12] See the Featherman et al. (Appendix VII). The Duncan SEI is based on the occupational education and income characteristics, as initially estimated by O.D. Duncan for the 1950 Census classification system.

[13] These economists hold the view that jobs in the labor market can be roughly classified as "core" or "good" -- providing high pay, security, and ample promotion possibilities -- or "peripheral" or "bad" -- lacking in these characteristics with little movement for upward economic mobility. For an excellent review of the literature, see Glen G. Cain, "The challenge by Segmented Labor Market Theories to Orthodox Theory: A Survey" Journal of Economic Literature, Dec. 1976, pp. 1215-1258.

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As defined by the Duncan SEI scores, the overwhelming majority of those refugees who were working (71 percent) hold low-status jobs, while only 10 percent have high status jobs. Also, those in the labor force tend to be employed in the periphery of the economy (53 percent) rather than in the core economic sectors (47 percent). Table III.A.9 (page 133) shows the type of jobs held by refugees according to our two criteria, and the hourly wages associated with each. These analyses lead us to conclude that in addition to being unemployed and underemployed, the refugees tend to hold "dead-end" jobs.

Table III.A.9

Employment Status and Sector

Status	Percent		Periphery	Core
Low:	71%	Percent of total	40%	31%
		Hourly Wage	$4.50	$5.00
Medium	19%	Percent of total	11%	8%
		Hourly Wage	$4.5	$6.00
High	10%	Percent of total	4%	6%
		Hourly Wage	$6.60	$6.80
Totals	100%		55%	45%

Over three quarters (78 percent) of the employed refugees in our sample work full-time (meaning 35 or more hours a week), reporting an average work week of 37 hours, and 17 percent work overtime. Twenty-two percent have part-time jobs (34 percent of these attend school). The majority (58 percent) said they would prefer to work longer hours.

On the average, workers earn $5.02 an hour. Overtime pays an average of $8.09 per hour. There are site and ethnicity differences in pay rates, which we discuss in separate sections below.

c. Job Benefits. Most of the workers (63 percent) have employment benefits -- most often health insurance, paid vacations, and sick leave (see Table III.A.10, page 134). A majority of full-time workers (75 percent) have benefits, but this is true of only 21 percent of those with part-time jobs (see Table III.A.11, page 135). Benefits are provided for more than three-fourths (78 percent) of the respondents who work in core economic sectors, but for only 50 percent of those in peripheral jobs (See Table III.A.12, page 135). Job scores on the Duncan SEI show no relationship to the provision of benefits. Of course, most of these key job characteristics vary somewhat depending upon a respondent's occupation and employer.

Table III.A.10
Availability of Job Benefits

N=1,197

Type of Benefit	Job Benefits	
	Yes	No
Health Insurance	57%	43%
Life Insurance	34%	66%
Dental Insurance	26%	74%
Retirement Pension	24%	76%
Paid Vacations	52%	48%

Table III.A.11
Job Benefits By Level of Employment

N=1,197

Employment	Yes	No
Full-time	75%	25%
Part-time	21%	79%

Table III.A.12
Job Benefits By Economic Sector

N=1,197

Sector	Yes	No
Core	78%	22%
Periphery	50%	50%

Health Benefits: The availability of medical benefits varies by site. Table III.A.13 shows that health insurance is a more common benefit in Chicago, Houston, and Orange County, where over two-thirds of those working are covered compared with Boston and Seattle where less than half report coverage. Also, there appears to be some variation in health coverage by ethnicity, (see Table III.A.14, page 136): the Lao report 65 percent coverage, the Vietnamese 55 percent; and the Chinese 49 percent. It is difficult to say at this point why the Lao, with their low status and low paying jobs (Table III.A.4, page 115), have the highest percentage of health insurance. Full-time employees are over three times more likely to report health benefits than part-time employees (69 percent versus 18 percent Table III.A.15, page 137), and those holding jobs in the core sector are far more likely than those in periphery sector jobs to report health benefits (71 percent versus 45 percent, Table III.A.16, page 137).

Table III.A.13
Health Insurance Benefits By Site

N=744

Site	Health Insurance	
	Yes	No
Chicago	67%	33%
Boston	44%	56%
Seattle	42%	58%
Houston	72%	28%
Orange County	66%	34%

Table III.A.14
Health Insurance Benefits By Ethnicity

N=744

Ethnicity	Health Insurance	
	Yes	No
Vietnamese	55%	45%
Chinese	49%	51%
Lao	65%	35%

Table III.A.15
Health Insurance Benefits By Employment Level

N=744

Level	Health Insurance	
	Yes	No
Full Time	69%	31%
Part Time	18%	82%

Table III.A.16
Health Insurance Benefits By Economic Sector

N=744

Sector	Health Insurance	
	Yes	No
Core	71%	29%
Periphery	45%	55%

Retirement Pensions: As shown in Table III.A.10 (page 134), about a quarter of the sample report retirement benefits. These vary across site (Table III.A.17, page 138) from the highest number (40 percent) in Orange County to 9 percent in Seattle. About one quarter of the Vietnamese and Lao respondents report such benefits compared with 16 percent for the Chinese (Table III.A.18, page 138). Also, over half again as many of those with core sector jobs report such benefits over those with periphery sector jobs (31 percent versus 19 percent, Table III.A.19, page 139).

Paid Vacations: These are reported by half of our respondents and, like other benefits, vary by site and other relevant factors. Paid vacations were most frequently reported by our Houston respondents (71 percent) and least often cited by those in Seattle (26 percent). The Lao are most likely to report such benefits (59 percent), followed by the Vietnamese (50 percent) and Chinese (45 percent).

Table III.A.17
Retirement Pension By Site

N=729

Site	Yes	No
Chicago	27%	73%
Boston	17%	83%
Seattle	9%	91%
Houston	30%	70%
Orange County	40%	60%

Table III.A.18
Retirement Pension By Ethnicity

N=729

Ethnicity	Retirement Pensions	
	Yes	No
Vietnamese	26%	74%
Chinese	18%	82%
Lao	25%	75%

Table III.A.19
Retirement Pension By Economic Sector

N=729

Economic Sector	Retirement Pensions	
	Yes	No
Core	31%	69%
Periphery	19%	81%

4. Time and Labor Force Participation

On the average, once they arrived in the U.S., it took our respondents 11 months to ' their first job, although this varied and will be discussed later. Generally, those who were clerical workers in Southeast Asia took the longest to find a job (about a year and a half). Former students, who comprise about 20 percent of the employed, required about a year to find their first job. Former enlisted military people, who also constitute about a fifth of the sample, also took about one year to find their first job. Education in Southeast Asia seems more consistently (p <.05) to influence the chances of finding a job relatively quickly. Those who had no education or had only attended elementary school took longer on the average -- a year between arrival and their first job. But college graduates lived in the U.S. for an average of only 8 months before going to work.

As noted above, even where jobs are held by refugees, they tend to be low in wages, status, and any possibility for upward mobility. Yet, the efforts of refugees point toward a better future. One need only observe the refugees' economic achievement through time in order to obtain a better sense of their employment picture. Figure III.A.9 (page 141) indicates the sharp drop in the unemployment rate from the first months of resettlement (86 percent) to the

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final months of the fourth year (30 percent). Thus, the employment status of the refugees is not a steady condition, but one which is in a constant state of change. To use the aggregate figure of 42 percent unemployment is quite misleading.

a. Individual Level. Among the main respondents who held employment since coming to the U.S., some had left previous jobs "voluntarily" (8 percent due to low wages, 8 percent to go to school, 8 percent moved, 12 percent found better jobs), but a substantial number (34.5 percent) had been laid off. Of those who were laid off, a third (33 percent) are currently employed.

Of the 453 main respondents currently employed (55 percent of all respondents in the labor force), 64 percent have had only one job -- their current job -- since their arrival in the U.S.; 26 percent have had one previous job in addition to their present job; 6 percent have had two previous jobs in addition to their present job; and 3 percent have had more than two previous jobs (Table III.A.20, page 142). Those with only their current job have been employed an average of only 15 months in the U.S., whereas those with one previous job have been employed 21 months, those with two previous jobs for 23 months and those with more than two jobs for 20 months. Also, those with only current jobs have been in the U.S. fewer months overall -- 27 months as opposed to 31, 32, and 33 for the other three groups respectively. Apparently, however, those with a longer work history and more months in the U.S. have not profited substantially from their greater experience. Those with only their current job earn an average of $5.24 per hour while those with one past job -- with six more months in the labor force and four more months in the U.S. -- earn only $.06 more per hour, or $5.30. Those with two previous jobs earn slightly more ($5.64 per hour), but those with more than two jobs earn substantially more ($6.86 per hour). However, the latter

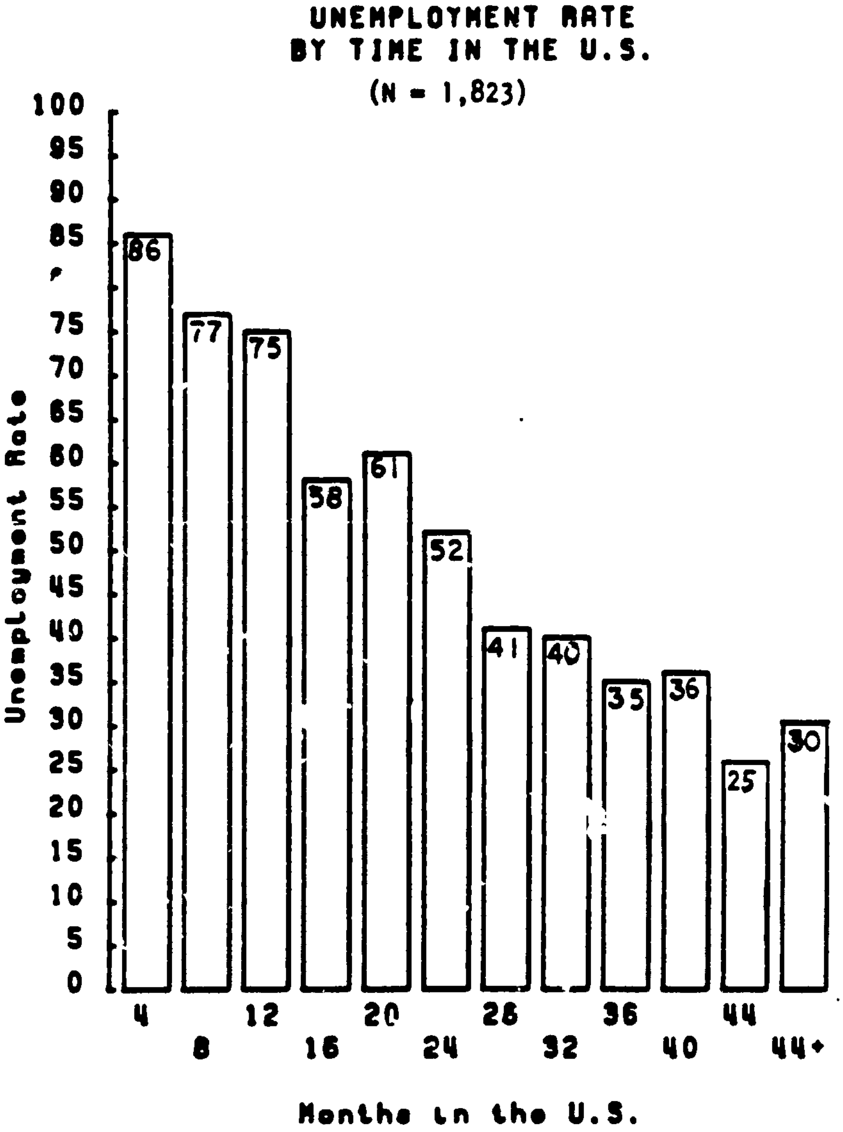

Figure III.A.9

represent only 3 percent of all currently employed refugees. These data show that the refugees in general are not moving from poor-paying jobs into prosperity by climbing from job to job (though a small number might be).

Table III.A.20

Employment History
(Respondents only)

	Current Job Only N=339	One Past Job N=135	Two Past Jobs N=34	More Than Two Past Jobs N=18
Current Hourly wage	$5.24	$5.30	$5.64	$6.96
Months in U.S.	27	31	32	33
Total Months Employed	15	21	23	20

b. Household Level. When the unit of analysis is the household instead of the individual, a very different and far more encouraging picture emerges for the household as a whole than for the individual above. Our sample shows that 57 percent of the refugee households have at least one member with some sort of job. In the aggregate, only one job is held in the majority of these working households (57 percent), while less than half of these households (43 percent) have two or more jobs. This would indicate that the household level would not show much of an improvement over the individual level. Yet, if we take time into consideration, the number of jobs held in a household tends to increase the longer the household is in the U.S. Figure III.A.10 (page 144) shows changes in the percent of the household sample with no job, one job or two or more jobs over four-month intervals. The steady, almost monotonic increase in the percent of households with two or more jobs is the most significant feature of these data and will be discussed in detail in later sections of this report. But clearly, no adequate understanding of labor force participation and economic advancement can be achieved by viewing jobs held by individuals alone. Such data would reveal little progress in economic achievement because the quality and earning power of the jobs held are not impressive. What is impressive, however, is the effort to improve the economic position with more than one person per household entering the labor force. Almost two thirds of those with jobs live in households with more than one job.

The point worth emphasizing is that the number of jobs per household rather than the character of individual jobs or job advancement at the individual level makes the major difference in achieving self-sufficiency. This can be illustrated very simply by comparing the characteristics of individual jobs in one, two, three and four or more job households. The differences, where they exist, are comparatively small. In a limited job market, individual initiative to advance in the job currently held or to get a better job will not work in moving the family ahead economically, either comparatively or in an absolute sense. What will make the difference is the capability of more than one member of a household to secure employment.

Table III.A.2? charts the level of employment (full-time or part-time) for the single and multiple job households. Note that the Chi-square is statistically insignificant, meaning that the distribution of full- to part-time employment across these households can be attributed to chance. About three quarters of all jobs, regardless of the number of workers per household, are full-time and one quarter are part-time.

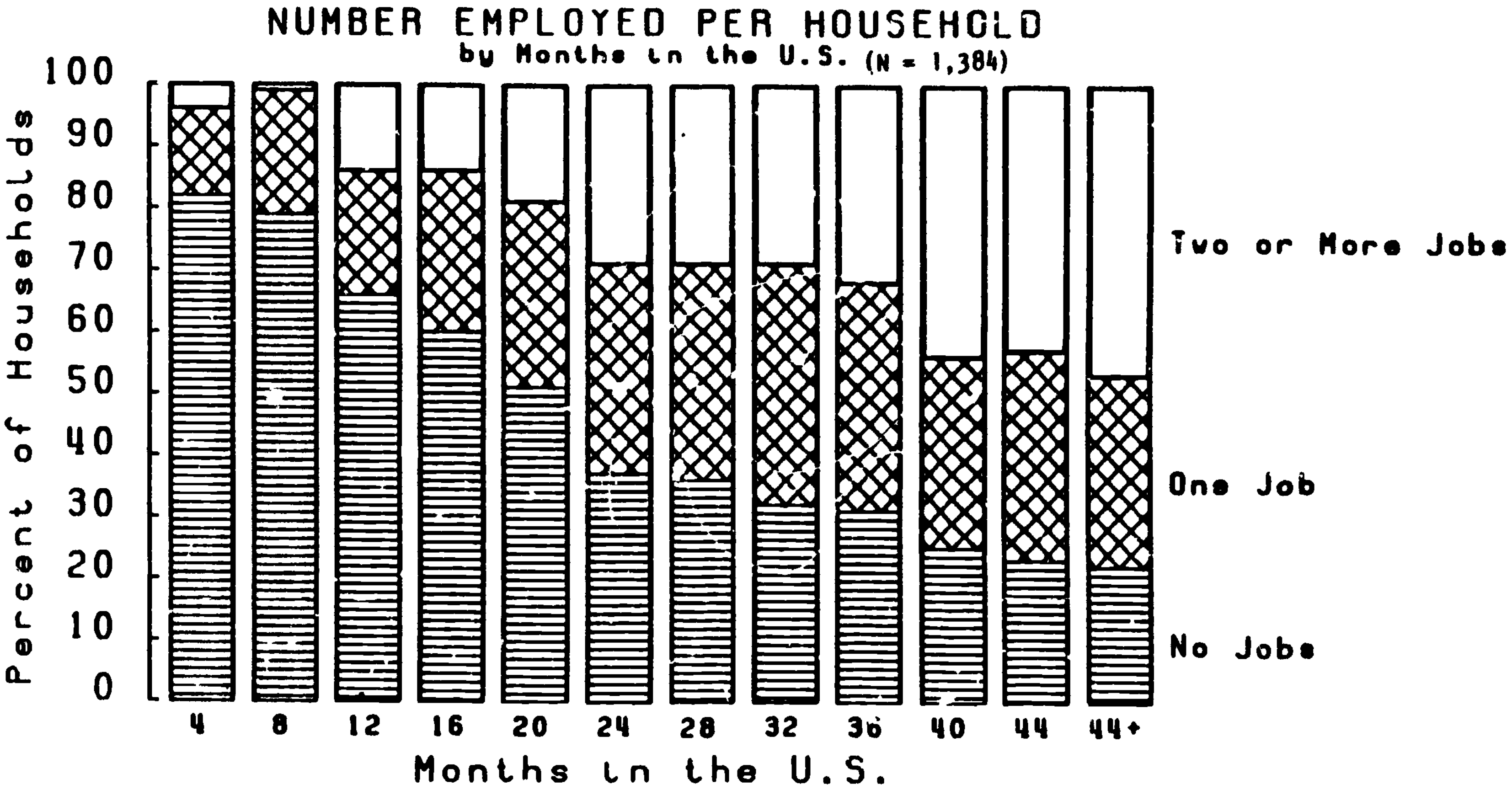

FIGURE III.A.10

Table III.A.21

Number and Percent of Jobs Per Household by Level of Employment

Employment Level	Jobs Per Household				Totals
	1	2	3	4	
Full-time	74.9% (316)	77.6% (391)	75.4% (150)	69.9% (95)	75.5% (952)
Part-time	25.1% (106)	22.4% (113)	24.6% (49)	30.1% (41)	24.5% (309)
Totals	100.0% (422)	100.0% (504)	100.0% (199)	100.0% (136)	100.0% (1,261)

Chi-square = 3.61
Probability = 0.31

Hourly wage by jobs per household is given in Table III.A.22 (page 146) and ranges from an average of $5.07 per hour for the two-job households to $4.42 per hour for the households with four or more jobs. Although the F test (analysis of variance) shows the differences in hourly wage to be statistically significant, these differences are of limited importance substantively. The households with three and four or more jobs earn on the average about fifty cents less per hour and show a smaller standard deviation than the one- and two-job households.

Table III.A.22

Mean Hourly Wages by Number of Jobs Per Household

Number of Jobs Per Household	Number of Households	Percent of Households	Mean Hourly Wage	Standard Deviation
1	418	34.5%	$4.97	$2.00
2	481	39.8%	4.07	1.86
3	187	15.5%	4.62	1.69
4 or more	124	10.2%	4.42	1.05
Totals	1,210	100.0%	$4.90	$1.83

F = 5.900
Probability(F) = 0.00

Differences between the quality of employment in these households probably account for the differences in hourly wages. Tables III.A.23 and III.A.24 (page 147) show that, on the average, jobs in the households with three and four or more jobs are more often in the periphery rather than the core sector, and are also lower in socioeconomic prestige level. But again the Chi-square is statistically insignificant. The point is that little difference in job quality exists whether the job is the first in the household or the fourth, and that the important point is the sheer number of jobs in the household, regardless of their good or bad qualities.

