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Voluntary departures, expulsions, or profitable extortion?

THE POLITICS OF EXPULSION AND THE ETHNIC CHINESE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES 1975 - 1979

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This thesis examines the origins, implementation and motives of the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign that took place in Vietnam between early 1978 and mid-1979 and the broader post-Vietnam War political and societal developments starting from 1975 that were connected to the ethnic Chinese expulsions in Southern Vietnam. The main purpose of this historical study is to provide a clear account of how the expulsion campaign came to be commenced in southern parts of Vietnam, how it was implemented and to examine the politics and reasons that were behind it.

The role of the Vietnamese government in the ethnic Chinese exodus/expulsions and in the emergence of the larger Vietnamese boat people crisis of 1978 and 1979 has been debated since the events took place, but few historical studies have re-examined this topic since more sources have become available. The main conclusion that this thesis presents on this subject is that the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) and Public Security Bureau officials and southern party cadres operating under their directives used covert voluntary departure program as means to expel ethnic Chinese from Southern Vietnam between late July – early August of 1978 and July 1979. This program was officially only open to the ethnic Chinese and in order to leave the refugees had to pay a sizable "exit tax" to the government and a fee to the organizers who were supplying the boat and other means for the departure. I argue that behind this voluntary departure program and these expulsion policies were politics and distinct policies that aimed to facilitate these boat departures of the ethnic Chinese minority members that were perceived to be a possible fifth column in the Vietnamese society. Furthermore, I posit that in addition to the political motives, in the southern parts of the SRV there was a clear economic motive driving the expansion of the departure program that resulted from both Vietnamese governments' and Vietnamese authorities' desire to extort wealth from the ethnic Chinese individuals. This economic incentive according to many signs also affected how many departures were ultimately organized.

Through a historical social scientific approach to the subject, this thesis explores how these paid ethnic Chinese boat refugee departures in Southern Vietnam were part of the larger the expulsion campaign in the country and argues that we should ultimately understand these departures through their wider societal and political context.

Keywords: Vietnamese refugees, Vietnam, Vietnamese history, Boat people, Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), Expulsions, Ethnic Chinese, Hoa, Forced Migration, Exit, Sino-Vietnamese relations, Refugee trafficking

Note on the term used to describe Vietnam:

In this study the term "Southern Vietnam" is used to describe the area that is the focus of the examination of this study. This term refers to the same areas which were under the rule of Republic of Vietnam, under the 17th parallel. Traditionally Vietnam has been divided geographically into three distinct parts, the northern region known as Tonkin (Bắc Bộ in Vietnamese) that contains roughly the delta of Red River and the mountainous areas to the west and north of it, the central region of Annam (Trung Bộ), which contains the long thin stretch of coast and mountains of the Annamitic Cordillera and the central highlands of Vietnam in the southern parts. The last area to which Vietnam is traditionally divided to is Cochinchina (Nam Bộ), which contains the fertile areas of Mekong Delta and the coastal areas to the west. The area referred to this study as Southern Vietnam contains sections of Annam and Cochinchina that were part of the territory of former Republic of Vietnam.

I have chosen to use the term "Southern Vietnam" in this study, as this study discusses the events which took place in the areas of former of Republic of Vietnam, that underwent significant changes in the post-war period. This area was still its own specific cultural and administrative region after the war with distinct political, demographic, and cultural differences to the former areas of Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Furthermore, some other terms such as "South Vietnam" would carry the resemblance towards the term used to describe the former Republic of Vietnam, that was also called South Vietnam.

Naming of ethnic Chinese and non-English names and terms:

This study discusses the treatment and expulsions of people of Chinese descent in Vietnam. In research literature, many terms, such as "overseas Chinese", "Chinese", "Vietnamese-Chinese", "Hoa-people" and "ethnic Chinese" have been used to denote these people. In this study I primarily use the term "ethnic Chinese" to discuss these individuals and communities, as it refers to the ethnic origins of this group of people, rather than for example their citizenship (which has been historically debated).

When discussing Vietnamese persons, the Vietnamese convention of family name preceding given names and last syllable of their given name being used to refer to them thereafter is followed. When possible, Vietnamese names are written in their Vietnamese forms to be more specific about who is discussed in the chapter. The names of Vietnamese cities are however written in their English forms. Vietnamese and Chinese terms used in this study are translated, with Chinese hànzì or Vietnamese quốc ngữ form of the word and the applicable translation visible.

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1. Introduction

On 6th of June 1979 a telegram from Hong Kong Government office reached the desk of newly elected British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.[1] Written and underlined on the right-hand corner of the document were the words: "Prime Minister – An appalling assessment" and on the inside was a detailed description of information received from the interrogation of recent refugee arrivals from Vietnam. What the document disclosed was an overview of a system of official extortion conducted with secrecy by the Vietnamese government officials. It was targeted towards the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese looking to leave the country. How the system worked was that the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam had to pay the officials a large sum in gold for an organized departure out of the country by boat. According to the document, the Vietnamese government was now *de facto* involved in the business of exporting refugees and all the reports suggested that they were profiting from it handsomely.

The information which Margaret Thatcher received was related to the developments of an expulsion campaign, that had started in early 1978 in Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV). In March 1978, the Vietnamese Politburo decreed that due to the worsening relations with China, the ethnic Chinese minority were a possible fifth column in the Vietnamese society and for this reason they had to be removed from Vietnam. The Ministry of Interior, that was in charge of the public security apparatus in Vietnam, issued an order of allowing the ethnic Chinese to leave, but at the same time systematic harassment and persecution was also applied to make them leave.[2] Between April and July of 1978, before the closing of land border between China and Vietnam, over 160 000 ethnic Chinese from northern parts of Vietnam crossed the border to go to China.[3] After the first phase of expulsions in the North, the expulsion campaign continued in Southern Vietnam with a program which allowed the ethnic Chinese to pay to leave by boat to nearby countries. This program was commenced sometime around late July – August of 1978 and the shipping of refugees continued, with only one notable break in between, until July 1979, when the expulsion campaign was discontinued due to massive pushback from the international

[1] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Hong Kong to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jun. 6th, 1979, p. 85-87.
[2] U.S Department of State, "*Vietnam's refugee Machine*", CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.
[3] Amer (2013), p. 10.

community.[4] The primary focus of this study is on this second phase of expulsions, which took place primarily in the southern parts of Vietnam.

The main argument that this study presents is that the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV, Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam) and Public Security Bureau (PSB, Công an) officials and southern party cadres operating under their directives used covert voluntary departure program as means to expel ethnic Chinese from Southern Vietnam between late July – early August of 1978 and July 1979. This program was officially only open to the ethnic Chinese and in order to leave the refugees had to pay a sizable "exit tax" to the government and a fee to the organizers who were supplying the boat and other means for the departure. The registrations to leave were voluntary, but in actuality the whole program was part of a larger expulsion campaign initiated by the CPV in Northern Vietnam early 1978. I argue that behind this voluntary departure program and these expulsion policies were politics and distinct policies that aimed to facilitate these boat departures of the ethnic Chinese minority members that were perceived to be a possible fifth column in the Vietnamese society.

This study is in large part a study of the Vietnamese ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign itself: an examination of its implementation and the motives behind it and an analysis of the historical context and events that led to it. In relation to the expulsion campaign, this study argues that the departure program was meant to achieve a number off intended goals: 1) To drive away a section of population, that was deemed politically problematic in the light of the Sino-Vietnamese relations crisis, 2) to confiscate the wealth of the ethnic Chinese and to break the economic hold they had in the southern parts of Vietnam and 3) to alleviate internal pressure and opposition to the reforms taken to socialize in the economy in the South. All of these distinct goals acted also as motives to expel the ethnic Chinese from Southern Vietnam starting in 1978. Furthermore, I posit that while the expulsion campaign in Southern Vietnam was inherently connected to the Sino-Vietnamese relations and to the events in Northern Vietnam, there were differences in the way the expulsion campaign was implemented between these two areas that resulted from differences in the ethnic Chinese communities in these two areas, such as from their geographical and political closeness to China and their respective economic situation and social class among other factors.[5] Lastly, I posit that in addition to the political motives, in the southern parts of the SRV there was a clear economic motive driving the expansion of the departure program that resulted from both Vietnamese governments' and Vietnamese authorities' desire to extort wealth

[4] Amer (2013), p. 12 – 13.
[5] Han (2009), p. 2 – 3.

from the ethnic Chinese individuals. This economic incentive according to many signs also affected how many departures were ultimately organized.

This study argues that the expulsions in southern parts of the SRV were profitable to the SRV government for two distinct reasons. Firstly, each ethnic Chinese adult leaving through the government run program had to pay between 8 – 12 taels[6] of gold in order to depart, with around 5 taels paid to the PSB officials as the cut of the government. Secondly, with the operation came a notable increase in remittances from the ethnic Chinese living abroad which provided valuable foreign exchange, of which Vietnam's economy had had shortage of since 1975.[7] Yet, the government was not the only one benefitting. While the expulsion campaign itself was party state sanctioned, the actual day-to-day organization rested on the shoulders of the southern party and government cadres and PSB officials. This resulted in large degree of local autonomy in the implementation and enabled systemic corruption to flourish. Corruption was widespread as the officials engaged in many illegal acts with the intention of making some extra money - such as selling departures to non-ethnic Chinese people for a premium, demanding extra bribes, fleecing departing refugees and forging documents.[8] The argument this study presents in relation to these corruptive practices is that not all of the gold confiscated from the refugees ended up in the hands of the government, but based on several independent sources and accounts, there was a portion of the money paid for the departures which was the official government fee for the departure in Southern Vietnam.

A large focus of this study is on examining this expulsion campaign and especially *expulsions*, which are understood to be exercises of state power, in which political actors, such as governments secure the removal of certain individuals or segments of population from the territorial space of the state, either "voluntarily" (with threats but no forcible relocation) or forcibly.[9] They are political acts which are carried out with certain purposes and intentions in mind, and to which we can find motives and explanations which rationalize these actions. For example, concerning this particular case, it has been argued in previous research that the primary motives for the actions

[6] Tael is a Chinese unit of weight (1 tael = 1,21 ounces or 37,79 grams) often used in Vietnam to measure gold. Traditionally taels of gold have been used for large business transactions in Vietnam. Before 1975, Saigon was a regional center for gold trade and even after the reunification, gold was used to buy items at the black market and later to buy a departure out of Vietnam, Truitt (2013), p. 7, 17 and 69. According to Wain (1981), p. 86, one tael was around $220 on the world market at mid-1978 and then rose to $250 in the second half of the year and finally reached over $600 during 1979. Prices presented here are not inflation adjusted.

[7] See PREM Series 19/129 p. 85-87, telegram from the Hong Kong Government office to London, Jun. 6th, 1979 and Sinclair, Kevin, *"Date set for new Vietnam exodus",* SCMP, Dec. 30th, 1979. The notable increase in remittance is confirmed in many seemingly independent sources.

[8] See for example AP, *"How Hanoi officials bleed the refugees",* SCMP, Mar. 24th, 1979 and Wain (1981), p. 87.

[9] Bloch and Schuster (2005), p. 493, Goodwin-Gill (1978), p. 201 and Walters (2002), p. 268. This definition follows to a large degree the Goodwin-Gill's definition of expulsion in international law setting.

taken towards the ethnic Chinese were related to *who* the expelled were and to the military and political conflict which developed between China and Vietnam.[10] Number of other reasons, ranging from the ethnic Chinese having unclear political loyalties to them not assimilating properly to the Vietnamese society have also been cited as secondary motives.[11] These explanations help to understand that there were certain political conflicts and historical contentions between the political actor wielding the power to expel (the party-state) and the expelled (the ethnic Chinese) in Vietnam. But they do not give an answer to these two questions: why expulsions? and what specific purpose did the expulsions serve?

Arguably, expulsions have throughout history been selectively used with various intents to banish certain groups of people regarded to be harmful to the polity.[12] William Walters observed in his article analyzing the historical practices of deportations, that by the end of the nineteenth century a change occurred in who were the targets of expulsions, as no longer were they mostly revolutionaries, aliens or religious minorities, but increasingly more individuals branded as "*social enemies in the form of various categories of socially ´undesirable´ persons"* and this meant that these "enemies" from the point of view of the state belonged more and more to the "*various categories of persons who are deemed to pose a threat to its population, which is increasingly understood in racial and biopolitical terms, or to* [to pose a threat to] *its economy or system of welfare provision"*.[13] But to this list I would also add, that to some regimes, the expelled were also increasingly people which were seen as a threat to the effective governance and governability[14] of the state. This point is illustrated by examining authoritarian socialist regimes, such as Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic (GDR) who used expulsions to expel political opposition and people deemed as reactionaries, that were due to their political identity seen to be problematic to regime stability.[15]

The problems which the ethnic Chinese presented to the SRV regime were not, however, attributable to them simply being political opposition or even reactionaries. The political motivations for the expulsions and expelling the ethnic Chinese stemmed from complex set of factors which this study intends to examine: first by describing the history of the ethnic Chinese

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[10] Amer (2013), p. 18, Chang (1982), p. 229 and Godley (1980), p. 36. The topic of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam became a serious diplomatic issue between China and Vietnam in 1978 and 1979, Han (2009) p. 22, see note 148.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Zolberg (1983), p. 32, Hirschman (1970), p. 76 Hirschman (1993), p. 184 and Light (2012), p. 401.
[13] Walters (2002), p. 278.
[14] This concept has been defined by Mark Bevir as follows: "*the quality of being governable, that [which] is capable of being controlled or managed.",* Bevir (2007), p. 363.
[15] See for example Bell-Fialkoff (1993), p. 115, Green and Weil (2007), p. 2 and 8, Hasselberg (2016), p. 24, Hirschman (1993), p. 184 and Millers and Peter (2018), p. 7.

communities in Southern Vietnam, their distinct cultural identity in Vietnam and outlining the historical, political and social reasons which made the ethnic Chinese problematic from the perspective of the communist authorities. This description is then followed by an investigation of the post-Vietnam War communist state-building and state-making process in the southern parts of Vietnam and a summary of the problems in the Sino-Vietnamese relations, which I argue together provided the justification for the CPV to take action towards the ethnic Chinese. The second part of this examination explores the implementation of the expulsion campaign itself and discusses the purposes that the expulsions served in the approach that the CPV took towards the ethnic Chinese in southern parts of Vietnam.

The main purpose of this historical study is to provide a clear historical account of how the expulsion campaign came to be commenced in southern parts of Vietnam and how it was implemented, as well as to present the politics and processes that were behind it. The topic has historical significance, as according to one estimation 246 108 refugees arrived by boat to the nearby Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong between July-August 1978 and August 1979 when the expulsion campaign was operational.[16] While the numbers on how many had to pay their way out are impossible to estimate accurately, the ethnic Chinese were a majority among these boat refugees and for this reason having a more detailed account of what the expulsions campaign was and when it took place is an important chapter in the stories many of the Vietnamese refugees.[17]

The second purpose of this study is to provide an explanation why the ethnic Chinese were expelled. In this, expanding on topics such as who the ethnic Chinese were, what had been their historical significance and position in the Vietnamese society and on what foundation was the relationship between the communist policy makers and ethnic Chinese built upon, is important.

1.1 A brief introduction to the sources

A lot more remains to be said on this topic through examining it through new historical sources, ranging from what was the definitive role of the SRV government in the refugee crisis to discussing the developments which led to the expulsions in the southern parts of the SRV. The sources used in this study describe the political and economic developments in the Southern

[16] Amer (2011), p. 36 – 37.
[17] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus",* CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 27.

Vietnamese society starting from the post-Vietnam War period in 1975 to 1979. The period after the Vietnam War, starting from 1975 was in Southern Vietnam a departure from the old in several ways, with the most drastic political change being the one in the political leadership and political system, which reshaped the society in a fundamental manner.[18] This study examines the expulsions as being linked to the political and societal developments in Vietnam, as well as to the political regime of the SRV, and takes on the view that expulsions are the results of longer societal and political processes. Therefore, starting the analysis from 1975, the period of drastic societal changes after the Vietnam War, serves as a good starting point for this historical study of expulsions.[19]

The main body of the sources in this study consists of the South China Morning Post and Far Eastern Economic Review newspapers for this specified period. These are augmented by two books that are eye-witness accounts and investigations of the expulsion campaign in Southern Vietnam. The first one is by Barry Wain, a former Asian Wall Street Journal investigative journalist, who wrote the book *The refused: The agony of the Indochina refugees* in 1981 which provided the first accounts of the official government involvement in the Vietnamese refugee crisis. The second one is *After Saigon Fell - Daily Life Under the Vietnamese Communists* by Nguyen Long and Harry H. Kendall written also in 1981. It focuses on describing the life under communist rule and accounts the story of the how one of the authors, Nguyễn Long, left from Vietnam. He was an ethnic Vietnamese, who was able through false identification papers and connections to secure his departure from Vietnam through these official channels, that were created to expel the ethnic Chinese. The last type of sources are the confidential cabinet papers of first Thatcher administration and intelligence assessments from the CIA and the National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC). These documents are mostly from 1979 and contain valuable intelligence assessments of the refugee situation in Hong Kong and about the Vietnamese official involvement in the exodus.

[18] Goscha (2016), p. 377 – 379.
[19] Hasselberg (2016), p. 29.

1.2 Research questions and the thesis structure

1. Which factors and circumstances motivated the CPV to begin expelling ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam?
2. In what way was the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign carried out in the Southern parts of the SRV?
3. What factors, motives and circumstances ultimately affected the implementation of the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign in the Southern Vietnam?

This research is structured as follows: chapter two discusses the gaps left by the previous research through literary review, as well as examines the research on expulsions in general and provides definition to the key-concepts used in the study. Chapter three outlines the sources used in the research and discusses their validity in relation to this topic and explains the basis of historical interpretation. The fourth chapter (research question 1) examines the origins of the expulsion campaign. After the fourth chapter giving the background to the expulsions, the fifth chapter (research question 2) will focus on the expulsions themselves and discuss the implementation of the expulsion campaign in southern parts of Vietnam. The six and last chapter (research question 3) focuses on the evaluation the expulsion campaign and explaining purposes of the expulsions and aims to explain expulsions as purposeful political acts in the context of the ethnic Chinese expulsions in SRV.

2. *Literary review and key-concepts*

Although Vietnam's ethnic Chinese expulsions have been studied in previous research literature since the events took place, the role of the Vietnamese government has often been side-lined in the academic studies and papers discussing the boat people departures and the ethnic Chinese exodus from Vietnam. This literary review section of the thesis introduces the major studies related to the topic of the ethnic Chinese expulsions and discusses why the exodus is in today's research often presented in multitude of different ways.

2.1 Literary review on the existing literature relating to the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign

This sub-chapter focuses on reviewing the existing literature and gaps in the literature concerning what this study calls as the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign. The literature on the topic can be separated into three broad categories: firstly, to the contemporary research published shortly after

the events took place and secondly, to the research which was published 5 or more years after the events. The third and last category can be regarded to be the new historical research on Sino-Vietnamese relations, Vietnamese history and on the Vietnamese refugee crisis which has started to appear within the last 10 to 15 years.

The first wave of research, that was published shortly after the events took place, was inspired by the drastic turns in the Sino-Vietnamese relations in the late 1970s. The ethnic Chinese issue in the SRV was painted as a dispute involving both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the ethnic Chinese were the people caught between the rhetoric in the dispute.[20] Two representative examples of this wave are the Michael Godley's article (1980) *A Summer Cruise to Nowhere and the Vietnamese Chinese in perspective* and the Pao-Ming Chang's article (1982) *The Sino-Vietnamese Dispute over the Ethnic Chinese*. Godley's article focused on analyzing a relatively small side affair in the diplomatic tug-of-war between the PRC and the SRV in 1978, as the focal point of the article was on analyzing the language and actions in the diplomatic dispute of whether the PRC can send ships to repatriate the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam.[21] Examining the arguments and actions of both factions, Godley saw that the PRC's fierce defense of the overseas Chinese community contributed to the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese position becoming problematic in the SRV.[22] In a similar manner to Godley, Chang also saw the dispute between the PRC and the SRV as being conducive factor in the expulsions.[23] Although Vietnamese actions towards the ethnic Chinese are in some small form analyzed in both of these articles, the main focus in both is on the diplomatic dispute over the ethnic Chinese communities. This is understandable, as the available sources consisted mostly of official Vietnamese and Chinese statements and propagandistic media articles on the issue, which were created to propagate the official viewpoints of the SRV and the PRC. The lack of available sources constricted the possibilities of conducting larger studies on the topic.

The second body of literature which were written during the first wave were the investigations on the causes and events behind the Vietnamese refugee crisis. Barry Wain is an example of an important contributor to this discussion. His article titled *The Indochina Refugee Crisis* published in 1979 in Foreign Affairs and his book on the topic, that was released few years after the article, titled *The refused: The agony of the Indochina refugees* (1981) contained important insights into

[20] Godley (1980), p. 55 – 56.
[21] Godley (1980), 39. The discussion on whether China can send ships to repatriate ethnic Chinese from Vietnam was a relatively small and short lived as a discussion, but it was one of the discussions that paved the way for the Sino-Vietnamese relations breakdown in 1978.
[22] Godley (1980), p. 56.
[23] Chang (1982), p. 229 – 230.

what led to the expulsions in the SRV. Wain's journalist investigation into the issue represents one of the earliest attempts to build a cohesive narrative of the events of the Indochina refugee crisis. It also provides one of the most damning account of the SRV government involvement in the ethnic Chinese exodus and argues that the SRV authorities authorized the departures of some of the boat people, charged them exit fees and effectively expelled them for profit.[24] While Wain's narrative on the events and description of the SRV government involvement in the expulsions is one of the most influential ones, further historical studies on the matter, such as this study, are still needed to collaborate it.

Following this first wave came the first, more comprehensive retrospective accounts of what happened to the ethnic Chinese and what took place after the expulsions in the SRV. One of the earlier accounts was Lewis M. Stern's article on *The Overseas Chinese in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1979 – 82* published in 1985, which focused on the effect that the Vietnamese economic policies had had on the ethnic Chinese communities in the South and on the regime's attitude toward the ethnic Chinese after the expulsions. These studies in general also established that a sizable ethnic Chinese community survived in Southern Vietnam even after the expulsion campaign in 1979, albeit these communities had been significantly impacted.[25] A second, more comprehensive study, called *The Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam and Sino-Vietnamese Relations* was completed in 1991 by Ramses Amer. The purpose of this study was to analyze the fate of the ethnic Chinese community in Vietnam and to examine what kind of effects the ethnic Chinese dispute as a political issue had on the bilateral relations between the PRC and the SRV.[26] At the same time there was an emphasis on examining the domestic policies within Vietnam which affected Sino-Vietnamese relations.[27] Amer contributed significantly to the discussion of Vietnamese government official involvement in the exodus through analysis of the past available secondary sources. He concluded that in Southern Vietnam, there was a system of "*semi-legal departure*"[28], that was administered by the PSB but which in practice worked often through ethnic Chinese intermediaries.[29] He saw the role of the Vietnamese PSB as being one of administrator and also argued that in light of the actions towards the ethnic Chinese in the North, that were "*tantamount to expulsions*", the SRV leadership could not have been unaware of what was going

[24] Wain (1981), p. 12.
[25] Ungar (1987), p. 613 – 614 and Stern (1985), p. 527 and 536.
[26] Amer (1991), p. 1.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Amer described the system as follows: "*a system of semi-legal departure that was open only to the Chinese and administered by the Public Security Bureau (PSB). In essence, Chinese who wanted to leave had to pay, through Chinese organizers, a fixed fee that was handed over to a PSB official. Furthermore, they had to pay for boat, fuel, and other necessities like anyone else who attempted to leave*", Amer (2013), p. 12.
[29] Amer (1991), p. 85 – 87.

in Southern Vietnam.[30] But according to him, it was also quite possible that only those in charge of the internal security apparatuses were in the know of the situation.[31] Amer's arguments provide a solid foundation for this study also to further examine these claims.

While the first retrospective examinations of the topic furthered our understanding of the topic significantly, they were still largely based on secondary sources and on previous research articles. In the last 10 to 15 years, recent historical interpretation based on new sources have started to appear. With the limited opening of the Vietnamese archives, continuation studies such as *Examining the Demographic Developments Relating to the Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam Since 1954* in 2013 by Ramses Amer and *China's Economic Sanctions against Vietnam, 1975–1978* by Kosal Path have been made possible. Discoveries such as linking the developments in the semi-legal departure system to the number of refugees leaving the SRV have made it possible to state that the expulsion campaign had a definitive impact on the ethnic Chinese communities and have pointed to the conclusion that this expulsion campaign was more significant factor in the refugee outflows than previously thought.[32] Findings like these reinforce the need to re-examine the terms on which we analyze the Vietnamese refugee crisis and this period in Vietnamese history.

Historical monographs have also made their appearance and through them the topic has been in some sense re-examined. The most prominent work on the Vietnamese refugee crisis and the boat people has been Vo M. Nghia's *The Vietnamese boat people, 1954 and 1975–1992* in 2005, which concluded, in alignment to Amer's findings, that the SRV government was involved in the exporting of the ethnic Chinese. However, rather than arguing that the expulsions were solely the result of the SRV authorities' actions, Vo placed more emphasis on the fact that ethnic Chinese within and outside Vietnam were also heavily involved in the matter and worked in syndicates which engaged in human trafficking.[33] Another development which has resulted from the movement towards more cohesive narratives in Vietnamese history has been that the ethnic Chinese expulsion incident has become in a sense an unclear footnote in the writings focusing on Vietnam's history. This was demonstrated in Christopher Goscha's 2016 historical monography *Vietnam: A new history* where the affair of ethnic Chinese expulsions in the South and escapes from Vietnam were presented as a case of "*internal hemorrhaging*", made possible by smuggling syndicates and bribes and only half a page was devoted to these events.[34] Similarly in a long research essay published by Thomas Engelbert (2008) titled *Vietnamese-Chinese Relations in*

[30] Amer (1991), p. 104.
[31] Amer (1991), p. 103.
[32] Amer (2013), p. 13 – 14.
[33] Vo (2005), p. 92.
[34] Goscha (2016), p. 386.

Southern Vietnam during the First Indochina Conflict, the exodus of the ethnic Chinese becomes a part of the long-term developments of Vietnamese political history and in itself plays only a minor role in the modern history of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.[35] The events are addressed as "*mass flights"* stemming ultimately from expropriation, collectivization, and nationalization in Vietnam and from the Sino-Vietnamese crisis.[36]

in Vietnamese and Chinese language research literature the origins of the Vietnamese boat people crisis and the events in Vietnam surrounding the ethnic Chinese expulsions have been discussed relatively little or even ignored. However, some studies and books have been written about the Vietnamese refugees who came to Hong Kong, both in English and Chinese. These studies have focused mostly on the challenges that the city faced as a result of the large influx of refugees and on the experiences of the refugees in Hong Kong, but have also limitedly discussed the reasons why these refugees came to Hong Kong.[37] In general, the more in depth examinations done on the topic by Hong Kong scholars have been written in English, such as *The Chinese/ Vietnamese Diaspora* by Yuk Wah Chan (Ed.), which is a collection of English language articles by different authors on the Vietnamese refugee diaspora in Hong Kong and abroad.[38] Yet, some Chinese language social sciences and history articles about the Vietnamese boat refugee situation in Hong Kong have been published also by researchers from mainland China. Two of these articles, one written by Li and Chen (2003) titled 香港的越南难民和船民问题 (Xiānggǎng de yuènán nànmín hé chuánmín wèntí, "Vietnamese Refugees and Boat People in Hong Kong) and other by Chen (2006) 论香港越南难民和船民问题的缘起 (Lùn xiānggǎng yuènán nànmín hé chuánmín wèntí de yuánqǐ, "On the Origin of Vietnamese Refugees and Boat People in Hong Kong"), even mentioned Vietnamese government engaging in what the authors described as "refugee trade" (难民贸易, nànmín màoyì).[39] According to them, the Vietnamese government, driven by economic incentive, were selling departures to the refugees and this was one of the factors that allowed many refugees to ultimately to come to Hong Kong during 1978 and 1979.[40] In this manner, the topic of Vietnamese government involvement in the boat people departures has been limitedly been discussed in Chinese language literature.[41] Based on the author's own research into the topic,

[35] Engelbert (2008), p. 222.
[36] Ibid.
[37] See for example articles by Suk Mun (2011) and Li and Chen (2003).
[38] See Chan, Y. W (Ed.) (2012).
[39] Chen (2006), p. 56 and Li and Chen (2003), p. 45.
[40] Chen (2006), p. 55 – 56 and Li and Chen (2003), p. 45.
[41] During the events, the actions of Vietnamese government authorities were also criticized in the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the CCP, Rénmín rìbào (人民日报, "People's Daily") on several occasion. The newspaper articles often used the term "越南输出难民" (Yuènán shūchū nànmín, "*Vietnam('s) refugee exporting"*) to describe the actions of the Vietnamese government. Renmin Ribao published articles demanding

the topic has not been discussed in Vietnamese language research. This most likely stems from the fact that debates around the boat people and the ethnic Chinese exodus are most likely regarded to be in some terms sensitive still in Vietnam and closer examination of the events could present the actions of the Vietnamese government and the CPV in an unfavourable light. Patricia Pelley, a scholar of Vietnamese post-colonial historical writing, states on the topic of sensitive issues that since 1940s and 1950s, the CPV has functioned in a "*powerful censoring way"* and that while there are no formal guides on topics that should be avoided in historical writing, many conversations about difficult topics are still essentially forbidden in Vietnam.[42] According to her, this has also caused many of the histories of ethnic minorities and non-normative groups to be minimally explored or even to be ignored in studies that have been written in Vietnamese language.[43]

What a closer examination of the relevant literature reveals is that there has been a fundamental problem related to the characterization of the ethnic Chinese exodus. Do we discuss them as voluntary departures, ultimately being the result of push and pull factors which made the ethnic Chinese leave? Should we frame them as expulsions, even when there was this sort of voluntary business transaction involved in the *exit*? Or rather were they malicious acts perpetrated by the Vietnamese government to extort profit from human misery? So far, there has been several studies done on the ethnic Chinese issue and on the boat people crisis, which have discussed these events and have presented their own interpretations of what happened and who was culpable.[44] Yet, a form of unclearness has persisted in the different accounts describing what happened and forming a precise picture of what happened has been hard due this unclearness. Partly this could be contributed to the fact that after the book published by Barry Wain in 1981, the expulsions in Southern Vietnam in 1978 and 1979 have received relatively little attention. But I would argue that the more prominent problem has been that due to the fact that historical contemporary sources have not been re-analyzed, the picture of the agency and actions behind these historical acts has also remained unclear and convoluted and as a result, the interpretations of these events have varied both in detail and description.

Vietnam to stop the exportation of refugees, Chinese spokesperson statements on the issue and even published few exposé articles detailing their version of the Vietnamese authorities' actions, see for example Su Yuanchun, "Yuenan de guoying nanmin chukou ye [Vietnam's state-run refugee export industry]", Renmin Ribao, Jul. 4th, 1979 and "*Zhizhi yuenan shuchu nanmin shi dangwuzhiji",* Renmin Ribao, Jul 7th, 1979.

[42] Pelley (2011), p. 569.

[43] Pelley (2011), p. 568.

[44] See for example Amer (1991), p. 85 – 87 and 102 – 104, Chan (1982), p. 222 – 223, Stein (1979), p. 719 – 721, Suk Mun (2011), p. 118 – 119, Tsamenyi (1983), p. 354 – 355, Vo (2006), p. 89 – 90, Wain (1979), p. 165 and Wain (1981), p. 12, 16-35 and 84-122.

2.2 Essential concepts of this study

Why do governments expel non-citizens and even their own citizens? Who have historically been the targets of expulsions? This section of the thesis and its sub-chapter provide answers questions such as these by examining theoretical and conceptual literature on the topic of expulsions. It highlights how expulsions are purposeful actions that often have some form of instrumental rationality behind them. In addition to examining expulsions as actions from theoretical perspective, this section of the thesis also acquaints the reader with the concepts that are relevant for understanding this thesis.

2.2.1 Agency and action

What is agency? Put into simple terms agency is "*the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power."*[45] It is at the same time an operation and capability, but in philosophical and scientific discussion also a concept which tries to encapsulate how the human possibility of action comes to be. The concept of agency holds within itself the principal idea that individuals are able to in varying degrees and with varying constraints make (rational) choices and engage in actions which are not predetermined or preordained.[46] Beyond these kinds of formulations, the ontological nature and the structure of agency has been highly debated.[47] The central debates around agency have revolved around questions such as voluntarism versus determinism in action, to which degree actions can be perceived to be intentional and rational and in which manner our sociopolitical and structural settings affect and dictate our actions.[48] Principally, social sciences and history have focused on studying the human society and social relationships and events and phenomena which have been the result or have resulted from human actions.[49] For this reason, agency has remained as a central concept in social sciences and history as it aims to explain the fundamental sources, limitations and origins of action and acting.[50]

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[45] Adams (2011), p. 3.
[46] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 964. However, there has been debate on whether free agency is possible at all, see for example Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 964 – 966 for summary of the debate. See also Brown (2016), p. 60 – 61. This study starts off from the point of view that some form of free and rational agency is possible.
[47] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 962 and 964 - 966.
[48] Archer (1996), p. xi and Mele (2003), p. 5.
[49] Although some theories, such as Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory contribute agency also to other entities or objects (beyond humans) which act and most importantly affect, see Latour (2005), p. 70 – 79. In this sense some theories have also tried to move past the perception of agency being possibility of and the study of human action. See also Brown (2016), p. 103 – 105 for more on this topic.
[50] Brown (2016), p. 60 – 63 and Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 962 – 963.

Two central debates in agency are relevant for this study: firstly, to whom we can *contribute* agency and in which manner can this agency and action be conceptualized to exist in these agents? And secondly, to what extent does the actions of others and structural conditions place constraints on our capability to act as agents? Starting from the first question, it is relevant for this work as expulsions are often defined as being exercise of state power, which are carried out by the government institutions and organizations which are part of the state.[51] Following this type of definition of expulsions, the principal actor in cases of expulsions is then the government or other institutions within the state implementing these actions. Yet, the limits of and nature of the agency of government and institutions has been debated.[52] Principally these debates have discussed in which manner are states and other institutions, as structures, comprised of their individual parts – do we see government' and institutions' agency being comprised of decisions of only certain agents high in hierarchy or in other words of the leading figures or are government and institutions in a sense also "*bloodless"*, meaning that they are as actors something more than the mere instrument of the actors involved in their structures.[53] Furthermore, do individuals making decisions within government act only in accordance with their own political agendas or their party's line or does some form of collective knowledge of what a particular government (or nation) should strive to do also exist and affect the actions of policymakers? These examples are of course simplifications of the debates surrounding the institution-agency debate, but these problems of describing and analyzing agency draw attention to the conundrum which Wendt (1999) excellently puts into words: "*any designation of actors and structures … will affect the resulting story."*[54] Meaning that as we explain actions and contribute agency in certain actions to agents such as states and institutions, we also end up also describing the phenomenon or event which is studied in particular way, that is related to these contributions of agency and action. As was demonstrated in the literary review, this has phenomenon which Wendt described has also been reflected in the previous descriptions of the expulsions in Southern Vietnam.

The second question is directly related to the phenomenon of expulsions and expelling in several ways. Expulsions entail the removal of individuals or groups through direct (for example through physical transportation) or indirect measures (for example through coercion or discriminatory measures to push people to leave "voluntarily").[55] As expulsions are not often clear-cut cases which take away all agency from those being expelled and are often accompanied with variety

[51] Goodwin-Gill (1978), p. 201 and Walters (2002), p. 268.
[52] Wight (2004), p. 269 – 270.
[53] Hay and Wincott (1998), p. 952, Wendt (1999), p. 193 and Wight (2004), p. 269.
[54] Wendt (1999), p. 193.
[55] Henckaerts (1995), p. 5.

measures designed to enforce people to leave, the question of to what extent does complying become a requirement is of course extremely relevant for this study.[56] This problem relates to the problem of explaining whether something can be regarded to be a voluntary or involuntary action. In forced migration research this problem is as old as the research itself, Hugo and Bun (1990) formulated the problem of describing agency in these cases very succinctly: *"in the strictest sense migration can be consider to be involuntary only when a person is physically transported from a country and has no opportunity to escape from those transporting him."*[57] In general, in expulsion research there has not been not a lot of focus on analyzing and explaining agency within expulsion campaigns, which has, I would argue also meant that expulsions have been explained in a way which presents a very straightforward and monolithic picture of the agency and action involved in expulsions.

In this study, agency is conceptualized along the lines of Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) formulation as a "*temporally embedded process of social engagement"* where actions and agency are informed (among other things) by both the past and evaluated on the basis of the perceived present and future.[58] This broad conceptualization allows to discuss how social actors are capable of critically evaluating and reconstructing the conditions for action in a temporal reality.[59] Actions, such as expulsions, are not only then seen as "*pursuit of preestablished ends, abstracted from concrete situations"*, but rather as being developed within contexts that are ever changing and which are subject to constant re-evaluations.[60]

As a last point to the topic of agency and action, it is pertinent to add, as this study discusses actions taken and policies implemented by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's regime, that the actor of regime is not understood in this study as a sentient monolith. Behind the deliberation of the regime are understood to be humans and individuals, which pursue the policies which lead to expulsions.[61] These humans and individuals are referred to in this study with the broad term "authorities" or regime actors, or by other terms that refer to more specific actors. Related to this question of nature of state/regime as actor, this formulation by Bob Jessop (1990) is relevant for this study: "*it is not the state which acts: it is always specific sets of politicians and state officials located in specific parts of the state system."*[62] This kind of formulation does not however necessarily fully explain how action and deliberation happens within the structures of the state or

[56] Henckaerts (1995), p. 108 – 109.
[57] Hugo and Bun (1990), p. 20
[58] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 962.
[59] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 963 – 964.
[60] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 967 – 968.
[61] Wight (2004), p. 273.
[62] Jessop (1990), p. 367.

regime. I would be inclined to agree with Wendt (1999), that some form of collective knowledge of what the regime and government is, what are its principles and what is in its national interests and foreign policies, exists and is reproduced continually and affect policy-making.[63]

2.2.2 What is considered as an expulsion?

In its most clear-cut form, expulsions are political acts undertaken by the government or political regimes to remove certain individuals or segments of population from the territorial space of the state.[64] However, there exists several distinct terms which are used to describe different forms of expulsions, such as mass expulsions, ethnic expulsion, ethnic cleansing, religious expulsion, forced population transfers and deportation.[65] Each of these terms denote phenomena, which are the result of varying and sometimes differing causes, but at the same time are characteristically similar in many ways. To give an example, ethnic expulsions and religious expulsions have historically been perpetrated on the basis that the targeted are characteristically (in ethnicity, nationality, religion, culturally) different and distinct from the perpetrators.[66] Yet, these actions as expulsions, regardless of what brand of expulsions they have been characterized as, have generally aimed at removing certain segments of population from the territory and polity of the state. The justifications and motivations have then tended to vary, but, expulsions have fundamentally been actions carried out with the intention of achieving this prescribed goal.

Expulsions can be separated from other natural and human factors which lead to involuntary movement of people within and outside borders. Factors such as civil war, internal strife and ethnic tensions all can make people move involuntarily, but the principal difference between movement resulting from these factors and expulsion is related to the fact that in acts of expulsion, there is a governmental or regime actors orchestrating these movements.[67]

Traditionally it has been seen that behind the expulsions is often an expulsion order or decree.[68] Most often the orders have been often carried out by the designed authorities or military, but the

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[63] Wendt (1999), p. 217. This kind of process of reproducing collective knowledge explains for example continuity between different governments.
[64] Bloch and Schuster (2005), p. 493, Goodwin-Gill (1978), p. 201 and Walters (2002), p. 268. Although this study discusses expulsions in the context of people being expelled from nation state, expulsions can in the widest sense refer to expelling of individuals from any organization, as was discussed in Hirschman (1970), p. 76.
[65] Bell-Fialkoff (1993), p. 110, Henckaerts (1995), p. 1 and Walters (2002), p. 266. See also Encyclopedia Princetoniensis article on ethnic expulsions by Brendan O'Leary.
[66] O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved May 27th, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328 and Zolberg (1983), p. 31 – 32.
[67] Henckaerts (1995), p. 2 and 109.
[68] Henckaerts (1995), p. 5.

methods taken to make people leave have tended to vary. Henckaerts (1995) for example highlights that indirect measures such as coercion and various political, economic, and social measures are also often used by government actors to make people to leave.[69] Expulsions can then encompass variety of actions intended to make people leave. For example, in Northern Vietnam, the contemporary sources point to there being harassment, rumour spreading and even coercion complementing the voluntary departure policies which allowed the ethnic Chinese to cross the border to the PRC.[70] In Southern Vietnam the method of expelling ethnic Chinese was more subtle, it relied on ethnic Chinese registering to leave and paying to officials to organize departure, sometimes through intermediaries and other times directly.[71] In these expulsions in the South, there was an aspect of voluntariness involved in the departures, that would disqualify these actions as being labelled as expulsions, if we were to understand expulsions strictly as acts only involving forceful means or forced relocation of population.[72] However, Goodwin-Gill's definition of expulsions for example emphasizes that expulsions can secure the removal of an individual "*either 'voluntarily', under threat of forcible removal, or forcibly*".[73] Expulsions and indirect expulsions in the broadest sense refer to any measures taken by governments to force people to leave the country.[74]

One argument this study presents is that the available evidence points to there being this kind of expulsion order behind these actions. By this fact alone, the characterization of these actions as expulsions is justifiable. But at the same time, it must be said that the expulsions especially in the Southern Vietnam, present a quite a unique case to examine in terms of expulsions. As will be discussed later in this study, variety of indirect methods and methods relying on voluntary actions, such as the departure program, were used to facilitate departures of ethnic Chinese from Southern Vietnam. Yet, not all measures which affected the position of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam were taken with the consideration that they would force the ethnic Chinese to leave.[75] Therefore, this study is also an exercise in interpretation in relation to these expulsions and as such tries to highlight the decisions and policies behind these actions throughout the study.

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[69] Henckaerts (1995), p. 5.
[70] *"Exodus from Vietnam",* SCMP, Jul 23rd, 1978, Wong, Eileen, *"Hanoi tightens screws on Chinese population",* SCMP, May 30th, 1979 and. U.S Department of State, "*Vietnam's refugee Machine*", CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.
[71] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 48 and Wain (1981), p. 86.
[72] Hugo and Bun (1990), p. 20, discussed this dichotomy of voluntary versus involuntary action in the context of migration. Tsamenyi (1983), p. 372 – 373 also touched upon this topic in the context of the boat people refugees.
[73] Goodwin-Gill (1978), p. 201.
[74] Henckaerts (1995), p. 110.
[75] Amer (2013), p. 6 – 7.

2.2.3 The terminology surrounding different types of expulsions

In this subchapter, a short introduction will be given to the various forms of expulsions and conceptual distinctions related to expulsions which are relevant to this study. Starting from deportations, according to Henckaerts (1995), they are characteristically almost identical to expulsions.[76] The difference between the terms expulsion and deportation is largely one related to the context their used in, as expulsions are most often used in the context of international law, while deportations are mostly used in municipal law.[77] Furthermore, in terms of legality in international law, deportations have been seen as form of legitimate expulsion targeted towards aliens (non-citizens) and regarded as a sovereign rights of the state, whereas expulsions of masses or mass expulsions are prohibited by international human rights instruments.[78] At the same time there are few semantical differences between the terms as for example deportations are mostly discussed in the context of them being "*authorized removal of non-citizens from state territory"* and involving the idea of returning these non-citizens to their purported country of origin.[79] In contemporary deportation research, deportations are often differentiated from mass expulsions as phenomenon.[80]

Mass expulsions refer to expulsion of a large group of people, whereas the expulsion of individuals are often referred to as being cases of forced political exile or deportations.[81] Mass expulsions are generally instigated or organized with the intention of inducing a group of unwanted people to leave.[82] And in contrast to deportations, the targets of these mass expulsions are not only aliens (non-citizens), as the targeted are often nationals and possess at least the nominal citizenship of the country.[83] Mass expulsions can be categorized as being either internal or international mass expulsions, depending on whether the expelled relocate within the country or to outside it.[84] Frequently expulsions are spoken in terms of them being expulsions of masses

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[76] Henckaerts (1995), p. 5
[77] Ibid. Furthermore, the terms are often used in synonymous manner, for example in Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic (GDR) the acts of expelling certain segments of population and individuals from the state have been traditionally characterized as deportations, Gelb (1995), p. 389 and Hirschman (1993), p. 184.
[78] Henckaerts (1995), p. 1 and 5. Since after the Second World War, the use of expulsions as a political tool and the indiscriminate use of expulsions has been severely limited by the statutes of international human rights law, see Henry (2018), p. 5 for history of the prohibition of deportations and forcible transfers of population.
[79] Hasselberg (2016), p. 24 and Paoletti (2010), p. 5.
[80] See Bloch and Schuster (2005), Hasselberg (2016), Paoletti (2010) and Walters (2002) for examples of contemporary deportation research.
[81] Henckaerts (1995), p. 1, Van Hear (1993), p. 275 and Walters (2002), p. 268 – 269.
[82] Henckaerts (1995), p. 5 and Van Hear (1993), p. 275.
[83] Henckaerts (1995), p. 5.
[84] Henckaerts (1995), p. 3 – 4.

and due to this the terms mass expulsion and expulsion are often used interchangeably. However, expulsion is more of a general term for acts involving the removal of certain groups or individuals from the territory of the state and refers not only to the acts themselves, but to the wider phenomenon of expelling also. For this reason, this study uses the term expulsion instead of mass expulsion.

Population transfer has been another widely used term to indicate certain type of planned mass movements of people.[85] This term has been used when discussing for instance the population exchange between Greece and Turkey and to other transfers of minorities between countries.[86] The planned mass movements related to population transfers have in different cases been either voluntary or forced.[87] Sometimes the transfer of population has been confined to areas within the country, other times population exchanges have transferred people between two different countries and across national borders. This term is also relevant to this study, as in the SRV after the war a policy of population transfer from cities to rural development zones called New Economic Zones (NEZ) begun after the war in 1975. The relocations were in some cases voluntary and other cases coerced to these zones.[88]

Ethnic expulsion is another type of mass expulsion which, as stated before, is perpetrated on the basis that the targeted are characteristically (in this case in terms of ethnicity) different and distinct from the perpetrators.[89] Ethnic expulsions have often been one measure used in ethnic conflicts between competing ethnic groups, especially if one group has had a more established and dominant position than the other in the state/society.[90] Sometimes ethnic expulsions have been motivated by a desire to "cleanse" the area from certain ethnic groups and in this way "purify" the area by forcibly driving people away from the area.[91] Other times these ethnic cleansings have resulted in a genocide.[92] In terms of naming, calling the ethnic Chinese expulsions as ethnic expulsions is in many ways justifiable. However, in this study I have opted not to use this term due to perceiving that behind the expulsions were also wider political motives stemming from political ideology and from variety of political goals in addition to the ethnic motives.

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[85] Walters (2002), p. 273.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Amer (2013), p. 5 and Desbarats (1987), p. 72 – 73.
[89] O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved 5th of June, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328.
[90] See Bell-Fialkoff (1993), p. 113 – 115, O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved 5th of June, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328 and Rizal (2004), p. 151 – 152 and 157.
[91] Bell-Fialkoff (1993), p. 114 and O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved 5th of June, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328.
[92] Bell-Fialkoff (1993), p. 113.

2.3 The politics of expulsions – instrumental and exceptional actions

Expulsions are, above all, political acts carried out with certain purposes and intentions in mind. In Spain during the late 15th century, the unconverted Jews were expelled by the regime which emphasized religious unity.[93] Zolberg (1983) states that "*The Jews became to be viewed as an obstacle that must be eliminated if Spain were to reach its newly defined political objectives."*[94] Hirschman (1993) made similar observations of regimes using expulsions intentionally for their own purposes: "*They* [the German Democratic Republic, GDR] *realized they could weaken internal opposition by a selective policy of either permitting certain people to exit or outright expelling critical voices considered to be dangerous or obnoxious."*[95] Expulsions have often been framed as being instrumental and value-rational actions, that are used to achieve selected political objectives.[96]

While some researchers, such as Van Hear (1993), suggest that expulsions are *"episodes rather than continuous processes",* as they do not take place continuously, I would emphasize that they also often have significant political, cultural and historical reasons behind them and act often as a continuation in series of actions which target specific groups people.[97] And so, while the acts might be sudden measures as Van Hear suggested, they also often have both identifiable longer-term and short-term processes behind them.

As a general theme, many of the more explanatory theories of expulsions have emphasized a view in which the politics of expulsions and agency in expulsions are related to means-end type of rationality.[98] Weiner (1991) for example identified three types of politically motivated expulsions: the first one being expulsions used as a way to achieve cultural homogeneity or asserting dominance of one ethnic community over another, the second one being expulsions used as a method to deal with political dissidents and class enemies and the third being the use of expulsions as a part of strategy to achieve foreign policy objectives.[99] All of these categorical types place some form of instrumental logic behind expulsions as actions, but they also establish that there has been no singular motive for the act of expelling. Perhaps for reasons that stem from conclusions similar to this one, there has been in a sense rejection of *"singular"* expulsion, as the

[93] Zolberg (1983), p. 31 – 32.
[94] Zolberg (1983), p. 32.
[95] Hirschman (1993), p. 184.
[96] Zolberg (1983), p. 32, Hirschman (1970), p. 76 Hirschman (1993), p. 184 and Light (2012), p. 401.
[97] Van Hear (1993), p. 275.
[98] See for example Hirschman (1993), Weiner (1992) and Van Hear (1993).
[99] Weiner (1992), p. 98 – 100.

reasons behind expulsions have been seen to be greatly varied between different times and cases.[100] This rejection has not, however, stopped researchers from establishing archetypes of expulsions along the lines of Weiner and from forming general observations of expulsions. In fact, as Walters (2002) has argued, these types of general observations related to expulsions can help us move *"from seeing expulsions in singular or exceptional terms"* and assist us in understanding whether they belong for example to *"repertoire of techniques of social regulation"* of states or whether they are one tool of governance.[101]

From previous research literature, we can outline what kind of circumstances and politics expulsions have been seen to be related to. Starting from what causes expulsions; they have often been argued to have resulted from either a war, religious or ethnic conflict or security concerns.[102] According to Van Hear (1993) during nineteenth and twentieth century expulsions were most commonly instigated in periods of instability, after independence, during or after war, during elections or periods of nationalist upsurge, or during the emergence of new nation-states or polities.[103] Expulsions have then been related to periods of political and societal change and have often in a sense been sparked by them.[104] The justifications given for the expulsions by the perpetrators have often outlined the expelled as politically disloyal and have accused them of being a potential fifth column.[105] And as Weiner's classification of three types of politically motivated expulsions demonstrate, the acts have had some form of political purpose or intentions behind them.

It could be argued that as acts, expulsions exemplify the coercive power which states hold to regulate who belongs and who does not.[106] In general, the removal of individuals and groups through expulsions has also meant that they have been disbarred from the privileges and rights of being a citizen of the given state and excluded from participating in its future development.[107] Furthermore, it has also often meant for these people everything which accompanies forced relocation: loss of home, property, jobs and in terms of identity, and even a shattered sense of

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[100] Walters (2002), p. 272.
[101] Walters (2002), p. 271.
[102] Bell-Fialkoff, (1993), p. 115, O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved May 29th, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328 and Zolberg (1983), p. 32.
[103] Van Hear (1993), p. 276.
[104] O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved Jun. 16th , 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328 and Zolberg (1983), p. 32 and Van Hear (1993), p. 276.
[105] O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved Jun. 16th, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328 and Van Hear (1993), p. 279.
[106] Hasselberg (2016), p. 24 and Paoletti (2010), p. 5.
[107] Green and Weil (2007), p. 1, Light (2012), p. 401 and Paoletti (2010), p. 5. In *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation,* Green, Weil and other authors contributing to the book examine citizenship as not only being conceptualized in the terms of entry and staying, but also through exit and leaving as well.

belonging.[108] Yet, in terms of measures to exclude certain individuals from obtaining certain political rights, economic privileges or barring them from being a full-fledged member of society, expulsions have served as only one method. Detention or internment, a form of confinement within a camp or prison, has been one often used method.[109] Even if detention or imprisonment have not actually removed people from the physical territory of the state, they have, as Bloch and Schuster (2005) argued, meant exclusion from society.[110] In a similar manner to detentions and expulsions, population transfers within the country have sometimes been used as a way of removing and transferring certain minority groups from certain territories to another, in order to silence critique or opposition for certain political or economic projects.[111] In this manner they have also meant political and societal exclusion for these people, especially if the transfers have taken these people away for example from their traditional lands or moved them to more remote regions.[112] It is interesting to note that presented in this manner, all these acts could be argued to be a tools of political governance and population control, as they have been used by governments to move the people further away from the problem or threat they have been perceived to cause.