Table III.A.23

Number of Jobs Per Household by Economic Sector

Employment Level	Number Employed Per Household				Totals
	1	2	3	4	
Periphery	54.1% (220)	52.9% (252)	62.4% (116)	59.7% (71)	55.5% (659)
Core	45.9% (187)	47.1% (224)	37.6% (70)	40.3% (48)	44.5% (529)
Totals	100.0% (407)	100.0% (476)	100.0% (186)	100.0% (119)	100.0% (1,188)

Chi-Square = 5.99
Probability = 0.11

Table III.A.24

Number of Jobs Per Household by Employment Status

Employment Status	Number of Jobs in the Household				Totals
	1	2	3	4	
Low	68.8% (260)	65.1% (291)	76.9% (133)	76.2% (80)	69.3% (764)
Medium	19.8% (75)	20.6% (92)	15.0% (26)	21.0% (22)	19.5% (215)
High	11.4% (43)	14.3% (64)	8.1% (14)	2.9% (3)	11.2% (124)
Totals	100.0% (1,232)	100.0% (848)	100.0% (301)	100.0% (183)	100.0% (1,103)

Chi-Square = 23.94
Probability = .05

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B. INCOME SOURCE

Virtually all Southeast Asian refugees begin their American lives on welfare. For most, getting off welfare is a gradual process that is greatly dependent on the general state of the economy into which they have been thrust, because most refugees get low-paying, low status jobs sensitive to changes in the general economy and affected by "last hired, first fired" forces of the labor market. Households, most of which (65 percent) were receiving some kind of cash assistance a the time of the interview, rather than families or individuals, serve as the unit of analysis. Yet being on cash assistance does change with the length of time the refugees have been in the United States, depending upon such variables as arrival English, household composition, number of employable adults, etc., (as we shall see in the results of the multivariate analysis to be discussed later). As Figure III.B.1 (page 149) indicates, the percentage of the households on cash assistance at four-month intervals drops rather sharply from over 90 percen for those here up to four months, to roughly 50 percent for those here over 40 months. Nevertheless, 60 percent of the households here over three years still get some cash assistance. Less than 5 percent of the households have never received cash assistance in any form. Variation also exists by site. Table III.B.1 (page 150) shows the percentage of households in each site receiving cash assistance; Houston's low percentage (19 percent, or 36 households) reflects both its welfare policies and the fact that of the five sites, its refugee population has been in the U.S. the longest. Boston has more recent arrivals, explaining in part its high percentage of households (80 percent, or 248) on assistance.

We shall discuss these findings in more detail in this section, but it is important to note at the outset that the receipt of assistance is not an all-

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE

BY MONTHS IN U.S.

(N = 898)

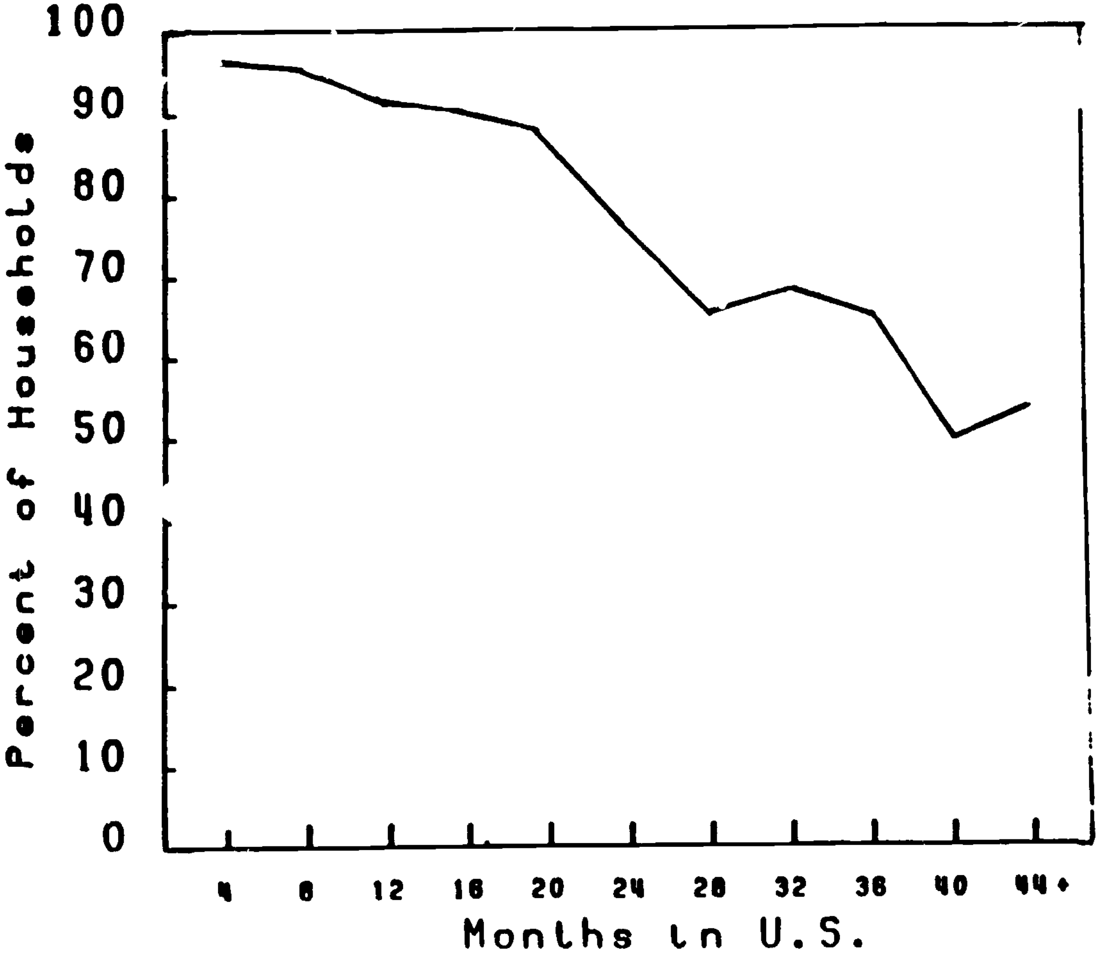

FIGURE III.B.1

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Table III.B.1

Percent of Households Receiving Cash Assistance by Site

Cash Assistance	SITE					
	Chicago	Boston	Seattle	Houston	Orange C	Totals
YES	74.2% (221)	80.3% (249)	62.7% (178)	19.1% (36)	70.4% (214)	64.9% (898)
NO	25.8% (77)	19.7% (61)	37.3% (106)	80.9% (152)	29.6% (90)	35.1% (486)
TOTALS	100.0% (298)	100.0% (310)	100.0% (284)	100.0% (188)	100.0% (304)	100.0% (1,384)

CHI-SQUARE = 220.94 PROBABILITY < .01

or-nothing proposition. Thirty-two percent of the households in the sample rely on both earnings and transfer sources. Allotments may be reduced as individuals enter the labor force and may be decreased over time as part-time jobs expand to full-time jobs, or as wages increase. Yet the number of individuals who obtain both earnings and cash assistance is quite small. As Table III.B.9 (page 162) shows, 45 adults living alone receive both assistance and earnings. Some adults who live with other adults or families also receive both, but the percentage of all adults (less than two percent) is small enough not to warrant further discussion. Of greater significance is the fact that households rely on combinations of income, and just as household composition may determine self-sufficiency (see Section IV.C.), the makeup of the household may also be the most telling single feature of dependency. For instance, households including elderly and/or disabled persons will be likely to get SSI and to continue receiving it as long as the elderly remain with them. But these same households may also include newer arrivals -- perhaps young singles -- who are initially eligible for RCA and likely to find and hold jobs later.

As a result of variation in welfare programs, disparities emerge among sites with regard to both the proportion of refugee households on assistance and the prevalence of different kinds of assistance. Yet a major problem in discussing the latter question -- which sites gave what kinds of assistance -- is that the interviewing took place when the eighteen-month cutoff of RCA was being implemented in the different sites (see Appendix V). This situation made difficult any effort to evaluate the impact of such variation.

Government financial assistance is part of the transition process for nearly every refugee household. Over half of the households with earned income (many of which still get assistance) relied on transfer income and/or food stamps in the past (58 percent). About a third who are on one type of assistance now also received another form of assistance in the past (31 percent).

1. Combinations and Amounts of Assistance

The households reporting that they receive public assistance, both cash and/or food stamps (75 percent of the sample), often depend upon more than one kind.[14]

Table III.B.3 (page 154) amplifies our understanding of the extent to which households receive different mean monthly amounts for each type of assistance. It displays the monthly average amount contributed by the specific

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[14] We asked the respondents for each household in the sample to report whether household members received cash assistance and, if so, the source and monthly amount of the checks each received.

Table III.B.2

Percent of Households Reporting
Different Combinations of Assistance

Type of Assistance	Percent of Households
No Assistance	25% (342)
Food Stamps Only	10% (138)
RCA Only	3% (45)
AFDC Only	4% (52)
SSI Only	1% (20)
Food Stamps and P/GA	1% (20)
Food Stamps and RCA	25% (342)
Food Stamps and AFDC	19% (260)
Food Stamps and RCA and AFDC	3% (40)
Other (Misc.) Combined	9% (125)
Totals	100% (1,384)

assistance type. For instance, we can see that households receiving AFDC have an mean monthly transfer income from that source in the amount of $535. On the average, where combined, each type of cash assistance is supplemented by about $200 of other assistance, mainly food stamps. Variation of payment exists by site. As noted in Section II.1.C, an eligible family of four officially receives $601.00 in Orange County, $531.00 in Seattle, $444.50 in Boston, $368.00 in Chicago, and $118.00 in Houston. Table III.B.3 (page 154) thus underscores the importance of combinations of assistance to a household's survival. Apparent differences in amounts for households on the same type of assistance are most clearly a function of household size and composition, as well as different levels of payment in each site.

Table III.B.3

Mean Monthly Household Income By Type of Assistance (N=959)

	[illegible]	AFDC	GA	SSI	Food Stamps
Mean Monthly Income	$546	$535	$283	$361	$170

2. Profiles of the Three Income Source Groups

Rather than dwell on whether or not households receive public assistance, it is more informative to identify and discuss the characteristics of the refugees within the sample who (1) receive only transfer assistance (both income and food stamps are included); (2) have some earned income but supplement it with assistance; or (3) have earnings alone. By identifying the groups which have assistance, earnings, or both, we are better able to focus on the features of the households which set these groups apart from one another.

Almost two-thirds of refugee households obtain public cash assistance, but as we have noted, reliance on public sources is hardly an all-or-nothing proposition. While 43 percent of the households subsist solely on aid (whether cash or food stamps), 32 percent have both assistance and some earned income. Another 25 percent of the households depend upon earnings alone.

Different types of assistance contribute to the two groups of assistance recipients -- cash assistance only or combined cash assistance and earnings. RCA is an important income source to both groups, contributing to 46 percent and 32 percent of the transfer and combined income households respectively. About a third of all households which have earnings also receive RCA but two-thirds of RCA-assisted households have no earnings. About the same percentage of households (30 percent) supplement earned income with AFDC; 70 percent of households on this form of assistance have no earnings. Although the numbers are small, the majority of households receiving General Assistance and SSI also report some earned income

The importance of food stamps to the overall picture is clear. Seventy-nine percent of the households that have both assistance and earned income are food stamp recipients, and 94 percent of those receiving assistance alone get food stamps.

The following are brief profiles of the characteristics of each income source group based on the data available and shown in Tables III.B.4-18 (pages 157-168). (Whether a particular income group is disproportionately high or low on a variable depends upon comparison with the "totals" percent.)

Transfer Payments Only

Site: Disproportionately low (5 percent) in Houston. Table III.B.4.

Ethnicity: High for Vietnamese. Table III.B.5.

Time in U.S.: Most recent arrivals (average=20 months). Table III.B.6.

Urban/Rural: Most likely to have come from rural areas in Southeast Asia. (26 percent). Table III.B.7.

Southeast Asian Education: Least educated. Table III.B.8.

Household Composition: Nuclear families. Table III.B.9.

Children: Highest in mean number of children under the age of five (0.83). Table III.B.10.

Employable Adults: Lowest in mean number of employable adults per household (.41). Table III.B.12.

Labor Force Status: Highest percent unemployed (25 percent); not employed, not looking for work (20 percent); housewives (22 percent); and non working students (27 percent). Table III.B.14.

Arrival English: Lowest on arrival English. Table III B.15.

Current English: Lowest on current English. Table III.B.16

Household Size: High for those with 3-10 people. Table III.B.17

Southeast Asian Occupation: High for urban occupations (clerical, sales, operatives, etc.) fishers and housewives. Table III.B.18

Combined

Site: Slightly high for Boston and Seattle. Low for Orange County. Table III.B.4

Ethnicity: High for Chinese. Low among Vietnamese. Table III.B.5

Time in U.S.: Medium. Table III.B.6

Household Composition: Disproportionately high on unrelated singles living together or with unrelated families and on extended families. Table III.B.9

Household Size: High for those with 5-11 people. Table III.B.17.

Southeast Asian Occupation: High for students, farmers, and fishers. Table III.B.18.

Earned

Site: High for Houston. Low in Boston and Seattle. Table III.B.4

Ethnicity: Differences are comparatively small when considered against total representation in totals. Table III.B.5

Time in U.S.: In the U.S. longest of the three income groups, mean=32 months. Table III.B.6

Southeast Asian Education: Highest in education on arrival. Table III.B.8

Household Composition: Highest for singles living alone. Table III.B.9.

Hourly Wage: Significantly higher than Combined ($5.44 versus $4.55). Table III.B.11

Adults Employed: Highest in percent of household adults employed (76 percent compared with 47 percent for Combined). Table III.B.13

Labor Force Status: Highest on percent employed (66 percent), low on housewife (8 percent) and non working student (8 percent) categories. Table III.B.14

Arrival English: Highest on arrival English. Table III.B.15

Current English: Highest on current English. Table III.B.16

Household Size: High for those with 1-2 people. Table III.B.17.

Southeast Asian Occupation: High for professional, military officers and enlisted and housewives. Table III.B.18

Table III.B.4

Income Source by Site (Households)

	Transfer only	Combined	Earned only	Totals
Chicago	49.4% (132)	28.5% (76)	22.1% (59)	100.0% (267)
Boston	44.3% (97)	39.7% (87)	16.0% (35)	100.0% (219)
Seattle	44.1% (98)	40.5% (90)	15.3% (34)	100.0% (222)
Houston	15.2% (25)	28.7% (47)	56.1% (92)	100.0% (164)
Orange County	55.3% (130)	23.0% (54)	21.7% (51)	100.0% (235)
Totals	43.5% (482)	32.0% (354)	24.5% (271)	100.0% (1107)

Chi-square = 138.98
Probability=<.01

Table III.B.5

Income Source by Ethnicity (Households)

Households	Income Source			Totals
	Transfer	Combined	Earned	
Vietnamese	48.1% (261)	28.5% (155)	23.4% (127)	100.0% (543)
Chinese	40.7% (92)	39.4% (89)	19.9% (45)	100.0% (226)
Lao	38.2% (129)	32.5% (110)	29.3% (99)	100.0% (338)
Totals	43.5% (482)	32.0% (354)	24.5% (271)	100.0% (1,107)

Chi-square = 16.51
Probability = <.01

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Table III.B.6

Income Source by Time In U.S. (Adults)*

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean No. of Months
Transfer	1,239	40.7%	20.1
Combined	1,187	39.0%	25.5
Earned	620	20.4	32.4
Totals	3,046	100.0%	24.728

F(2,3043) = 194.247
Probability(F) = 0.00

*The N here is those adults in households of a particular income source.

Table III.B.7

Income Source by Place of Residence in Southeast Asia (Households)

	Transfer	Combined	Earned	Totals
Urban	41.4% (357)	32.9% (284)	25.7% (222)	100.0% (863)
Rural	51.5% (123)	28.5% (68)	20.1% (48)	100.0% (239)
Totals	43.6% (480)	31.9% (352)	24.5% (270)	100.0% (1,102)

Chi-Square = 7.98
Probability = 0.02

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Table III.B.8

Income Source by Southeast Asian Education (Households)

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean*
Transfer	479	43.4%	2.090
Combined	354	32.1%	2.415
Earned	270	24.5%	2.607
Totals	1,103	100.0%	2.321

F (2,1100) = 15.320
Probability (F) = 0.00

*The mean figure (or all adults) for a household based on the following scale:

0 - No education
1 - Primary education
2 - Secondary education
3 - High school graduate
4 - College education
5 - College graduate
6 - Advanced degree

Table III.B.9

Income Source by Household Composition (Adults)

	Income Source			Totals
	Transfer	Combined	Earned	
Singles Living Alone	34.0% (49)	31.3% (45)	34.7% (50)	100.0% (144)
Singles Living Together	32.8% (89)	53.5% (145)	13.7% (37)	100.0% (271)
Nuclear Families	45.3% (862)	32.8% (623)	21.9% (416)	100.0% (1,901)
Nuclear Family Plus Singles	35.1 (87)	49.6% (123)	15.3% (38)	100.0% (248)
Extended Family	31.4% (163)	49.2% (256)	19.4% (101)	100.0% (520)
Extended Family Plus Unrelated Singles	32.6% (15)	65.2% (30)	2.2% (1)	100.0% (46)
Totals	40.4% (1.265)	39.0% (1,222)	20.5% (643)	100.0% (3.130)

Chi Square = 15.83
Probability = <.01

Table III.B.10

Mean Number of Children Under the Age of Five By Income Source of Households

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean Number of Children
Transfer only	482	43.5%	0.634
Combined	354	32.0%	0.571
Earned only	271	24.5%	0.557
Totals	1,107	100.0%	0.557

F = 11.473
Probability(F) = 0.00

Table III.B.11

Mean Hourly Wages (Households) by Income Source

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean Hourly Wages
Combined	520	52.9%	4.55
Earned only	463	47.1%	5.44
Totals	983	100%	4.97

F = 58.039
Probability(F) = 0.00

Table III.B.12

Mean Number of Employable Adults By Income Source (Households)

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean Number of Employable Adults
Transfer	482	43.5%	0.411
Combined	354	32.0%	0.570
Earned	271	24.5%	0.607
Totals	1,107	100.0%	0.510

F = 47.254
Probability(F) = 0.00

Table III.B.13

Income Source By Mean Percent of Adults Employed (Households)

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean Percent of Adults Employed
Transfer	482	43.5%	00.0%
Combined	354	32.0%	46.9%
Earned	271	24.5%	76.4%
Totals	1,107	100.0%	33.7%

F(2,1104) = 67.358
Probability(F) = 0.00

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Table III.B.14

Labor Force Status by Income Source of Household*

Labor Force Status of Adults in Household	Transfer only	Combined	Earned only	Totals
Employed	0.0% (0)	47.6% (383)	52.4% (422)	100.0% (805)
Laid Off Looking For Work	31.0% (31)	36.0% (36)	33.0% (33)	100.0% (100)
Unemployed	60.4% (319)	32.2% (170)	7.4% (39)	100.0% (528)
Not Employed, Not Looking for Work	67.4% (248)	29.9% (110)	2.7% (10)	100.0% (368)
Retired	52.1% (25)	47.9% (23)	0.0% (0)	100.0% (48)
Disabled	64.1% (25)	30.8% (12)	5.1% (2)	100.0% (39)
Housewife	58.5% (273)	30.8% (144)	10.7% (50)	100.0% [illegible]
Student Not Working	53.2% (344)	38.5% (249)	8.3% (54)	100.0% (647)
Student working	0.0% (0)	74.0% (94)	26.0% (33)	100.0% (127)
Totals	40.4% (1,265)	39.0% (1,221)	20.6% (643)	100.0% (3,129)

Chi-Square = 1,240.93
Probability = 0.00

*N is all adults in households with transfer income only, combined income, or earned income only.