This naturally leads to the question of what then makes expulsions special in terms their political utility or purposes, if they could be argued to be only one method among many? If there is a case to be made for the distinctive political utility of expulsions, it would arguably be related to the fact presented earlier in the introduction, that they serve as a concrete method of removing people from territory and from its political space.[113] In his explanation of expulsions, Albert Hirschman for example argued that expulsions were among the many instruments which organizations, like states, tended to use to curtail critique and criticism.[114] He saw that the removal of these people would effectively then also silence the political voice and critique of these people.[115] More severe examples of how expulsions can arise from desire to politically exclude and remove people from territory can be found in the cases of ethnic expulsions, where the motive for expelling has, in the

[108] Bernstein (1996), p. 83, Van Hear (1993), p. 275 and Walters (2002), p. 273. To political theorist and philosopher Hannah Arendt, the sudden loss of one's place in the world and political status, as happened to the European Jews during the period between the wars and during Second World War, was "*identical with expulsion from humanity altogether.",* Bernstein (1996), p. 83.
[109] Bloch and Schuster (2005), p. 493 and 497.
[110] Block and Schuster (2005), p. 493.
[111] Hasselberg (2016), p. 28 – 29.
[112] Walters (2002), p. 273 – 274.
[113] Paoletti (2010), p. 5. Although the removal from political space especially in the modern-day globalized world is not always the case.
[114] Hirschman (1970), p. 76.
[115] Hirschman (1970), p. 37 and Hirschman (1993), p. 184. However, Hoffman (2008), p. 11 and 13 -14, posits that emigrants and diaspora can voice their concerns abroad and depending on the strength of the ties to the country of origin even influence the political situation inside their country of origin. In this way this thesis of expulsions removing voice is not always true.

most extreme cases, risen from a desire to ethnically "cleanse" certain territories due to political, strategic or ideological concerns.[116] Possibly then the removal of certain people from the territory or political space in a sense also removes the problem which these expelled people have been perceived to cause or at least diminishes it. The removal or at least diminishing of certain societal, political, ideological, or economic problems might be argued to be in this sense the favourable outcome which expulsions produce. Perhaps the banishment of certain people also carries with it a certain permanence and concreteness through removing people from the society completely, which the other alternative measures such as detention and population transfers within the country might not have, but not the severity of more extreme measures that could be used to achieve similar results such as executions or organized killings.[117]

What these types of formulations of expulsions elude to, is that there might be some type of strategic-context evaluations which lead to expulsions, and that the favourable outcomes or pursuit of these goals are then mostly measured from the perspective of the beholder, or in this case, from the point of view of the principle agent expelling these people – the government officials in charge of the expulsion policies and the authorities implementing them. I would agree with the position that there is certain special political utility in expulsions, which distinguishes and separates them as acts from other forms of exclusion and other ways to deal people who are perceived to cause problems and present some form of threat to political governance in some manner. However, I would also maintain that due to this agency regimes have in expulsions, the politics of expulsion are also inherently connected to the regime doing the expelling. Even if this agency and the politics connected to the actions are not uniform in style and always clear and easy to interpret.

We must consider what are the special circumstances and actions behind expulsions if we are to explain expulsions beyond them being instrumental actions and mere responses and tools of an institutional agent. Explaining the purposiveness of expulsions requires considering what kind of agent or agents are behind the expulsions. But it also requires giving background to the act and to the sociopolitical relationships and political developments which are prevalently behind the expulsions. In this manner analyzing and studying politics of expulsion is also a descriptive effort, which assigns and illustrates meanings, and explaining expulsions themselves is an explanatory effort. In holistic study of expulsions, both are required, as expulsions do not come to fruition

[116] Bell-Fialkoff, (1993), p. 110 and O'Leary, "*Ethnic Expulsions"*, retrieved June 3rd, 2019 from https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/328.
[117] Finkel (2008), p. 166.

without a purpose and the purposefulness in expulsions does not seem to only derive from the sum of the expulsions' anticipated consequences.

2.3.1 Becoming expellable – agency and decision-making in expulsions

When one examines expulsions, it becomes clear that not all regimes expel in masses, nor do all subjects seem to be expellable. Basing on this statement, it is pertinent to ask how certain people then ultimately end up becoming expellable and how expulsions end up happening. One way of examining this question would be to examine who historically have been targeted by expulsions and scope out what these cases have been related to. However, this type of grand comparative sociological analysis of different periods and cases would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, even a smaller and more general examination of this question can bring about salient points and insights, which can help us understand how people are targeted by expulsions and how they, in a sense, become expellable.

Trying to answer the question of who are vulnerable to expulsions, Van Hear (1993) stated that the targets of the expulsions have often been those who are seen to be in some form partial or problematic members of the society they reside in, such as migrant workers or long-term minority communities of another ethnicity or of alien origin.[118] He saw that in the question of *who* is expellable, the question of membership and status of the expelled is central, as often in expulsion cases, it is the societal membership (and citizenship) of the targeted people that becomes questioned as a form of doubt is cast upon their residence within the country.[119] In a similar manner to Van Hear, Bonacich (1973) examined the question of what could explain why certain groups become targets of hostile actions. Her analysis dealt with groups that she called *"middleman minorities"*[120]*,* to which she attributed groups such as ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, Jews in Europe and Indians in East Africa.[121] She argued that there can develop a form of "*host hostility"* towards the longer-term minorities and migrants, that reside within a country for number of reasons, ranging from the minorities having distinct identities and reluctance to

[118] Van Hear (1993), p. 277 and 279.
[119] Van Hear (1993), p. 279.
[120] The name comes from the fact that in similar manner to each other these minorities have played a *"role of middleman between producer and consumer, employer and employee, owner and renter, elite and masses."* in the society, Bonacich (1973), p. 583. In addition to this, Bonacich argued that these middleman minorities have strong communal solidarity, ethnic, cultural, and regional ties to the broader communities of other communities of similar ethnicity and often to the country of origin, Bonacich (1973), p. 586.
[121] Bonacich (1973), p. 583 – 586.

assimilate to the broader society to them having strong ties to their country of origin at the perceived expense of the country they reside in.[122] She saw that at the centre of why these hostile acts (to which she included expulsions) happen, is the fact that both the minorities and the host society have their own and often conflicting goals that come into conflict for various reasons at different times.[123] While this theorization is on quite abstract level, what Bonacich suggests is that some form of *informed socially constructed relationship* seems to exist between host society and these minorities and that this social relation seems to be the basis on which the action in these types of actions, such as expulsions, are deliberated upon.[124] Even if the term host society is vague and unprecise in terms of explaining who is counted as being part of host society, the basic argument of Bonacich that there exists some form of informed socially constructed relationship between the expellers and expellers, and that this relations informs the actions seems believable.

Both Bonacich and Van Hear discussed the problems related to the unassimilated long-term migrants and saw that their position in the society, who they were, their questionable societal membership and orientations had made them problematic and targets for differentiated treatment and hostile action.[125] However, from different examples we can perceive that not all expulsions have resulted from these types of centuries old issues of unclear and unresolved membership. Finkel (2003, 2008) examined the deportations of Soviet intellectuals from the early Soviet era and accounted a story of the expulsions of Moscow intellectuals. These intellectuals were ordered to leave the country due to charge of "*anti-Soviet activities"*, but when they were expelled, many of them were oblivious to what they had done wrong.[126] As background to the expulsions, Finkel explained that there had been struggles over university autonomy and on-going conflicts between the regime and the intelligentsia, that eventually led to expulsions.[127] There had been no long lasting debate over whether these Soviet intellectuals were Soviet citizens or whether they had assimilated properly to the society, but rather according to Finkel, *"the individuals selected for expulsions were considered to have overstepped boundaries of permissible behaviour by asserting for the intelligentsia a role to which it was no longer supposed to aspire."*[128] Finkle argued that the fact that the intellectuals engaged in public discourse in the style of the West, was "*tantamount to a political act"* in the eyes of the Bolsheviks and dissent behaviour in the Soviet public sphere

[122] Bonacich (1973), p. 589 – 591.
[123] Bonacich (1973), p. 589 – 591 and 593.
[124] Bonacich (1973), p. 589 – 590.
[125] Bonacich (1973), p. 584 – 589 and Van Hear (1993), p. 278 – 280.
[126] Finkel (2003), p. 589 and Finkel (2008), p. 9 – 11. The account is from Finkel (2003), p. 589.
[127] Finkel (2003), p. 590 and 593 – 595 and Finkel (2008), p. 9 – 11.
[128] Finkel (2008), p. 10.

that the Bolsheviks were trying to create.[129] The expulsions were orchestrated by the regime then as a sort of punishment and the behaviour of the intellectuals reflected against the normative expectations of conduct that the regime had for public discourse and speaking. Furthermore, it seemed that to the Soviet leadership, upon deliberation, the expulsions were apparently a favourable option to others in solving the problems presented by the intelligentsia [130] In this case that Finkel described in detail, the belonging and membership of these people was problematized also, but on entirely different terms than what Van Hear for example presented in his article.

From all these examples presented in this study, I would like to present three general observations about expulsions. Firstly, the decision to expel seems to be not only to be evaluated and deliberated, but is preceded by problematization by regime actors, that is often done in relation to some project or goal which needs to be resolved. Secondly, the problem that these people are perceived to present seems to be not the sum of any particular factor, such as ethnicity or social class, (although we can identify such factors in the discourses surrounding these expulsions), rather these factors seem to become a part of the wider political problem of their *belonging,* and this questioning of belonging goes beyond the scope of what ethnicity or what occupation these people for example represent as it is reflected to other goals and projects of the regime. Thirdly, while the problem of belonging becomes problematized in terms of it being reflected to certain goal, values or projects of the moment, there exists an historically informed and future oriented socially constructed relationship between the expelled and the perpetrators which affects and informs the exercise of power and action, among other things, in this relationship.

In cases of expulsion, most of the time people are expelled by authorities, acting on behalf of the state.[131] What I argue is that ultimately the decision to expel is up to the deliberation of the regime and in the cases of expulsions, the belonging of these people is often problematized in relation to some project or goal that the regime wants to realize or in relation to a threat that these people are seemed to cause to the regime. The goal or project can for example be building certain kind of religious state as happened in Spain in the late 15th century, construction of distinctive Soviet

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[129] Finkel (2008), p. 12. Finkel described the Soviet public sphere to be "*quite similar to the autonomous civil society it was intended to replace…* [but] *At the same time, however, it would be purged of the disturbing heterogeneity that characterized the bourgeois public sphere and infused instead with that enforced harmony and unity that was a central element of the Soviet utopian project."* In this manner the intellectual public discussion over how things should be organized was problematic to the Bolsheviks, Finkel (2008), p. 5 and 8 -9.

[130] Finkel (2008), p. 166 – 167. In his study, Finkel showcased this deliberation through the personal correspondence of Lenin and other high-ranking Soviet authorities. These individuals that were expelled were branded as "*socially dangerous"* and were suspected of corrupting their students and other educated citizens, Finkel (2003), p. 610.

[131] Henckaerts (1995), p. 108 – 109. Henckaerts also mentions that in some cases of expulsions non-government agents can also act, expel, and persecute, and that governments can tolerate or even abet this kind of behavior that leads to mass expulsions, making them complicit to the actions by condoning them.

society and public sphere, the pursual and construction of some manner of ethnostate or weakening the oppositional forces of the regime.[132] In all of these examples I listed here, people have through their actions or as what they represent for example as a member of opposition or as a member of different faith, become a problem in terms of realizing these goals or projects.

Yet, as was argued previously, the decision to expel is also informed by and reflected upon the historically informed and future oriented socially constructed relationship between the expelled and expellers.[133] In this manner expulsions do not happen in a vacuum and often act as a continuation in series of actions that have been pursued in order to try to resolve these problems that these people are perceived to cause. Furthermore, often the problematization of belonging of the people who have eventually been expelled from certain states or areas has happened and has been a political question for a long time even before the expulsions take place, as evidenced by "The Jewish question*"* in Europe during 19th and 20th century or the long-enduring political problems that surrounded and to this day surround the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia.[134] But not always, as is noticeable in Finkle's description of the expulsions of Soviet intellectuals. However, it is important to note that even in the Finkle's description there was a conflict that had already formed with the intellectuals, and as is evidenced by the conflict and Soviet leaderships descriptions of the Soviet intellectuals, a socially constructed relationship between the expelled and the expellers which informed the decision to expel.

As a last point, it is important to emphasize that when we distance ourselves from examining the decision-making in expulsions and move on to their implementation, we can start to see that there are agents within these political regime structures and outside them, who affect the events and actions in manners that were most likely never intended by the principal actors. Certainly, in mass expulsions, many of the events and actions are brought forward by what Finkel described aptly as "*politics of the moment"*, where the possibilities of the means dictate the action.[135] This certainly was the case in Southern Vietnam, where the implementation of the expulsions changed several times during the period the campaign was active and was even put on hold one time due to

[132] Bell-Fialkoff (1993), p. 110 – 115, Finkel (2008), p. 12 – 14, Hirschman (1993), p. 184 and Zolberg (1983), p. 31 – 32.
[133] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 998 - 1000 argued that in practical evaluations that agents engage in, there are three dominant "*tones"* which can be distinguished: problematization, decision and execution all of which require contextualization of projects and habitual practices. In addition to this they argued that two secondary tones can also be found, which are characterization and deliberation that place the actions "*against the background of the past"* and in the process in which future possible trajectories are deliberated. This formulation of agency is useful for examining deliberate and deliberated actions which expulsions essentially are.
[134] Bernstein (1996), p. 49 and Barrett (2012), p. 2.
[135] Emirbayer and Mische (1998), p. 998 – 1000 and Finkel (2008), p. 10.

international pressure.[136] In this manner, while the politics of the expulsion and ultimately the decision to expel might rest upon the regime doing the expelling and be inherently linked to the politics of it, we need to also explain how these actions take place and are implemented in their historical setting, in order to understand how many other factors also play a part in expulsions and becoming expellable.

3. Historical social sciences approach to historical research

Historical social sciences[137] is an approach or field of historical studies which adopts a sociological perspective towards historical phenomenon and events. In historical social sciences according to Rüsen (2005): "*Society is seen as entirety of all things according to which history can be sought after theoretically and empirically."*[138] Historical transformation and social development are seen as being interconnected in a world comprised of "*culturally constituted actors living within institutionally structured worlds"* and for this reason, some historians such as Hall and Bryant (2005) have argued that historical and sociological modes of analysis should be both employed in the study of *"social worlds past"*.[139]

This study focuses on examining certain type of actions (expulsions) that affect individuals and groups in historical setting. Expulsions are argued to be political acts which have to do with (among other factors) changes in the socially constructed relationship between the expelled and the expellers. For this reason, the type of analysis which Hall and Bryant championed for is employed for example in the chapter 4 of the study discussing the historical developments of the ethnic Chinese community and the evolvement of the socially constructed relationship between the ethnic Chinese communities and different Vietnamese polities. These changes that are analysed and highlighted are generally seen as taking place in a context of larger structural setting and societal changes.[140]

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[136] Amer (2011), p. 36 – 39.
[137] In general, historical social sciences or social science history (as it is sometimes called) is an approach or field of historical studies which critiques the disciplinary distinctions by which history and social sciences are often separated from each other, p. Rüsen (2005), p. 96 and Hall and Bryant (2005), p. XXII – XXIII.
[138] Rüsen (2005), p. 97 – 99.
[139] Hall and Bryant (2005), p. XXII.
[140] Hall and Bryant (2005), p. XXII - XXIV.

In general, this study can be characterized to be a historical social sciences study as it seeks to not only to understand[141] historical experiences and phenomena, but to explain them and more notably, to provide explanations of them.[142] Historical sources are the basis of the analysis in the study, but practical theories and concepts related to expulsions are also used to disclose and interpret findings in the last chapter. The purpose of this is to discuss the basis of these actions and highlight how they shape the motivations and destinies of individuals that become the targets of expulsions.

In the next few sub-chapters, I will go over more the procedural basis and understanding of historical research that this study employs.

3.1 Historical interpretation as a basis of historical research

History, as an undertaking, is an intellectual effort to interpret the past.[143] Historians engage in interpretation, when they are doing history as they have to reconcile conflicting information and "*facts"* which preside in the fragmented relics (documents and other materials that historians use as sources for research) of the past.[144] Interpretation is a central method and process in historical research and as Rüsen (2005) states in all historical studies "*more or less theoretically explicated conceptual framework of interpretation* [is used] *when…* [historians] *mould facts into sense-bearing historical relationship."*[145] It is also a the central method of this study.

But what exactly does historical interpretation consist of? Historical interpretation is not synonymous with the process of source critique, in which the sources of the historical research are subjected to scrutiny and interrogated.[146] Nor is it a mere heuristic process of discovering the facts from the sources.[147] Yet it relates to both of these processes. Through interpretation,

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[141] Historical studies have been argued to know their object (the past) by way of "understanding" (as opposed to "explaining" it), this is an often made and cited distinction between historical research and social scientific research, Goldthorpe (1991), p. 211 – 212 and Rüsen 2005, p. 80.
[142] Historical social sciences emerged as an approach of historical research in the late 1960s and 1970s in West Germany and adopted theoretical elements as instruments of historical research. It also critiqued the isolation of historical research from theorization and from the conceptual knowledge of other disciplines. In this manner it has differed from other approaches to historical research in which emphasis has been laid that *"historical studies cannot and need not theorize."*, p. Rüsen (2005), p. 80 and 96.
[143] Lemon (2003), p. 292.
[144] Donnelly and Norton (2012), p. XIII and Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 69 and 84. Although all historians aim to provide factual claims of the past, as Howell and Prevenier write, p. 84, "*the status of any 'fact' available to the historian is always insecure"*, as the source evidence available is always incomplete and fragmented and the historian himself plays a significant role in interpreting and evaluating these facts in a way that forces historians to always question the epistemological status of the historical claims that they make.
[145] Rüsen (2005), p. 68.
[146] Rüsen (2005), p. 66 – 67.
[147] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 84 – 87.

historians assign meaning and significance to the information and facts they discover from the sources. These facts and information do not have any special or extraordinary historical meaning or significance, as their historical sense comes from the semantic relationship to other facts that is brought forward by historical interpretation.[148] When engaging in historical interpretation, the historian "*makes use of principles of sense, meaning and significance, which have a different ontological status from the facts themselves.*" [149] Furthermore, in historical interpretation, selectivity, both deliberate and non-deliberate is exercised and the reflections and judgements make certain patterns and information acquire special importance.[150] This aspect of sense-making in historical interpretation should not be downplayed, as it relates significantly to how historical events are construed and constructed in historical sciences.[151]

The traditional way of doing systematic research of a historical topic is often divided into three parts: heuristics (discovery), source critique and interpretation.[152] The result of these successive steps and of the writing process which "*transforms the source information into a sense and meaningful narrative sequence"* is a historical narrative, that is the prose form in which the historical account is narrated and explained in.[153] Historical interpretation has then a material basis that is subjected to the interpretation, as historians construct meanings from sources, but part of the process is also that the historical knowledge or "*facts",* that are gathered from these sources, are through interpretation organized in manner that situates this newly gained knowledge to a semantic relationship with other *"facts*".[154] Ultimately, interpretation comes to be explained in historical studies is in a form which seeks to make the events and actions coherent and explain the reasons and origins of them, as well as seeks places them into a coherent historical order and continuity in a way that answers the question: what happened (in the past)?[155] In this manner, historical research and reconstruction comprise of both interpretation and representation, that are connected to each other.[156]

As a conclusion, interpretation is only one, albeit far-reaching, aspect of historical research, that is integrally connected to the nature of historical knowledge. Other elements, such as source comparisons and critique are also integral parts of the valid procedures of historical research and

[148] Rüsen (2005), p. 67.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 85.
[151] Lemon (2003), p. 312 – 313.
[152] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 69 and Rüsen (2005), p. 83.
[153] Rüsen (2005), p. 9 and 67.
[154] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 19 and Rüsen (2005), p. 67.
[155] Lemon (2003), p. 293 and 311 and Rüsen (2005), p. 4 and 11.
[156] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 19 and Rüsen (2005), p. 4, 11 and 66.

solidify the basis of historical research and historical knowledge, as will be explained in the next few subchapters.

3.2 The scientific validity of historical knowledge

One of the most important question in historical sciences is the question of what is the scientific validity of historical knowledge that results from historical interpretation. Historical research is of course predicated upon the idea that we can have some accurate knowledge of the past.[157] Without this kind of presupposition, engaging in historical research would be pointless. But as far as establishing an authoritative narrative or having "*the right frame for understanding the general basis and direction of history*", it has been argued that historians cannot deliver on these promises.[158] This possibility of not being to explain of "what *truly* happened?" in the past problematizes the validity of historical knowledge. In general, two major problems can be seen to relate to historical knowledge in terms of validity: 1) The problems related to interpretations and objectivity and 2) the problems related to the limitations posed to historical knowledge by the sources used in historical research.

Starting from interpretation and objectivity, there is an aspect of interpretation (and perhaps as a result of this aspect - subjectivity) that cannot be separated from historical knowledge, and for this reason, in the absolute sense of objectivity, historical interpretations does not offer authoritative insights into the "*truth of things.*"[159] This does not however mean that all forms of historical knowledge are subjective - and therefore invalid. While interpretation is an important part of historical research, it is not the only essential element of it, nor it is the only part of it which produces knowledge. Through source comparisons and source analysis, it is possible to analyse whether some event for example happened in a manner that makes this information not subjective, provided that there are sufficient sources from which we derive that this event has taken place.[160] Information can be gathered of dates, events and names and as a result of validation from source critique and comparison, these findings are not subjective. Yet, at the same time, historians do also provide descriptions of actions, explanations for events, justifications and interpretations when they do historical research and write about historical events in order to describe causality and continuity in history.[161] For this reason, one of the most fundamental questions related to

[157] Murphey (1994), p. 263.
[158] Megill (2007), p. 107.
[159] Megill (2007), p. 107 and 113 and Rüsen (2005), p. 3.
[160] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 70.
[161] Megill (2007), p. 124.

interpretation and to its scientific validity is the question of how can we reduce the risk of mis-interpretations and the risk of providing accounts which might not align with what *actually* happened.[162]

One often repeated answer to this problem is that historians must be committed valid and verifiable procedures of historical research to reduce the subjectivity of their claims.[163] As Megill (2007) states: "*Good historians try to be as careful as they can about their procedures – going to properly verified primary sources, attending to relevant secondary writings, dealings in an analytic and explicitly counterfactual way with matters of causation, putting their evidence and reasoning on the table, and indicating clearly the degree of certainty or speculativeness to be attributed to their claims.*"[164] The valid procedures of historical research in this manner brings forward the basis of the historical interpretation that is presented and makes it possible to evaluate this interpretation based on its rational treatment of the experience of the past that is studied.[165] Subscribing to these procedures of research which Megill highlighted is important, as it provides a way for other historians to review your work. Yet, even with proper procedures, historical research is neither in its interpretation or representation totally detached from the person engaging in the research.[166]

The second problem with validity of historical knowledge is often cited to be what could be called the problem of the sources. Historical sources are referred as being fragments of the past, as the perspectives they offer into the past are fragmented and the sources which are possible to use for research are always finite and can never offer the full picture of the events.[167] What we can possibly know of any given historical period, event or action is limited by this evidence. The fragmented nature of sources places clear limitations to the extent of historical knowledge we can derive of them and to the very possibilities of historical reconstruction from sources.[168] Furthermore, the interpretations we make from sources are also always open for reinterpretation due to the fact that historians' research materials are always incomplete and must make amends with the possibilities of constant discoveries.[169]

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[162] Whether we can ever mitigate these problems related to validity of historical knowledge is of course one question brought forward for example by postmodern discourses, Rüsen (2005), p. 59.
[163] Megill (2007), p. 124 and Rüsen (2005), p. 59.
[164] Megill (2007), p. 124.
[165] Rüsen (2005), p. 59.
[166] Megill (2007), p. 124.
[167] Goldthorpe (1991), p. 213.
[168] Goldthorpe (1991), p. 214.
[169] Goldthorpe (1991), p. 213.

Having presented the two problems with validity of historical knowledge, we should consider what constraints they place to the knowledge produced by historical interpretations and how we could avoid a third problem: the problem of stigmatising historical knowledge and questioning its validity in absolute terms (either as perfectly valid or inherently subjective and fragmented). For this reason, we should perhaps define in what terms historical knowledge could be argued to be valid. As a final matter on the topic of scientific validity of historical knowledge, I will present few arguments, which hopefully makes clearer my understanding of this matter to the reader and the arguments for the validity of the interpretations presented in this study.

Firstly, following the procedures for historical research that Megill outlined, we can highlight the basis upon which the interpretation is made. This makes it possible to evaluate validity of the study on a procedural level, but of course places burden on the historian to bring forward the basis of his interpretation. Making clear statements on the shortcomings of certain sources and gaps in our knowledge brings validity to the information presented in the study as it makes it makes the terms upon which the interpretation is based upon more transparent to the reader. Secondly, related to whether historical knowledge has validity in scientific research, I would be inclined to agree with Rüsen (2005) that historical knowledge is scientific in the methodological sense and in its representation, as it involves framing the findings in accordance with principles of argumentation, conceptual thinking and following the procedures of historical research.[170] Thirdly, related to the question of objectivity, historical research cannot perhaps guarantee objectivity or eradicate subjectivity, but it aims to harness subjectivity through procedures and commitment to accuracy of depiction.[171] Whether this pursuit of harnessing subjectivity can ever be realized is a matter for debate, but this commitment to accuracy should not be downplayed as one driving principle of historical research. This commitment to accuracy acts as a guiding factor in the search for scientific validity in historical research and can be understood not just as an empty promise, but as a conscious effort by the historian to bring disciplinary validity to historical knowledge. Fourthly and lastly, the knowledge gained from sources is always an interpretation, that is open for reinterpretation and as stated before, is not an authoritative insight into the "*truth of things*".[172] This means that the depiction of the past should be treated as such and its validity should be assessed on special terms; through the evaluation of the relationship between the events of the past and its rational treatment by the historian. We can for example assess how the historian has

[170] Rüsen (2005), p. 81 – 83.
[171] Megill (2007), p. 108 – 110 and Rüsen (2005), p. 3. Rüsen pertinently on this matter that *"historical studies have traditionally tried to maintain truth claims and a capacity for scientific objectivity, but at the same time they tried to mark a difference from the natural sciences by stating their own logic."*
[172] Megill (2007), p. 107

made determinations over reliability and representativeness, to what he has assigned significance and meaning and for what reason and how coherent and plausible is his narrative and explanations in light of the sources presented and finally, how does the narrative compare to other accounts of the events.[173] Through this kind of understanding of assessing validity, I argue that we can place the interpretations done by historians into a relationship with other historiographies and evaluate the historian's dialogue with the experiences of the past derived from sources.