Table III.B.15

Mean Arrival English Proficiency* by Income Source (Adults)

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean
Transfer	1,264	40.5%	1.438
Combined	1,215	38.9%	1.567
Earned	641	20.5%	1.925
Totals	3,120	100.0%	1.588

*Means based on the following scale:
1 - Not at all
2 - Hardly any
3 - Not well
4 - Fairly well
5 - Very well

F(2,3117) = 60.712
Probability(F) = 0.00

Table III.B.16

Mean Current English Proficiency* by Income Source (Adults)

Income Source	Number	Percent	Mean
Transfer	1,263	40.4%	2.543
Partial	1,219	39.0%	2.869
Earned	642	20.6%	3.136
Totals	3,124	100.0%	2.792

*Means based on the following scale:
1 - Not at all
2 - Hardly any
3 - Not well
4 - Fairly well
5 - Very well

F(2,3121) = 76.710
Probability(F) = 0.00

Table III.B.17

Income Source by Household Size

Household Size	Income Source			Totals
	Transfer	Combined	Earned	
1 Person	29.2% (14)	12.5% (6)	58.3% (28)	100.0% (48)
2 People	36.3% (49)	25.9% (35)	37.8% (51)	100.0% (135)
3 People	49.1% (82)	23.4% (39)	27.5% (46)	100.0% (167)
4 People	47.2% (100)	27.4% (58)	25.5% (54)	100.0% (212)
5 People	38.5% (67)	39.1% (68)	22.4% (39)	100.0% (174)
6 People	47.3% (70)	33.8% (50)	18.9% (28)	100.0% (148)
7 People	47.1% (41)	41.4% (36)	11.5% (10)	100.0% (87)
8 People	39.7% (23)	46.6% (27)	13.8% (8)	100.0% (58)
9 to 12 People	47.2% (34)	45.8% (33)	6.9% (5)	100.0% (72)
Totals	43.6% (480)	32.0% (352)	24.4% (269)	100.0% (1101)

Chi Square = 17.44
p = <.01

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Table III.B.18

Distribution among Adults by Southeast Asian Occupation of Household with Transfer Only, Combined, and Earned Only Incomes

Occupation	Income Source			Totals
	Transfer	Combined	Earned	
Professional	42.3% (33)	26.9% (21)	30.8% (24)	100.0% (78)
Officer	36.4% (4)	18.2% (2)	45.5% (5)	100.0% (11)
Manager	46.7% (21)	26.7% (12)	26.7% (12)	100.0% (45)
Student	40.6% (155)	36.6% (140)	22.8% (87)	100.0% (382)
Clerical	54.5% (24)	29.5% (13)	15.9% (7)	100.0% (44)
Sales	55.6% (25)	28.9% (13)	15.6% (7)	100.0% (45)
Crafts	47.8% (11)	30.4% (7)	21.7% (5)	100.0% (23)
Operative	53.8% (43)	28.8% (23)	17.5% (14)	100.0% (80)
Farmer	43.1% (22)	35.3% (18)	21.6% (11)	100.0% (51)
Fisherman	50.0% (16)	37.5% (12)	12.5% (4)	100.0% (32)
Enlisted	37.8% (17)	24.4% (11)	37.8% (17)	100.0% (45)
Housewife	46.1% (77)	22.2% (37)	31.7% (53)	100.0% (167)
Totals	44.7% (448)	30.8% (309)	24.5% (246)	100.0% (1003)

Chi Square = 39.20
p = .08

These profiles are drawn from a selected number of variable comparisons showing statistically significant differences across income groups. We place them here for informational purposes, but warn against making causal inferences from them since the interactional effects among the variables have not been controlled. For example, in the profile of the group on transfer income alone, the Vietnamese rank high (Table III.B.5, page 158)). However, this cannot be attributed to an ethnic quality; rather, it may be explained by the next variable -- time in the U.S. The Vietnamese as a group have not been in this country as long as the Chinese or the Lao, and it is the length of time since arrival here rather than ethnicity which best explains the statistic.

While the above comparisons are useful in gaining perspective, the variables are intercorrelated and must be approached with caution. In Chapter IV below, we present multivariate analyses which examine these variables and determine which are most significant in differentiating the three income groups.

3. Income Patterns, Site, and Time

Table III.B.4 (page 157 above) displays the pattern of income source for each of the sites.

Chicago, Boston and Seattle show remarkable similarity with respect to the percentage of households receiving transfer income alone. In all three of these sites, close to half of the households rely only on assistance. Boston and Seattle also show approximately equal percentages with combined and earned income, but in Chicago, proportionally more refugees report that they receive earned income alone.

Houston stands out in terms of both the percentage on assistance alone -- at 15 percent, the lowest of all five sites -- and the percentage of refugee households earning all their income -- at 60 percent, the highest among the sites. However, it does not differ from the other sites in terms of the proportion of combined income recipients. Orange County has the highest percentage of those on assistance alone, a lower percentage on combined income, and 21 percent of households relying on earnings alone.

Not unexpectedly, the refugees who live on earned income alone are, for the most part, the earliest arrivals. On the average, those subsisting on earnings alone have been in the U.S. for 32 months. The mean number of months in the U.S. for those receiving both assistance and earnings is just over two years (26 months), while for those who rely on assistance alone, the mean number of months in the U.S. is 20. (Because Houston is unique with respect to both employment opportunities and for the preponderance there of earlier arrivals, we also computed the mean without the Houston data. Nevertheless, even with this site data excluded, the change in the mean number of months in the U.S. was negligible for all three categories of assistance dependency.)

An examination of earnings trends by those on combined income suggests that the proportion of earned income contributing to total income may increase over time in a linear fashion. Those households with combined income and comprised of refugees who have been in the U.S. for more than three years rely on earnings for 70-80 percent of their overall income. This contrasts with the relative contribution made by earned income among those in the U.S. a year or less, where earnings comprise about 55 percent of the households' total income. For those households with refugees who have been in the U.S. between one and three years (about 80 percent of all households on combined income), the proportion of earned income increases in steady and consistent increments in association with the length of time in the U.S. Similarly, the longer the household members have been employed, the greater the contribution their earnings make to the household total. While these findings suggest a dependency/

independency continuum, with an ever increasing reliance on earnings, we must exercise caution in interpreting these statistics. The characteristics of household composition, and changes in it, may confound the observation that relationships between dependency and earnings are correlated over time. For example, some households (possibly those which can better afford to) include both families and singles (18 percent). The singles may have joined the household in the recent past, bringing either earned income, transfer income, or both to the household total.

Figure III.B.1 at the beginning of the section (page 149) shows the decline of refugee households on cash assistance over time. If we look instead at income source over time, the changes become much more apparent. Figure III.B.2 (page 173) shows a steady change, particularly in the first two years, for all three groups. Households on transfer income alone dropped from about 80 percent in the first four months to about 35 percent after three years. The percentage of households with combined income went up from almost [illegible] percent in the first four months to double that from sixteen to thirty-two months before falling off to around 30 percent thereafter. The percentage of those living just on earned income rose fairly steadily from 3 percent in the first four months to about 50 percent after three years.

All five sites reflect the general trends through time of these three income sources. Yet, while the trends are similar, the angles of the three lines differ to some degree for each site (see Figures III.B.3-7, pages 174-178). While 88-90 percent of the refugee populations who had lived here up to a year were on transfer income alone in Chicago, Orange County, and Seattle, the percentages in the second and third years drop off most sharply for Seattle (perhaps due to the impact of the eighteen-month cutoff; see Appendix V), somewhat less so for Chicago, and much less so for Orange County.

Boston has a flatter curve for the drop in the percentage on transfer income alone, a fairly steady and high rate for households on combined income, and a consequent rise but low rate for those on earned income alone. Houston has low rates of households on transfer alone and combined income and a high rate on earned only, yet this site still maintains these general trends of decline in the first, rise and fall in the second, and rise in the third.

The pattern for households with combined income in the five sites also parallels the general trenc The sites saw a rise from the first year into the second and third years and a decline in the fourth year. Only in Boston, the site with the highest number of such households, was there anything slightly different -- a much flatter curve and a constant trend from the third year into the fourth. Boston and Houston both peaked in the second year, though the differences between the second and third years were small. Chicago, Seattle, and Orange County all peaked in the third year.

In regard to households with earned income alone, four sites had steady rises from the first year through the fourth. Only Houston, with its high employment rate, saw a drop from one year to the next (the first to the second); however, there was a steady rise thereafter. Thus, in all sites, regardless of the state of the local economy and a slow start in some places, there was definite improvement in the number of households able to bring money in through earnings. Variations in degree of improvement were factors, both of the sites themselves and of other variables which differ among the refugee communities from site to site -- Boston's large and mixed households being a major case in point.

One final comment: although we have tended to view those on earned income alone as economically self-sufficient, it is misleading to do so. They are, in fact, economically independent, but not all are self-sufficient. Of

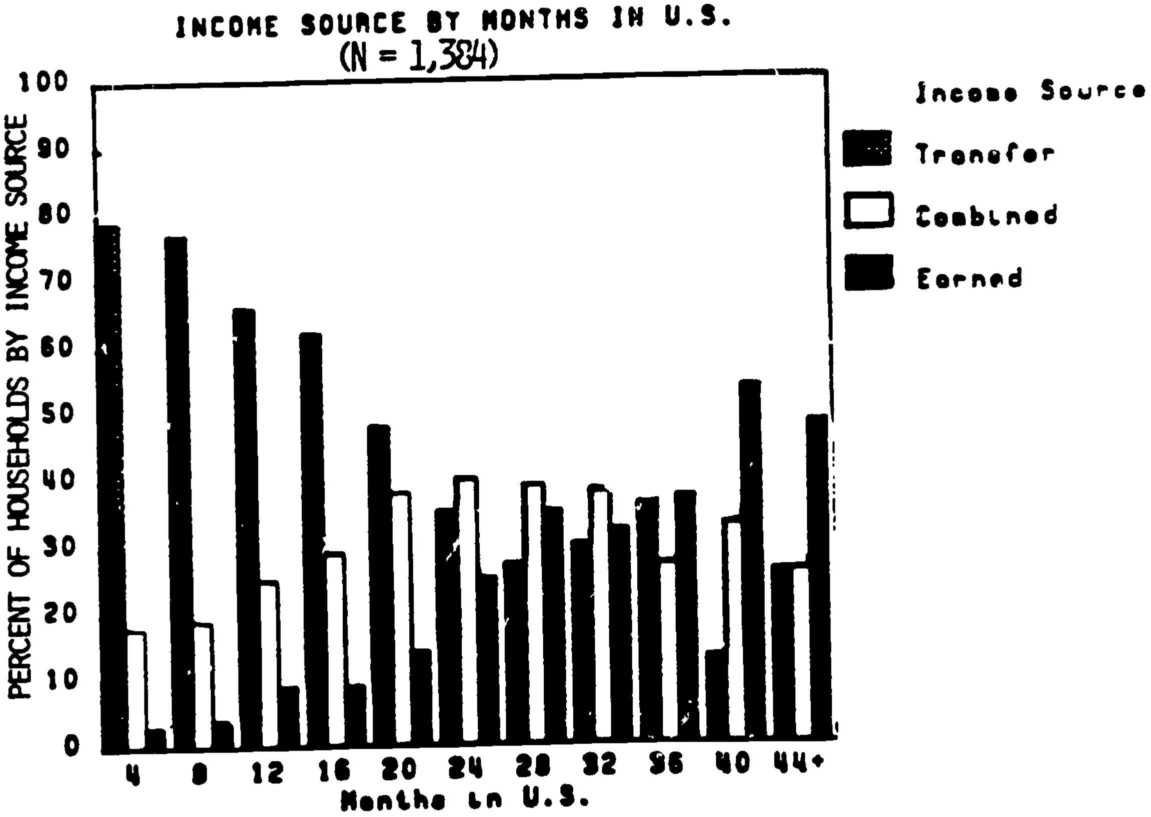

FIGURE III.B.2

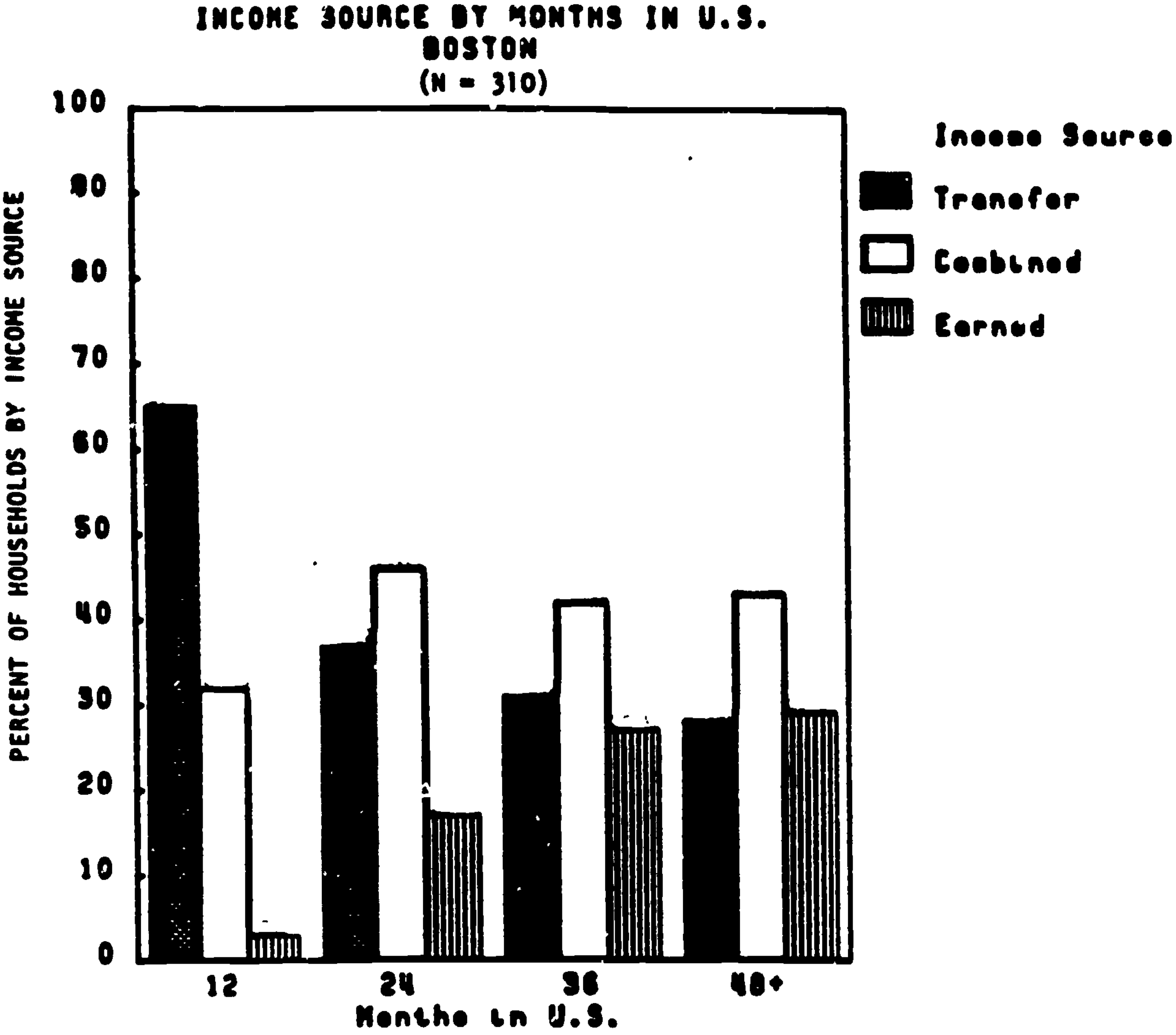

FIGURE III.B.3

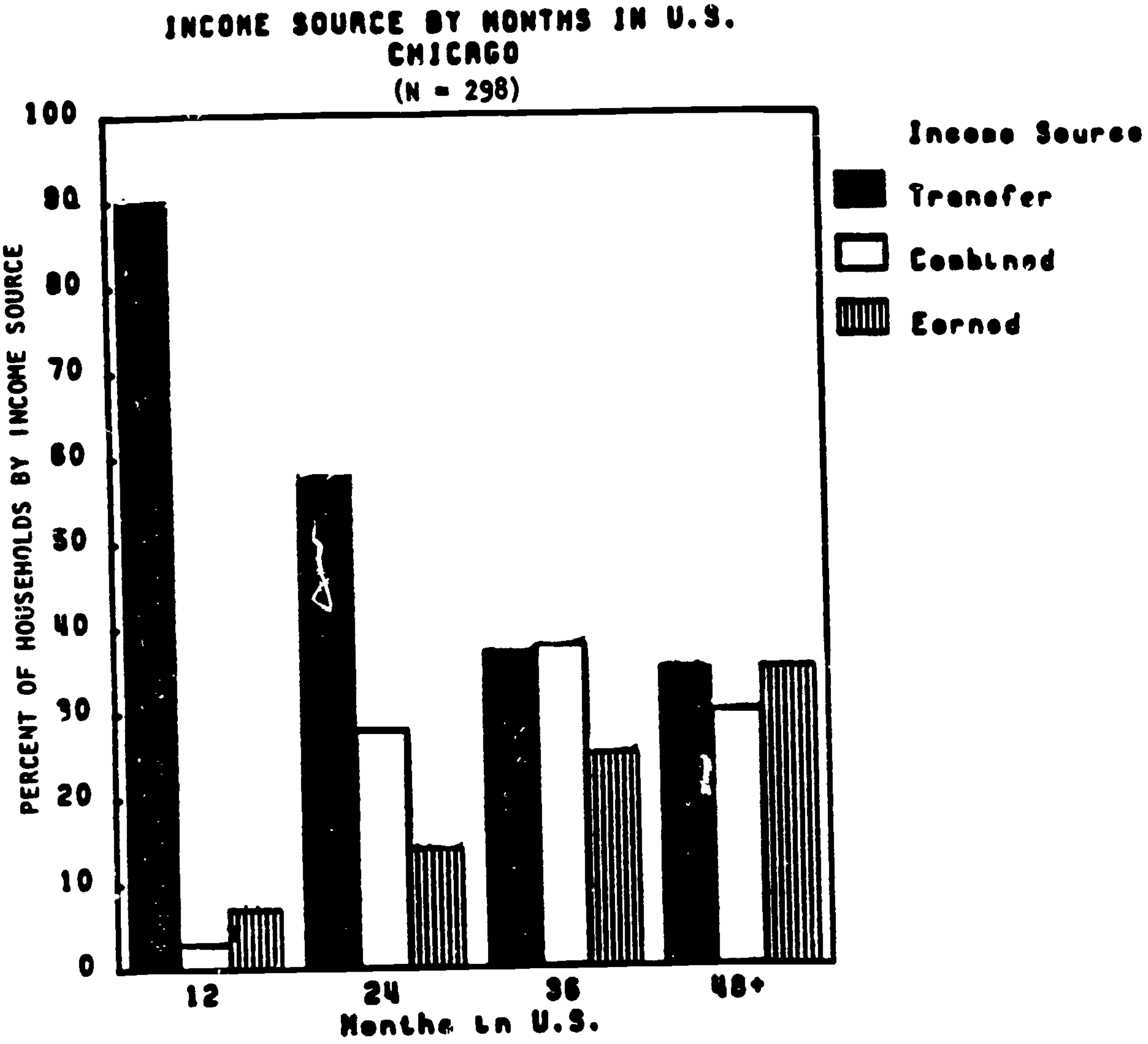

FIGURE III.B.4

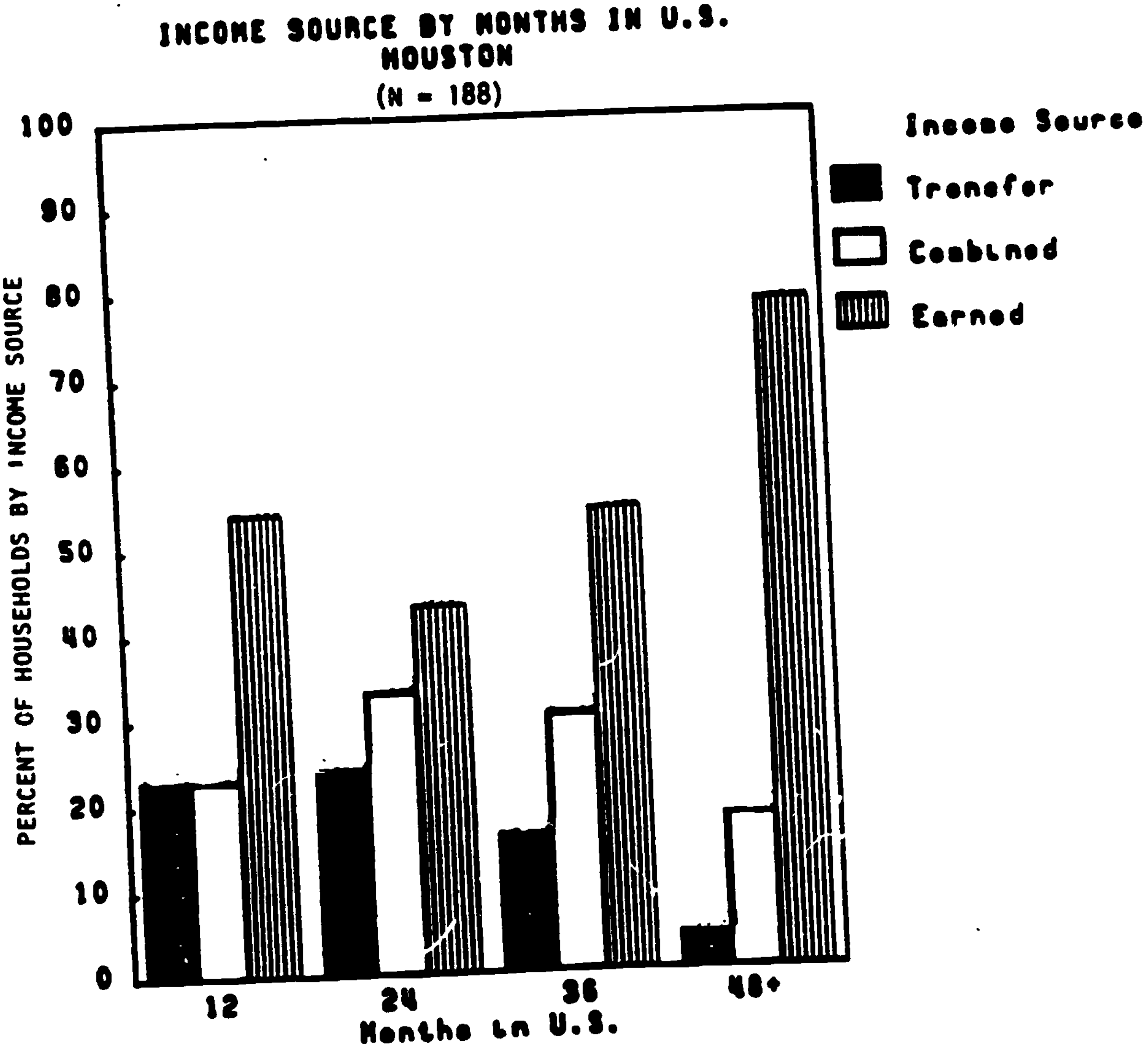

FIGURE III.B.5

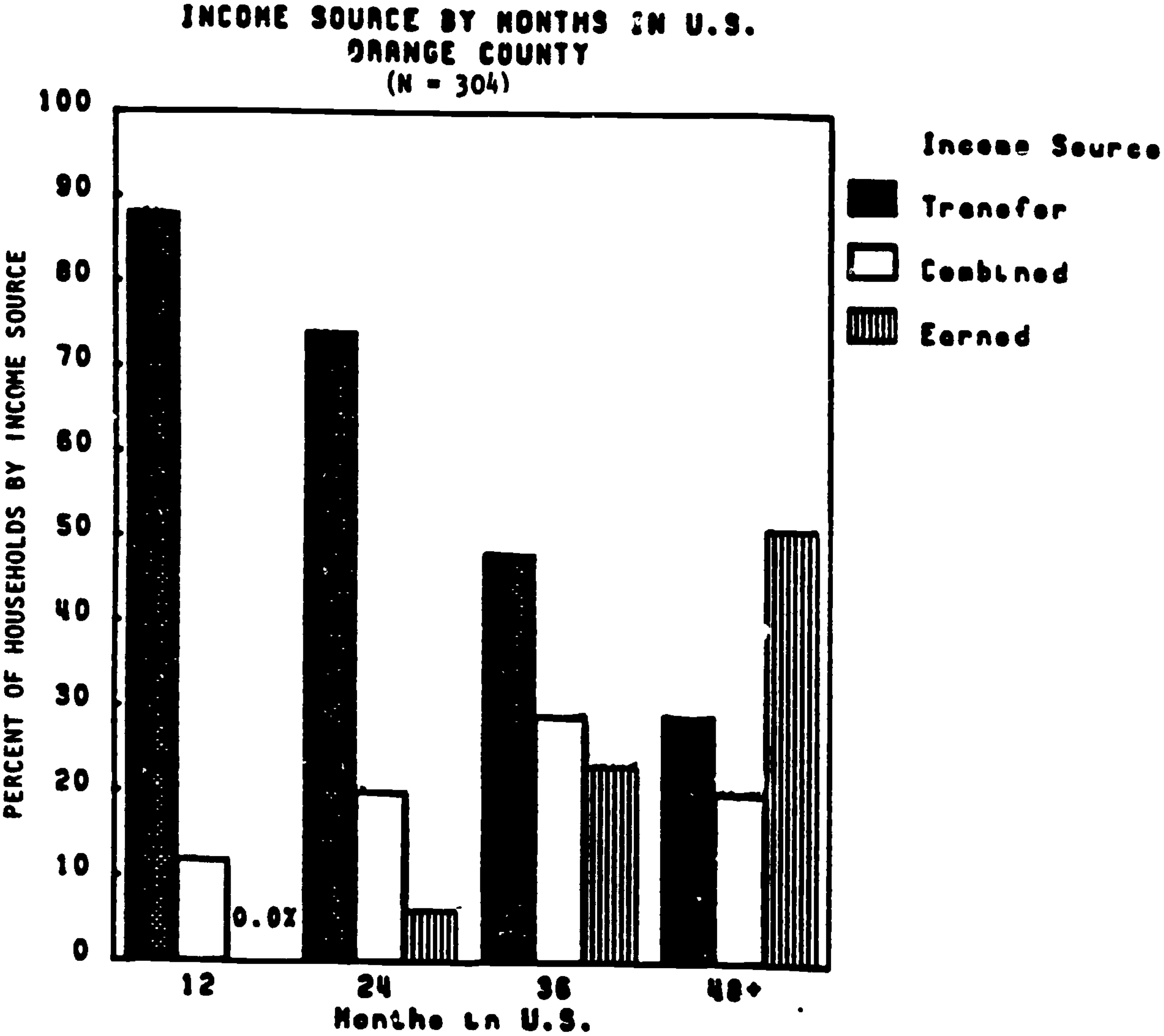

FIGURE III.B.6

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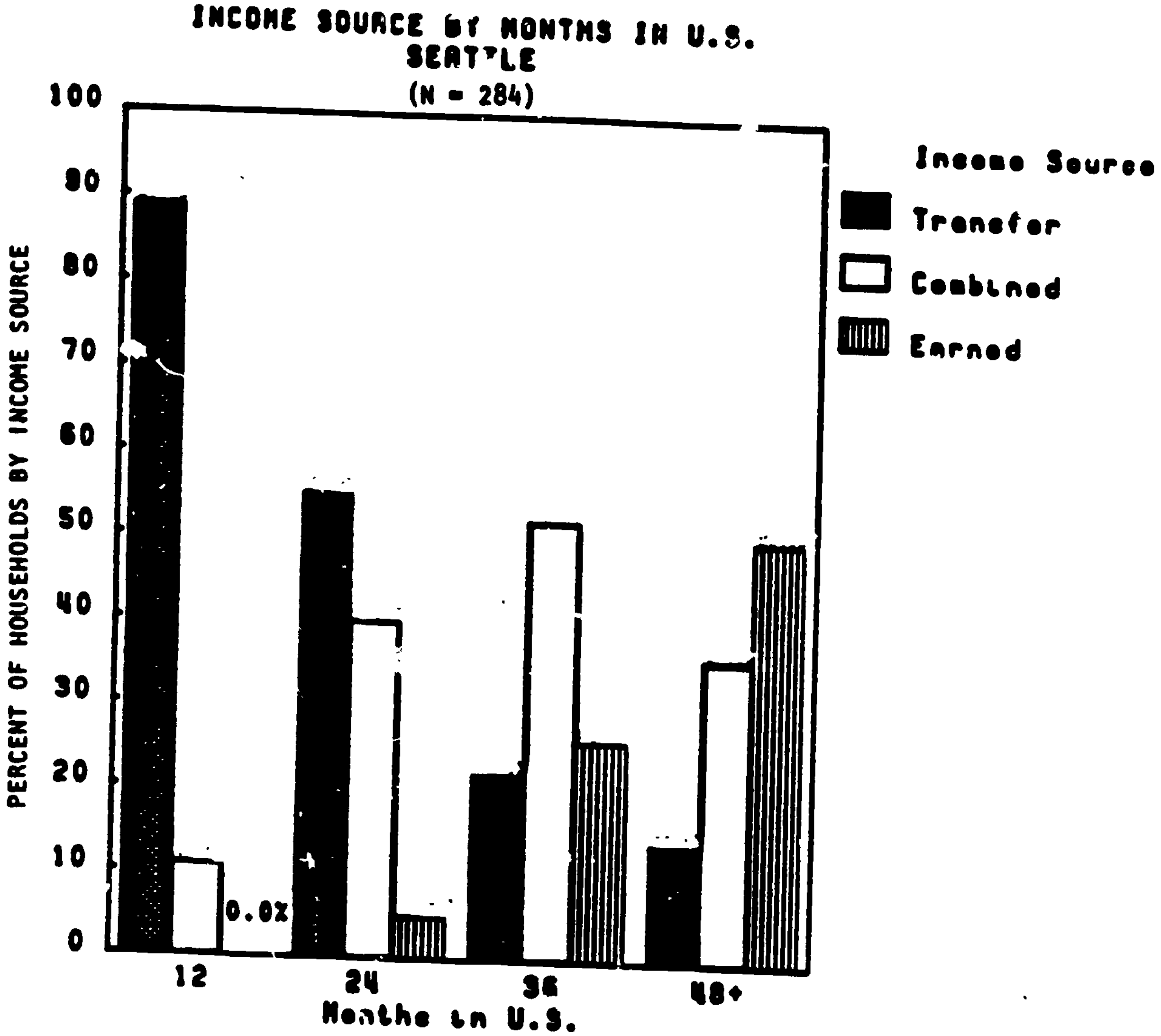

FIGURE III.B.7

those on earned income only, twelve percent are below the poverty level. The next section examines this point more closely.

C. POVERTY LEVEL STANDING

The economic status of the refugees studied is best indicated by the degree to which household needs are met in relation to the poverty level over time.[15]

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[15] "Poverty level," "poverty line" and "poverty need standard" are used interchangably in this report. The basic explanation for this measure is set forth by Orshansky in "How Poverty is Measured" published in the Monthly Labor Review (Orshansky, M. 1969). The poverty measure is calculated on the basis of Department of Agriculture data on food needs by age, sex and family size corrected for inflation. The poverty level is regularly updated and published each month by the Department of Labor in the Monthly Labor Review.

The basic rules used to obtain the poverty level are as follows:

Assign weekly food amounts by age and sex

Multiply weekly food amount as follows:
3.33 ----->to get total budget
4.3 ----->to get monthly budget
2.88 ----->to account for inflation
.8 ----->to reduce to official poverty level budget
3.33 x 4.3 x 2.88 x .8 = 32.99

"Household income" is defined as money income from Refugee Cash Assistance, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, General Assistance, and Supplemental Security Income as well as earnings, i.e., the sum of labor, capital, and transfer cash income of all household members. In-kind income (e.g., food stamps or Medicaid) is not included. Figures III.C.1 and III.C.2 (pages 182 183) show the income data, regardless of income source, in relation to the poverty standard by time in the U.S. in four month intervals. (Again, note that time in the U.S. is calculated as the mean for the household based on the arrival dates of all adult members.)

The official federal poverty level for each household has been calculated by standard procedures which assign a monthly need amount to each household member by gradation of age and sex. This is then summed to a household total and adjusted for household size (increased for units smaller than four; decreased for those larger than four -- to reflect economies of scale). The poverty-level standing has been calculated by simply dividing each household's total monthly earnings by its need standard. A household with a value of 1.0 on this measure is therefore precisely at the poverty level; a value of .5 would place it at one-half its poverty-level need standard, and a value of 2.0 would mean it earned twice its poverty-level need standard. It should be pointed out that this standard is a rather conservative estimate of self-sufficiency, Figure III.C.1 (page 182) shows that 20 percent of the most recent arrivals (those households in the U.S. for four months or less) reported incomes above the poverty level. Those in the U.S. from four to eight months are doing somewhat better (30 percent are above poverty), and so on. One-third of the households with an average of one year in the U.S. are above the poverty level, at two years there is a rise of about ten percentage points to 43 percent, and at three years 57 percent are above the poverty line. After about four years, approximately 70 percent of the households are out of poverty.

While the general direction of change in economic status shown in Figure III.C.1 is upward, the picture is not nearly as dramatic as might be expected based on the data on changes in unemployment over time shown earlier (Figure III.A.9, on page 141). Nonetheless, if compared to official poverty standing data for the U.S. over this same period, the refugees did quite well.

The official poverty rate for the total U.S. population in 1982, at the time of this survey, was 15.0 percent. (See U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports. Series P 60 144. Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level: 1982. U.S. Printing Office. 1984.) The Census Bureau data on poverty rate for specific segments of the population were: white, 12.0 percent; black, 35.6 percent; and Hispanic, 29.9 percent. By comparison, the refugee poverty rates varied from 80 percent for households in the U.S. for four months or less to around 30 percent for those in the country the longest, i.e. around 44 months (Figure III.C.1, page 182). Thus, although there is steady improvement in relation to the poverty level over time, the poverty rate for refugees in our sample at any point in time is high compared with the rate for the total U.S. population. But, those in the U.S. for

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in that the monthly need standard for a "typical" family of four is approximately $800. Some relevant definitions follow:

44 months or more show rates which are not significantly different from that for blacks and Hispanics. More important, the census data showed evidence that the poverty rate for the U.S. rose rather dramatically for the years 1979 and 1982. For example, the corresponding rates for these years are as follows: total 11.7 percent versus 15.0 percent; whites 9.0 percent versus 12.0 percent; blacks 31.0 percent versus 35.6 percent and Hispanics 21.8 percent versus 29.9 percent. Thus, the overall percent of persons living under poverty conditions rose in the period 1979-82, making the success in climbing out of poverty by refugees coming into the country during this same time period all the more striking.

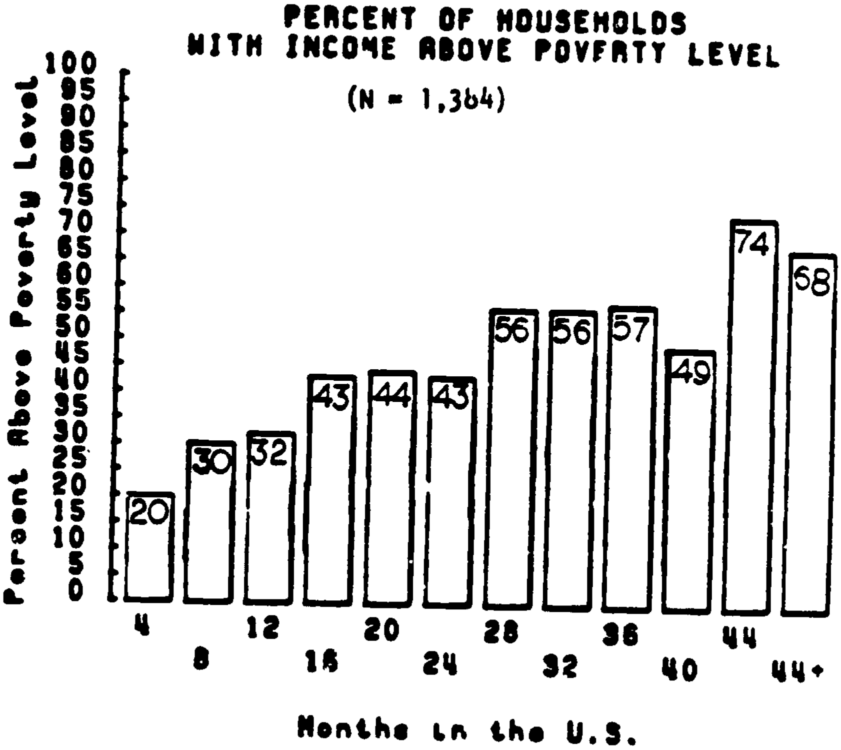

FIGURE III.C.1

PERCENT OF POVERTY STANDARD MET
BY TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME
(N = 1,384)

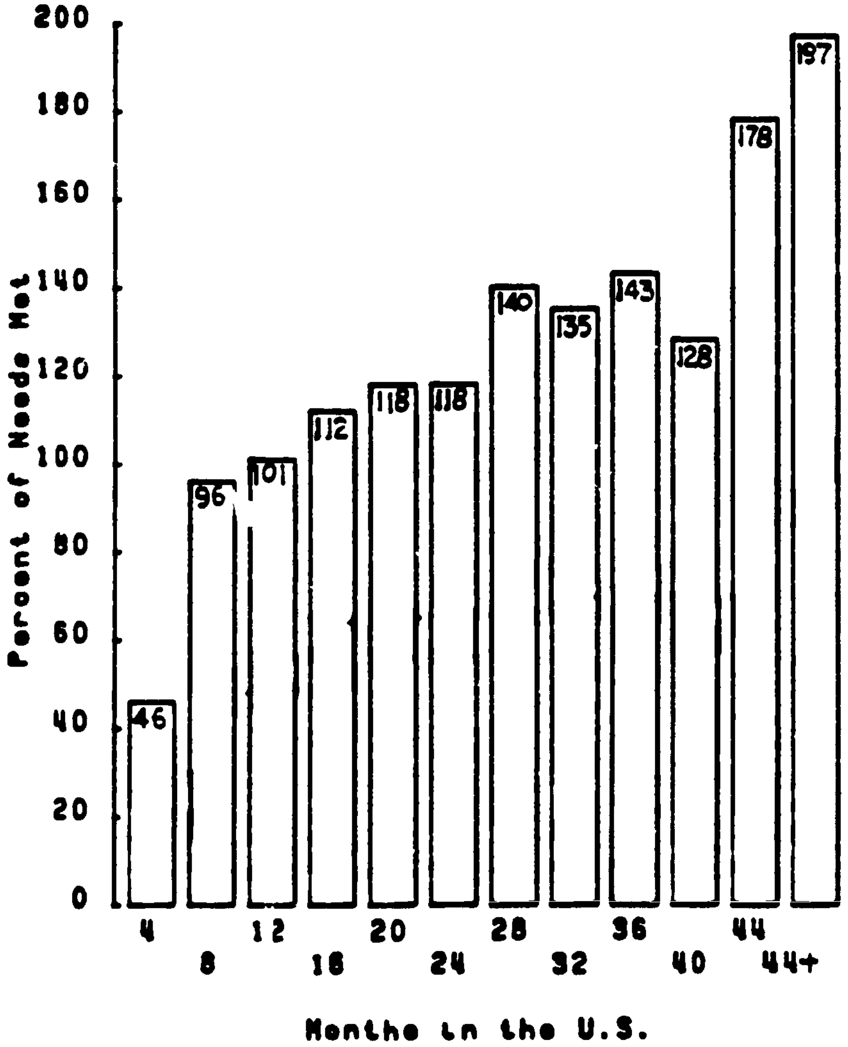

FIGURE III.C.2

Those data, along with the steady increase in earned income shown in Figure III.B.2 (page 173) promise a more steady and steeply rising improvement in economic status. The data on the numbers climbing out of poverty shown in Figure III.C.1 (page 182) are less dramatic -- particularly among those in the U.S. from 16 to 40 months, who average in the 40-60 percent range above poverty. The steady increase in the number of two-job households and the concomitant reduction in the number of households without employment (Figure III.A.9 on page 141) as well as the steady increase in earned income (Figure III.B.2, page 173) do not translate immediately into improved economic position when measured by percent changes in households above the poverty line. More in keeping with expectations based on the data shown earlier are the results charted in Figure III.C.2 (page 183). While Figure III.C.1 shows results based solely on whether or not households are above or below the poverty line, the data shown in Figure III.C.2 are based on the mean percent of poverty level standard met for those same households. For those who have been in the U.S. four months or less, the average percent of needs met by cash income is 46 percent of the poverty level standard, while Figure III.C.1 which shows that only 20 percent of the households in this same time period have incomes above poverty. Thus, however measured, the economic standing of the refugees during those early months is dismal.[14]

After the fourth month, the level of needs met rises rather steadily up to almost 200 percent of the poverty level for those who have been in the U.S. for almost four years. Translated into dollars and cents, this would mean that a household of a family of four with an income at twice the poverty level would have $1440 a month ($17,280 year) on which to live. While that amount of money is insufficient to guarantee a comfortable life in today's economy, it would be adequate for meeting basic needs and attaining a reasonable life standard.