3.3 Sources

As was presented in the previous chapters, historical sources and their interpretation form the basis of historical research. In general, historical research entails making decisions on what sources to utilize, deciding which sources to use in the final interpretation and explaining why ultimately these specific sources were selected.[174] Furthermore, sources are in an exceedingly important role in historical research, as historians always go back and forth between their sources and the analysis that they are making as they attempt to construct explanations for the problems they study.[175]

The sources that were selected for this study reflect the methodological approach this study takes in regard to studying the expulsion campaign of 1978 and 1979. As expulsions are seen as being events which have extensive history behind them and have often been implemented after periods of drastic societal change, this study examines sources that describe the political and economic developments in the Southern Vietnamese already before the expulsion campaign started, from the immediate period after the Vietnam war in 1975 to the time when the expulsion campaign had finally ended in late 1979. An emphasis has also been placed on examining sources that have been not used before in studies that have examined these expulsions.

Three types of sources are generally used in this study: newspaper sources, declassified governmental and intelligence agency sources and first and second-hand accounts from people that experienced many of the events that are described in this study. All of these types of sources have their distinct weaknesses and strengths. The purpose of using different kinds of sources was

[173] Rüsen (2005), p. 59.
[174] Howell and Prevenier (2001), p. 70.
[175] Bucheli et al. (2014), p. 287

to contrast and corroborate the information of individual documents or accounts to others in order to form a clearer view of the events.

Starting from newspaper sources, the major ones that are used in this study as sources, South China Morning Post (SCMP)[176] and Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)[177], provide an overview of the changes that took place in the Southern Vietnamese society after the war and follow the situation with Vietnamese refugees and ethnic Chinese already starting from 1975. Both of these newspapers were during the 1970s leading newspapers for English-based reporting on Asia and Southeast Asia. The articles about Vietnam within these magazines vary in style and content, as the FEER published more longer articles on the development in Vietnam and the SCMP generally published shorter ones, that tended to focus on just single issue or event in Vietnam. With the exception of few articles that were the written by foreign correspondent's after visits to the area, most of the articles in the SCMP and the FEER can be regarded to be secondary sources, as they report about events that the reporters did not witness themselves and as the articles often contain analysis of information gathered from interviews of witnesses or from official statements. Both the FEER and the SCMP focused on reporting event and changes in Southern Vietnam mostly rather than in the whole country. Based on my findings from going through reporting of several newspapers of that time, it seems that this is a common feature of the Western newspapers' Vietnam reporting during that period. This might have also possibly been dictated by the interest of the newspaper readers, by interests of the journalists themselves or limited by access to sources of information detailing developments in Northern Vietnam.

In general, one of the challenges of using newspaper articles is judging whether one can generalize the small pieces of information contained within them.[178] For example, one short account from

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[176] The South China Morning Post (SCMP) is a daily Hong Kong based English-language newspaper that was founded originally in 1903. It has been an important source for English-based reporting on China, Hong Kong and Asia throughout its history. By searching the South China Morning Post Proquest Historical Newspaper online collection with keywords such as "Vietnam", "Vietnamese refugees" and "ethnic Chinese", I was able to find in total 214 articles on topics related to these keywords. This type of keyword search approach of course has its possible pitfalls, as it is possible that some relevant articles have been missed or not identified due to missing keywords. Relevant pieces of information either contradicting or reaffirming the findings might have been left out due to this. Yet, despite the possible pitfalls, the collection of the SCMP articles I was able to recover from the online archives is significant in quantity.

[177] The Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) was a weekly English language news magazine which existed between 1946 and 2009. The magazine was known for its in-depth Asia business and political coverage. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, during its 60-year existence, it was one of the most authoritative and well-respected English language newspapers reporting of major developments in Asia and Southeast Asia regions, see *"Far Eastern Economic Review to shut after 63 years"*, Reuters, Sep. 22nd, 2009 and The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "*Far Eastern Economic Review – Magazine",* https://www.britannica.com/topic/Far-Eastern-Economic-Review. To search the collection of articles the FEER had on Vietnam and the ethnic Chinese, I travelled to the Finnish National Repository Library in Kuopio in January 2019 to conduct archival research. As a result of this archival research I was able to find in total 36 articles that were relevant for this thesis.

[178] Bingham (2010), p. 225

refugee published in a newspaper might not tell us much of how things actually were in Vietnam at the time or be indicative of the general situation in the area. However, when used in addition to other accounts and sources, they provide valuable background and supplementary information about the changes in the Southern Vietnamese society. The collection of newspaper articles in the SCMP and the FEER represent some of the largest catalogues of contemporary information on the events in Vietnam at the time. They contain statements by Vietnamese authorities on different issues, interviews by refugees, investigative articles on the origins of the refugee crisis among other information and for this reason they are used in this study. However, while these articles are informative, it is important to note that in general the articles' focus has been decided by the author or the editor and in this sense these articles are never neutral pieces of information. Especially the longer articles in the FEER present a constructed narrative of the events in Vietnam and as such describe them from certain point of view. Some other miscellaneous newspaper articles from other magazines are also at times used in this study as sources when they have been found to be relevant for the subject at hand. These articles are listed individually in the sources list, as no systematic research has been done to uncover these articles and they are relatively few in number.

One difficulty in studying the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign has been that the whole expulsion campaign was essentially operated under a shroud of secrecy and as a result, during the contemporary period some core details of how the campaign was implemented remained vague and were not necessarily publicized.[179] But during the events, foreign governmental and intelligence agencies were active in trying to investigate the causes behind the boat people departures and the ethnic Chinese exodus. When the events were taking place, the U.K and the U.S were especially active in uncovering the extent of Vietnam's actions. This became clear to me, when I analyzed U.S Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)[180] documents regarding Vietnamese refugees and records of the U.K Prime Minister's Office regarding Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong (PREM files)[181]. The documents from the CIA archives used in this study are mostly

[179] Wain (1981), p. 86. Wain commented that the Vietnamese authorities aimed to keep their involvement in the expulsion campaign a secret.

[180] The U.S CIA has since its inception produced classified military, economic, foreign policy and political information for the U.S policy decision making, and it is among the largest intelligence information gathering and producing bodies in the world, Cohen (1999), p. 342 and U.S CIA, "*Organization of National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC)"*, CIA-RDP90-01137R000100030002-4, October 11th, 1977. The documents gathered for this study were accessed from the online Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room on CIA's website. The documents were generally released as a result of the U.S Freedom of Information Act and other CIA document release programs

[181] In general, these PREM files contain assortment of diplomatic correspondence, intelligence information, meeting memos, research papers and prime minister's general correspondence on the issue of Vietnamese Refugees in Hong Kong and their resettlement in the UK. The primary function of these documents was to keep the prime minister informed on the affairs related to these issues. In total three collections of documents on this topic have

assorted intelligence assessment and reports from between 1978 and 1979, when the interest towards the Vietnamese boat people crisis grew as the number of refugees kept growing.[182] The CIA's prominent role in gathering intelligence around the world and the history of the U.S with Vietnam was the reason I decided to go through these archives to search new information.

The U.K Prime Minister's Office files contain documents from between 24th of May to 14th of July 1979 and they contain correspondence and reports about the refugee situation in Hong Kong, that grew exponentially worse during 1979 compared to previous years as the result of additional departures from Vietnam.[183] The reason why I decided to examine the files from the U.K Prime Minister's Office for this study stems from the fact that the U.K had a strong connection to the Vietnamese refugee crisis. Hong Kong, which was a Crown colony of the U.K at the time, was a major destination for the ethnic Chinese refugees who had to pay to the government to depart from Vietnam. Due to the large number of refugees in Hong Kong in need of resettlement, the U.K was perhaps the nation most adamant about resolving this Indochina refugee resettlement through an international conference. [184] The U.K documents detail how it was applying pressure to Vietnam to change its domestic policies which they had deemed to be the cause of the crisis and at the same time trying to resolve the issue of resettlement of Vietnamese refugees with various countries and United Nations by pushing for a refugee conference under the auspices of the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.[185] While the relevancy of these diplomatic and intelligence assessment documents vary from document to document, they generally highlight what was being done about and known at the time about Vietnam's expulsion campaign behind the "diplomatic curtain".

As sources, declassified governmental and international organization documents whether they are originally from intelligence agencies, international organizations or from other diplomatic organizations provide valuable insight for historical research, as they often contain knowledge that has previously not been available about events that are examined. Governmental intelligence and diplomatic entities also often have access to wider range of sources for information on current

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been compiled by the National Archives from the Prime Minister Office's correspondence and papers between 1979 – 1981, but only two of these files (part 1 and part 2) containing papers from between 24th of May - 19th of July 1979 have been digitized. This study uses only these two files which have been digitized.

[182] See Amer (2013), p. 13 – 15.

[183] Amer (2011), p. 36 – 38.

[184] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, Prime Minister Thatcher's response to Secretary General Waldheim, May 31st, 1979, p. 165 – 169 and U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, Summary to Prime Minister Thatcher of practical steps taken towards the Vietnamese refugee issue, May 28th, 1979, p. 282 – 289.

[185] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, Summary to Prime Minister Thatcher of practical steps taken towards the Vietnamese refugee issue, May 28th, 1979, p. 282 – 289.

events when they are happening than for example ordinary researchers. These entities also have more resources and ways to verify the information they obtain. For these reasons, some declassified intelligence assessments and governmental documents have been given especially prominent role in this study as they have provided information on the actions of Vietnamese authorities that has not been available before on the events. One intelligence assessment particularly by U.S State Department titled "*Vietnam's Refugee Machine*"[186] provides a detailed assessment of the Vietnamese government involvement in the expulsion program in the SRV between 1978 – 1979.[187] The information within this document generally matches with the details of other accounts describing the expulsion campaign and the actions of Vietnamese authorities and for this reason it is utilized heavily in this study. That being said, inaccuracies, inconsistencies and wrong information exist also in these kind of documents and even when there has been a larger organization gathering and verifying information, the documents have been drafted to only give assessments of particular events/situations based on limited sources of information in a specific historical period.[188]

The last major type of source utilized in this study are the contemporary first and secondhand accounts that detail the events. Perhaps the most significant first-hand account of the events is the account of Nguyễn Long (lived 1941 – 2020), who was a Vietnamese intellectual who escaped Vietnam by boat on April 30th, 1979. He stayed in Vietnam for four years after the war until he successfully left together with his family of five.[189] Later in 1981 when he had settled in the U.S he chronicled incidents of his daily life in Vietnam after the war and his process of leaving Vietnam in a 200-page book titled *After Saigon Fell – Daily life under the Vietnamese Communists*. The book was co-authored by Harry Kendall who worked at the time as an international conference coordinator at the UC Berkeley Institute of East Asian Studies. During

[186] Not much information on the origins and on sources of information is provided within the document itself other than that this document was authored by the U.S State department's East Asia-Pacific Division, Office of Political Analysis and the contents of the report were coordinated with several different offices of the U.S State department and with the National Intelligence Officer for East Asia. However, as a result of further research into the report, I was able to find out that this report was also presented in the summer 1979 in redacted version to the U.S House of Representatives' Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in a hearing on the growing Southeast Asian refugee problem, and there it was revealed that it was based on extensive interviews with refugees and on other sources, See U.S House of Representatives (1979), Appendix 4, p. 58 – 60. Based on my own estimation and comparison to other sources, combination of newspaper sources, refugee information/interviews and possibly other government intelligence information were used to compile this assessment.

[187] See U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 – 3.

[188] Cohen (1999), p. 341.

[189] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. VII.

the Vietnam War, Long had also received his PhD from UC Berkeley and returned there after re-settling in the U.S, eventually becoming a Professor of Political Science there in the later years.

Long's and Kendall book is the only long-format English language account that I have been able to find which describes in detail all the proceedings that went along with paying officials to depart from Vietnam in 1978 – 1979. He bought false identification papers which stated that he was ethnic Chinese so that he could register with a group of ethnic Chinese to leave Vietnam under a policy that the Vietnamese authorities had started called "Going abroad officially".[190] He paid his registration fee to depart with a group of ethnic Chinese from Cholon. The leaders of this ethnic Chinese group also organized their departure and payments to Vietnamese officials.[191]

For this study, the first-hand account of Long is an important as a historical source, as it provides unique details of the ethnic Chinese expulsion system organized by Vietnamese authorities in Southern Vietnam that this study examines. Details of the escape and of its planning occupy a large portion of the book and for this reason it provides quite a detailed account of what is was like to leave Vietnam during this time. The tone of the book is however personal and it contains many anecdotes of daily life under communist rule, towards which Long grew more and more negative towards as time passed.[192] This attitude towards the communist rule is visible throughout the book and it places questions on the reliability of the parts of the book which discuss the motivations and goals of the communist rule in everyday Vietnam at the time.[193] Nevertheless, its description of one refugees journey to leave Vietnam is very in-depth and it collaborates many of the findings of other investigative articles and books on Vietnamese official involvement in selling the departures, while bringing also more information to the topic. For this reason, this particular account is very relevant for this study.

Another important account of the Indochina refugee crisis and the Vietnamese government refugee trade was written by Barry Wain in 1981.[194] His book *The Refused – The agony of the Indochina refugees* has been one of the most one of the most influential reports of the events for the past forty years.[195] The book explores the factors that were behind the exodus of refugees in

[190] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 50.
[191] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 119.
[192] See for example the Introduction written by Long, Long and Kendall (1981), p. IX – XII.
[193] See for example account told by Long of the People's Court at Thai Binh Market, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 1 – 3.
[194] The account of Wain is mostly based on his own journalist investigations into the topic during in 1978 and 1979. Wain had started to work in 1971 in Hong Kong as a free-lance journalist and staff reporter and was appointed in 1976 as the diplomatic correspondent and staff reporter for The Asian Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong. When the expulsion campaign in Vietnam started, he started investigating the story and travelled the region interviewing refugees and officials and visiting important locations in the region.
[195] See for example Amer (1991), especially p. 85 – 87, Amer (2013), p. 12 and Vo (2006), especially p. 89 – 90.

Indochina and details how Vietnamese government had an active role in selling departures to the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.[196] Wain's conclusion was that Vietnamese authorities had indeed authorized departures of refugees and charged them exit fees and therefore effectively "*expelled* [the ethnic Chinese] *for profit.*"[197]

Although his book is described to be an eye-witness account in the back cover, the book is actually comprised of information received from extensive interviews, visits to refugee camps and other relevant places in Indochina and Asia and from secondary sources such as newspaper articles.[198] Therefore it could be regarded to be comprised of a mixture of first-hand information and second-hand information. As a historical source, Wain's account of the events at Vietnam at the time is perhaps the most complete one. It provides a credible description of the actions by Vietnamese officials at the time. For this reason, it is a compelling source to use as an authoritative narrative on the matter. However, as time has passed and more sources and accounts have become available, it is also important to contrast the findings of Wain to other sources in order to build even more cohesive picture in this study of the historical events in Vietnam at that time.

Finally, besides the sources that were introduced earlier, some other potential sources were also evaluated for their relevance to the studied topic, but ultimately later left out or are used only limitedly in this study. Among these sources that are only limitedly used is the Rénmín rìbào newspaper (人民日报, "People's Daily"), which was the leading newspaper in the PRC at the time and is still even today the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the CCP. When going through the material from the newspaper's online archive, I came to the conclusion that while most of the articles in the newspaper regarding Vietnam did not discuss matters that were the focus of this study, some of the articles contained information that were relevant for this study. The relatively few articles that are cited in this study focus more on exploring the actions of the Vietnamese authorities. The biggest obstacle for using the Renmin Ribao as a source had to do with the tone and content of the articles, which were heavily critical of Vietnam and propagated a certain view of the changes in the Sino-Vietnamese relations.[199] Many of the articles also from the years 1978 and 1979 discussing Vietnam also had to do with the issues in Sino-Vietnamese

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[196] Wain (1981), p. 11.
[197] Wain (1981), p. 12. In the sources section of the book he states that the chapter 4. of the book which examines the events in Vietnam in 1978 and 1979 and the evidence for Vietnamese government being involved in the refugee trade he states: "*Much of the chapter is compiled from the debriefing of refugees by security and intelligence organizations, as well as personal interviews conducted by the author and others. It is supported by witnesses, both Vietnamese and foreign, who were in county at the time, and by defecting Communist cadres."*, p. Wain (1981), p. 273.
[198] Wain (1981), p. 12 and 273.
[199] According to Chang (1982), p. 209, in late May 1978, a publicity campaign was started to rally domestic support in PRC against Vietnam and to draw international attention to the exodus from Vietnam.

relations. As the feud between the PRC and the SRV is not the focus of this study, and I did not want to focus on analyzing the reporting of the Renmin Ribao on the topic or on the feud between these two countries, I decided to only use few selected articles from this newspaper.

On a similar note, several books that were published by official Beijing and Hanoi foreign language printing presses in 1978 and 1979 on the ethnic Chinese issue and Sino-Vietnamese relations, such as *The Hoa in Vietnam - Dossier part I* and *II* and *The Truth about Viet Nam – China relations over the last 30 years* presenting the arguments of the Vietnamese side and Guānyú yuènán qūgăn huáqiáo wèntí (关于越南驱赶华侨问题, "On Viet Nam's Expulsion of Chinese Residents") cataloguing PRC's statements and viewpoints on the issue are only cited infrequently in this study. These documents and the official statements contained within them have been well-analysed in many previous studies discussing the crisis of the Sino-Vietnamese relations and for this reason I decided not to re-analyse them more closely for this study.[200] Furthermore, these dossiers propagate a desired point of view of the events in Vietnam at that time from both sides and for this reason they are not reliable sources in describing what happened in Vietnam during this period. They however provide insight into what were the official stances of the Vietnamese and Chinese governments on the ethnic Chinese issue. In this respect these documents are limitedly useful for looking of representations of both of these countries point of views.

As a conclusion to the section on sources and methodology in this study, it important to state that although this study employs wide-range of sources in its study of the expulsion campaign in Vietnam between 1978 – 1979 and of the events that preceded it in Vietnam between 1975 – 1978, no official Vietnamese documents from Vietnamese archives or from other sources are used in this study to validate the findings. Having access to these documents would answer many questions on the topic that can now only be left as unanswered. Whether or not Vietnamese government documents that would collaborate the official Vietnamese involvement in the expulsions and facilitating the refugee outflow from Vietnam still exist or will ever be released is uncertain. Officially the SRV has denied its involvement in orchestrating these departures.[201] That being said, an impressive amount of contemporary investigative material from intelligence organizations, journalists and academics can be found on the matter and these are used in this study to re-examine what happened in Vietnam during this time and to explain the role of different

[200] See for example Amer (1991), Amer (2013), Chang (1982) and Godley (1980).
[201] Wain (1981), p. 12.

actors in orchestrating the departures from Vietnam. And also, to build clearer the picture of these events and actions which have not been re-examined in detail by historians after they took place.

4. The origins of the expulsions campaign

This chapter and its sub-chapters give background to the difficult issues and debates that have existed around ethnic Chinese population identities, citizenship, and social position in the Southern Vietnamese society throughout history and to the more recent issues that contributed to the ethnic Chinese becoming targets of expulsions. The sub-chapters 4.1, 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 discuss the origins of the ethnic Chinese question and issues in Southern Vietnam and highlight the different solutions Vietnam's different rulers have taken to address these problems. The sub-chapters starting from 4.2 discuss the restructuring of the Southern Vietnamese society after the Vietnam war and the difficulties in the Sino-Vietnamese relations which both made the social position in the Southern Vietnamese society problematic after 1975.

4.1 History of the ethnic Chinese communities in Southern Vietnam (111 BCE – 1954)

The history of the Chinese migration to the area known today as Vietnam traces back all the way to beginning of the period known in Vietnamese history as *Bắc thuộc* ("Belonging to the North", 111 BCE - 938 CE).[202] During this long period, soldiers, administrators and farmers migrated to parts of Vietnam to consolidate the area under Chinese rule.[203] Another group which migrated to China during this long period in substantial numbers were the refugees fleeing the political upheavals and unrests that were taking place in China.[204] After 938 CE Vietnam gained a form of independence and became its own, distinct monarchical political entity, the migration from China became less frequent. The small minority of ethnic Chinese, who had moved to Vietnam during this first phase of Chinese migration more or less integrated slowly to the surrounding society.[205] Yet, modest numbers of Chinese refugees and migrant kept trickling in to Vietnam during the

[202] Amer (1991), p. 5.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Khanh (1993), p. 14.
[205] Goscha (2016), p. 19 – 21.

whole monarchical period (938 – 1858), but not in numbers that would be enough to establish a permanent minority of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.[206]

What was as the starting point for the second, more regularized, phase of the Chinese migration is up for debate. Amer argued that the second phase started when the whole country had been colonialized and secured under French rule in 1883, as during the colonial period the stream of people moving from China to Vietnam became more regular.[207] However, in reality the second phase of migration from China could be argued to have started already by the second half of the seventeenth century. One catalyst for larger Chinese migration to Vietnam was the fall of Ming Dynasty in China in 1644, which brought with it a wave of ethnic Chinese settlers that became to be known as *Minh Hương* ("Ming loyalists").[208] From mid-seventeenth century onwards, the Chinese migrants were allowed to settle in the major trading centres that had emerged in Southern Vietnam by the respective rulers of these areas and this resulted in sizable Chinese communities and Chinese quarters being established in the South for example in Gia Dinh (later Saigon) and Cholon.[209] It was this second wave of migration which established a permanent Chinese minority to the different parts of Vietnam.

As the ethnic Chinese migrant communities gradually grew, their position and existence within the Vietnamese society eventually became to be regulated through special regulations. Most important example of this took place in 1802, after Vietnam was unified by emperor Gia Long (the first emperor of the Nguyễn dynasty) after three-hundred-year period of it being ruled by multiple clans. He divided the ethnic Chinese into congregations in order to control and tax them more effectively.[210] These organizations were called *huìguǎn* (会馆, "associations") in Chinese and *bang* in Vietnamese and their primary function was to organize the ethnic Chinese communities into manageable administrative units.[211] There were five main congregations which corresponded with the five principal speech groups of the migrants (Cantonese, Hokkien,

[206] Amer (1991), p. 5 – 6 and Huy (1998), p. 92 – 93.
[207] Amer (1991), p. 5 and 11.
[208] Goscha (2016), p. 166. This term was used to denote the ethnic Chinese and their descendants who were the offspring of the people who left the Ming dynasty and came to Vietnam. According to Khanh and Phuong (1997), p. 273, until 1885 the *Minh Hương* were regarded to be Vietnamese citizens, but after that the French offered them the choice of choosing between being Chinese nationals or new category known as "French Asian citizens". The term *Minh Hương* was in use at least until the end of the colonial period, but due to the increasing Chinese migration, the *Minh Hương* slowly became a minority among the ethnic Chinese. During the late colonial period, majority of ethnic Chinese eventually came to be the new arrivals, categorized administratively as Huáqiáo (华侨 "overseas Chinese" or "Chinese sojourners") who were considered Chinese nationals and had special tax status among other privileges in colonial Vietnam.
[209] Khanh and Phuong (1997), p. 271.
[210] Goscha (2016), p. 166.
[211] Engelbert (2008), p. 195.