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[14] The percent of needs met is this low because many new arrival households had yet to receive any or only limited outside cash assistance at the time of the interview. The difficulty is due to problems of getting on the rolls properly, having applications processed and checks sent. In consequence, these are difficult months during which many of the refugees must depend upon fiends and voluntary agencies for assistance (food, clothing, shelter).

The question that remains to be answered is which of the two figures (Figure III.C.1 or 2, pages 182-183) is more representative of the actual economic position of the refugees. Figure III.C.2 would indicate that their present economic status is rather good and that we can expect it to continue to improve steadily at the rate of about ten percentage points over the poverty level every few months. Figure III.C.1 suggests that progress is slower. After 44 months only about seven out of ten households are above poverty level with evidence of a steady but not dramatic change over time -- a very different picture compared to the steep upward climb culminating with an average of 200 percent of the poverty level met by those in the U.S. over 44 months shown in Figure III.C.2. If the latter figure is a more accurate reflection of the aggregate economic condition, then the rise in standard of living is commensurate with increased labor force participation and the steady increase in earned income shown earlier. If the former is correct, then common assumptions about the contribution of household employment and earned income vis-a-vis transfer income to economic well-being must be reexamined.

The truth lies somewhere in between. Both figures portray a valid picture of economic status, but from somewhat different perspectives. The issue is a matter of whether to consider the arithmetic mean or the median as the measure of central tendency. Households in the U.S. over 44 months have a mean standard of living at twice the poverty standard (Figure III.C.2) yet three out of ten of those households are still below the poverty level.

Figure III.C.2 data tells us that some of those who have made it out of poverty have done so well that their income dramatically increases the mean standard of living for all households. The aggregated data for households by percent of poverty level met charted in Figure III.C.3 (page 187) shows that a sizeable number of households have incomes which are more than twice the poverty needs standard. In fact, they range up to 750 percent of the poverty standard. Households at the 400-750 percent range of poverty standard would greatly influence the mean percent of poverty standard met for the aggregated data, even though less affluent refugee households constitute the vast majority of the sample. Conversely, a single comparatively affluent household (e.g., at 750 percent of poverty standard) would influence the data in Figure III.C.1 no more than another household with an income only $1 per month over the poverty standard. Thus, Figure III.C.2 data reflect the influence of extreme cases and Figure III.C.1 data do not. Stated differently, if we leave out the 10 percent of households shown in Figure III.C.3 (page 187) with incomes which are 200 percent or more of the poverty standard the overall trajectory in Figure III.C.2 would show a significant drop and its trends would more closely resemble those of Figure III.C.1.

Finally, one additional point should be made regarding differences in households to account for some of the extremes in Figure III.C.3 at 750 percent of poverty standards. Dramatic changes in economic status occur when persons in addition to the initial wage earner take jobs. Steep rises in households with two or more jobs (Figure III.A.9, page 141) and the steep rise in the percent of needs met (Figure III.C.2, page 183) appear to mean that more people working per household improves the standard of living. Yet the effect of multiple jobs is less predictable with respect to changes in poverty

DISTRIBUTION OF REFUGEE HOUSEHOLDS
BY RELATION TO POVERTY STANDARD
(N = 1,384)

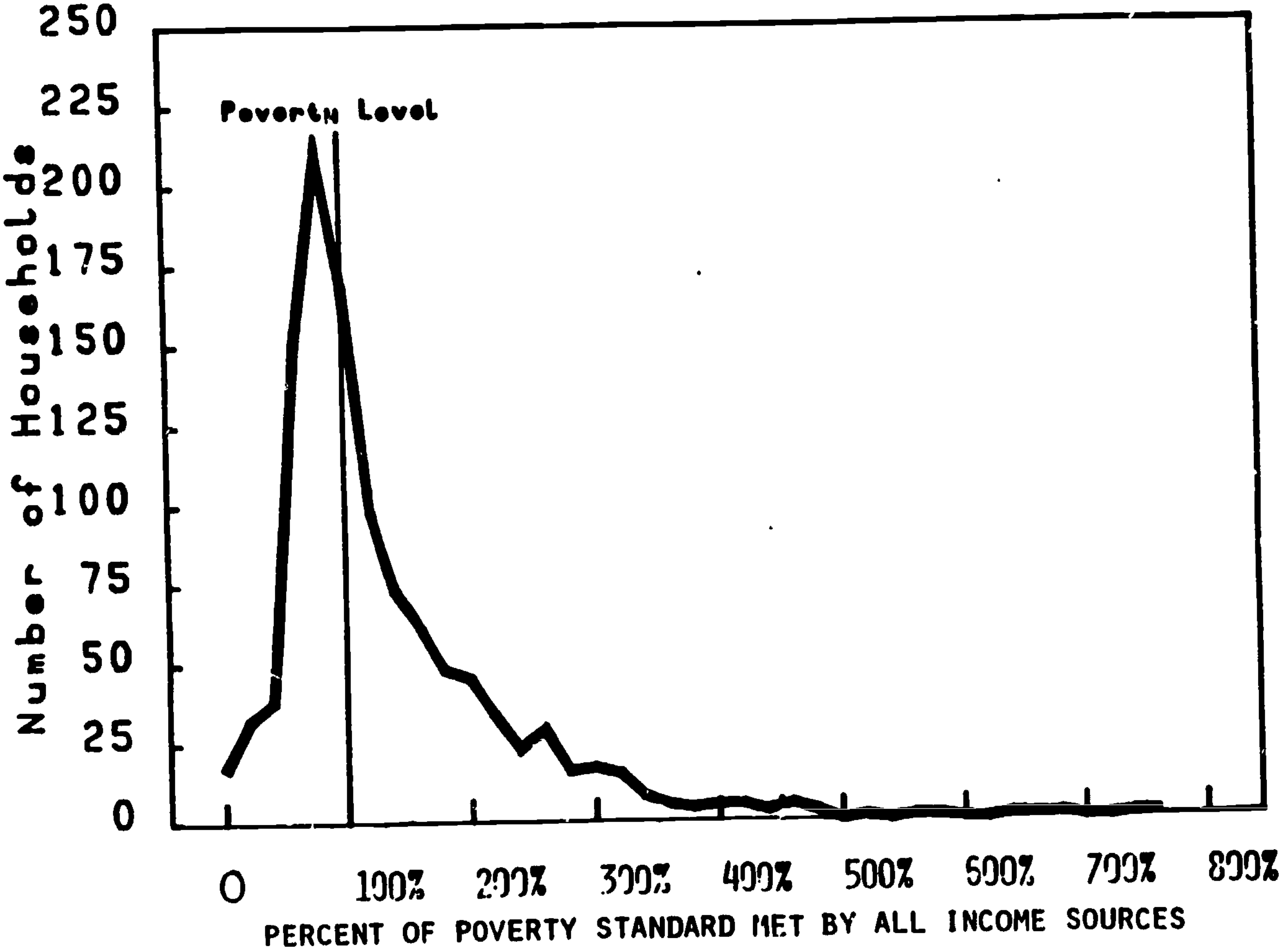

FIGURE III.C.3

level status for the refugees as a group than for an individual refugee household.

1. Income Source and Poverty

The source of household income -- transfer, combined, or earned (see Figure III.B.2, page 173) -- is a major determinant of economic status with respect to both poverty level standing and self-sufficiency if defined in terms of transfer versus earned income. The income distribution by poverty level for households on transfer income alone is shown in Figure III.C.4 (page 190). Sixty-four percent of such households fall below the poverty level with only a few receiving more than 150 percent of the poverty needs standard.

Households with combined (transfer and earned) income (Figure III.C..5, page 191) do better: 28 percent live in poverty. Finally, for those households on earned income, 12 percent fall below the poverty line (Figure III.C.6, page 193). Approximately one half of the households in the earned income group have earnings over 200 percent of the poverty standard, compared to only 16 percent of the households with combined income. Table III.C.1 (page 189) shows the mean percent poverty needs standard met for all three income groups. The average household on transfer income alone has income at 79 percent of the poverty level. The comparable figures for the combined and earned income houses are 146 and 218 percent respectively. Thus, for households to achieve income at the poverty level, or to rise substantially above it, they must acquire some earned income.

This relationship of earned income to percent of poverty standing met is evident in the coinciding changes in level of earned income over time in Figure III.B.2 (page 173) compared with the data shown in Figure III.C.2 (page 184); namely, the higher the level of households on earned income, the higher the level of needs met over the poverty standard. Note that the rise and fall in the prevalence of combined income households does not show the same close relationship to the Figure III.C.2 data. Its trajectory suggests that those combined households may represent some temporary economic expedient, but in the long run, only those families with earned income alone rise significantly above poverty.

Table III.C.1

Percent of Poverty Level Met by Income Source

Income Source	Number	Percent of Sample	Mean Percent of Poverty Level Met
Transfer	(482)	43.5%	79.1%
Combined	(354)	32.0%	146.3%
Earned	(271)	24.5%	217.9%
Totals	1,107	100%	134.6%

F(2,1104) = 286.562
Probability (F) = 0.000

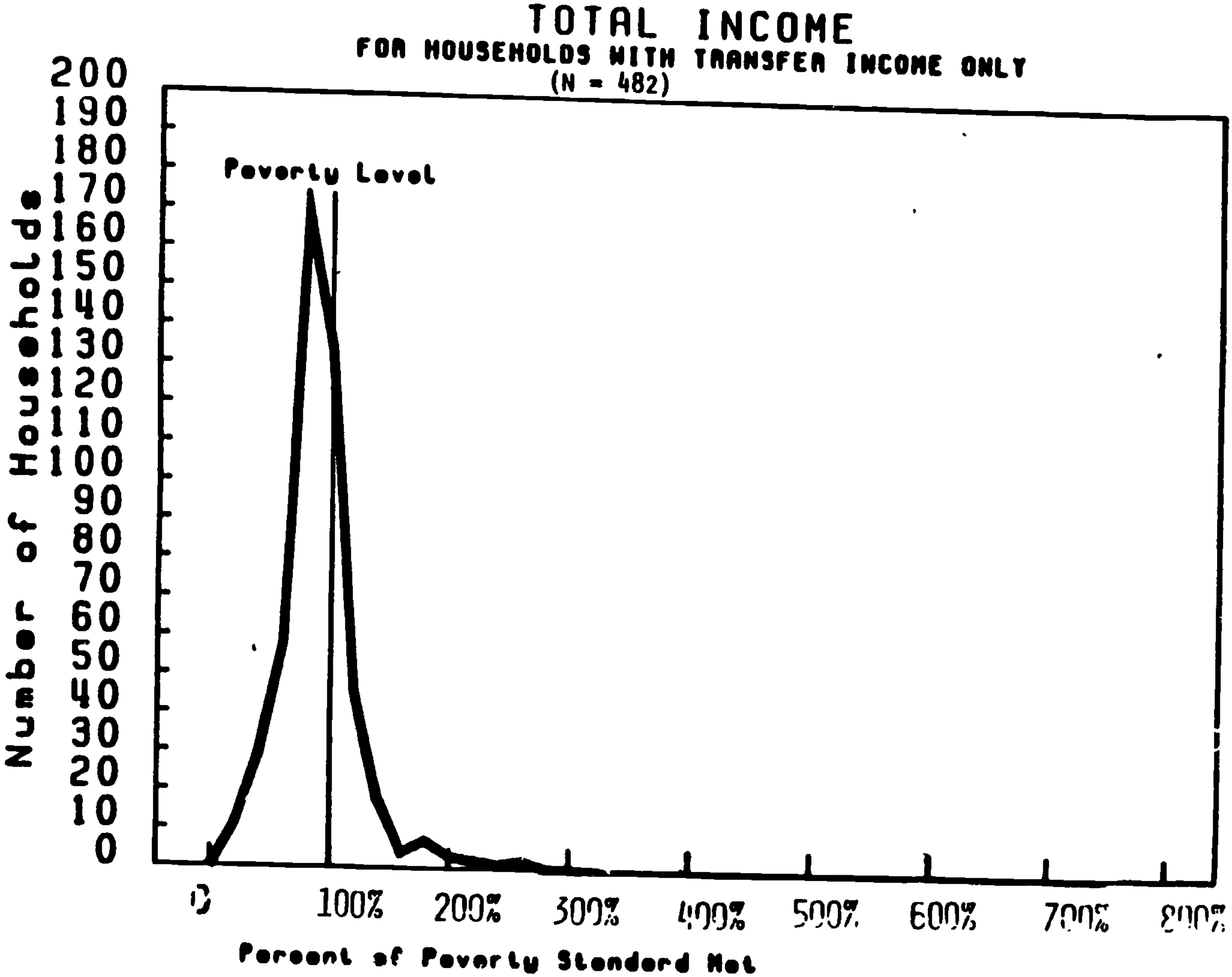

FIGURE III.C.4

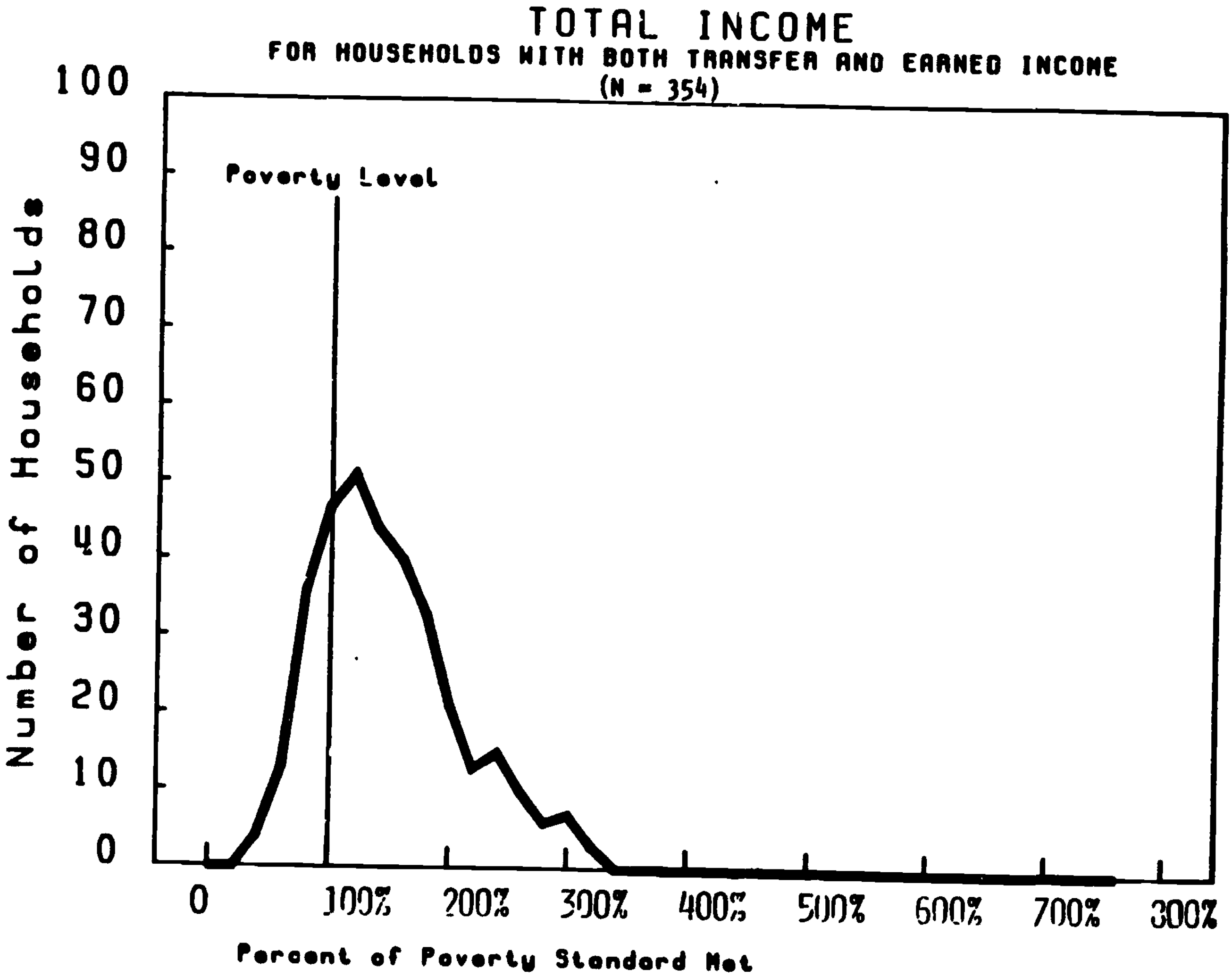

FIGURE III.C.5

A few final points. These descriptive data on income source and poverty source apply to 90 percent of our sample. Not shown in these data is the 10 percent of our household sample who reported having no sources of income. These consist about evenly of newly arrived households without employment who had yet to receive transfer income, and households where the employed person(s) had been laid off and had yet to find other employment or income sources, as well as some households affected by the eighteen-month cutoff (see Appendix V). Ten percent is a sizable fraction of households to be without income. especially given the likely absence of savings or other economic resources. As nearly as could be determined by our interviewers, persons in these households subsisted entirely on the generosity of relatives and friends.

Finally, although the earned income households fared far better than those on other sources of income, it bears emphasizing that 12 percent had incomes which fell below poverty. Thus, although 'self-sufficient" in a purely economic sense, these refugees on earned income alone are not all living above the poverty level.

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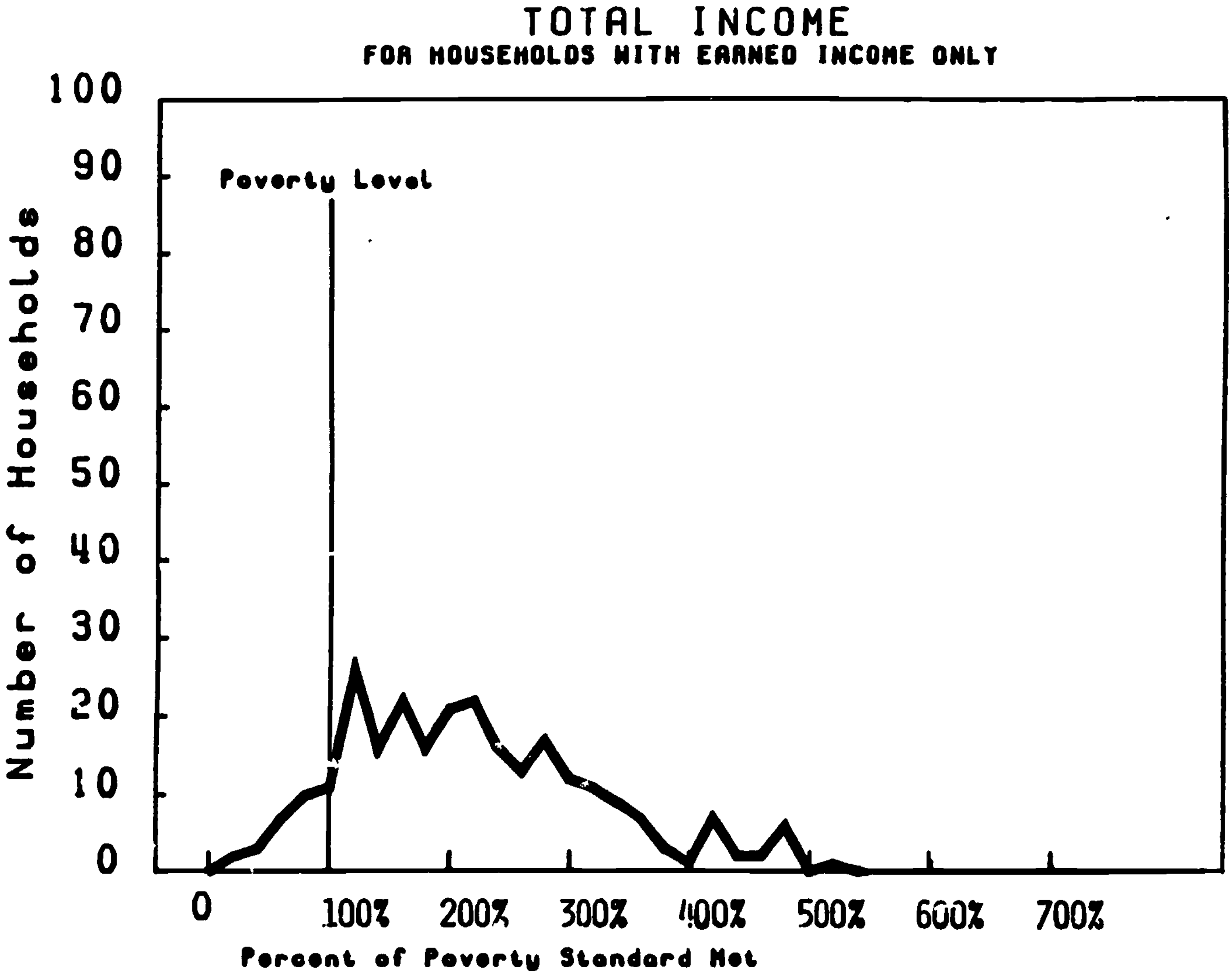

FIGURE III.C.6

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2. Jobs Per Household and Poverty

We concluded Section III.A by showing the steady increase of households with two or more jobs. The data in Table III.C.2 shows the relationship of this employment variable to poverty level standing.