Teochew, Hainanese and Hakka).[212] These organizations were useful to the migrants in many ways as a newly arrived migrant could ask a person from their native place to vouch for them to join a congregation and the people from congregation could help them set up their profession or provide assistance to them in other ways to help them settle in.[213]

The congregations served as a way to preserve the cultural and religious traditions of each culture group and became places to nurture both social and business networks and Chinese culture.[214] Partly these organizations had their roots in the voluntary organizations that the ethnic Chinese tended to establish around dialect groups, common ancestry and surnames and religion.[215] Each *bang* had their own leaders, businesses, special trade, their own financial investment organization, schools, hospitals and religious houses.[216] They were welfare, interest and business organizations rolled into one and served the interests of their own dialect groups, but they also effectively insulated the ethnic Chinese from parts of the Vietnamese society, as these organizations fostered the forming strong autonomous ethnic communities that had no need assimilate to the surrounding society.[217]

The congregations and special privileges which were first awarded to Chinese migrants during the 19th century, like the right to practice different professions, played an important role in forming an established ethnic Chinese minority to Southern Vietnam.[218] Furthermore, many of the policies and privileges granted to the ethnic Chinese had strong continuity in the Southern Vietnamese society, and this continuity made the conditions favourable for more regularized migration. An example of this continuity was that after the Nguyễn dynasty rule, the French colonial authorities continued the policy of congregations when they secured their rule over the whole of Vietnam and made it a requirement by law to join one in 1871. The congregations were not abolished until 1955 in Southern Vietnam.[219] The continuity can be explained by the fact that the congregations were useful for the Nguyễn dynasty rulers and later to the French colonial administrators, as they made gathering taxes and Chinese immigration control easier.[220]

All in all, by the early and mid-twentieth century, the ethnic Chinese communities had become a distinct and regularized part of the Southern Vietnamese society. In the Southern parts of Vietnam,

[212] Barrett (2012), p. 1 and Engelbert (2008), p. 194.
[213] Tong (2010), p. 177.
[214] Barrett (2012), p. 2.
[215] Khanh (1993), p. 34.
[216] Khanh (1993), p. 34.
[217] Amer (1991), p. 11.
[218] Amer (1991), p. 8 – 9 and Goscha (2016), p. 166.
[219] Engelbert (2008), p. 221 – 222.
[220] Tong (2010), p. 177.

the communities were mainly centred around the cities and trading posts, with the bulk of them residing in Saigon-Cholon area (210 000) and with other communities existing in Can Tho (13 000), Soc Trang (11 000), Thu Dau Mot (10 000) and in Bac Lieu and Rach Gia (9000 each).[221] Within the cities the ethnic Chinese communities tended to form their own concentrated "Chinatowns".[222] According to Tong (2010), this custom also perpetuated the social segregation between the ethnic Chinese and the Vietnamese.[223] In terms of professions, the ethnic Chinese mainly engaged in commerce and due to their efficient networks both in Vietnam and in China they gained a commanding position within many of these industries.[224] For example, great bulk of the rice trade, money lending business, the regional water trade and the processing industry was run by the ethnic Chinese by mid-twentieth century.[225] Congregations played an important role in this, as members of these organizations could pool together capital for larger investments and build connections which proved to be invaluable in the emerging capitalist environment.[226]

As was noted earlier, starting from early 19th century, the ethnic Chinese were awarded some privileges that made their position, among other things, in the Southern Vietnamese society distinct from other Southern Vietnamese residents. For example, the privilege of ethnic Chinese men being exempt from military service was only removed few years after the 1975 reunification of Vietnam and beginning of the communist rule.[227] However, it is important to note also that many of the privileges were not only given as a gift of being in someone's good graces but were based on certain reasons that made the position of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam hard to regulate. The proximity to China and the Chinese historically having a say in what happened to ethnic Chinese in Vietnam was for example just one among many of the reasons that ultimately complicated the forming of fully autonomous administrative relationship between Vietnam's rulers and ethnic Chinese. Furthermore, as Vietnamese nationalism began to emerge beginning from twentieth century, questions of citizenship, nationality and assimilation became more and

[221] Engelbert (2008), p. 193. These numbers are from 1943 and from the documents of the French colonial government. Khanh (1993), p. 16 states that no definitive statistics on the number of ethnic Chinese in Southern parts of Vietnam exist of the time before the colonial government.
[222] Engelbert (2008), p. 194.
[223] Tong (2010), p. 177.
[224] Barrett (2008), p. 15 and Khanh and Phuong (1997), p. 273.
[225] Amer (1991), p. 11 and Engelbert (2008), p. 193 – 194.
[226] Barrett (2012), p. 2 and Khanh (1993), p. 35.
[227] See "*Vietnam refugees flee to avoid draft*", SCMP, Aug. 2nd, 1977, Wong, James *"Refugees flee war",* SCMP, Dec. 31st, 1977 and *"Alert for refugee flood",* SCMP, May 8th, 1978. In late 1977 Socialist Republic of Vietnam's authorities widened the draft to include both men and women aged between 17 to 30. The reason behind this was the escalation of the border conflict with Cambodia. At some point in either late 1977 or 1978, the draft also started to apply to the young ethnic Chinese men.

more important in how the Southern ethnic Chinese communities were ultimately viewed and treated in the Republic of Vietnam and in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that came after it.

4.1.1 The origins of the ethnic Chinese question and issues in Southern Vietnam

Historically, the ethnic Chinese communities have often been painted as the "other" or even as dangerous during various times in Southeast Asian history by the authorities of different host countries in the region.[228] This has not only been the case in Southern Vietnam, but also elsewhere in Southeast Asia. As ethnic Chinese have been the targets of persecution, discriminatory legislations and other harsh measures during various times in many places in Southeast Asia, studying the historical attitudes and policies towards these communities has been a relatively popular research topic.[229] Yet, pointing out any specific issue as being the pivotal ethnic Chinese question is rather difficult, as in reality the status and treatment of the ethnic Chinese has historically varied greatly even in specific areas such as Southern Vietnam. At the crux of the issue has been wide variety of questions, ranging from the cultural and political identity of the ethnic Chinese to their citizenship and dominant position of power in the economies of Southeast Asian countries.

In Southern Vietnam specifically, the question of the status and treatment of the ethnic Chinese has historically been linked to governance, to the proximity with China, to the economic power and dominant role of the ethnic Chinese in the economy, and later to the Vietnamese views on state-building and citizenship. As Christopher Goscha (2016) writes in his written history of Vietnam, *"'Vietnam' - whatever its name, shape, or form – has never been an ethnically homogenous polity."*[230] This has traditionally meant that forming a policy on how to govern ethnic minorities and other political entities who had influence, such as religious groups and sects has been necessary to governing an area as ethnically diverse as Vietnam. In many respects, the ethnic policies which were historically enacted in Southern Vietnam included both particular as well as general characteristics related to the governance exercised by different Vietnamese political regimes. The long contentious history between the different Chinese and Vietnamese political

[228] Barrett (2012), p. 2.
[229] See for example Barrett (2012): *The Chinese Diaspora in South-East Asia: The Overseas Chinese in Indochina* for a historical description of the ethnic Chinese communities and their treatment during late 19th and early 20th century in French Indochina or Han (2009) Xiarong's *Spoiled guests or dedicated patriots? The Chinese in North Vietnam, 1954–1978* for an example of an excellent historical detailed account from a specific area.
[230] Goscha (2016), p. xii

entities has most certainly also had its effect on how the ethnic policies were formed towards this particular group, but in general, these policies have also reflected historical forces of social change in the Southern Vietnamese society and evolved as the politics of the area has changed.

As was presented in the last chapter, the special policies and privileges, such as the 19th century policy of congregations, became fundamental part of governance of the ethnic Chinese communities when the migration to different areas of Vietnam became more regular. But even before the 19th century examples of decrees which focus on regulating the status and living of ethnic Chinese in different parts of Vietnam can be found. The Nguyễn court, which was one the major ruling clans of Vietnam between mid-sixteenth century and late eighteenth century, for example decreed in 1698 that the Minh Hương must live in special Minh Hương villages.[231] The restrictive decrees were however counterbalanced by privileges awarded to the Minh Hương who lived in these villages, such allowing them to own land, manage trade customs and ports and marry Vietnamese persons and the right to take civil service examinations and hold government positions.[232] These privileges resulted most likely from Minh Hương playing a key role in the sea trade and government in Southern Vietnam at that time.[233] This is just one example of how state-community relations between the ethnic Chinese communities and Vietnamese authorities has historically played a role in the formulation of policy towards these communities.

We can see that starting already from late seventeenth century, the ethnic Chinese have often been made have some form of special residential status through decrees and regulations in different parts of Vietnam. In general, regulating Chinese migration to Vietnam and making the position of the ethnic Chinese regulated became a requirement from the standpoint of governing as the communities grew and the number of migrants increased. Partially these regulations also formed and upheld the separate identity that the ethnic Chinese embraced in Vietnam. Congregations and Minh Hương villages are examples of these regulatory systems that socially separated the different ethnic Chinese groups from surrounding society.[234] Cultural and religious organizations that the ethnic Chinese established in Vietnam also played an important part in socially insulating the ethnic Chinese from surrounding society's customs and culture.

Partially this position of the ethnic Chinese as special residents in different Vietnamese kingdoms and states was not only the result of Vietnamese views on minorities, but was also shaped by the

[231] Wheeler (2015), p. 153.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Khanh and Phuong (1997), p. 271 – 272 and Wheeler (2015), p. 153.
[234] Amer (1991), p. 11 and Wheeler (2015), p. 153 – 154.

closeness to China and influenced by the Chinese views and policies on overseas Chinese[235]. During the Qing dynasty (1644 to 1912) for example the Chinese stance was that that any child born to Chinese father (even to those who had migrated to Vietnam) would be Chinese national.[236] This naturally complicated the residential status question and meant that the ethnic Chinese could not be in the fullest sense of the word Vietnamese citizens and subjects, before the Chinese would accept this position.

Another stable feature of the Chinese engagement with the overseas Chinese was that the Qing dynasty and later the different Chinese governments tried to safeguard the ethnic Chinese communities and guarantee that their rights were being upheld in the host states through various manners. Mostly this safeguarding comprised of diplomatic actions, such as demands for negotiations on the position of the ethnic Chinese or diplomatic protests when the rights and privileges of the ethnic Chinese were not upheld in Vietnam according to the Chinese, but sometimes other methods were used also by the Chinese. At times this meant that the treatment and status of the ethnic Chinese also had implications for diplomatic relations.[237]

While the relationship between ethnic Chinese migrants and the Vietnam's different rulers were generally historically quite peaceful and stable, some concerns regarding the social position and status of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam emerged already during the colonial period. These concerns were things that later Vietnamese polities starting from the mid-twentieth century tried to later mitigate through policies which pushed ethnic Chinese to assimilate to the surrounding society and by regulating their activities more. At different points of colonial period, French colonial administrators had a concerns that the ethnic Chinese would become a sort of "*state within a state*", an ungovernable section of the population whose political motives were also of suspect.[238] Contributing to these fears were few factors: firstly, the growing political and economic importance of these communities. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the ethnic Chinese communities and their businesses and organizations had grown to be very influential in the export and trade sectors.[239] This meant that quite a lot of economic power had concentrated in colonial Vietnam to the hands of these communities, that

[235] The term overseas Chinese (in Chinese 华侨, huáqiáo) has after nineteenth century often been used to refer to Chinese living outside China by both Western writers and Chinese authorities. It is important to note however that the term carries a special connotation within itself: namely the idea that these Chinese living outside are Chinese also in the sense that they are part of bigger Chinese nation and that they are Chinese nationals. This connotation has emerged from the way different Chinese governments and scholars have used the term to refer to ethnic Chinese living outside China, Suryadinata (1997), p. 1 – 3.
[236] Goscha (2016), p. 167.
[237] Amer (1991), p. 10 and 13 – 14, Engelbert (2008), p. 198 and Khanh (1993), p. 28
[238] Engelbert (2008), p. 198.
[239] Engelbert (2008), p. 192 – 193.

were partly self-governed through congregations and by their own community leaders.[240] Secondly, through different kinds of business associations and cultural and political organizations, the different Chinese political parties maintained close ties with the ethnic Chinese communities during the late-colonial period. Organizations such as The Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Cholon[241] were created by the ethnic Chinese communities to mainly foster business, but they also acted as channels to maintain connection between the overseas Chinese communities and China.[242] Especially active in trying to foster these connections was the Chinese Nationalist Party, Gúomíndǎng (GMD, 中国国民党) in the early and mid-twentieth century. It tried to exert political influence within the ethnic Chinese organization in Southern Vietnam.[243] The methods were at times quite brazen and ranged from establishing GMD led overseas Chinese organizations such as the Association of the Overseas Chinese (hoa kiều liên hiệp hội / 华侨联合会, Huáqiáo liánhéhuì) in Southern Vietnam to trying to control the congregations and other traditional ethnic Chinese organizations from within.[244]After 1949 the GMD's influence weakened in Southern Vietnam due to the events in the mainland China, but the GMD led Republic of China still however continued to act as the guardian to the communities until the end of the Vietnam War.[245] Echoes of these types of fears of Chinese interfering in Vietnamese matters through the ethnic Chinese communities and using the ethnic Chinese to further their own political goals could also be discerned later, during the ethnic Chinese crisis of 1978 – 1979 as will be discussed later.

4.1.2 The communists, the nationalists, and the push towards assimilation (1954 – 1975)

After the French colonial rule ended in Vietnam in 1954 after the First Indochina War, in the two newly formed Vietnamese nation states the ethnic Chinese or *Hoa*[246] question turned into largely

[240] Engelbert (2008), p. 195.
[241] Established in 1903 (legalized in 1904), this association focused mainly on monitoring prices and distribution of goods in Saigon-Cholon area, but gradually its network grew to cover whole Vietnam. It was also an interest organization for the ethnic Chinese communities, which defended their rights to work and live in Vietnam. Khanh (1993), p. 36.
[242] Engelbert (2008), p. 195 – 197.
[243] Engelbert (2008), p. 196 – 197. However, Engelbert's (2008) analysis seems to demonstrate that the ethnic Chinese were not particularly interested in leaning too much towards any political party or faction or even in championing Chinese political agendas in Southern Vietnam.
[244] Engelbert (2008), p. 198.
[245] Amer (1991), p. 20 – 21 and Engelbert (2008), p. 204 – 208. A large contributing factor to this was certainly the fact that the Republic of Vietnam never established diplomatic ties with the PRC, due to the policy of anti-communism, Chen (2002), p. 62.
[246] Starting from 1964, in South Vietnam the ethnic Chinese were identified as Vietnamese of Chinese origin (Người Việt gốc Hoa or just *Hoa)* in official papers and documents, Khanh (1993), p. 29. This *Hoa*-term was after

an issue of citizenship, nationality and assimilation. In Southern Vietnam, push towards assimilation and adopting Vietnamese citizenship became a persistent part of policy starting from the beginning of the first Republic of Vietnam president's Ngô Đình Diệm[247] era and it even continued later after the merging of the North and South Vietnam. As a contrast to the approach adopted by South Vietnam, in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) a more lenient assimilation policy was adopted. Behind this policy in the North Vietnam was a pact that was formed between the Chinese Communist Party and the Workers Party of Vietnam (WPV)[248] in 1955, which decreed that the ethnic Chinese could be persuaded to adopt North Vietnamese citizenship through soft measures, but not forced to assimilate. This pact later became significant, as the interpretation on the contents of the agreement became one of the main points of contention between the China and Vietnam during the ethnic Chinese crisis of 1978 – 1979 as China accused Vietnam of persecuting and forcibly assimilating the ethnic Chinese in the SRV.[249]

In Southern Vietnam, the first years of Ngô Đình Diệm's regime marked a significant turning point in the treatment of the ethnic Chinese, as series of governmental and presidential decrees were issued in 1955 and 1956 to coerce ethnic Chinese and other smaller ethnic minority groups to adopt South Vietnamese citizenship.[250] First, it was decreed that all children born to Chinese-Vietnamese parents were considered to be Vietnamese citizens and the ethnic Chinese could no longer choose between Chinese or Vietnamese citizenship. Then later next year, on August 1956 it was announced that all ethnic Chinese born in Vietnam were considered to be Vietnamese citizens, regardless of their parents or their own wishes. This ruling was meant to apply also retroactively. All other Chinese were considered to be aliens and would need to apply for residential permits which had to be renewed periodically.[251] As a last measure, on September 1956, government banned foreigners from engaging in eleven trades[252], which were at the time largely

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this point used by the Vietnamese (Southern Vietnamese and Northern Vietnamese alike) to denote the ethnic Chinese living in Vietnam and the term is still used today.

[247] In addition to becoming the first president of the Republic of Vietnam, Diệm was an anti-communist nationalist who, after securing and consolidating power, quickly started to decolonize, modernize and centralize the political system of South Vietnam with heavy handed measures. Goscha (2016), p. 283 and 286 – 287.

[248] The Workers Party of Vietnam was the predecessor of the Communist Party of Vietnam in North Vietnam during the war. The party was renamed from the Workers Party of Vietnam (Đảng lao động Việt Nam or Lao động) to the Communist Party of Vietnam in the Fourth Party Congress held in Hanoi in December 1976, Smith (1977), p. 195.

[249] Amer (1991), p. 13 – 14. So far, the actual agreement has remained unpublished and therefore its specific wording remains unknown, except for one excerpt obtained by Gareth Porter from official of the SRV Foreign Ministry in Hanoi in November 1978 which states: *"all the work regulating the Hoa people from now on, including the problems of mass organizations, newspapers, schools, hospitals, and all other relief associations for unemployment and social welfare, will be done by the Vietnamese side. ",* Porter (1980), p. 55.

[250] Tong (2010), p. 180 – 181.

[251] Khanh (1993), p. 28 – 29.

[252] According to Amer (1991), p. 19 – 20 these eleven trades were: *"Fishmonger, butcher, retailer of products in common use (chap-pho?), coal and firewood merchants, dealer in petroleum products, second-hand dealer, textile*

practiced by the ethnic Chinese.[253] Businesses of non-Vietnamese engaging in these trades were given six months to one year to close down.[254] Through placing restrictions on the rights to practice professions and on owning businesses, these decrees applied pressure to adopt Vietnamese citizenship in a way which was consequential to the ethnic Chinese.[255] Furthermore, those Chinese nationals in Southern Vietnam who failed to adopt Vietnamese citizenship or register as foreigner would be expelled.[256] In this manner Diệm's regime also made clearer the distinctions between non-citizens and citizens in the Republic of Vietnam.

In hindsight these decrees were also significant in the sense that they signalled a permanent shift in the ethnic Chinese policies in Southern Vietnam. Even when the Ngô Đình Diệm regime later backtracked or laxed some of these restrictions, due to the ethnic Chinese protesting and bringing the economy to a standstill temporarily, they were generally successful in achieving their goal.[257] From this point onward, the policies towards the Southern Vietnamese ethnic Chinese changed harshly towards forced assimilation.[258] Based on research literature I would argue there were few distinct reasons for why Diệm's regime adopted these policies meant to assimilate the ethnic Chinese communities. Firstly, with the emergence of Vietnamese nationalism, becoming a Vietnamese citizen became more important to the nationalist regime.[259] Furthermore, with this emergence of nationalism and nation states, the notion of sovereignty, citizenship and nationality also had gained importance. Ending the separate citizenship status of the ethnic Chinese was then was important from this nation-building perspective. Secondly, the ethnic Chinese were still largely unassimilated to the surrounding society by the mid-1950s when Ngô Đình Diệm came to power. They had their own language, enclaves, schools, their own communities, community leaders, businesses and financial institutions.[260] Diệm had the goal of building a centralized Vietnamese nation state with nationalized education and its own national language and for this reason many elements of the ethnic Chinese practices, identity and culture clashed with these

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and silk merchants, metal scrap dealer, cereal dealer, transporter of persons and merchandize by boat or vehicle, rice millers and processor or commission agents."

[253] Tong (2010), p. 181.

[254] Amer (1991), p. 20.

[255] See for example Amer (1991), p. 19 – 21, Goscha (2016), p. 287 and Tong (2010), p. 180 – 181. I would be inclined to agree with Amer (1991) that these policies were at least partly enacted to try to force the ethnic Chinese communities particularly to assimilate, Amer (1991), p. 19.

[256] Chang (1982), p. 198.

[257] It is generally accepted that these measures had success in forcing ethnic Chinese to adopt a Vietnamese citizenship, Amer (1991), p. 22 – 23, Engelbert (2008), p. 222 and Tong (2010), p. 181. Some researchers, such as Tong (2010) have offered numbers such as that over 90% of the ethnic Chinese assimilated, but these types of numbers should be used with caution.

[258] Amer (1991), p. 21 – 22.

[259] Engelbert (2008), p. 222 and Goscha (2016), p. 286 – 287.

[260] Amer (1991), p. 18 – 19, Barrett (2012), p. 1 – 2 and Khanh (1993), p. 34.

ideas related to state and nation-building. Thirdly, a part of this state-building project was to centralize the political and administrative power in the hands of Ngô Đình Diệm's regime. This meant that the ethnic communities' and religious sects' autonomies, such as the semi-autonomous congregations, that had been established before were to be abolished.[261] Ethnic Chinese communities were then one obstacle to be dealt with in this endeavour.

During the later war years, the general themes of the ethnic policies remained the same. For some of the ethnic Chinese the war itself provided lucrative opportunities for illicit trade of supplies and contraband.[262] Few ethnic Chinese individuals grew also immensely wealthy and were able to monopolize certain sections of the economy during the war. Nicknames corresponding to the area of expertise of these monopolists, such as the "rice king", "gasoline king" and "iron and steel king" were given to these individuals during the war.[263] Behind these monopolies were also close connections to South Vietnamese politicians and military leaders and corruption.[264] Later when the war was over, the communists cracked down on these individuals.[265]

All in all, I would argue that from Ngô Đình Diệm's regime onward, the policies which affected ethnic Chinese communities started to be entwined with the general goals of state-building much more than before. The state-building itself was fuelled by desires of institutional consolidation, consolidation of citizenship and allegiances and by desires of nationalizing education, language in Southern Vietnam. Push towards establishing a centralized Vietnamese nation state was an effort that begun in Southern Vietnam first during Ngô Đình Diệm's era and continued later after the reunification under the communist rule. Although the methods and goals of state-building differed to some extent between these two political entities, the general undertone of Vietnamese nationalism scored the actions of both these political regimes when it came to ethnic policies. Push towards citizenship and assimilation became consistent traits of these policies.[266]

New important features also emerged to the ethnic Chinese question after the communists took over Southern Vietnam in 1975, which affected how the ethnic Chinese became to be ultimately treated in Southern Vietnam. After the reunification of Vietnam, the deteriorating Sino-Vietnamese relations suddenly became the most important factor in determining in the fate of the ethnic Chinese communities in Southern Vietnam. Furthermore, in the midst of a severe crisis of

[261] Engelbert (2008), p. 221.
[262] Engelbert (2008), p. 204 and 207.
[263] Khanh (1993), p. 33.
[264] Khanh (1993), p. 80.
[265] See for example Reuter, *"New currency for S. Vietnam",* SCMP, Sept. 22nd, 1975, Reuter, *"PRG to punish hoarders",* SCMP, Sept. 10th, 1975 and Thoraval, Jean, "*The axe falls on Cholon",* SCMP, Aug. 26th, 1976.
[266] Engelbert (2008), p. 222.

relations between the PRC and the SRV, the ethnic Chinese became to be feared to be a potential "fifth column", a group of people set on shaking the society from within.[267] Combined with the large changes in the Southern Vietnamese society and economic and political system after the communists consolidated their power, the presence and political loyalties of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam became to be once again questioned and these factors, among others that will be presented in the next chapters, ultimately led to the expulsions.

4.2 The restructuring of the Southern Vietnamese society after the war (1975)

For almost thirty years, Vietnam and Vietnamese people had endured the gruesome state of war. Since 1945, as many as 3,6 million people had perished as a result of the war.[268] From the many factions of the war, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and its People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) alongside their allies in the South had prevailed, first against the French and later against the South Vietnamese and the Americans.[269] The capital of South Vietnam, Saigon (renamed to Ho Chi Minh City after the war), was conquered by the PAVN forces on April 30th 1975 and this marked the end to the long war.

As the ending of the war became apparent, the speculation began on what would happen to the South Vietnamese people and society after the war. Punishment campaigns, persecution and even non-discriminatory violence were likely possibilities in the minds of some South Vietnamese as northern communists took over the South Vietnamese cities rapidly.[270] What actually took place immediately after the war partly corresponded with these images in peoples' minds, but not wholly. There was no immediate wave of violence or killings. Instead the newly formed Military Management Commission[271] of Ho Chi Minh city adopted a twin-headed strategy towards the post-war restructuring of the Southern Vietnamese society: public campaigns and initiatives to

[267] Interestingly enough, this was also a view propagated by the Soviet Union in its propaganda, see for example Mikhail Andreev's book called (1975) Overseas Chinese bourgeoisie: a Peking tool in Southeast Asia and U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/130 s. 228-230, summary of the discussions between prime minister Thatcher and Lee (Kuan Yew), Jun 20th, 1979.
[268] Goscha (2016), p. 372. Number used by Goscha (2016).
[269] Ibid.
[270] See Chan (2006), p. 57, Chanda, Nayan, "*The Classroom Revolution*", FEER, Jun. 27th, 1975 and Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. IX for descriptions of the immediate post-war atmosphere in Southern Vietnam.
[271] This commission, intended for temporarily administrating the newly conquered areas of Southern Vietnam, was established on the May 3rd, 1975, few days after Saigon had been conquered. The commission comprised of leaders of military, southern Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) members, who had been the communist' parallel government organization in the South, and of northern cadres. The most important spots were awarded to the representatives of the northern communists, Nguyen V.C. (2017), p. 14 – 15.

win the hearts and minds of the public were launched which focused on trying to address the pressing societal issues, such as economic situation, unemployment, feeding the people and the war refugee issue that had resulted from the war. The other focus became creating new administrative structures to solidify the communist governance of the South. This included creating new party institutions at all levels of government, reshaping old government institutions, and taking measures to impose loyalty and political control to all levels of society. In charge of implementing these new policies were two political entities which were responsible for the governance and forming policy in Southern Vietnam until the formal reunification in 1976 was the aforementioned Military Management Commission and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG, Chính phủ Cách mạng lâm thời Cộng hòa miền Nam Việt Nam).[272]

Many of the initial measures taken by the communist authorities were targeted towards problems that had resulted from the war. For example, as a result of the war, a large portion of the population had relocated to urban areas. In 1960, twenty percent of the population lived in urban areas in South Vietnam and by 1975 this percentage had increased to forty-three.[273] A major reason for the migration was that the war and fighting at the countryside had forced people to relocate to cities. In addition to this people also moved to the cities to pursue the better economic opportunities that were available there. An artificial aid economy, propped up by the generous US aid, had created a lot of economic opportunities in the urban centres of Southern Vietnam, especially in service, import and retail sectors.[274] This artificially propped up economy naturally crashed after the Americans left and the economic aid ended, and as the fighting reached the economic centres of South Vietnam. The result was rapid inflation and mass unemployment. An estimated one million people were unemployed in the urban areas as the northern communists seized power in the South.[275]

In addition to trying to address issues that had resulted from the war, the building of a centralized socialist society in the South began almost immediately. These policies taken under the guise of

[272] With the reunification the political structures were unified throughout the whole country, with the most important policy decisions being made by the CPV Politburo by resolutions, which were translated into laws by the National Assembly. Decisions made by the party are still even today carried out by the state agencies of all levels. Provincial and local district and city level officials in this system take care of the implementation of policy at their respective levels, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 14 - 16 and Nguyen V.C (2017), p. 64.
[273] Goscha (2016), p. 330 and 383.
[274] Dacy (1986), p. 192 and 200.
[275] Goscha (2016), p. 383. Although in an interview given to the Far Eastern Economic Review, a PRG minister of state stated that around 2 million people were unemployed in the South during this time, Chanda, Nayan *"Vietnam: Back to the Land"*, FEER, Jun 27th, 1975. The precise number of unemployed during this time is hard to estimate and these estimations should be taken with a grain of salt.