Table III.C.2

Percent of Poverty Level Standard by Jobs Per Household

Number of Jobs	Percent Poverty-level Standard Met	Percent Below Poverty Level
0	77%	83%
1	150%	32%
2 or more	215%	7%

Compared to those households with no employed persons (32 percent of poverty), households with one person working almost doubled their living standard as measured by the poverty level (150 percent of poverty), and the living standard nearly triples in households with two or more persons working. The figures in Table III.C.2 also indicate that not all households with no employed persons live below the poverty level, and not all households with two or more employed persons rise above the poverty line.

CHAPTER IV

MULTIVARIATE FINDINGS

Multivariate analyses were conducted independently on two indicators of self-sufficiency: (1) receipt of cash assistance and (2) poverty status. The analytical procedures used compute the fraction of variance of an outcome measure (self-sufficiency) accounted for by a group of predictors taken together, and apportions the shared variance to the predictors in relation to the magnitude of their individual relations to the outcome measures. Thus, if each of two predictors accounts for 10 percent of the variance in a self-sufficiency measure, and together they account for 15 percent, then 5 percent is shared. To the extent that predictors account for shared variance, they can be viewed as alternative measures of the same thing, and the extent to which such shared explanatory power should be attributed to one, to the other, or divided between them, becomes a matter of theoretical interpretation. Although we are interested in the total shared explanatory power for the set of variables under study, the primary focus of the discussion to follow will be the amount of variance contributed independently by each variable to the total.[17]

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[17] Variance is a measure of the summed distances of each case's value on a variable from the general mean of all cases. The extent to which these summed distances can be reduced by calculating them from the values of a second variable, is the variance "explained" or "accounted for" by the second. This "explanatory" or "predictive" power is computed and reported as a percentage.

The question of the size and character of the relationship between this set of predictors taken together and the attainment of self-sufficiency (the three measures described) can be addressed only by multivariate analyses. We have employed such analyses to determine: (1) whether interaction effects exist among the predictors in their relations to self-sufficiency; (2) the extent to which predictors are interdependent and, therefore, "share" the variance they account for or "explain."

The advantage of these multivariate procedures over the bivariate comparisons is that they allow comparisons which take into account the influence of other variables which may be correlated with the variables under study. If we find a strong bivariate association between change in x and change in y, it becomes important to see whether the associations hold up when the effects of other important variables are taken into account, otherwise the effect of x on y may be overestimated and, essentially, that is what multivariate analysis does. By simultaneously taking into account the effects of several potentially important variables, we develop a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of the determinants of self-sufficiency.

An interaction effect exists when the relationship observed between one predictor and the outcome depends on the values of a second predictor. For example, large households might fare better than small among the Vietnamese, but household size makes no difference among the Lao. An even more dramatic interaction would occur if large households fare better among the Vietnamese, and small among the Lao. We have employed three strategies to detect interaction effects: (1) direct comparison of bivariate relationships within various groups; (2) multivariate analyses of the two self-sufficiency measures with a technique called SEARCH (see below), which successively partitions the sample into groups by maximizing the variance for which each such partition can account (asymmetrical partitions thus indicating the presence of interactions); and (3) comparison of the proportion of variance which can be explained by SEARCH (which is sensitive to interaction) with that accounted for by multiple regression analyses (which is not sensitive to interaction) using the same predictors - that is, we employed multiple regression analyses because intercorrelations (or "multicollinearity") among some of the factors we are examining could make them account for the "same" subset of variance on our self-sufficiency measures. Multi-variate analyses (which assumes linearity and additivity) is useful under these conditions to investigate the degree of shared variance and the relative importance of the predictors when taken together. All of these strategies suggest the presence of relatively minor interactions: the strength, but not the existence or direction, of many relationships vary within different parts of the sample. There appear, however, to be no major interaction effects that must be taken into account in order to describe the basic relationships of interest in this study. Furthermore, we have not detected any sizable curvilinear relationships that need to be taken into account. It appears that the relationships between the factors we have examined and self-sufficiency can be adequately described by models which assume linearity (that the relations can be approximated by a straight line) and additivity (that there are no pronounced interaction effects).

A. PREDICTOR VARIABLES

Below is a list of variables examined in the multivariate analyses for their relationship to the three self-sufficiency measures.

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Ethnicity
4. Household Composition
5. Site
6. Urban/Rural in Southeast Asia
7. Secondary migration
8. ESL
9. Employment Service use
10. Vocational Training
11. Health problems
12. Time in U.S.
13. Current English Proficiency
14. Arrival English Proficiency
15. Southeast Asian Occupation
16. Southeast Asian Education
17. Household Size

In some instances these variables stand for an entire set of items included in [illegible]ltivariate analyses, rather than a single item. For example, "Site" actually consists of the following separate site-level variables for each of the five sites:

SITE
  Total Population
  Percent Black and Hispanic
  Percent Asian
  Cost-of-living index
  Unemployment rate
  Availability and types of welfare
    programs -- in particular, general
    assistance, AFDC-unemployed parent,
    in addition to RCA
  Availability of employment and ESL programs

When and where appropriate, the detailed features of each predictor variable will be elaborated upon in the discussion to follow.

Taken together, the variables listed account for similar amounts of explained variance regardless of the self-sufficiency measures used. Specifically, we were able to account for 29 percent of the variance of receipt of transfer income alone and 23 percent for poverty level standing measures.

B. RECEIPT OF TRANSFER INCOME

Table IV.B.1 gives the results of a multivariate analysis comparing those households receiving transfer income (entirely on transfer plus those with a combination of transfer and earned i.e. combined, income) with households which are entirely on earned income. Five variables, Site, Time in the U.S., Arrival English Proficiency, Household Size, and Age account for 28.23% of the variance between those households on transfer income and those on earned income. Included in Table IV.B.1 are only those variables which accounted for one percent or more of the variance.

Table IV.B.1

Predictors of Household Receipt of Transfer Income

Variables	Percent Variance
Site	9.40
Time in U.S.	7.30
Arrival English Proficiency	6.13
Household Size	3.03
Age	2.37
Total Explained Variance	28.23

The variable accounting for the largest percent of explained variance is Site and, more specifically, this variable ranks high in the table entirely because of the difference between Houston and all other sites. Forty-four percent of the Houston sample are receiving transfer income compared to 81 percent for the other sites combined. In addition, those on transfer income have been in the U.S. for less time than those on earned income (less than thirty months versus thirty months or more) and, also report less English proficiency upon arrival (87 percent of households with a mean ranging from "none" to 5 on a refined scale for Arrival English; compared with 62 percent for those ranging from 6 to 10 (Fluency) on the same scale). Also, larger households are more likely to be on transfer, e.g. sixty-eight percent of households with 5 or more adults receive transfer income compared to forty percent for those with one to five persons. This analysis revealed a bimodal relationship of age to receipt of cash assistance, the youngest and the oldest are more frequently found on transfer income while of those on earned income are more often in the middle age range, i.e., 24-55.

Despite the sizable amount of variance accounted for by this analysis, the explanatory value is limited. That is, while certain variables are identified as significant statistically, they are of little value in understanding the dynamics of economic self-sufficiency and resettlement. Moreover, the use of nonreceipt of cash assistance as a proxy for self-sufficiency is questionable in view of the fact that 12 percent of those household solely on earned income fall below the poverty line. Therefore, some measure other than a strict economic indicator of self-sufficiency would seem more realistic. In consequence, we turn to poverty status to explore for factors which play a role in determining which households climbed out of poverty and which did not.

C. POVERTY LEVEL STANDING

Table IV.C.1 (page 200) shows the major predictor variables for household poverty level standing resulting from the multivariate analysis. The variables are listed in order of their independent contribution to the explained variance. These results are richer in their substantive significance than those obtained for transfer income receipt.

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Table IV.C.1

Predictors of Household Income Below the Poverty-level
(N=1,398)

Variable	Percent of Variance
Household Composition	7.79
Arrival English Proficiency	5.09
Household Size	3.92
Time in U.S.	2.54
Site	1.69
Southeast Asian Education	.85
Southeast Asian Occupation	.82
Total Variance explained	22.70

Table IV.C.2

Percent of Households Living Below Poverty Needs Standard by Composition of the Household (N=1,384)

Household Composition	Percent Living Below Poverty Needs Standard
Unrelated Singles Only	9%
Extended Family and Single(s)	20%
Multiple Family and Singles	27%
Nuclear Family and Single(s)	29%
Single, Individual Living Alone	29%
Multiple Family	40%
Extended Family	43%
Nuclear Family	61%
Total Sample	51%

1. Household Composition

The data on poverty level standing by household composition, the most powerful independent predictor of whether a household income is above or below the poverty level needs standard, are further detailed in Table IV.C.2 (page 201).

These data show that the household group which constitutes the largest proportion of the total sample -- over half in fact -- also comprises the largest percentage of households below the poverty standard. Sixty-one percent of the nuclear families, which account for 52 percent of the household sample, do not have the minimal income necessary to meet needs at the poverty level. The household unit making up the next largest proportion of the sample is the Extended Family. That group, which constitutes 26 percent of the total sample, is second only to nuclear family units in its failure to reach the poverty standard. Forty-three percent of these households fall belc the poverty standard. These two groups, which together constitute 79 percent of the entire sample, represent the only two classifications in Table IV.C.2. where only related members of the same family live under a single roof. In other words, they come closest to meeting what is routinely meant by "family."

Households that double-up do about as well as extended families. Forty percent of the multiple family households live below the poverty standard, which is quite a bit better than they would do if they lived separately. What makes a greater difference in rising out of poverty is the presence of one or more unrelated singles in a household. The percent of Nuclear Family and Single(s) below the poverty level is 29 percent, or half that for Nuclear Family members alone. Equally significant reductions occur for the Multiple Families plus Single(s) (40 percent versus 27 percent) and Extended Family plus Single(s) (43 percent versus 20 percent). In this entire report, few attributes will be found to produce a substantive effect on economic status equal to that of the presence of unrelated and presumably employable singles in a household. Although probably less important to long-term self-sufficiency than other variables, this household composition arrangement is a real boon to immediate self-sufficiency. Finally, 9 percent of the households consisting solely of unrelated singles live below the poverty level -- the smallest percentage in poverty for all household groups. This is not surprising since these households consist largely of collections of potential wage earners and fewer elderly, children, or other types of dependent persons.

2. Arrival English.

The refugee's level of English proficiency at the time of arrival in the U.S. is important for two reasons. First, it is an extremely good predictor to later economic status, second only to household composition. Second, it proved to be a better predictor than current English, Southeast Asian education and Southeast Asian occupation.

Although Arrival English is important to all refugees in achieving self-sufficiency, this relationship is most easily demonstrated in single nuclear families which constitute a majority of the households in the survey (52 percent). Figure IV.C.1 (page 204) shows the point along the English proficiency dimension where the multivariate "split" occurs to produce the greatest variance, as well as the greatest effect in terms of poverty-level standing. Here we use the more refined scale for English proficiency of 0-10. If the split is made between those refugee households which average 0 (none) to 3 (some) level of ability in English versus those which average 4 to 10 (fluent), the corresponding percentage living above the poverty level are 31 percent and 63 percent. That is, those nuclear families whose English upon arrival in the U.S. is better than "some" on reading and speaking are twice as likely to achieve self sufficiency under the same conditions as those who are less proficient upon arrival.

Multivariate results can be difficult to present because such results depend upon holding a number of variables constant in order to partial out the interaction and multicorrelational influences of other variables. Although somewhat complicated, one such effort is warranted to show the power of Arrival English over two other background variables -- Time in the U.S. and Southeast Asian Occupation. Of those less proficient in English (0-4), only 4 percent achieved self sufficiency in less than 30 months. Other than additional time in the U.S., we found that the only factor to make a difference in determining self-sufficiency for those households with limited English proficiency was Southeast Asian Occupation. Those who climb out of poverty

Percent of Nuclear Families
Above the Poverty Level
by Level of Arrival English
(N = 666)

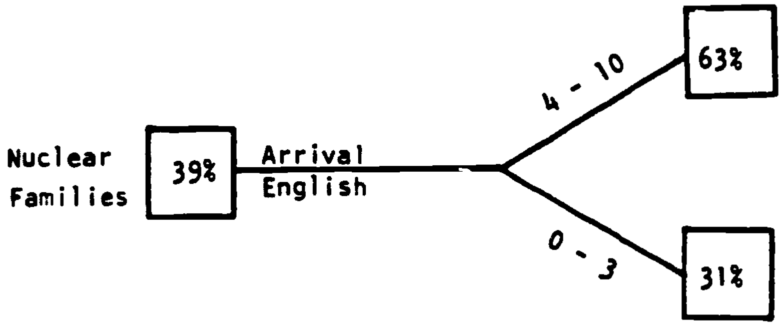
Nuclear
Families
39%
Arrival
English
4 - 10
63%
0 - 3
31%

FIGURE IV.C.1

Percent of Households Above Poverty by Arrival English and Household Size

(N = 1,384)

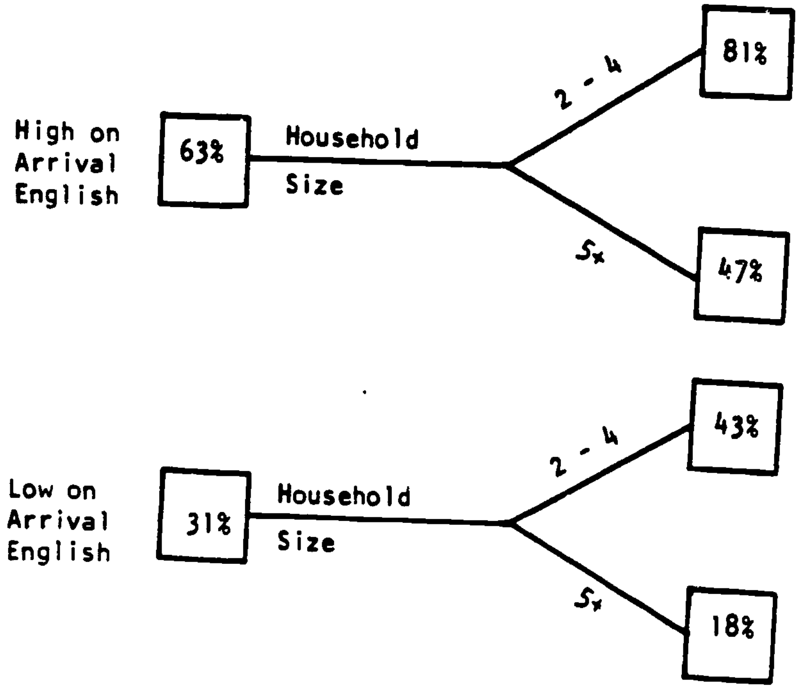
High on Arrival English
63%
Household Size
2 - 4
81%
5+
47%
Low on Arrival English
31%
Household Size
2 - 4
43%
5+
18%

FIGURE IV.C.2

the quickest are professionals. Even with limited English skills, 32 percent of those persons achieved self-sufficiency compared to less than half that (15 percent) for refugees with other occupational backgrounds. Presuming that professionals (i.e. persons with advanced degrees) in Southeast Asia came from comparatively higher socioeconomic backgrounds as well as higher educational backgrounds, it is noteworthy that even they require more than 30 months to achieve self-sufficiency to any significant degree. They are, however, among the first out of poverty at a rate twice that of others with limited English proficiency upon arrival Yet these "others" constitute the bulk of our sample: 65 percent of the refugees in our sample fall in the group which is less proficient on Arrival English as defined above.

Before ending this discussion, it is important to comment on why Arrival English proves to be such a powerful predictor of self-sufficiency and why current English is not. While this question carries implications for programmatic intervention (i.e. ESL) and will be elaborated upon in later sections we will deal with it here mainly from the standpoint of the multivariate analyses performed.

We conducted several multivariate analyses using a variety of self-sufficiency measures, and English upon arrival in the U.S. repeatedly proved to be among the important sources of variance reduction and Current English did not. We also ran the same analyses leaving out Arrival English as a predictor. Under this condition, Current English emerged as a predictor, but without matching the level of variance reduction associated with Arrival English. In essence, Arrival English predicts what Current English predicts and more. Therefore, Current English becomes eliminated statistically because it makes little or no independent contribution to variance reduction when Arrival English is included among the predictors. Substantively, this means two things. First, no intervening events (such as experience at large or programmatic experience) occurred which preempted or overrode the power of Arrival English to predict Current English closely. Arrival English remained highly correlated with Current English regardless of events between date of arrival and date of interview. Second, Arrival English, however gained before reaching the U.S., was simply a better predictor to self-sufficiency measures than Current English; we had expected the opposite. Moreover, this is not due to the presence of students in the sample who have improved their English since arrival but are out of the labor force and who show up in our data as not self-sufficient. If this had been the case, we might have found even a negative correlation between Current English and self-sufficiency. There is the possibility that in the long-run, (a) post-arrival experiences will have more influence on Current English, thereby weakening the ability of Arrival English to predict Current English; and (b) as job advancement occurs over time, i.e. long-term self-sufficiency, Current English will be a better predictor to economic status than Arrival English. However, insofar as immediate self-sufficiency is at issue, the refugee's English proficiency at the time of arrival in the U.S. is a better predictor than current English proficiency as reported by refugees, representing a span of up to almost four years in the U.S.

3. Household Size.

Smaller households fare better economically than larger households. This holds consistently true for all household composition categories regardless of their English proficiency upon arrival. As Table IV.C.1 illustrates (page 200), it is the third best predictor.

The impact of Household Size can best be illustrated by following the data shown in Figure IV.C.2 on page 205. For the households whose adults had a higher mean English proficiency on arrival, 81 percent of those with smaller households are above poverty level compared to 47 percent of those with larger households (five or more). The corresponding figures for those less proficient in English on arrival are 43 percent and 18 percent respectively.

One can easily see how the magnitude of effects increases markedly with these interactions. Eight out of ten small households with comparatively better English on arrival were out of poverty. Conversely, only one in five households were out of poverty if they were less proficient on arrival and comprised comparatively large families.

The data in Figure IV.C.2 (page 205) are derived from households of single nuclear families. The data for other household combinations would be similar. We have chosen to use nuclear family households for purposes of simplicity (only one type of composition, no combinations) and because these constitute the largest percentage of households in the sample (52 percent).

In order to give additional meaning to the household size, we also ran multivariate analyses using "Adults Employable" (the number of adults per household who could participate in the labor force) as the predictor variable. The computation for this variable is the comparison of the number of adults (age 16 or over) per household in relation to the number of children under school-age. We constructed this index as the ratio of "employable" adults to the total household size (adults plus children). Each adult was considered to be "employable" unless reported as retired, disabled or over 55 years of age. Students and older people who were reported as working, laid off or seeking work were also included as "employable." Finally, one adult in each household with a child five years of age or younger (preschool) was regarded as a child caretaker and hence not "employable," unless there were two or more other "unemployable" adults (such as grandparents) already in the household to perform those duties. The result of these rather complex decision-rules is essentially a ratio of employable adults to dependents. Table IV.C.3 (page 209) gives the multivariate results on poverty level if only the nuclear family data are analyzed, with the Adults Employable variable included among the predictors.