"*building socialism*" ("xây dựng chủ nghĩa xã hội") in Southern Vietnam included establishing state industries in the economic sector, creating state monopolies in education and broadcasting and press and creating other socialist and party organizations to establish communist party leadership effectively over the whole country.[276] In a swift manner the central positions of power in the government and party apparatuses were concentrated to the hands of the northern communist faction. [277] Civil servants of the old regime were replaced by northern cadres, that were deemed to be more loyal to the party and in a similar manner the communists took control of the schools and universities.[278] Parallel party structures were created for all levels of government and administration to secure the political leadership of the communist party.[279]

While the re-shaping of the political and economic structures affected people at first mostly indirectly and in a roundabout way, what had a more direct effect in peoples' lives were the measures taken to impose loyalty and political control to all levels of society. Many of these actions were implemented in a manner stylized after the examples of the PRC and the Soviet Union.[280] Mass associations that were controlled by the communist party were created to mobilize the youth, agricultural workers and workers to strengthen ideological loyalty to the party and to the new unified socialist nation.[281] People had to join organizations that coincided with their occupation, age or sex, and the activities organized by these organizations were mandatory and often consumed much of the free time people had.[282] These organizations also had an important role as acting as a link in between the party leadership, administration and the people, as they passed down CPV policies and directives to the common people.[283] They also were the part of the larger security and citizenship monitoring system that was established in Southern Vietnam, as participation and activities inside these organizations were monitored. In many respects, monitoring of the citizens by both security agencies and by their peers became part of everyday life for Southern Vietnamese citizens.[284] Public Security Bureaus were created for every city ward

[276] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 16.
[277] Goscha (2016), p. 377. It is important to understand that during the war, there were at least two different factions among the victors, mostly demarked along the lines of southern communist compatriots and northern communists and these two factions had often different views on how to proceed with the transformation and unification of the country after the war, Goscha, p. 372 and Smith (1977), p. 196.
[278] Goscha (2016), p. 373 and 382.
[279] Elliot (1980), p. 201 and Goscha (2016), p. 378.
[280] Goscha (2016), p. 377 – 378.
[281] Goscha (2016), p. 378 – 379.
[282] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. XIV.
[283] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 133.
[284] Nguyễn Long describes this reality in his description of everyday life in Southern Vietnam after the war, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. IX – XVIII.

and even smaller security units to individual street blocs.[285] Travelling and moving to another location was not allowed unless you had a special permission signed by the authorities.[286]

Almost immediately after the war mandatory political re-education was ordered for all former South Vietnamese military officers, former South Vietnamese politicians, professors, policemen and other societal figures which were branded as dangerous by the communist authorities.[287] Although for most of the detainees the re-education was rather quick, between 1 week to four weeks, for some of the higher-ranked officials of the former regime, the re-education lasted for over twenty years.[288] Conditions were often harsh in these camps where the more "stubborn elements" were kept and malnutrition and starvation were commonplace in these camps.[289] In general, people's background and past deeds during and before the war became the yard stick by which they were measured and through which their post-war fate could be assessed through. Forcing those who had been affiliated with the former government to re-education was just one example of this in action. To assess people's backgrounds, a household management system was created, in which each member of the household had to fill in an autobiographical statement (*lý lịch, "background*"), which included information of their current occupation, family relations, ethnicity and faith.[290] These documents had significant importance as the contents within them ultimately determined whether you would gain access to education or to government jobs, or whether you would rather be sent to re-education.[291] Based on background people were effectively then divided into "good elements" and "bad elements" and representing the latter meant that you could be systematically discriminated against, your property and excess wealth could be confiscated, you could be placed under tighter surveillance or even incarcerated.[292]

These developments are important to outline, because they highlight both the circumstances after the war and the fact that in the new Southern society, it was the communist authorities and the CPV policies and directives which dictated who was to be regarded as "good" or "bad" element and which groups were to be subjected to which kind of treatment. Through rationing policies, they could even decide who was able to receive which kind of food and when.[293] Around 6,5 million people (of total of 20 million in Southern Vietnam) were according to a Hanoi

[285] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 24.
[286] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 183 – 184.
[287] Chan (2006), p. 65 - 66 and Veiga, Joe, *"Vietnam: 90 days of struggle and strife",* SCMP, Jul. 30th, 1975.
[288] AP, "*Vietnam to punish the stubborn"*, SCMP, Jun. 17th, 1976. And Vo, N.M (2015), p. 2.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Goscha (2016), p. 381, Truitt (2013), p. 43 – 44.
[291] Leshkowich (2014), p. 143.
[292] Goscha (2016), p. 381.
[293] Butterfield, Fox, "*Vietnam transfers imprisoned officers north",* SCMP, Feb. 13th, 1977 and Chang, Harold and Pang, Anthony, *"Saigon seethes with intrigue after dark",* SCMP, Jul 31st, 1977.

spokesperson regarded as being "compromised" in some form in 1975 due to the fact that they themselves or their family members had served in the government or army of the former regime or been part of anti-communist political party or mass organization.[294] This estimate of course only includes those who were compromised through their or their family's collaboration during or after the war. Your class status and being of the "unproductive" group in the labour force also subjected you to differentiated treatment.[295]

In the case of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam, while they were not often the ones who were sent to re-education camps or even discriminated against on a large scale at first, we can see from later chapters that in a similar manner to other people who were subjected to differentiated treatment immediately after the war in the new Southern Vietnamese society, the ethnic Chinese as a group also became slowly branded as being a dangerous potential fifth column in Vietnam and the targets of their very own CPV policies and directives.

4.2.1 The immediate effects for the ethnic Chinese communities in Southern Vietnam (1975 – 1976)

The ethnic Chinese communities of Southern Vietnam were also affected by the stark political changes which took place in the society after the war in 1975. In a quick manner, education was nationalized and ideologized. As a result, many of the ethnic Chinese community schools that used Chinese as their primary language were either closed down or Vietnamized.[296] Few months after the war, traditional culture and business organizations of the ethnic Chinese were also shut down, alongside community newspapers and pagodas that had been founded when congregations were still active.[297] On an individual level people were at first subjected to similar treatment as other Vietnamese by the communist authorities and security officials.

In general, we do not have a lot of available sources or accounts on how the life changed for the average ethnic Chinese individual in Southern Vietnam after the communists took over, at least before second half of 1978 when masses of refugees started arriving to other countries. Where we can find pieces of information are the general accounts of life in Southern Vietnam in the western

[294] Goscha (2016), p. 382. Goscha here relies on the information provided by human rights lawyer Stephen Denney (1990) in his report prepared for Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. I decided to include this number as it is the only estimate given by communist party official of the number of those who were in some form regarded as second-class citizens in the immediate post-war situation.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Chang (1982), p. 197 and Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 191 – 192.
[297] Engelbert (2008), p. 222 and Khanh (1993), p. 36 and 82.

newspapers who had correspondents in the area or visited the area, in first-hand accounts of Southern Vietnamese citizens published after the events took place and research literature dealing with ethnic Chinese communities in Southern Vietnam. Due to this lack of first-hand accounts, this chapter highlights some of the general changes in economy and in the Southern Vietnamese society and analyzes their significance to the ethnic Chinese communities and individuals in Southern Vietnam.

After the war, the economic landscape changed drastically in Southern Vietnam and this had its own effects for the ethnic Chinese communities. In relation to the economic reform, the communists adopted an approach of *"*gradual socialist reform of the national economy*"* in Southern Vietnam.[298] This meant that the steps towards socializing the economy would be taken over time and not immediately. At first, even the relatively free-enterprise system was allowed continue, although the authorities began to supervise some of the bigger private businesses and industries.[299] Some parts of the private economy were however nationalized immediately, such as banking sector and many of the larger privately-owned companies, and by 1976 this included almost all of production industries.[300] The goal of the nationalizations was for the state agencies to eventually control all means of production.

Another priority for the Vietnamese policymakers was to combat hoarders and speculators that had emerged during the war years and to stop the "comprador bourgeoisie"/capitalists in Southern Vietnam and this had an effect on ethnic Chinese businesses and businessmen.[301] Few months after the war, a special mass campaign titled "X1" was started by the Provincial Revolutionary Government on September 11th, 1975. It aimed to confiscate "*all or part of the property of the comprador bourgeoisie* [individuals]" in Southern Vietnam.[302] The extent of the confiscations would according to a government communiqué be dependent on the "*seriousness of their crimes.*"[303] The campaign specifically targeted the leading businessmen, industry owners and monopolists of Southern Vietnam.[304] Not all of those who were targeted by the campaign were

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[298] Chanda, Nayan, "*Speeding towards reunification"*, FEER, Dec. 5th, 1975 and Woollacott, Martin, "*Conflict in Vietnam"*, SCMP, May 2nd, 1976.
[299] Wain (1981), p. 39.
[300] AP-DJ, *"Saigon closes private banks",* SCMP, Aug. 30th, 1975 and Chanda, Nayan "*Vietnam: Back to the Land"*, FEER, Jun 27th, 1975.
[301] Chanda, Nayan, *"Speeding towards reunification*", FEER, Dec. 5th, 1975, Khanh (1993), p. 79 and Reuter, *"PRG to punish hoarders*", SCMP, Sept. 10th, 1975. According to Khanh (1993), the comprador bourgeoisie referred to the big businessmen who were seen to have colluded with the former government and who had been acting in the interest of the foreign capitalists.
[302] Khanh (1993), p. 81 and Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 43.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Butterfield, Fox, *"Growing hardships face people of South Vietnam",* SCMP, Sept. 23rd, 1975 and Khanh (1993), p. 81

found to be part of the comprador bourgeoisie, but from those who were deemed to belong to this class, around seventy percent were ethnic Chinese.[305] In general, the portion of the well-off businessmen who were punished by the authorities represented only a small portion of the ethnic Chinese community in Southern Vietnam, as most of the ethnic Chinese were either small business owners, service personnel or regular employees.[306] Yet, the accusations were a serious matter, as according to Khanh (1993) several of those who were arrested committed suicide.[307] This campaign affected the ethnic Chinese business community and business infrastructure adversely and it was the first demonstration of the ideological economic mass campaigns that the authorities undertook to reshape the economic sphere in Southern Vietnam after the war.

The ethnic Chinese population in Southern Vietnam was also affected in many ways by the new economic policies meant to change the economic landscape in the SRV. Bolstering agricultural production became an economic priority in the SRV and Vietnamese authorities planned to increase production through land development and collectivization of agriculture.[308] To realize these plans, a policy of *"building new economic zones"* ("xây dựng các vùng kinh tế mới") was started in June 1975. Much of the countryside had been ravaged by the war and a lot of wartime refugees had come to the cities as countryside had become unhabitable.[309] The New Economic Zones (NEZ) aimed to develop agriculture in those areas that had been destroyed by the war, transform areas that had not been formerly developed for agriculture into land for agricultural production and to send people back to their native villages.[310] Government promised free land, transportation and rice rations for six months to those who would go these zones voluntarily. This population transfer policy was at first marketed to the urban unemployed and underemployed, to people who had lived previously in the countryside before the war and to the problematic political groups, such as the soldiers of the former South Vietnamese regime. The departure was also said to be voluntary.[311] However, by the time a second Five-Year-Plan (1976 – 1980) was set in motion in the Fourth Party Congress of the CPV in late 1976, quotas on how many people should be sent

[305]This statistic bases on numbers provided by Khanh (1993), he stated that 670 heads of families were targeted and of them, 159 were considered to be comprador bourgeoisie and of those 119, or around seventy percent, were ethnic Chinese, Khanh (1993), p. 81.
[306] See Table 5. Khanh (1993), p. 33. According to this table, which is based on Khanh's own calculations, before the Fall of Saigon, around thirty-one percent of ethnic Chinese in Saigon-Cholon were either employees, sixty-six percent were small businessmen or service personnel and only three percent could be categorized as capitalists.
[307] Khanh (1993), p. 81.
[308] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 270.
[309] Burchett, Wilfred, "*A Rural problem for the new rulers",* FEER, Nov. 7th, 1975.
[310] Goscha (2016), p. 383 – 384.
[311] AFP, *"Hanoi demotes heavy industry",* SCMP, Nov. 8th, 1976, Butterfield, Fox, *"Growing hardships face people of South Vietnam"*, SCMP, Sept. 23rd, 1975.and Chanda, Nayan "*Vietnam: Back to the Land"*, FEER, Jun 27th, 1975

to the New Economic Zones were part of the official economic plans.[312] The aspect of going to the New Economic Zones being based on own volition was soon forgotten by the authorities.[313] Very quickly it became apparent that if at any point you would find yourself underemployed or unemployed, you could be sent to the New Economic Zones.[314] This mattered as the New Economic Zones were often unforgiving territories and rumors quickly spread of the harsh life that would await there.[315] In a similar manner to other people living in the cities, many ethnic Chinese individuals were reluctant to go to the New Economic Zones.[316]

Often the economic interests of even the small businesses owners did not align with the new policies taken to reform the economy. Policies taken to redistribute wealth and to gradually move towards centrally planned socialist economy affected the ethnic Chinese communities' livelihoods substantially as they were strongly represented in all aspects of business sector.[317] On the other hand the strong representation and role of the ethnic Chinese communities in the private sector also meant that gaining control over the economy was also difficult for the state agencies and policy makers responsible for the economic planning.[318] Exacerbating this problem for the authorities was the fact that they had to break monopolies established during the war for example in rice and gasoline trade.[319] Gaining control over the economy was especially difficult as corruption, hoarding and black-market activity were prevalent in the bigger cities, like in Ho Chi Minh City. Hoarding and black-market activities were also issues, which brought the ethnic Chinese communities especially in Cholon to the radar of the local authorities and policy makers.[320] Several measures ranging from currency reforms to harshening punishments for hoarding were implemented to stop hoarding and rampant inflation that had partly resulted from it.[321] Among these measures was also the X1 campaign. From the newspaper articles and from different accounts, it can be discerned that hoarding and black-market activity continued to be a

[312] Chanda, Nayan, "*Hanoi comes down to earth",* FEER, Feb. 4th, 1977 and Gallois, Jean-Pierre, "*Vietnam ends a year of failure"*, SCMP, Dec. 27th, 1977.
[313] Goscha (2016), p. 383 – 384.
[314] Hoath, Colin, *"Vietnam: the new society",* SCMP, Sep. 4th, 1976 and Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 21.
[315] A Correspondent, *"Vietnam: Housing the homeless*", FEER, Feb. 11th, 1977.
[316] Chanda, Nayan, *"Now, the second revolution",* FEER, May 7th, 1976 and Wong, Eileen, "*Chinese protest march in Vietnam"*, SCMP, Apr. 11th, 1978.
[317] Khanh (1993), p. 79.
[318] Khanh (1993), p. 84.
[319] Amer (1991), p. 36 – 37 and Khanh (1993), p. 79 and 84.
[320] Cholon, the large Chinese quarter of Ho Chi Minh City, was among other economic activities also the center of black-market and illicit trade activities in Southern Vietnam, see Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 120 and Thoraval, Jean, *"The axe falls on Cholon",* SCMP, Aug. 26th, 1976.
[321] AP, *"Hoarders warned",* SCMP, Jun. 3rd, 1976, Khanh (1993), p. 82 – 83 and Reuters, *"PRG to punish hoarders",* SCMP, Sept. 10th, 1975.

constant menace to the authorities and undermined their goals for controlling the economy.[322] Although the speculators were not in the statements of Vietnamese authorities at the time identified as being ethnic Chinese, during the expulsion campaign in a propaganda dossier published by Hanoi Foreign Language press in 1978 a group of "capitalist of Chinese origin" were mentioned as having worked against the revolution and socialist transformation of capitalist industry by speculating, hoarding and raising prices among other methods.[323]

Alongside other immediate post-war reforms, a naturalization of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam also took place. This happened in a roundabout manner, as everyone had to register to vote in the April 1976 National Assembly general elections which held special symbolic significance as these were the first countrywide elections since the civil war had started. The voters were issued new identification cards that became essential for everything, including for receiving rations.[324] With this mandatory voting and registration the ethnic Chinese effectively became Vietnamese citizens on paper.[325] This naturalization of the ethnic Chinese was later disputed by the PRC, as a conflict over the treatment of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam emerged between SRV and PRC.

4.3 The rifts in the Sino-Vietnamese alliance and the ethnic Chinese (1975 – 1977)

The relationship between Vietnam and China steadily worsened after the Vietnam war ended in 1975 and this came to have major repercussions for the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. The four major strains on the relations between the two countries were the territorial disputes, escalating conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia, disputes over aid and Vietnam's deepening alliance with the Soviet Union instead of China. Small scale border clashes between the PRC and the SRV had risen from 100 cases in 1974 to 400 in 1975 and kept increasing yearly.[326] Complicating these issues was the fact that no official border treaty had been signed between the PRC and the SRV. The last official treaty had been signed during the colonial times by French Colonial authorities and Manchu court in 1887.[327] As a result of this "border-vacuum", both Vietnam and China were

[322] AP, *"Hoarders warned",* SCMP, Jun. 3rd, 1976, Chanda, Nayan, *"Comrades curb the capitalists"*, FEER, Apr. 14th, 1978. and Nguyen V.C (2017), p. 48 – 50.
[323] Ky (1978), p. 22 – 23.
[324] Chanda, Nayan, *"Now, the second revolution",* FEER, May 7th, 1976.
[325] Amer (1991), p. 40 - 42.
[326] Path (2012), p. 1043.
[327] Chanda, Nayan, *"Cholon's merchants feel the border backlash",* FEER, May 5th, 1978

then trying to change the territorial status quo in their favour in the border between them and in the Spratly and Paracel islands.[328] In addition to the border problems, there had also been serious disputes over the amount of aid the PRC was giving to the DRV already between 1972 - 1975, and disputes over the aid continued after 1975.[329] After 1975, the PRC categorically rejected requests for non-refundable aid and delayed the delivery of existing aid support projects.[330] This further strained the two countries relationship as after the war Vietnam relied heavily on aid to rebuild its war-ravaged country and economy.[331]

At the root of the problems between these two countries was that starting from late 1960s, North Vietnam had steadily started to lean more towards Soviet Union in military support and aid. Throughout the different conflicts the PRC had traditionally been the DRV's most vigorous supporter.[332] The PRC had been the first country to recognize North Vietnam diplomatically and had provided large amounts of artillery, firearms and ammunition among other aid to the DRV since 1949.[333] Contrastingly, the USSR had not really been interested in supporting the Vietnamese revolution until a major re-alignment of policy took place as a result of change in the Soviet leadership and as American escalation of the war happened.[334] Yet, even when both the PRC and the USSR were supporting North Vietnam during the war, the triangular relationship between the DRV, the PRC and the USSR was complicated as the relations between the two major powers in the socialist bloc had steadily worsened during the 1950s and effectively broken down in 1961.[335] This meant that Vietnam had to balance between the demands and politics of these two powers if it would want to continue to receive aid from both of them. In addition to this difficult situation, the PRC was especially complicating this triangular relationship by torpedoing all initiatives for trilateral co-operation and increasingly demanding that the SRV should side with the PRC on ideological issues and debates that were debated at the time between the PRC and the USSR.[336] However, already in 1965, the Vietnamese leadership were according to their own words frustrated with some of the PRC's leaderships and especially Mao's positions on politics,

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[328] Zhang (2015), p. 35.
[329] Path (2012), p. 1041 and 1049.
[330] Path (2015), p. 1049.
[331] AFP, "*Hanoi describes aid as ´very precious´*", SCMP, Sep. 27th, 1975.
[332] Lorenz and Lüthi (2008), p. 302.
[333] Lorenz and Lüthi (2008), p. 302 and 304.
[334] Lorenz and Lüthi (2008), p. 302.
[335] Behind this formal breakdown of relations were differences on ideological and policy-level between the PRC and the USSR. Especially the issues of de-Stalinization and the Soviet adopted doctrine of peaceful coexistence with the Western world were issues that the PRC and the USSR disagreed on. The formal breakdown of relations was initiated by Chairman Mao Zedong in 1961, as he accused the USSR of having ceased to be anti-imperialist power and as being Marxist revisionist, Lorenz and Lüthi (2008), p. 48 – 49 and 303.
[336] Lorenz and Lüthi (2008), p. 330 – 331 and 336.

Vietnamese conflict and co-operation matters, and this was perhaps one of the reasons why the SRV started to gradually lean more towards the Soviet Union.[337]

This re-alignment, albeit at first slight, naturally brought tensions also to the relationship between the PRC and the DRV/SRV, as both major powers were trying to bring the SRV under their respective spheres of influence.[338] After the war, the territorial disputes that emerged between the PRC and the SRV complicated the two countries relationship.[339] In addition to this, after the fighting had ended and Vietnam was starting to focus on rebuilding, the Chinese leaders told the Vietnamese leadership in a meeting in Beijing that the PRC's economic assistance to Vietnam would be substantially reduced.[340] Most likely due to these factors, in addition to the previous difficulties in dealing with the PRC during the war, the SRV decided to deepen co-operation with the USSR rather than the PRC after 1975.[341] By June 1977, after series of high-level meetings between Vietnamese and Soviet leaders in Moscow, Vietnam had secured additional support and aid for "all-round" co-operation from the Soviet Union and this ushered in a new era of deepening co-operation between these two countries.[342] Finally in June 1978 Vietnam joined the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), which finalized the co-operative alliance with the Soviet Union and reliance on Soviet support.[343]

While these tensions were running high in the background, publicly both the SRV and the PRC maintained the appearance that things between them were fine, at least until late 1977, when the border conflicts started to intensify.[344] However, according to Path (2012), already in July 1976 in an internal report of the Vietnamese ministry of foreign affairs outlined some emerging issues regarding the border disputes and China's mobilization of ethnic Chinese communities along the border.[345] This document is the first indication of the fact that the Vietnamese authorities had started to be wary of the ethnic Chinese communities along the northern border and the possibility of the PRC using these communities to interfere in Vietnamese affairs already in mid-1976. Another show of distrust towards the Chinese was that in December 1976 in the Fourth National

[337] Lorenz and Lüthi (2008), p. 323 – 324 and 330 – 331.
[338] Zhang (2015), p. 19 and 27 – 28.
[339] Path (2012), p. 1043 – 1044.
[340] Path (2012), p. 1047.
[341] Path (2012) argued that since 1965, the PRC's aid had been increasingly predicated on Hanoi's leadership making political and ideological concessions. He also stated that after 1968, Vietnamese leadership was less willing to accept political guidance from the PRC, most likely due to the chaotic situation of the cultural revolution, Path (2012), p. 1040 – 1041. Yet, the SRV's alignment towards the Soviet Union was the result of many different issues with the PRC.
[342] Path (2012), p. 1050.
[343] Khoo (2010), p. 341.
[344] "*Fence-sitting is more difficult"*, SCMP, Dec. 24th, 1975 and Reuter," *Support for North Vietnam",* SCMP, Aug 15th, 1975.
[345] Path (2012), p. 1044.

Party Congress of the CPV, the pro-Chinese faction members were dropped from the CPV Politburo. In the same conference, a more aggressive stance was also adopted towards border disputes with Cambodia that had started in 1975.[346] This meant that Vietnam was effectively engaged in border conflicts on both its western and northern borders.

The border conflicts between China and Vietnam continued to escalate in the second half of 1977, as the number of border clashes between these two countries kept rising steadily.[347] As a result of increasing border conflicts, some measures to address the perceived security risk of the ethnic Chinese in Northern Vietnam were taken. Surveillance of the ethnic Chinese communities was ramped up and members of the community who were cadres or had an important political position were dismissed from their jobs. Some of the ethnic Chinese who had ties to CCP through ethnic Chinese organizations were also arrested[348]

In November 1977, Vietnam started to expel those Chinese who were not Vietnamese citizens from three Northwest provinces bordering China.[349] In contrast to the situation in Southern Vietnam, not all ethnic Chinese in the North had been forced to adopt Vietnamese citizenship and therefore some were still Chinese. The expelled were these individuals who possessed Chinese citizenship or Chinese nationals who had come to work or trade in Vietnam.[350] The expulsions had been preceded by a new fifteen-point order in April 1977 on how foreign residents or non-naturalized citizens could be treated in Vietnam, which gave basis for the expulsions of these non-citizens.[351] According to this ordinance signed by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, Vietnamese government had the right to decide where foreign residents can reside and approve their movements. Other restrictions were also placed on foreigners, such as ban on certain professions and being able to participate in elections.[352] It could be stated that from this point onward the CPV started to adopt harsher measures towards the ethnic Chinese who it deemed pose a security risk in Vietnam. The political loyalties of those Chinese who had not adopted a Vietnamese citizenship became to be questioned as the conflict between China and Vietnam escalated. Later in 1978, this questioning of political loyalties seemed to expand to the whole ethnic Chinese population permanently residing in the SRV.[353]

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[346] Chang (1982), p. 201.
[347] Path (2012), p. 1043.
[348] Chang (1982), p. 204 and Goscha (2016), p. 380.
[349] Path (2012), p. 1052 – 1053.
[350] Han (2009), p. 15.
[351] Han (2009), p. 23.
[352] Ibid.
[353] Han (2009), p. 1.

It is important to note that the measures taken towards the ethnic Chinese in the North were not at first applied towards the ethnic Chinese population in the South. There are few possible reasons for this. The Southern and Northern ethnic Chinese populations posed very different challenges to the CPV in terms of security and policy. This stemmed from the fact that the ethnic Chinese population differed greatly between Northern and Southern Vietnam. These populations differed not only in their geographical closeness to China, but also in economic power, size, cultural and occupational diversity and in political orientation towards the PRC and the SRV.[354] In Southern Vietnam the ethnic Chinese communities presented problems to proceeding with the socialist reform of the national economy, as they were dominant part of the private trader community that still existed in Southern Vietnam.[355] Without eventually abolishing private trade and gaining control over the means of production the socialist reform of the economy could not be realized. Most likely the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam were also not thought to pose a security risk in a similar manner in the escalating border conflict along the northern border and therefore these security measures were not applied to them. However, later in March 1978, when private trade was in a swift manner banned in Vietnam and the expulsion campaign was started, the situation changed drastically for the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam also.

4.4 The people caught between the rhetoric and actions (1977 – 1978)

From late 1977 onwards diplomatic disputes emerged between the PRC and the SRV over several issues, of which one the most important one was the issue of the treatment of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. There were few major developments which contributed to these diplomatic disputes emerging. The first one was the escalation of the border conflicts between the SRV and Cambodia and the SRV and the PRC. By second half of 1977, both Vietnamese and Cambodian forces were making border incursion to the other sides' territories and these clashes quickly spiralled into an open conflict. Vietnam even reintroduced draft as the conflict became more serious and this time it also included the ethnic Chinese individuals who had previously been exempt from it due to special privileges.[356] The PRC sided in the conflict with Cambodia and urged for immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, creating another point of contention between

[354] Han (2009), p. 2. According to official Vietnamese statistics, in 1974 census of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam there were 256 534 ethnic Chinese living in Northern Vietnam and in the 1976 SRV census 949 825 living in Southern Vietnam, Amer (2013), p. 3 – 4.
[355] Khanh (1993), p. 25.
[356] Chang (1982), p. 204.

the PRC and the SRV.[357] At this point the border conflicts between the PRC and the SRV had also already become a major point of contention between the two countries. Between October 1977 and March 1978 series of bilateral negotiations on the border issues between the PRC and the SRV were held and the Vietnamese notes on these negotiations demonstrate that the relations were already at this point severely strained.[358] These negotiations were unable to resolve the differences between China and Vietnam and as a result the militarization on the northern border continued and the threat of open conflict between these two countries kept rising.[359]

The second development was the CCP formulating a new policy in late 1977 on overseas Chinese. As a result of this new policy the overseas Chinese question quickly became an important domestic, foreign policy and diplomatic issue for the PRC. Historically, the different Chinese states had traditionally acted as guardians of the ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, but during the Cultural Revolution the overseas Chinese had become ideologically suspect and undesirables from class standpoint.[360] During this period the CCP had abandoned its active policy towards these communities, but later after the death of Chairman Mao Zedong in September 1976, the CCP decided again to formulate new policy towards the overseas Chinese.[361] As a result, preparatory conference on Overseas Chinese Affairs was held between November – December 1977 in the PRC and as a result a new State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (国务院侨务办公室, Guówùyuàn qiáowù bàngōngshì) was established as an administrative office under the PRC State Council in early 1978.[362] The overseas Chinese were announced to be "*part of Chinese nation*" and they were called to participate in modernization of the Chinese nation. Furthermore, in an official statement in the conference the PRC also outlined that it would protect the legitimate interests and rights of the overseas Chinese who had Chinese citizenship.[363] Two months later in the first session of the Fifth National People's Congress on February 1978, Chairman of the CCP Hua Guofeng outlined that China would oppose "*any attempt to compel overseas Chinese to change their citizenship"* and that it would protect those overseas Chinese that decided to keep their Chinese citizenship.[364]

After the new policy was formed, the ethnic Chinese issue became a key issue in the Sino-Vietnamese relations. Already before this in June 1977, Chinese premier Li Xiannian had

[357] Amer (1991), p. 34 and Chen (1987), p. 34 - 35
[358] Path (2012), p. 1051 – 1052.
[359] Path (2012), p. 1052.
[360] Chang (1980), p. 281.
[361] Ren (2009), p. 144 – 146 and *"The case of the overseas Chinese",* SCMP, Sept. 26th, 1975
[362] Ren (2009), p. 149.
[363] Chang (1982), p. 204.
[364] Chang (1982), p. 205.

reportedly raised the issue of the treatment of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam in bilateral talks between the two countries.[365] The major issues emerged later however, as in late March 1978 private trade was banned in Vietnam and sometime in late March – early April of 1978 the expulsions of the ethnic Chinese in the Northern Vietnam began.[366] These two events affected the ethnic Chinese individuals in Vietnam significantly and after them the diplomatic protests by the PRC grew in volume and their tone harshened.

At the heart of the argument between these two countries on the topic of the treatment of these contested "Chinamese" were three issues. The first one was the naturalization of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam. The SRV regarded that they had become Vietnamese citizens already twenty years ago, while the PRC argued that they had been forcibly naturalized and that this was breaking the 1955 agreement between the two parties on the naturalization of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.[367] The second issue was the expulsions, which the PRC protested against on several occasions. The SRV however never officially admitted to expelling the ethnic Chinese.[368] The third issue was the general treatment of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. The PRC argued that the SRV had stepped up its discriminatory practices towards ethnic Chinese and that it had persecuted and expelled them, as well as made it harder for them to make a living in Vietnam.[369] Related to this third issue was also then the issues of the expulsions and the ban of private trade in Vietnam.

The most distressing issue for the PRC seemed to be the issue of expulsions. As a first response to the issue of expulsions, on the 30th of April 1978, Head of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office issued a statement which condemned the expulsion of the "Chinese residents" by Vietnamese authorities.[370] According to the PRC, 40 000 expelled refugees had gone to China during the month of April alone.[371]As the number of refugees kept growing, the PRC continued to protest the expulsions diplomatically. In an official letter sent to the SRV on 12th of May 1978, the PRC accused Vietnam of expelling Chinese immigrants since early 1977 along the border and of intensifying and expanding these expulsions to Chinese nationals in early 1978.[372] The harshest

[365] Chang (1982), p. 203
[366] Amer (2013), p. 6 and 9.
[367] Chang (1982), p. 209 and Godley (1980), p. 51.
[368] Path (2012), p. 1053.
[369] See Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaobu guanyu yuenan qugan huaqiao wenti de shengming [Statement by People's Republic of China's foreign ministry on the question of Vietnam's expelled Overseas Chinese], Jun. 9th, 1978, p. 6.
[370] Amer (2013), p. 9 – 10.
[371] Ibid.
[372]In the letter, PRC accused SRV of starting expulsions of Chinese immigrants in early 1977 along the border provinces in the North, expelling "*overseas Chinese residing in three Vietnamese provinces, Hoang Lien Son, Lai*

accusations however came from the PRC on 24th of May as Overseas Chinese Affairs Office put out a statement which accused the SRV of ostracizing and persecuting Chinese residents in Vietnam.[373] Few days later on the 26th of May, in a surprise move the PRC announced that it would send two ships to Vietnam to bring home these persecuted Chinese.[374]

This announcement by the PRC sparked a two-month long debate over whether Chinese ships could come pick up the persecuted Chinese it referred to with the term nànqiáo (南桥, which can be translated as "overseas countrymen in distress") from Vietnam.[375] Vietnamese representatives however refuted that there were any victimized Chinese in Vietnam.[376] As Godley (1980) pointed out in his article *A summer cruise to nowhere - China and the Vietnamese Chinese in perspective,* at the centre of this argument were the terms both sides used for the ethnic Chinese. The PRC referred to ethnic Chinese in Vietnam as being Chinese nationals and the SRV stated that the ethnic Chinese were Vietnamese citizens and insisted that they were Vietnamese of Chinese origin or *Hoa.*[377] Behind these different terms was the issue of the citizenship of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam that the PRC was trying to dispute.

While the debate raged over whether the PRC could send two ships to Vietnam to pick up the ethnic Chinese, from April to early July over 160 000 ethnic Chinese had already crossed the border over to the PRC from Vietnam either by foot or by boat.[378] As a response to the sheer number of people crossing the border to China, the PRC closed its land border with the SRV on July 11th, 1978.[379] In addition to the now closed border between the two countries, another signal of the worsening crisis in Sino-Vietnamese relations was the fact that after in total fourteen sessions of talks on the repatriation by boat, these negotiations also ultimately ended in failure on the July 19th, as the PRC and the SRV could not agree on the general terms for the repatriation and on the specific terms the people for repatriation would be selected.[380] After this the talks over the general ethnic Chinese issue continued later on a Vice Foreign Minister level.[381]

Chau and Son La" in November 1977 and of intensifying and expanding its expulsions of overseas Chinese in early 1978, Path (2012), p. 1052 – 1053.

[373] Chang (1982), p. 209.
[374] Godley (1980), p. 39.
[375] Godley (1980), p. 40 – 41.
[376] Godley (1980), p. 50.
[377] Godley (1980), p. 40 and 50.
[378] Chang (1982), p. 207 and "Exodus from Vietnam", SCMP, Jul 23rd, 1978. The numbers are stated in Chang's article and are based on Chinese statements.
[379] Chang (1982), p. 219.
[380] Godley (1980), p. 50 – 51.
[381] Godley (1980), p. 52.

During the two months of talks, preparations had however been made for the possible sealift of the ethnic Chinese. During the month of June, special registration offices had been set up in several places in Ho Chi Minh City and Haiphong for the purpose of this sealift.[382] Those wanting to leave to the PRC had to register either with their local ward's people's committee or at the special registration offices that had been set up for the purpose of registration.[383] The registration was popular among the ethnic Chinese especially in Southern Vietnam.[384] Many ethnic Chinese individuals wanted to leave Vietnam as their livelihood had been disrupted by the ban on private trade and as making a living was becoming harder.[385] However, as Nguyễn Long, a refugee who paid to leave Vietnam in 1979 with a group of ethnic Chinese recounts, many of the ethnic Chinese in Ho Chi Minh City at that time also had reservations of going from one communist country to another.[386] However, as the negotiations failed, nothing eventually came out of these registrations as the evacuation talks were dropped.[387]

After the failed talks on the possible evacuations, the second phase of the negotiations on the ethnic Chinese issues started on the August 8th.[388] In these talks the issue of ethnic Chinese refugees who had been stranded at the Sino-Vietnamese border came up and the nationality and the expulsion issues were further debated.[389] Yet, behind the scenes the failure of the first repatriation negotiation and growing indifferences on the ethnic Chinese question between the two countries only seemed to encourage Vietnam to continue expelling the ethnic Chinese. The closure of the Sino-Vietnamese land border had temporarily halted the flow of refugees to China, but this only prompted the CPV changed its expulsion strategy; it would now start selling government sanctioned departures by boat through another program to the ethnic Chinese, while

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[382] AFP and Reuter, *"Vietnamese prepare for mass exodus",* SCMP, Jun. 17th, 1978, AFP, *"Thousands wait for rescue ships"*, SCMP, Jun. 22nd, 1978 and Godley (1980), p. 42.
[383] AFP and Reuter, "*Vietnamese prepare for mass exodus",* SCMP, Jun. 17th, 1978, AFP, "*Thousands wait for rescue ships"*, SCMP, Jun. 22nd, 1978 and Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 49 – 50. According to the SCMP article on 22nd of June, 24 of such offices had been set up in Ho Chi Minh City's Cholon alone.
[384] Basing on the estimations in the articles of Benoit (1982), Chang (1982) and Porter (1980), Amer (2013), p. 12, offered an estimation that between 30 – 40 percent to about 75 percent of ethnic Chinese in Ho Chi Minh City would have registered to leave by the end of 1978. According to my own research this statement is not accurate, as these registrations did not in all likelihood continue until the end of 1978, but rather were discontinued after the negotiations failed on the possibility of sealift between the PRC and the SRV. In fact, what I argue is that there were registrations for two programs started around this same period: the first one was the free registration for ethnic Chinese to depart to the PRC, which was most likely discontinued when the negotiations failed and the second was the program to "go abroad officially" (see Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 50) which required people to pay a large sum of gold to Vietnamese officials to depart and did not have specific country of destination.
[385] Butterfield, Fox, *"Chinese harassed in Vietnam: Refugee's Tales of Woe",* Times of India, Jun 3rd, 1978 and Butterfield, Fox, *"Reasons behind Hanoi persecution",* SCMP, May 30th, 1978.
[386] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 48.
[387] Amer (2013), p. 13 and Godley (1980), p. 53 and 56.
[388] Godley (1980), p. 53.
[389] Godley (1980), p. 53 – 55.

disguising these departures as clandestine departures.[390] According to Nguyễn Long, in Ho Chi Minh City the ethnic Chinese community leaders in Cholon were approached by the communist authorities with the offer to "go abroad officially". The offer was accepted, and the ethnic Chinese community leaders established an organization to liaison with the communist authorities.[391] The program was started and by the end of the year, it was working regularly and Vietnamese authorities had established an orderly schedule for the departures.[392] This *"refugee machine",* as it was dubbed by a classified U.S State Department's report in 1979, was being set up by the CPV and by the Vietnamese authorities in secrecy during the summer of 1978, while publicly the diplomatic talks between the PRC and the SRV over the treatment of the ethnic Chinese continued.[393] This new program not only continued the expulsion policies adopted in early 1978 in a different form, but also shaped the whole public face of the Indochina refugee crisis, as suddenly tens of thousands of weather-beaten and worn Vietnamese refugees or "boat people", as they became to be known, started to appear in the second half of 1978 on the shores and ports of Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong.[394]

In the next chapters I will analyse the developments and different phases of the whole expulsion campaign more closely and highlight the reasonings behind the expulsion campaign further.

5.Vietnam's expulsion campaign 1978 – 1979

This chapter examines how the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign was implemented in Vietnam between 1978 and 1979 and highlights the role of the Vietnamese government in creating the Vietnamese boat people crisis that emerged during these years. The sub-chapters 5.1 and 5.1.1

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[390] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 50, Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 152 – 153, U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 – 3 and Wain (1981), p. 84 – 90.

[391] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48. It is unclear whether similar negotiations were held in other parts of Vietnam, but according to Wain (1981), p. 84 - 85 the program was set up throughout the country in 1978. It is possible that Ho Chi Minh City and Cholon was a special case as the ethnic Chinese community leaders had large business networks throughout Southeast and East Asia and in this manner they could aid in implementation of the program, Amer (2013), p. 6. As will be discussed in later chapters, ethnic Chinese syndicates operating from Cholon acting as middlemen in the departures are mentioned in several accounts as having key role in facilitating the departures.

[392] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 119, U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 84 – 86 and 88.

[393]See Amer (2013), p. 12 – 13 and U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.

[394] See for example *"Refugees in horror voyage".* SCMP, Nov. 26, 1976. *"Freedom voyages by 'unfortunates".* SCMP, Jul. 1, 1977," *Vietnam refugees flee to avoid draft".* SCMP, Aug. 2, 1977 and Wain (1981), p. 7 – 9.

focus on explaining the first steps of the expulsion campaign and the early decisions that the CPV took to deal with the problems that the ethnic Chinese were perceived to cause in Southern and Northern Vietnam. The sub-chapter 5.2 examines in-depth how the departure program that the Vietnamese authorities started in Southern Vietnam worked and the 5.2.1 highlights how the program enabled systemic corruption to flourish. The last sub-chapter 5.3 examines the refugee outflows from Vietnam and how the different decisions by CPV during the expulsion campaign ultimately affected the number of people leaving Vietnam.

5.1 The first steps of the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign in Southern and Northern Vietnam

In early 1978, two important decisions that had lasting consequences for the ethnic Chinese communities in Vietnam were greenlit by the CPV politburo. The first decision decided by the Politburo in mid-February 1978 was to swiftly ban all private trade in the country.[395] The campaign to ban the private trade, codenamed "X2", was started on March 23rd. The campaign was effectively also a clampdown on the economic power and structures still controlled by the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam.[396] The second decision, greenlit sometime in March 1978, was the adoption of a policy of expulsion towards the ethnic Chinese in Northern Vietnam.[397] In practice it meant that the Ministry of Interior (Bộ Nội vụ) issued an order of allowing ethnic Chinese people to leave voluntarily for China, but that at the same time systematic pressure was applied to the ethnic Chinese population to make sure they would leave.[398] These can be seen to have been the first steps in the expulsion campaign that sought to diminish the influence of the ethnic Chinese (and as extension the PRC's influence) in Vietnam's domestic situation, confiscate their property and wealth and to make them leave Vietnam.

The decision to ban private trade was one of the final steps in the "gradual socialist reform of the national economy" in Southern Vietnam and in unifying the national economic system and as

[395] Vo, N. T (1990), p. 89. The original source that Vo cites for this information of this meeting was Nayan Chanda's book Brother Enemy: The War After the War.
[396] Amer (2013), p. 6 and Vo, N. T (1990), p. 89.
[397] Amer (2013), p. 6 and U.S Department of State, "*Vietnam's refugee Machine*", CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.
[398] U.S Department of State, "*Vietnam's refugee Machine*", CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.

such, it was carefully planned and implemented.[399] Already in July 1976 the General Secretary of the CPV Lê Duẩn told in a speech to the National Assembly that the CPV must:

> "*Undertake socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and commerce, agriculture, handicraft and small trade through appropriate measures and steps. We* [must] *also combine transformation and building in order actively to steer the economy of the South into the orbit of socialism and integrate the economies of both zones in a single system of large-scale socialism."*[400]

A year later in July 1977, an announcement was made by Lê Duẩn that the government would soon seize control over the industries and commerce in Southern Vietnam.[401] To manage this campaign, the Committee for the Transformation of Industry and Trade was created by the CPV Central Committee the same month, and senior party official Nguyễn Văn Linh was appointed to head it.[402] After this, few months later in September 1977, another announcement was made, which mandated that all governments offices must streamline their personnel, as more trained cadres were required in the South.[403] Finally in early 1978, thousands of new northern cadres replaced some of the previous cadres and reinforced the administration in Southern Vietnam, and as an additional measure, the party leadership was also overhauled in Ho Chi Minh City.[404]

These new administrative structures and cadre changes were in all likelihood a response to the previous failures in Southern Vietnam's economic management and to the rampart corruption that had existed among the cadres in the South.[405] The campaign had to be carefully implemented for it to work, as previous economic measures taken for government agencies to stop hoarding and control the prices of essential products in Southern Vietnam had failed.[406] Food shortages had also emerged in the whole country by 1977 and contributing factors to this were prolonged droughts and natural disasters and government mismanagement, creating urgency to hasten the economic reforms and to fix economy.[407] Due to these reasons, it was essential to have new capable and

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[399] Amer (2013), p. 6 and Chanda, Nayan, *"Speeding towards reunification",* FEER, Dec. 5th, 1975. According to a CPV high-ranking official and lead theoretician Trường Chinh, bringing the two zones within one administrative and economic framework was the end goal of the reunification already in 1975, see Chanda's article.
[400] Nguyen, V. C (2017), p. 31.
[401] Vo, N.T (1990), p. 89.
[402] Ibid.
[403] Butterfield, Fox, *"Vietnam flap over food",* SCMP, Oct 4th, 1977.
[404] Chanda, Nayan, *"Comrades curb the capitalists*", FEER, Apr. 14th, 1978 and Chang (1982), p. 206.
[405] Chanda, Nayan, *"Dong's quiet anniversary",* FEER, Sep. 23rd, 1977. Phạm Văn Đồng stated in a speech given to celebrate 32nd anniversary of Vietnamese independence that number of officials and cadres had been jailed in the South due to corruption.
[406] Khanh (1993), p. 82 – 84 and Nguyen, V. C (2017), p. 48 – 50.
[407] Butterfield, Fox, *"Vietnam flap over food", SCMP*, Oct 4th, 1977 and Chanda, Nayan, *"Dong's quiet anniversary",* FEER, Sep. 23rd, 1977.

loyal management to oversee the final steps of the socialist reform in the South. Exemplifying this desire for reliable management was a last minute change in leadership of the campaign, as the man who had been in charge of the socialist transformation in the North in the late 1950s, Đỗ Mười, was also put in charge of implementing the campaign.[408]

The actual campaign started with one swift strike meant to paralyze the entire private economic sphere in Southern Vietnam, as on the night of March 23rd, 1978 tens of thousands members of para-security force comprised of police, students and cadres appeared on the doors of every business and business owner in Cholon and confiscated goods and assets under the pretext of taking inventory of these items.[409] According to Nguyen Van Canh (2017), similar scenes took place all throughout Southern Vietnam at the same time.[410] The next day on the 24th of March, an announcement was made that all wholesale trade and big business activity was outlawed. This effectively forced all business activity to close down.[411] The ban on all private was cemented with an order forbidding private trade on the 31st of March in the whole country.[412] All in all, the massive operations to close down businesses and take inventory throughout Vietnam continued into mid-April.[413]

In addition to the closure of private shops, stands and other places of business, the bourgeois traders and service personnel would be transferred to work in production. According to an order by Vice-Premier Đỗ Mười, the bourgeois traders could switch to working in production:

> "*In conforming with the State lines, policies, programs and plans, and in accordance with the requirements of economic zoning and diversification and the redistribution of production forces and populations throughout the country and in each location.. Bourgeois households having to move to* [New Economic Zones] *designed by local authorities to carry out production will be given State assistance in transporting their families and property."*[414]

What this meant in practice was that the private traders and service personnel were being forced to shift to work in production and some of them would be transferred to the New Economic Zones.

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[408] Vo, N.T (1990), p. 89.
[409] Chang (1982), p. 206 and Nguyen V.C (2017), p. 44.
[410] Nguyen V.C (2017), p. 44.
[411] Chang (1982), p. 206.
[412] Nguyen V.C (2017), p. 44 – 45.
[413] Chang (1982), p. 206.
[414] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 44 – 45.

The consequences of the ban on private trade for many ethnic Chinese individuals were far-reaching. A large majority of the ethnic Chinese in Ho Chi Minh City before the Fall of Saigon had been either small-traders or employees.[415] According to Khanh (1993), the small and medium sized businesses had been allowed to exist well after 1975, with 93% of pre-communist era businesses being open still by the end of 1976.[416] Now these ethnic Chinese traders classified by communists as non-comprador bourgeoisie[417] were being transferred to work in production. How many ethnic Chinese were exactly transferred to the New Economic Zones either voluntarily or as a result of coercion during and after this campaign is unknown, but Goscha (2016) states that in total in 1977 New Economic Zones were home to 120 000 and in 1978 already to estimated half a million.[418] Even accounting for population growth and for the continuing transfers of people to these areas, this number tells that the population transfers were ramped up significantly during 1978 and this increase was most likely also tied to these decrees of moving former non-comprador bourgeoisie to work in production.

Overall, these measures had several effects. The ethnic Chinese communities in Ho Chi Minh City organized several protests to demonstrate against these measures.[419] Being ordered to go to New Economic Zones, young ethnic Chinese being drafted to the army due to the Cambodian conflict and the violent crackdown on private trade and seizures of private property were reported to be the main concerns among the protestors according to group of refugees who came to Hong Kong and were interviewed in early April.[420]

The ban on private trade making the bad economic situation worse for many individuals also had lasting impact on their willingness to depart from Vietnam. The UNHCR reported that the month of April saw the highest number of refugees fleeing communist Indochina by boat since the ending of the Vietnam War in 1975.[421] The departures by boat for each month doubled from previous levels before campaign during the summer months of 1978, so the effect of the campaign was evident.[422] According to Nguyễn Long's (1981) account, many ethnic Chinese in Ho Chi Minh

[415] See Table 5. Khanh (1993), p. 33.
[416] Khanh (1993), p. 84.
[417] According to Vo, N.T (1990), p. 65 the non-comprador bourgeoisie differed from the comprador bourgeoisie in that "[they were] *chiefly composed of former small businessmen, skilled handicraftsmen and professionals"* who had benefitted from the private trade during the war, but had not colluded with the foreign investors as the big businessmen had done.
[418] Goscha (2016), p. 384.
[419] *"Alert for refugee flood",* SCMP, May 8th, 1978, Chang (1982), p. 205 – 206 and Wong, Eileen, *"Chinese protest march in Vietnam",* SCMP, Apr. 11th, 1978.
[420] See Chang (1982), p. 205 – 206 and Wong, Eileen, *"Chinese protest march in Vietnam",* SCMP, Apr. 11th, 1978.
[421] *"Alert for refugee flood",* SCMP, May 8th, 1978. According to the article, other reasons such as the seasonal monsoon ending also possibly affected this.
[422] Amer (2013), p. 13.

City started looking for a way to leave Vietnam around this time, either by illegally escaping or by joining the groups up north leaving for China.[423] These numbers only returned to the pre-April 1978 levels when the expulsion campaign was ended after the conference on Indochina refugees in Geneve.[424]

The campaign to ban private trade was generally successful in achieving its primary goal. However, while the primary motives of the campaign can be seen to have been linked to reforming the national economy, the question whether or not the campaign had secondary motives, such as wanting to break the economic power of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam or to make them leave by discriminating against them during the campaign, has been discussed in academic literature since the events took place.[425] If we look at the previous major developments behind the campaign and their timeline, we can see that the first practical measures towards realizing the campaign had already been taken nine months earlier and the need to bring the country under one economic system had been discussed since even before the formal reunification. From this perspective, the idea that one of the principal motives behind the campaign would have been to target the ethnic Chinese population specifically cannot be supported. However, if we put the campaign into the context of the previous X1-campaign, which aimed to stop hoarding, nationalized some of their property and targeted the comprador bourgeoisie elite in order to strengthen the government's control over the economy, we can see that this second campaign learned from many of the mistakes of the first one. The campaign was started with a swift strike to the heart of the Southern Vietnam's legitimate and illegitimate trade, Cholon, and its reach was bigger this time, as now all private businesses and even some private residences had their inventory searched and counted and unaccounted wealth was confiscated.[426] By examining the implementation of the campaign and the orders during it to move the former non-comprador bourgeoisie to work in production, we can see that this time the campaign was meant to be much more effective and uncompromising. While the campaign targeted all private trade and traders in

[423] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 50.
[424] Amer (2013), p. 13
[425] Authors such as Amer (1991), p. 54 – 55, Amer (2013), p. 6 and Chang (1982), p. 206 – 207, have argued that while the measures affected the ethnic Chinese individuals and communities especially harshly, they were not taken with the intention to specifically discriminate towards or to target the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. Vo, N.T (1990), p. 90 stated on the matter that the ethnic Chinese were most affected due to their "*disproportionately high involvement in business, particularly in Cholon"* and that the implementation of the campaign was tied to general politics as politically "*the Party perceived that there was no longer any need to treat the non-compradore bourgeoisie considerately as the revolutionary power was already in firm command of the whole country."* He did not see other special motives that involved the ethnic Chinese behind the campaign. Khanh (1993), p. 84 saw the pressure of the border situations and Vietnam's domestic led to the CPV taking the next step in its socialist transformation program, but that breaking the control of the ethnic Chinese over the economy had become a priority already earlier.
[426] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 44.

Vietnam, it would not be unreasonable to assume that one of the secondary objectives of the campaign during the planning had been to break the economic power of the ethnic Chinese traders in Southern Vietnam, as the black-market trade of products, controlled primarily by the ethnic Chinese communities, was still dominant part of the whole economy.[427]

Furthermore, the CPV's attitudes towards the ethnic Chinese minority had also started to change, as can be evidenced by the actions in Northern Vietnam starting in the second half of 1977 and the policy of allowing the ethnic Chinese to leave to the PRC that was adopted one month later. While the ban on private trade was an important episode in the wider story of the expulsions, as the loss of job and being pushed to go to New Economic Zones made the prospect of living in Vietnam in the future for many unthinkable (and therefore pushed people to leave), the expulsions decrees were adopted in the Northern Vietnam around the same time as the campaign to ban private trade was implemented in the Southern Vietnam. The first steps of the expulsion campaign in Northern Vietnam are important to outline even when this study focuses on the departures and changes in Southern Vietnam, as the expulsion policies were only few months later in operation in the whole country.