Table IV.C.3

Predictors of Poverty-Level Standing
(Nuclear Families)

Variable	Percent of Variance
Arrival English	10.20
Household Size	7.96
Adults Employable	3.34
Site	3.40
Time in U.S.	.97
Southeast Asian Occupation	.81
	26.68

It is interesting that both Household Size and Adults Employable contribute independently: Household Size, however, contributes more than twice the amount of explained variance. This raises the possibility that in some nuclear families, older children or persons outside the home may take care of the preschool children so that both parents can work. We have only indirect evidence to support this supposition. But, it is noteworthy that adding Adults Employable drops the variance contributed by Time in the U.S. to less than 1 percent, meaning that it is of no substantive contribution to the overall amount of variance explained by the other variables. This means that, if we know how many employable adults there are in a household, date of arrival would not add significantly to our ability to predict the poverty-level standing. We report this with some satisfaction, because some reports on refugee resettlement in the U.S. cite arrival date as the most powerful derived variable in predicting economic progress. Because "time", as such, has little or no explanatory value in its own right, it is important to be able to reduce its overall contribution through the identification of variables which are conceptually more meaningful. Thus, for example, as far as nuclear families alone are concerned, the predictive power of knowing the level of arrival English of households will enable one to predict the economic status of a household far better than knowing the date of arrival. Even more significant is the interpretive value of arrival English, which at least in the short run holds far greater potential for giving meaning to the findings than "time" alone.

4. Time in the U.S.

Data presented earlier on employment and income sources, as well as the economic status data discussed in this chapter, show that steady, often monotonic, changes occur over time in surprisingly predictable trajectories. Clearly, the longer refugees are in the U.S., the better their economic status. But "time" as a variable has limited explanatory value. What is important is to identify what happens over time that makes a difference in determining economic self-sufficiency, or for any dependent variable. So in a sense, the variance attributed to "Time in the U.S." in this analysis represents a residual for the variance of variables that are, in fact, time-bound and the nature of which can, at best, be speculated upon. For example, as time goes on, refugees pick up English skills, learn the cultural mazeways, cut into friendship networks which help to find employment; the younger children become school age and thereby free-up a spouse to enter into the labor force, etc. These are the events which occur over time that are directly associated with the achievement of self-sufficiency. Thus, while not denying the importance of time as a factor, we look to other results, to aid us in understanding which refugees take longer to achieve self sufficiency and why.

5. Site

Site is the final variable to contribute explained variance of any significance. The amount contributed (1.69) is materially insignificant to the total explained variance; more important is the finding that differences in achieving self-sufficiency attributable to site-related factors are far less important than expected. To a large degree, some of the obvious differences are accounted for by other factors. For example, while refugees in Houston may be comparatively better off than refugees in other sites, they arrived earlier and had significantly better arrival English than the latter. The earlier arrival date also meant that the economy was in better shape (across all sites) than it was for later arrivals. That is to say, with better than average English proficiency, refugees arriving at the same time as those in Houston did as well wherever they settled. There are some exceptions and, in the main, they account for the additional 1.69 percent of explained variance. The economy in Seattle was the worst across the five sites and had been from the time the first refugees arrived there. Therefore, individual and household characteristics that correlated with improved economic status elsewhere were of less benefit to the refugees in Seattle. Chicago was singled out in the multivariate analysis because it was the only other site with a specific feature associated with the attainment of self-sufficiency. Almost all households in Chicago on transfer income fell below the poverty line; on the other hand, those households with employed persons were well above the poverty line. Therefore, comparatively speaking, the gap between those on transfer income versus those on earned income was large in Chicago, and because there were sizable numbers on each of these two income sources (vis-a-vis Houston, where there were comparatively few on transfer income), Chicago became singled out. We must re-emphasize that the significance of the variations across sites, while identifiable, is of very limited importance in terms of the total picture. Even then, both site-level factors noted impacted almost exclusively on one particular segment of the refugee population -- namely, nuclear families with low levels of English proficiency.

6. Southeast Asian Education and Occupation.

These variables contributed less than one percent of explained variance and, therefore, are of no practical significance in determining poverty standing during the first four years of resettlement. If, however, one were to identify a single group of individuals with the highest percentage above poverty, it would be singles, alone or unrelated in small groups with the highest level of past education. In our sample, 81 percent are above poverty. There are, however, comparatively few such persons in our sample. By contrast, the subgroup with the smallest percentage above poverty make up a sizable segment of the sample. They are large nuclear family households, poor in education and arrival English, and in the U.S. less than forty months. Only 14 percent of these are above poverty in our sample. The bivariate relationships are stronger, particularly for Southeast Asian education which correlates .24 with poverty-level standing and .13 with receipt of cash assistance. The correlations for Southeast Asian occupation are significantly lower, .06 for poverty-level standing and .02 for receipt of cash assistance respectively. The reason Southeast Asian education does not perform better in the multivariate results is because of its high intercorrelation with Arrival English, the variable which predominates in importance to self-sufficiency regardless of whether English was acquired through Southeast Asian education, camp classes, or other means. The point is that Southeast Asian education is important to our present measures of self-sufficiency because it was a means for acquiring English proficiency. In the long run, as the availability of better jobs improves, etc., we might expect other substantive advantages of better education to emerge as important to resettlement and economic position. At the moment, however, it is not very important to self-sufficiency.

D. OTHER VARIABLES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

The results in the preceding sections have given priority to findings based on multivariate analyses. More often than not the results show that the variation in self-sufficiency could be accounted for by five or six factors, household composition, English proficiency upon arrival in the U.S. and the number of employable adults per household. Many variables of substantive concern to the achievement of self-sufficiency did not show up as statistically important and, in consequence, were never treated in any detail. In the discussion to follow, effort is made to explain these expected relationships.

The reason for returning to the examination of these variables is because it would otherwise appear that many important factors -- program exposure, urban-rural backgrounds, health, etc. -- have been ignored. They, along with several hundred other variables (see Section IV.B.2 and Appendix VI), were in fact included in all our analyses, but simply did not prove to be statistically as important as one might intuitively expect as a result of the multivariate analysis. From the technical perspective, they did not prove statistically significant because of their intercorrelations with other factors which accounted for more variance.[18] Nonetheless, these factors remain salient concerns and are discussed below, along with the reasons they may not have been given prominence in the results discussed earlier. In addition, matrices showing the (1) bivariate correlations for a large number of independent variables with various measures of self-sufficiency, and (2) the intercorrelations among major variables with each other, are provided in Appendix VI. Also provided in the appendix is a set of instructions for reading the bivariate correlations.

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[18] For a discussion of Variance, see page 195, note 17.

1. Urban/Rural

Refugees from rural areas are more likely to be on cash assistance than those with urban backgrounds in Southeast Asia (see Table IV.D.1).

Table IV.D.1

Urban-Rural Background and Transfer Income

Income	Urban		Rural	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Transfer	(2,198)	68.8%	(689)	74.6%
No Transfer	(999)	31.2%	(234)	25.4%
Totals	(3,197)	100.0%	(923)	100.0%

Chi Square = 11.67
Probability= <.01

The bivariate data in this table show that persons from rural backgrounds are more likely to be on transfer income than those from urban backgrounds. Similarly, Table IV.D.2 (page 215) that persons from urban backgrounds in Southeast Asia are more likely to have a better economic position in relation to the official poverty standard than those from rural areas, and this relationship is also statistically reliable. Poverty status shown in Table IV.D.2 is scaled to show the percentage below poverty) and seven levels of standing ranging from 1 (at or immediately above poverty) to 7 (income at seven times poverty standard).

Table IV.D.2

Poverty Level Standing by Residence in Southeast Asia

Poverty Level Standing	Residence	
	Urban	Rural
Less than 100%	57.4% (751)	65.7% (207)
100-199% p-level	26.7% (349)	25.7% (81)
200-299% p-level	11.1% (145)	6.3% (20)
300-399% p-level	3.0% (39)	1.0% (3)
400-499% p-level	1.0% (13)	1.3% (4)
500-599% p-level	.5% (7)	0.0% (0)
600-699% p-level	.3% (4)	0.0% (0)
700% or greater than p-level	.1% (1)	0.0% (0)
Totals	100.0% (1,309)	100.0% (315)

Chi Square = 15.77
Probability= <.03

If as these bivariate comparisons show that, when compared with refugees from urban backgrounds, refugees from rural areas in Southeast Asia are more likely to be on cash assistance and to have poorer economic standing as measured by poverty status, why did this variable not emerge as important in the multivariate analyses? The reason is that other variables account for a greater amount of explained variance and allow us to understand what "urban-rural" background really means. For example, two variables, Family Composition and Arrival English, together virtually wipe out the importance of urban-rural background as a significant variable. Family Composition is our most powerful predictor to self-sufficiency: (1) nuclear families fare more poorly than other household arrangements; whether from urban or rural backgrounds, and (2) there are many more nuclear families among those who came from rural than urban backgrounds. Thus, the findings shown in Tables IV.D.1 and 2 (pages 214-215) are largely a reflection of the Family Composition variable rather than something intrinsically significant in urban-rural split. So, while it is true that households from rural backgrounds do not achieve self-sufficiency as quickly as those from urban backgrounds, the multivariate data tell us that a major reason for this difference is because nuclear families are more frequently found among the refugees with rural backgrounds and that they are slower to achieve self-sufficiency than other household arrangements more commonly associated with refugees from urban settings in Southeast Asia.

Similarly, the variable, Arrival English, which is highly correlated with the attainment of self-sufficiency, shows that fluency in English is comparatively poorer among rural populations. If a person has little or no English proficiency upon arrival in the U.S., he or she will have more difficulty achieving self-sufficiency than those with better English, regardless of background, either rural or urban. The point is that the multivariate analysis uncovers the more powerful predictors which underlie bivariate comparisons and which would otherwise go unnoticed if only bivariate comparisons. Once the entire data set is submitted to multivariate analysis, the greater understanding of the bivariate urban-rural comparison with self-sufficiency emerges. It is not that people from rural backgrounds in Southeast Asia are less successful solely because they came from rural backgrounds; it is because they are more likely to be in nuclear families (and therefore, have more children, and fewer persons available for employment per household), and are poorer in English upon arrival in the U.S. Conceptually, however, it does make some sense to say that there is an association between urban-rural background and self-sufficiency favoring persons from urban backgrounds, but only because those households are less likely to hold nuclear families with children, more likely to have at least survival English upon arrival in the U.S., etc. Thus, we have often placed more emphasis on how the data emerge as statistically important rather than reconfiguring the findings along lines which seem more intuitively and conceptually appealing.

2. Ethnicity and sex

Although some differences associated with ethnicity are shown (e.g. unemployment rates, job quality) they are small and would at best approach significance if treated as bivariate relationships. As resettlement continues to progress, differences among the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao are quite likely to emerge because of differences in Southeast Asian education. family composition, etc. But at the time of this survey, those differences appear to have little relationship to the achievement of self-sufficiency during early resettlement.

The movement of women into the work force, particularly those in nuclear families, emerges as a critical factor in the achievement of self-sufficiency and the improvement of economic status in general. A multiple job strategy is essential to getting ahead financially for households, and the data indicate that the importance and success of women in the work force is no less than that for men. Women are, however, more likely to be excluded from ESL classes and employment related programs.

3. Health

About a quarter of the refugees reported health problems and the only variable associated with health was Age: older people have more health problems. There was no association between health and economic self-sufficiency for the refugees considered in the aggregate, nor is there any evidence that health coverage played a major role in the decision to leave welfare and enter into the work force. Nonetheless, at the individual household level, poor health can be a major barrier to economic status. Five to ten percent of the population reported financial setbacks because of medical problems, or suffered unmet health problems, or both because they were unable to pay for medical attention.

4. Current English Proficiency

English proficiency, both on arrival and current, is related strongly to self-sufficiency. However, proficiency on arrival is a considerably better predictor, accounting for 10 percent of the variance in poverty-level status. Current proficiency accounts for 6 percent. The possibility should be considered that arrival English serves as an indicator of socioeconomic status and/or familiarity with western culture, and hence a whole array of background skills and attitudes not reflected by the level of proficiency alone. Yet arrival English is a better predictor to self-sufficiency than Southeast Asian education and occupation precisely because what is important during early resettlement is simply a minimal or survival level of proficiency in English, regardless of how it was acquired, e.g. past Southeast Asian education, prior contact with Americans, camp E.S.L. Two of the most striking findings of this study are: (1) arrival English is the best single predictor to self-sufficiency for nuclear families, and (2) the level of English proficiency upon arrival in the U.S. is of much greater importance to the achievement of self-sufficiency in the short run than post-arrival English proficiency.

5. Secondary Migration

Fifteen percent of the sample reported that they had moved. About three quarters of these moves were from outside the site and usually outside the state. Multivariate and bivariate analyses failed to yield a relationship between secondary migration and the economic self-sufficiency measure. Our measures indicated that those who moved into a site from elsewhere did as well as others who resettled there initially. Only 1 percent of those who either moved or reported that they planned to move cited public assistance policies as the reason for the move. The reasons most often cited for moving were to obtain work or to join other family members.

6. Program Effectiveness

The question of program effectiveness has turned out to be difficult in terms of the information gathered on the variety of variables being considered. However, we are able to make the following observations on the three major types of programs which fall under the purview of this survey: ESL (English as a Second Language), employment services, and vocational training.

a. ESL

To determine what variable had strong correlations with improvement in English proficiency in the U.S., we ran a series of stepwise regression analyses (Table IV.D.3, on page 221) those with no English on arrival here, those with a little English and, those with some English. We did not include those refugees with higher levels of English proficiency since the room for improvement in such cases was small and "ceiling" effects would confound the problems of measuring and comparing change scores for the group. For the first -- those with no English on arrival -- the major variable affecting improvement in English proficiency was level of education in Southeast Asia, and the next was age. These two variables correlate .59 with improved English proficiency. Thus, a young, well-educated person would tend to show much greater improvement in English than an older, less well-educated person. Time in the U.S. added .07 to the combined correlation, and degree of participation in an ESL program added another .03, resulting in a multiple correlation of .69. Thus, more time here and greater attendance in ESL classes account for some additional improvement in English for this group compared with Southeast Asian education and age but not much. The contribution of ESL for this group, although statistically significant, is of no substantive significance.

For the second group -- those with a little English on arrival -- the major variable for improving their English is primarily how long they have been here. Age (meaning relative youth) was another contributing factor, as was level of education in Southeast Asia. For this group, ESL attendance did not account for changes in proficiency level. The third group -- those with some English on arrival -- also had Time in the U.S. as the major variable, with ESL attendance, Age, and Southeast Asia Education adding slightly to the correlation with language improvement. The result of these analyses is that, while ESL attendance contributes some to English improvement, other variables -- level of education in Southeast Asia relative youth, and time in this country -- are far stronger predictors of improvement, regardless of ESL attendance.

Table IV.D.3

Stepwise Regressions on Improvement in English Fluency

Levels of Arrival English	R
"None" Arrival-English Group	
SEA Education	.46
SEA Education + Age	.59
SEA Education + Age + Time in U.S.	.66
SEA Education + Age + Time in U.S. + ESL	.69
"Little" Arrival-English Group	
Time in U.S.	.38
Time in U.S. + Age	.43
Time in U.S. + Age + SEA Education	.46
"Some" Arrival-English Group	
Time in U.S.	.27
Time in U.S. + ESL	.28
Time in U.S. + ESL + Age	.29

There are other important implications to the results shown in Table IV.D.3 and before proceeding further, some additional comments will help to clarify these findings. The "None," "Little," and "Some" Arrival English designations are based on self-reported measures on both reading and speaking abilities. While self-reported, they are measures which have been routinely used and generally show a strong positive correlation when compared to actual operational measures with the people giving such self-reports. The "improvement" measure used for each person was the difference in score between self-reported ival English and self-reported current English proficiency. The stepwise regression procedure operates similarly to the multivariate search technique described earlier, but relies on correlations rather than analysis of variance in selecting the more powerful variables as it goes through iterative cycles in choosing the combination of variables. The result is a multiple correlation which, in the sequence, shows the most powerful correlates and how much each adds to the total. Had we used only the bivariate relationships, albeit misleading, the effect of ESL on improved proficiency would have appeared to be stronger. As shown in the matrix in Appendix VI, the correlation of English improvement with ESL attendance for the "None" group is .20, and .15 and .13 for the "Little" and "Some" groups respectively.

The ESL measure used to test for multiple and bivariate correlations with the proficiency improvement measure was the actual number of hours the respondent reported as having attended. Thus, we examined for a relation between the changes in proficiency and the degree of ESL exposure, rather than simply treating it as a binary -- i.e. attended or not attended.

The results shown in Table IV.D.3 (page 221) should not be interpreted as a definitive test of ESL effectiveness. As Figures II.1-8 (pages 79-86) indicating large and significant differences in scores between arrival and current English (more than double) exist for the respondents, and most had attended ESL classes. We had sufficient data on ESL exposure and sufficient evidence on proficiency change to expect ESL to contribute to the acquisition of English over and above incidental day-to-day living experiences. Yet it contributed only three points to the multiple correlation for those who arrived with no English proficiency; it added nothing to those with "Little" arrival English; and it contributed only one additional correlational point to those who arrived with "Some" level of proficiency. Even though these data should not be construed as a definitive test of the effectiveness of ESL classes, they nevertheless give one reason to pause. On the other hand, this indicates that both ESL and daily life contribute significantly to the refugees′ major increase in English abilities. On the other, it also suggests that what ESL contributes is the refugees′ own initiative and diligence in improving their proficiency by drawing upon their own resourcefulness -- not too different from the role the same attributes play in helping them to climb out of poverty under many adverse personal and economic circumstances.

b. Employment Services

Employment services are more difficult to analyze, given the wide range of activities that the phrase includes. As a whole, the fact that a refugee utilized employment services did not predict economic success for that refugee. Although in individual cases such service did help, there is little relationship between the mere fact of having or not having such services and either being on cash assistance or finding employment. Tables IV.D.4-5 (page 224) show that employment services are of some significance for gaining earned income and not being on cash assistance. Our best indicator is the answer of employed respondents to the question: How did you get that job? As presented in Table IV D.6 (page 225), exactly half the refugees mentioned personal contacts (friends, self, and relatives), while less than a third (29 percent) spoke of organizational aid (voluntary agency offices, schools, employment programs), and another 14 percent cited sponsors and local churches. The indication is that the refugee networks provide the most aid in gaining jobs, while organizations help to some degree.

Table IV.D.4

Employment Services and Cash Assistance (Respondents N=1382)

	Ever Received Employment Services		
	Yes	No	Total
On Cash Assistance	38% (343)	62% (553)	100% (896)
No Cash Assistance	43% (207)	57% (279)	100% (486)
Totals	40% (550)	60% (832)	100% (1382)

Chi-Square = 2.44
Probability = 0.12

Table IV.D.5

Employment Services and Earned Income (Respondents N=1360)

	Ever Received Employment Services		
	Yes	No	Totals
Earned Income	47% (242)	53% (277)	100% (519)
No Earned Income	35% (297)	65% (544)	100% (841)
Totals	40% (539)	60% (821)	100% (1360)

Chi-Square = [illegible].17
Probability = [illegible].01

Table IV.D.6

How did you get that job? (N=361)

Friends	30%
Self-Sought	16%
Volag	15%
Sponsor*	10%
Schools*	6%
Employment Programs*	5%
Churches	4%
Relatives	4%
State Employment Services*	3%
MAA	3%
Miscellaneous Other	4%
Total	100%

*Non-volag

c. Vocational Training

Vocational training is a more specific and concrete case than is either of the first two. Yet it has some complications that need to be kept in mind as we judge its effectiveness. At first glance such training appears to have had a definite impact. Tables IV.D.7-8 (pages 226-227) show a certain positive relationship among having had vocational training, not being on cash assistance, and gaining earned income. Moreover, as Table IV.D.9 (page 228) indicates, in four of the five sites, a significantly higher percentage of those refugees who had vocational training worked at one time or another compared to those who had no training. In Houston, the percentages of these two groups were almost identical, revealing and possibly reflecting the dynamics of the local economy and perhaps the higher level of English proficiency among the refugees who were resettled at that site.

Table IV.D.7

Vocational Training and Cash Assistance
(Respondents N=1382)

	Ever Received Vocational Training	
	Yes	No
On Cash Assistance	13% (113)	87% (784)
No Cash Assistance	20% (97)	80% (388)
Totals	15% (210)	85% (1172)

Chi-Square = 13.39
Probability = <.01

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Table IV.D.8

Vocational Training and Earned Income
(Respondents N=1360)

	Past Vocational Training	
	Yes	No
Earned Income	18% (96)	82% (422)
No Earned Income	13% (108)	87% (734)
Totals	15% (204)	85% (1156)

Chi-Square = 8.19
Probability = <.01

Yet, when we compared the employment status of those who had this training with those who had similar characteristics (high level of English proficiency, education, etc.) but no training, the outcome was about the same. This is the "creaming" effect -- the good ones who get into these programs could get a job just about as easily without the programs. The training does, however, mean somewhat better jobs and pay for these individuals.

It is an unfortunate fact that the empirical determination of program impacts are difficult to achieve. Even under the best of circumstances, i.e. random assignment of equivalent intended beneficiaries of the program to experimental and control groups, sustained sequencing of services over a protracted period of time, etc., a confident, verifiable assessment of outcomes would be difficult to achieve -- mainly because there is simply no way to constrain the effects of external events which influence open-community research. The results of such research is even all the more equivocal in after-the-fact assessments such as in the present study. When evaluation

Table IV.D.9

Vocational Training and Employment of Main Respondents by Site

Site	Percent Reporting Past Vocational Training		Percent Ever Employed				
			Vocational Training		No Vocational Training		P
	N	Percent	N		N		
Chicago	51	17%	34	66%	116	47%	<.02
Boston	34	11%	20	58%	121	44%	<.09
Seattle	31	11%	20	64%	114	45%	<.05
Houston	24	13%	18	75%	123	76%	<.01
Orange County	58	19%	39	67%	112	45%	<.01
Total	198	14%	131	66%	586	49%	<.01

research can be instituted prior to the introduction of the intervention program, then necessary procedures and methodology can be adapted to the task and its adequacy monitored throughout the life of the program. But this cannot be done after the fact. The best that can be done under these circumstances is to sift through the data and if positive results are found, attempt to reconstruct history and account for the findings and, thereby, lay the foundation for more ambitious quantitative studies to confirm the results; to determine the magnitude of effect; and, to study the comparative advantage of program variations. Thus, we would argue that the absence of positive findings of language and employment program and services should not be interpreted as meaning that these programs failed to achieve their intended purposes. We would argue, however, that (a) there was sufficient program and service exposure, albeit selective, for the research to have detected overriding or strong effects, if these were there, and (b) the detection of outcomes produced by those programs will require carefully planned pre- and -post intervention evaluation studies.

7. Volag and Sponsorship

Neither the VOLAG which resettled the respondent nor the type of sponsorship show significant relationship to self-sufficiency. There are a large number of such agencies represented in one study employing a variety of philosophies and orientations that cannot be evaluated by a comparison of a limited number of refugees for each variable across the five sites.

E. Achieving Self Sufficiency with Minimal Help

This discussion describes our effort to identify a set of refugee households which have achieved self-sufficiency with (1) minimal reliance on outside financial help, such as cash assistance, and (2) minimal program involvement, e.g., ESL and employment services. Our purpose was to compare such households with their less successful and more dependent cohorts in order to search for differentiating characteristics and possible patterns of resettlement which might account for differences.

We discovered rather early that if the criteria for economic status or the criteria for limiting program involvement were at all restrictive, we would have too few "success" cases for comparative study. For example, using the following criteria:

1. Currently off all forms of economic assistance
2. Past cash assistance limited to 6 months or less
3. No program experience other than camp ESL
4. Earned household income of $1,667 ($20,000 yearly) or more,

only about 20 such households would qualify out of the 1384 in our sample.

By setting our level of economic well-being at the poverty level or better, i.e., changing criteria #4 as follows:

4. Income/Family needs equal to or greater than 100 percent (poverty level),

we increased the number of "success" households to 39 -- still too small a number for refined analysis.

Next we decided to allow unlimited program involvement and to increase the length of time allowable on cash assistance to one year. Thus, our revised and final criteria were as follows:

1. Currently off all forms of cash assistance.
2. Past cash assistance one year or less.
3. Program involvement of any sort.
4. Household needs met at the poverty level or better.

One hundred and twenty-two households (9 percent of the 1384 households comprising our sample) qualified using this criteria. The analysis which follows will focus on these households and the variables which differentiate them from the other households in order to account for their relative improvement in economic position. It should be kept in mind that these are not really "bootstrapper" households -- they could have been on cash assistance up to one year and no limitation was placed on the level and types of past program involvement in separating them from the total sample. Furthermore, compared to other refugee households, these 122 households may be "making it" but they do so only in that needs are being met at a minimally acceptable standard -- i.e, the poverty level. Therefore, we are faced with difficulty in labeling these 122 households. Their main features are economic independence and a living standard above the poverty line. Although they have climbed out of poverty, they have hardly begun to approach middle income levels. Also they have enjoyed the benefits of cash assistance and the opportunity to participate in ESL, employment-related and other programs designed to facilitate their social and economic adjustment in this country. "Self-reliant" is probably the best label for this state in that their achievements have been accomplished through a balance of external and internal resources.

Tables IV.E.1-11 (pages 231-234) are comparisons between these 122 households and the total household sample (N=1,384) on several key variables. The 122 households are referred to below as "Subsample."

Table IV.E.1

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Site

	Chicago	Boston	Seattle	Houston	Orange County	Totals
Subsample	23%	7%	5%	48%	17%	100% (122)
Total Sample	21%	22%	21%	14%	22%	100% (1,384)

Table IV.E.2

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Ethnicity

	Vietnamese	Chinese	Lao	Total
Subsample	51%	16%	33%	100% (122)
Total Sample	50%	20%	30%	100% (1,384)

Table IV.E.3

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Household Size

	Mean Number of Persons
Subsample	3.7
Total Sample	4.9

Table IV.E.4

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Number of Children per Household

	Mean Number of Children
Subsample	1.4
Total Sample	1.9

Table IV.E.5

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Months in U.S.

	Mean Number of Months*
Subsample	31.4
Total Sample	25.2

*Mean number of months in U.S. for adults in the household.

Table IV.E.6

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Monthly Household Income

	Mean
Subsample	$1,835
Total Sample	$1,173

Table IV.E.7

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Education in Southeast Asia

	None	Elementary	Second	H.Sch.	College	College Grad.
Subsample	3%	27%	29%	22%	12%	7%
Total Sample	8%	44%	22%	17%	6%	3%

Table IV.E.8

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Southeast Asian Occupation

	Professional	Manager	Student	Military	Other
Subsample	19%	11%	15%	27%	28%
Total Sample	12%	9%	18%	16%	45%

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Table IV.E.9

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Arrival English Proficiency
(Five Point Scale -- "Not at all" to "Very Well")

	Mean*
Subsample	2.3
Total Sample	1.7

*Mean based on scores from the five point scale (1=not at all; 5=very well); see Section II.6, page 69.

Table IV.E.10

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Percent Adults Employable for Household

	Mean
Subsample	55%
Total Sample	50%

Table IV.E.11

Self-Reliant and Total Households by Number of Adults Employed for Household

	Mean
Subsample	1.84
Total Sample	.95

As expected, those who have been most successful in advancing their economic status with minimal outside aid are most likely to be found in Houston and have been in the U.S. longer, but they are also better educated and had greater proficiency in English upon arrival than those who have been less successful. Moreover, the family size for those who have shown greater economic mobility is smaller by alm [illegible] person (3.7 persons per household versus 4.9 persons). This difference in household size is partly accounted for by fewer children in these families. The importance of this combination of family size and household composition is evident in the relationship of "Percent Employable" to "Number of Adults Employed." There is no significant difference in the percent of household employable--approximately half of all households. Nonetheless, the number of employed adults is twice as large for the self-sufficient group -- 1.84 versus .95 per household. Although the difference in household size and composition is not sufficiently great to affect the number of employable adults per household, it is, nonetheless, a change that makes a difference--i.e., sufficient to free an additional adult to participate in the labor force.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Receipt of transfer income and poverty-level measures both show that the Southeast Asian refugees have made steady progress climbing out of dependency and increasing their standard of living in relation to the official poverty level. It would be misleading to quote a single rate of dependency, a single figure for unemployment, or a single figure for the percent living above the poverty line. All these measures show steady progress over time. Starting with high rates of dependency, unemployment, and those living below the poverty line in the early months of resettlement, as well as very little English, the refugees in the U.S. for two and three years approach these same measures for the U.S. minority groups -- but with trajectories which indicate the likelihood of continued economic independence and improvement in economic status. At the same time, the percentage of households bove the poverty line for the population in general and other minority groups in particular fell in a period of major economic recession. The Southeast Asian refugees have not only survived these hard times, but have, in many cases, improved their economic status.

inally we should reiterate that virtually all the refugees studied elied on cash assistance during the early months in the U.S., and we find no evidence of "bootstrappers" who make it on their own: virtually all entering refugee households studied received cash assistance. Thus dependency, from what we can tell, is not by choice. Even the nine percent of refugee households deemed most self-reliant had had some early assistance and program involvements. The absence of sharp discontinuities in the various trend lines, particularly with respect to cash assistance cutoff periods, can be interpreted as significant. We would have expected to find such discontinuities in the trend lines or in the multivariate "splits," particularly at 36 months, if reliance on transfer income constituted a powerful disincentive to seeking earned income. But, we found so such evidence.

How have these refugees managed to move ahead economically during a time of deep recession in four years or less? There is less need for equivocation on documentation of self-sufficiency and dependency levels than on issues bearing on how these achievements were attained. There are two main reasons for this: 1) the bulk of our survey was devoted to documentation of income sources and income status; and 2) to establish cause and effect relationships, time-series studies are needed whereby data are collected repeatedly over time on the same different individuals. Although we have data on individuals in the U.S. at different points in time, such data cannot substitute for panel data on the same individuals over time if our purpose is to determine the nature of the process rather than simply to document the trend. Thus, our degree of confidence with respect to the economic state of the refugees during early resettlement is greater than that for inferences on how it was achieved. Nonetheless, we have evidence of what may be key factors, even though we may be on less solid ground in demonstrating how they go together to determine the resulting rise in the achievement of self-sufficiency.

As far as we can determine, the factor of utmost importance in successful early resettlement is the household as a unit of human capital ahead of individual interests and the importance of the refugee community as a source of social support and information on coping and adaptation strategies.

The Household. Household composition emerges as the strongest predictor of economic self-sufficiency. We examined variety of household composition measures, including household size, the number and type of family units comprising them, the ratio of adults to children, the percent of employable adults and others. All "capture" aspects of the same phenomenon and strongly predict to poverty-level standings, but none clarify precisely what that phenomenon is.

By using a "structural" index that classified household composition as nuclear family, extended family, multiple family, and unrelated singles units, we found that nuclear and extended families fared considerably more poorly than single person households or households composed of unrelated singles. This pattern appears to be fairly consistent: nuclear and extended families living with unrelated singles appear to fare better than those without. Thus, nuclear families (the household unit making up the largest proportion of the sample) are the most likely to remain below the poverty line, but they also have the potential to improve their economic status quickly once the youngest child is school age or if there is a grandparent to care for preschool age children, thereby freeing both parents to participate in the workforce. That is, given the opportunity to free an additional adult for participation in the labor force, the household (and particularly the nuclear family household) is in a good position to increase its economic status significantly.

When we first began to pretest our interview instruments, we included an item that read, "What is your monthly income?" Almost invariably, respondents reported the monthly income for the entire household, which often included a collection of related and unrelated individuals. That is to say, the respondents viewed the household as a mutually interdependent collective. regardless of its composition, Thus, if we wanted to know a respondent's income, we had to be very explicit and ask, "How much do you earn from your job?" Similarly, we had to be specific when inquiring about income and source for others living in the household.

This pooling of resources is not unexpected in view of the refugee background and their traditional values and, of course, was well suited given the economic constraints faced in the U.S. at the time of their arrival. Yet the way resources were pooled to foster adaptation to economic conditions was different from what we expected. More specifically, we are referring to those households with combined income -- namely a combination of unemployed individuals on cash assistance and employed persons with earned incomes.

The distribution by time of households on earned income and on transfer income differs in one important respect from those with a combination of transfer and earned income. Transfer begins with a high percentage of households during the early months of resettlement and steadily drops in a monotonic straight line to a lower percentage over time; the distribution of households on earned income is the opposite -- that is, it starts and steadily increases upward over time. The distribution of households with combined income, however, is dome-like, starting low, peaking near the intersection of the transfer and earned income distributions during the middle of the resettlement months studied and then dropping steadily thereafter.

An important element here is that only with earned income can a household expect to rise above the poverty level. The income of a household just on transfer income reached, on the average, only 79 percent of the poverty level, while the mean for households with combined incomes rose to 141 percent and to 218 percent for households with earned income alone.

The main distinguishable feature of the combined income group is increased household size -- perhaps a temporary recombination of the households achieved by adding able bodied persons who then move out once the original household group begins to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Furthermore, we know from the data on household composition and income that the addition of one employable person to a household makes a very large difference in the potential to advance economic status, virtually doubling the ability of the household to rise above the poverty-level standards.

In this regard, the importance of the refugee community from which the singles come is clear and simple in job-hunting. Half of the respondents with jobs who replied report neighbors, kin, and friends as the source of employment information when asked how jobs were found. If our inferences from the data are correct about the sequencing in and out of singles, it uncovers an important form of assistance which is less obvious and, in many ways, more important than our traditional notions about the community as an information network.

Not only are nuclear families the last to achieve self-sufficiency, but they also make up the largest segment of the refugee population which enter this country. By contrast, only a small number of single, unrelated individuals come into the U.S. Yet, our data show that these singles may be quite significant in helping families during the more critical stages of economic adaptation to their new home. The presence in a household of such singles almost cuts in half the possibility that the household is below the poverty level.

Thus, the more striking feature of these data is the multiple-wage earner means to get ahead. When no one in a household has a job, the income of that household reaches only 77 percent of the Federal poverty level. One job in the household improves the household's ability to meet basic needs to 150 percent of the poverty level. But a major change in living standards occurs when a second person from the household finds gainful employment; here the household income rises to 215 percent of the poverty level. Not all families have benefit of an able-bodied extra person to help and it is among those households who do have such an extra person that this strategy on work force participation is best revealed. Among nuclear families, the apparent pattern is for whichever spouse first finds employment to hold on to the job until the youngest child reaches school age, at which time the second spouse then enters into the work force. In instances where a grandparent is available to care for young children, both parents enter into the labor force as soon as possible. This information is important for several reasons; one, it reveals the importance of the multiple-wage earner strategies in the rapid adaptation to the workforce and in the achievement of early economic independence; it also demonstrates the willingness of both spouses to participate in the workforce; and, finally, it carries with it a policy implication -- namely, the possible importance of day-care.

Program effectiveness. The majority (65 percent) of refugees arrived unable to speak any English, slightly fewer than half of the adults are currently attending ESL classes, and roughly two-thirds have received substantial ESL instruction since leaving their homelands. The gain in English proficiency from both ESL and self-learning has been good.

About a third of all adults have also received employment services of some sort. Less than 10 percent of the respondents were in vocational training programs at the time of the survey and one in seven had received vocational training in the past. Given the need, this level of services rendered may generally be considered inadequate to bring the refugees as a whole into the mainstream of American society. But given the enormity of this task, it clearly represents a major effort: in a relatively short period of time, these services have been provided to a substantial proportion of the refugees.

The programs are not, however, equally available in all sites or equally used by all refugees. Program use differs little among ethnic groups, is heaviest among those 21 to 50 years of age, and is generally cumulative by time in the U.S. A higher proportion of men receive all types of services than women. This is a cause for concern, since women constitute an important part of the refugee work force and an important economic resource -- especially in view of the finding that the majority of households require two employed persons to move above the poverty level.

In addition, those with little education and who held low status or skill occupations in Southeast Asia are much less likely to be receiving the services they need than the more advantaged refugees. This is especially true for the most important service: vocational training. While ESL appears most democratic in being available to all who need it, employment services appear more restrictive in that they are rarely accessed by those with low levels of past education low status occupation histories and housewives. Vocational training seems to be most restrictive in that its use is largely confined to males with at least some secondary education, and who were professionals, military personnel, or students.

This presents a paradox: it makes sense to provide the services to those best prepared to make good use of them; yet this pattern of use will hasten the assimilation of the more advantaged, leaving the less advantaged to their own devices.

There is no question the refugees who are in programs value them, and they rank employment and language programs very high when asked what they see as necessary to getting ahead in life. On the other hand, it is difficult to point to specific program outcomes which relate to the attainment of economic self-sufficiency. We would caution any interpretation of these results to mean that the programs are ineffectual. The problem of testing program effects are of methodology -- unless a program produces a powerful and overriding effect, its outcome is difficult and often impossible to determine in the absence of a true experiment, e.g. the randomized assignment of persons to programs and the collection of before, during, and after measures for comparing experimental and control groups. And, even then, results often require a high level of equivocation when such studies are conducted in the open community. On the basis of available data we can say that vocational training (the most person-intensive) does result in some benefits. But we would hesitate to say how much difference it makes and what its potential would be if such programs were available to other than the more select segment of the refugee population.

Possibly it is the resourcefulness of the refugees, both those who have access to service programs and those who do not, that makes program effects appear so weak. That is, the ability of the refugees to husband their own resources, mutual interdependence, etc. have resulted in their being able to cope far more successfully with the adverse economic conditions and the other problems associated with resettlement than would have been expected possible if left to their own devices. Friends and relations are the main sources of helpful employment information, and the reported increase in English proficiency after arrival is great, whether gained through ESL classes or picked up through informal sources. While the service program data may raise some question about targeting and appropriateness to needs of the refugees, there is no question to their perceived need or to the great willingness of refugees to use them when and where available.

The Predictor Variables. One finding from the multivariate analysis bears emphasizing here, namely, the finding that the level of English proficiency upon arrival in the U.S is among the best predictors to later economic standing. Both arrival and current English were included in these analyses, and Arrival English is the better predictor. Arrival English is also a better predictor than Southeast Asian education and occupation. While current English may, in the long run, become a better predictor to economic status, in the more immediate time period proficiency at arrival is much more important.

When better arrival English is combined with smaller household size, 80 percent of the refugee households are above the poverty level. On the other hand, poorer arrival English and larger families mean that only 20 percent of the households reach that level.

Thus, major predictor variables for economic self-sufficiency are linked to the nature of the refugee households and the background whence the refugee came, especially as regards English proficiency. Time in the U.S. and Site are significant, but do not overcome the former variables. Other variables of assumed significance (secondary migration and ethnicity, for example) show little correlation with economic self-sufficiency among the refugees. Health and health insurance have little significant relationship with self-sufficiency, nor do the VOLAGs or type of sponsorship involved.

Our data support the position both that nothing would be gained by forcing the refugees into work when jobs are not there or to drop them off assistance when in fact they get off as soon as they can in any case. The Southeast Asian refugees, our study indicates, may be trusted to be self-reliant. All that initial immersion into the labor force would do would be to place them into grinding poverty and to impede their reaching an economic take-off point.

The welfare program is meant for precisely such people as these to aid them momentarily when they most need it.

In recent years the success of Asian-American groups has gained national recognition for their outstanding successes, which at one time or another have been the main story of almost every major national magazine. In the main, these stories have concentrated on their high level of mean income, the inordinately high percent who attend college, and the disproportionately high percentage that win or place at the top in scholarly awards. When a group or individuals rise to the very top, their accomplishments are given notoriety and gain public visibility: what we find in the results of this study is no less ı accomplishment. Although less obvious, the climb out of poverty of these newly arrived Asian refugees is a major accomplishment. It is fortunate that ORR saw fit to fund research to assess empirically the progress of the refugees and by doing so, document what this group has done to distinguish itself in improving its economic position, notwithstanding notwithstanding personal travails and the exigencies of a failing economy. Certainly they could not have done it without assistance, but equally important was what they brought with them -- i.e. their traditional background values, their collective achievement orientation, their patience and diligence.

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