5.1.1 The decision to expel the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam and the expulsions in Northern Vietnam

According to the U.S State department's intelligence assessment in June 1979, the Vietnamese Politburo decided in March 1978 to drive out the ethnic Chinese minority from Vietnam.[428] The policy was at first in a sense a policy of voluntary departure as the Ministry of Interior issued an order of allowing the ethnic Chinese to leave freely to the PRC.[429] What this meant in practice was that the ethnic Chinese were not forcibly transferred to the border and the journey of those who decided to leave was not impeded by the authorities. However, state-sponsored anti-Chinese discrimination measures, such as additional surveillance of the ethnic Chinese communities in Vietnam and dismissals from security critical jobs, had already started in the in late 1977 and early 1978 before the campaign.[430] Rumours of impending war amid the worsening Sino-Vietnamese

[427] Khanh (1993), p. 84.
[428] U.S Department of State, "Vietnam's refugee Machine", CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Goscha (2016), p. 380 and Kamm, Henry, "*Chinese of Vietnam Driven From North Refugee in Hong Kong Describes Change In Official Attitudes – He Seeks Asylum in U.S"*, New York Times, May 14th, 1979.

relations and border conflicts and the systematic discrimination of the ethnic Chinese that resulted largely from this conflict between the PRC and the SRV provided the backdrop for many of the refugees for the decision to leave.[431] Once started, the exodus developed its own momentum and already during the first two months of April and May over 70 000 ethnic Chinese had crossed the border to the PRC either by foot or by boat, and in July in total 160 000 refugees had travelled to the PRC before it closed its borders in mid-July.[432]

It is unclear whether Vietnamese security officials were actively at this time inciting the ethnic Chinese to leave for the PRC or not. The PRC did officially accuse Vietnamese officials of transporting groups to the border and of forcing them to cross it.[433] Furthermore, when international journalists were allowed to come visit these refugee camps in the PRC, they were told stories of persecution and forcible expulsions.[434] These claims must be examined however by placing them to the context of the debate on the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam that was raging between the SRV and the PRC. According to Chang (1982) the PRC tried to shape the narrative of the events to the international audiences and domestic through a publicity campaign which was started in late May 1978.[435] The access to most of these refugees and their stories was managed by local Chinese authorities and for this reason the stories presented of the events in these articles often supported the PRC approved narrative of the expulsions. This is visible for example from a picture reportage by Camera Press agency published in the SCMP on July 23rd 1978, that has 10 stirring images from the PRC side of the Sino-Vietnamese border, among them picture of young handicapped person being helped cross a border river, a nine-year old child who travelled to the Sino-Vietnamese border without his parents and a 91-year old grandma who was driven out according to the picture text by Vietnamese authorities after having lived all her life in Vietnam.[436]

The lack of access to reliable contemporary accounts from the refugees who went to the PRC is one aspect which makes analysing the first steps of the expulsion campaign difficult. Even previous studies discussing the topic have been largely reliant on either Vietnamese or Chinese official for many details of the events.[437] Nevertheless, from follow-up studies on the PRC refugees and their resettlement and from contemporary articles and interviews, some general characteristics related to the expulsions and to the experiences of the refugees can be found.

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[431] Amer (2013), p. 11 – 12 and Wong, Eileen, *"Chinese protest march in Vietnam",* SCMP, Apr. 11th, 1978.
[432] Chang (1982), p. 212 and 214.
[433] Chang (1982), p. 209
[434] *"Exodus from Vietnam",* SCMP, Jul. 23rd, 1978.
[435] Chang (1982), p. 209.
[436] See *"Exodus from Vietnam",* SCMP, Jul 23rd, 1978.
[437] See for example Amer (1991), p. 46 – 53, Chang (1982), p. 207 – 211 and Ungar (1987), p. 609 – 611.

The picture that can be built from the sources not reliant on official Vietnamese or Chinese accounts of the events points to the fact that the large-scale ethnic Chinese exodus from Vietnam to the PRC seemed to have taken place abruptly. In many instances whole communities of the ethnic Chinese left together, as happened with a community of thousands of coal miners in the Haiphong area.[438] According to Ungar (1987), this might have been due to still prominent traditional social structures that centred around clans in the ethnic Chinese communities, as once the clan head had made the decision to leave, others often followed. [439] This might have been one contributing factor to why such a large number left, but on the other hand it is possible that the departures also created its own snowball effect, where the sight and stories of ethnic Chinese leaving created a sense of urgency for others to leave also.

In general, the refugees travelled both by land and by boats to the PRC. From traditional fishing villages near the border and from islands like Cat Ba and Co To, people travelled by boat to Chinese harbours and to villages near border.[440] A large majority travelled however by land and crossed the border over to the Chinese border provinces of Guanxi and Yunnan.[441] People left especially from the border provinces on the Vietnamese side, such as from Quang Ninh, where one Vietnamese estimation in 1978 stated that nearly 60% of the ethnic Chinese population of the province had left by mid-June 1978.[442] However, most likely the true percentage of those who left was already higher at this point or became higher in the subsequent months as according to October 1979 census in the provinces of Northern Vietnam from the 256 000 sized ethnic Chinese community in the DRV in 1974, only 53 672 remained in 1979.[443]

According to most accounts, the departures were largely provoked by rumours of coming war between the PRC and the SRV and by rumours that ethnic Chinese would be violently caught in the middle of this conflict.[444] In addition to rumours of coming war, other types of rumours like that China was requesting the Hoa to return to help build up the fatherland and that they would be awarded good jobs in the PRC were also circulating within the ethnic Chinese communities during

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[438] AFP, *"Chinese are ´deserting´",* SCMP, May 9th, 1978 and Chanda, Nayan, *"A question of priorities"*, FEER, Aug. 4th, 1979
[439] Ungar (1987), p. 609
[440] Lam (2000), p. 381
[441] Lam (2000), p. 378.
[442] Nguyen, V.L (1978), p. 61. According to Porter (1980), p. 56, the border areas were where most of the ethnic Chinese in Northern Vietnam lived, and this made these areas also sensitive from security point of view.
[443] Amer (2013), p. 3. See Amer (2013), p. 15 – 16 for discussion on the reliability of these Vietnamese population statistics.
[444] Amer (2013), p. 11 – 12, Chang (1982), p. 209 and Porter (1980), p. 56. According to Porter, interviewed Hoa refugees from Hanoi and Haiphong had confirmed that there had been these kinds of rumours circulating at that time in Northern Vietnam and that they had created panic. Both PRC and SRV also blamed each other for circulating these rumours within these communities, Chang (1982), p. 209 – 210.

the spring of 1978.[445] While rumours were influential in making people leave, the heightening military situation at the border and the worsening economic conditions were also legitimate concerns that contributed to ethnic Chinese leaving, if we examine accounts of refugees published in the newspapers at the time.[446]

Based on available accounts on the events and academic literature, it is unlikely that Vietnamese public security officials were behind spreading these rumours. They had however contributed to the circumstances from which the refugees were fleeing and were in charge of implementing the additional discriminatory security measures that were taken towards the ethnic Chinese communities and individuals in late 1977 and early 1978. We can see that the official policies had undoubtedly changed towards the ethnic Chinese, as their journey to the PRC and departures were not impeded by the authorities.[447] Normally, travelling required a permit from the local security office and longer travel required approval from even higher-level officials.[448] A member of the CPV Central Committee, Xuân Thủy even reaffirmed the support for ethnic Chinese leaving in a public statement given 4th of May to Vietnam News Agency[449] (Thông tấn xã Việt Nam) by stating that "*if anyone wants to return to China, he only has to make an open request"* and that *"every assistance would be given to repatriate the Chinese ´through pre-determined crosspoints´*."[450] This statement was however completely contradictory to another statement by Xuân Thủy released in the same day, where he states that the whole exodus was illegal and that the Vietnamese government had requested the PRC authorities to advise Chinese nationals not to leave Vietnam illegally.[451] In general, the CPV employed this kind of double-dealing tactic, where they publicly denied any involvement in the expulsions and tried to deflect the blame to other

[445] Porter (1980), p. 56.
[446] AFP, *"Chinese are ´deserting´",* SCMP, May 9th, 1978, AP, *"Hanoi erects fence along river to keep out Chinese",* Times of India, Jul. 6th, 1978, *"Hanoi ´bans ships´",* SCMP, Jul. 19th, 1977 and Porter (1980), p. 56. The ban on private trade and on small traders also affected people in Northern Vietnam, that still had some traders and artisans despite the socialist transformation in the 1950s. As a result of the campaign, many ethnic Chinese lost their jobs and had hard time making a living after it, see Kamm, Henry, *"Chinese of Vietnam Driven From North Refugee in Hong Kong Describes Change In Official Attitudes – He Seeks Asylum in U.S",* New York Times, May 14th, 1979 and Wong, Eileen, *"Hanoi tightens screws on Chinese population",* SCMP, May 30th, 1979.
[447] Lee, Mary, *"The Cold wind from the North*", FEER, Nov. 10th, 1978. In this article, a group of refugees from Haiphong told that they had ran into Vietnamese marine patrol boat along their journey, but authorities had not reacted in any way to their boat passing them.
[448] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 183 – 184.
[449] Vietnam News Agency, formed in 1945, is a governmental agency and the official state news provider in Vietnam.
[450] AFP, *"Chinese are ´deserting´",* SCMP, May 9th, 1978.
[451] AFP, *"Chinese are ´deserting´",* SCMP, May 9th, 1978 and AFP, *"Exodus illegal, says Hanoi",* SCMP, May 5th, 1978. In regard to these statements, it is possible that the first statement was intended for domestic audiences and ethnic Chinese and the second one was the official response to the statements presented by Liao Chengzhi, director of PRC's Overseas Chinese Affairs Office on the expulsions on April 30th 1978 or that both were intended to give a favorable image of the actions of Vietnamese authorities to the international audiences.

entities, while at the same time implementing policies that contradicted the contents of their public statements all throughout the expulsion campaign.

A brief closure to this first phase of expulsions came when the PRC closed its side of the land border on July 11th, 1978.[452] After this only around 40 000 refugees more made it to the PRC by the end of 1978.[453] However, the events that followed and the consequent actions by Vietnamese authorities demonstrate that the CPV was fixed in its resolution to the make ethnic Chinese, who they regarded to be a potential fifth column, leave Vietnam. In late 1978, as the relationship between the PRC and the SRV had continued to deteriorate and war was becoming imminent, for many of the ethnic Chinese who had not left during the first phase of expulsions the situation got worse as the discrimination and harassment by security officials got more blatant. The Ethnic Chinese were according to various accounts often interrogated by public security officers, dismissed from jobs and in some cases even their food rations were cut. Furthermore, additional security measures were placed in some ethnic Chinese neighbourhoods.[454]

The situation between the SRV and the PRC finally evolved into an open military conflict in February 1979 after the long wind-up as the PRC launched its planned limited military invasion of Vietnam in February 17th, 1979.[455]This brief three-week war between the PRC and the SRV in February – March of 1979 only intensified the discriminatory measures taken towards the ethnic Chinese in Northern Vietnam. Following the announcement of withdrawal from the PRC side in early March, the Ministry of Interior issued orders to move the ethnic Chinese out of the cities, from areas near the border and from areas that were sensitive military-wise.[456] Two detainment camps were set up for the ethnic Chinese who refused to leave Vietnam or be relocated to resettlement zones, one at Vinh Bao, near Haiphong and other one at Nghe An, on the grounds that that another military invasion by the PRC was possible.[457] According to Porter (1980), in

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[452] Chang (1982), p. 219

[453] Chang (1982), p. 224. Number based on reporting by Xinhua News Agency. An estimated 57 000 more moved to the PRC in the year 1979, bringing the total number to somewhere around 260 000, see CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus"*, CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Jun. 1st, 1983, p. 2.

[454] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* New York Times, June 12th, 1979 and Kamm, Henry, "*Chinese of Vietnam Driven From North Refugee in Hong Kong Describes Change In Official Attitudes – He Seeks Asylum in U.S",* New York Times, May 14th, 1979. In both of these articles, Northern Vietnamese refugees are interviewed and they mentioned the harassment and discrimination of authorities starting in early 1978 and ramping up late 1978. Later, most likely after the brief war, both of these refugees were given a choice to either relocate to the New Economic Zones or leave country.

[455] Zhang (2015), p. 90 – 91.

[456] Porter (1980), p. 59.

[457] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* New York Times, June 12th, 1979 and Kamm, Henry, "*Chinese of Vietnam Driven From North Refugee in Hong Kong Describes Change In Official Attitudes – He Seeks Asylum in U.S",* New York Times, May 14th, 1979, Sinclair, Kevin, *"The Chinese choice: Get out or..",* SCMP, May 29th, 1979 and Wong, Eileen, *"Hanoi tightens screws on Chinese*

Haiphong and Hanoi, local cadres convened with the ethnic Chinese communities at the end of March and presented them the options to either leave Vietnam or move to these camps.[458] From the refugees' accounts, it seems that during this time most had to organize their departure themselves or bribe security officials who assisted in organizing the departures.[459] Relatively little attention has been given to these events in previous studies discussing the ethnic Chinese expulsions and often these particular events after the first phase of expulsions have been given little attention. More historical studies on the events would be needed to have a more complete narrative. However, it is clear that in general the measures towards the ethnic Chinese in the North were much more tied to the security situation and to the Sino-Vietnamese conflict than in the South. That being said, the events in Southern Vietnam were also affected heavily by the changes in the Sino-Vietnamese relations and the general situation between the PRC and the SRV.

But what ultimately prompted the CPV to change its policy towards the ethnic Chinese and adopt its expulsion policy? This question will be examined briefly as a conclusion to this sub-chapter. It is clear that in some terms, the treatment of the ethnic Chinese, especially in Northern Vietnam, has been at different periods seen by both the PRC and the DRV/SRV as an extension of the general Sino-Vietnamese relations.[460] Conversely, the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign demonstrated that the changes in Sino-Vietnamese relations could also affect this the social position and treatment of this contested minority.

As was highlighted by Path (2012), the PRC's mobilization of ethnic Chinese communities along the border was outlined already in July 1976 as an emerging issue by the Vietnamese government.[461] Judging by the actions of the Vietnamese authorities towards the ethnic Chinese in late 1977 and 1978, the loyalties of the ethnic Chinese especially in Northern Vietnam were regarded to be questionable and the question of whose side they would be fighting on in a potential conflict motivated the additional security measures. It is also clear that these measures evolved alongside the changing situation. It is highly likely that the CCP's new vigilant stance towards the overseas Chinese and active engagement with the ethnic Chinese question also contributed to the CPV adopting a new stance towards the ethnic Chinese. As Path (2012) argued in regard the flight of the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, it is significant that the exodus coincided with the CCP's

population", SCMP, May 30th, 1979. All of these Northern Vietnamese ethnic Chinese refugees in these articles refer to these camps existing and of people being taken to them if they refused official orders to relocate or did not want to leave the country. Porter (1980), p. 59 discusses the reasonings Vietnamese cadres gave to these measures.

[458] Porter (1980), p. 59.

[459] Porter (1980), p. 59 and Wain (1981), p. 99.

[460] Han (2009), p. 16.

[461] Path (2012), p. 1044.

change in policy towards the ethnic Chinese.[462] Taking into account the other circumstances in Vietnam at the time, not only did the new open arms policy in all likelihood contribute to many ethnic Chinese's individuals decision to leave to the PRC, but it also most likely made the CPV re-evaluate what measures would need to be taken with the ethnic Chinese from that moment forward.

The hardest question to answer based on available evidence is how one should interpret the CPV's and Vietnamese authorities' role in the first phase of the expulsions. Many gaps in our knowledge of these events exist and relevant first-hand accounts from that time are rare. Many contemporary sources relaying the experiences of the refugees' previous life in the SRV and of their journey to the PRC seem to have a connection to the PRC's publicity campaign, which means the information in these articles and statements needs to be evaluated carefully. The same is of course true for the SRV's similar publications and statements on the issue. If we go beyond these sources, there seems to be little supporting evidence for the fact that at the beginning Vietnamese authorities were actively trying to make ethnic Chinese leave Vietnam at this specific time. The exodus seemed to have started organically and spiralled into massive proportions quite rapidly.

This does not mean however that Vietnamese authorities and the CPV had no role in the exodus. Besides few attempts of trying to persuade vital workers to stay, the Vietnamese cadres and security officials working according to the CPV and the Ministry of Interior directives effectively allowed ethnic Chinese to leave freely.[463] The questions about the loyalties of the ethnic Chinese, the changes in the Sino-Vietnamese relations and ethnic Chinese wanting to leave themselves most likely all contributed to this decision of allowing ethnic Chinese to leave. The policy also served the SRV's strategic interests by getting rid of a potentially dangerous minority and by the fact the PRC would have to take these people in and take care of their resettlement. Furthermore, those who wanted to leave would in the process of doing so also demonstrate their true loyalties.[464] In this manner, although the expulsion policy was in practice at the beginning more of a policy of voluntary departure, the line between expulsions and voluntary departures was thin right from the start of the campaign and would get more blurred in the future as the campaign progressed. The decisions coming from the highest level of decision-making however point to the fact that the CPV wanted to facilitate the departure of ethnic Chinese minority individuals from Vietnam starting from March 1978.

[462] Path (2012), p. 1053.
[463] Porter (1980), p. 56.
[464] Han (2009), p. 22 – 23.

By all accounts, the CPV's voluntary assimilation policy towards ethnic Chinese had run its course by early 1978. Slowly assimilating and making ethnic Chinese *de facto* Vietnamese citizens in a way which would be recognized by the PRC had failed. Naturalization of the communities in order to make them Vietnamese, therefore reducing Chinese interference in domestic Vietnamese affairs through the ethnic Chinese had also failed. Making those ethnic Chinese who did not want to participate in building the new unified socialist Vietnam leave it clearly became a strategic goal early/mid-1978. This was demonstrated by not only the first phase of expulsions in Northern Vietnam, but by the new policy started in mid-summer of 1978, which allowed ethnic Chinese to register to leave by boat in Southern Vietnam. But in addition to the strategic goals, other ulterior motives also emerged which dictated how the expulsions would be organized from that point onward, especially in Southern Vietnam, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

5.2 The program for the Vietnamese of Chinese Descent to go abroad officially in Southern Vietnam

After the first phase of expulsions in Northern Vietnam and the failed negotiations on the repatriation of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam by boat to the PRC, a new expulsion program was commenced by the CPV in late July – early August 1978. It allowed ethnic Chinese to pay to leave the country by boat.[465] Although the precise official name of the program is unknown, according to one written account given to Associated Press, the scheme was carried out under the name "*Registration of Vietnamese of Chinese descent*[466] *to go abroad."*[467] In addition to the name,

[465] Although the specific date and decisions which launched this program have been so far not possible to triangulate, there are many factors and accounts which support the that the program was commenced sometime in late July – early August of 1978. In an investigative article published in the FEER in January 12th, 1979, it is told that according to the investigation of the journalists, the program was set up six months ago by Vietnamese Government, which would place it to July – August 1978. The article then goes on to describe more in detail the special department more that was set up by the government, Wilson, Paul, *"How Vienam profits from human traffic",* FEER, Jan. 12th, 1979. Nguyễn Long account placed the beginning of the program in early 1978 (p. 117), but also from his account of "*Chinese 'Going Abroad Officially'"* it can be discerned that although the specific time is not specified, the program started after the exodus in the Northern parts had already started as Long states that before the registration, some Chinese were encouraging sending their children North to go to PRC and that this practice stopped after the registrations started, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48. The findings of Amer (2013), p. 13 also supports this view and he stated that based on the number arrivals of refugees by boat to Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong, the program was most likely started in August 1978.

[466] The English translation for the term Hoa.

[467] AP, *"How Hanoi officials bleed the refugees",* SCMP, Mar. 24th, 1979. In this article, the details of the written account of Mr. Pham Dang Bao, the son of former South Vietnamese Foreign Minister (who left with a part of ethnic Chinese group through this program) are examined. The name of the program and the many of the details in

many other details have also remained ambiguous about this program, as Vietnamese authorities aimed to keep the program and their role in managing it secret.[468] The other contributing factor to this ambiguity has been the fragmented nature of many of the contemporary accounts. Due to the unclearness that has existed around the accounts describing this covert program, one of the primary goals of this sub-chapter is to provide a more cohesive picture of the implementation of the program.

Although there are no accounts from key officials that would highlight the specific motives surrounding the decision to commence the program, based on the events in Vietnam at the time, the timing the commencement, and the way the program was implemented, the primary motives for starting it were most likely linked to the fact that the ethnic Chinese dispute had escalated between the PRC and the SRV and to the fact that during when the repatriation by boat to the PRC was still on the table, tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese had expressed their desire to leave Vietnam.[469] The decision to ban private trade in Vietnam and the consequent decision to move the small traders to work into production in the New Economic Zones had also created protests and led to unrest in Ho Chi Minh City.[470] These developments, in addition to the events in the Northern Vietnam, most likely led to the Southern Vietnamese authorities approaching the Hoa community leaders in Cholon with the offer to co-operate on allowing ethnic Chinese to pay to leave Vietnam.[471] The program can be seen to be an extension of the policy that was adopted in the Northern Vietnam earlier by the CPV, as the fundamental idea of allowing a minority that was perceived to be problematic to voluntarily leave was the same. However, based on the program's implementation, it is evident that the program aimed to also confiscate the wealth of the ethnic Chinese that they possessed.[472] This was a powerful ulterior motive that seemed to drive the expansion of the program once it was started, alongside the more discernible motive of driving away a minority that could act as a potential fifth column in the event of conflict between the PRC and the SRV.

When the program was commenced, special offices for administering the program were set up all throughout Southern Vietnam to allow ethnic Chinese to register to leave Vietnam, with a

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the account are collaborated by another first-hand account by Nguyễn Long, who stated that the program went under quite similar name of *"registration for going abroad officially",* Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48.

[468] Wain (1981), p. 86.

[469] AFP, *"Thousands wait for rescue ships",* SCMP, Jun. 22nd, 1978, Amer (2013), p. 12 and Porter (1980), p. 57.

[470] Amer (2013), p. 9 and Wong, Eileen, *"Chinese protest march in Vietnam",* SCMP, Apr. 11th, 1978.

[471] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48 and 117 and Porter (1980), p. 57.

[472] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Hong Kong to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jun. 6th, 1979, p. 85-87, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 117, Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 153 – 154 and Porter (1980), p. 58

regional main office in Ho Chi Minh City.[473] These offices reported to the Ministry of Interior on the government side and directly to the Politburo on the party side.[474] According to some sources, the ultimate responsibility for the refugee operation rested on the shoulders of the Interior Minister Trần Quốc Hoàn, who oversaw the Vietnam's security services and political police.[475] Although this is not certain, based on what we know of how the program was structured and how the Vietnam's political police had a key role in running it, this would make sense. The most important decisions regarding the program were made in Hanoi and directives dictating the governments' official exit fee and when to stop the departures and when to resume them came from there.[476] According to several trip organizer who were interviewed by the FEER, information on how many boats had been authorized to leave and how much gold had been gathered was periodically sent to Hanoi also from provinces.[477]

The day-to-day coordination of the program and refugee departures were placed in the hands of the political-security divisions of the Public Security Bureaus (PSB), known also as the "B-2" division.[478] The Public Security Bureaus in Vietnam were administratively part of the Ministry of Interior and were generally organized into functional divisions with each of the divisions having different responsibilities. Each of the different divisions was headed by deputy chiefs of police at the provincial level. The "B-2" division was the division which was normally responsible for both the internal and external aspects of security in Vietnam. What this meant in practice was that they kept tabs on parties and factions that might threaten the government or deviate from its political line.[479]

The B2 PSB officers handled most of the practical and administrative responsibilities which were related to running the program. At the provincial level, which was the highest local administrative level, the responsibility of the B2 division deputy chiefs of police was to approve the departure applications, set the date of departure and to generally manage the program.[480] The deputy chiefs

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[473] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1. According to the U.S State Department report and Wain (1981), p. 91, government buildings, such as provincial PSB headquarters, were originally used to handle the refugee affairs, but later the offices were moved away from the government buildings to more inconspicuous location, such to private houses and even in Rach Gia reportedly to a closed down sawmill.

[474] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wilson, Paul, *"How Vienam profits from human traffic",* FEER, Jan. 12th, 1979. The part about this department in the U.S Department of State document was most likely based on this FEER article.

[475] Wain (1981), p. 106.

[476] Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979.

[477] Ibid.

[478] Wain (1981), p. 86. Public Security Bureaus in Vietnam are government offices, essentially similar to police stations. In Vietnam there are provincial, city, district, and ward level offices.

[479] Wain (1981), p. 86.

[480] See Wain (1981), p. 86, 91 and 97. These accounts by Wain are collaborated by a FEER article which stated on Jun. 15th, 1979 that "*The review also established that contract negotiations and other departure arrangements are*

of police were the persons in charge at the provincial level of the implementation of the program and therefore they were influential figures.[481] Other lower level officials took care of certifying passenger lists for each boat and collecting the gold from the passengers.[482] In addition to these duties, PSB officers were also tasked with searching and confiscating excess gold and wealth from each ship and refugee that left under this program.[483]

Although PSB officers sometimes provided boats and sold departures to individuals in exchange for bribes, in general recruitment of passengers and the practicalities related to travel, such as obtaining boat, fuel and supplies and documents for travel was handled by ethnic Chinese intermediaries/organizers.[484] This was by design, as according to the account of Nguyễn Long, the communist authorities themselves had approached the ethnic Chinese community leaders with the offer to co-operate with them on the departures.[485] According to Long, a new organization was also established by ethnic Chinese community leaders to liaison with the Public Security officials.[486] A regular channel to those authorities in charge of running the program was required, as the total price for each trip needed to be negotiated individually between the authorities and trip organisers and official documents from each refugee had to also be submitted to them.[487]

Through this new co-operation, the PSB authorities were able to circulate information about the new program among the ethnic Chinese communities, as well as establish plausible deniability that they were not directly involved in organizing the departures. This arrangement suited many ethnic Chinese syndicates in Cholon, which had since at least 1977 organized departures in

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carried out by centrally-appointed provincial officials under the chief of public security. In interviews of the boat organisers who landed on Malaysian shores in May, the Review has learned that identical schemes operate in most of the major southern coastal provinces", Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979.

[481] Wain (1981), p. 91 - 92

[482] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 92.

[483] AP, *"How Hanoi officials bleed the refugees",* SCMP, Mar. 24th, 1979, Chan (1982), p. 227 – 228 and Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 152. According to many different independent accounts, refugees were searched for wealth by PSB officials when they entered the ship that would take them abroad.

[484] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 86.

[485] According to Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48 *"The Chinese leaders in Cholon held an all-day consultation among themselves on the offer to "go abroad officially" and then established an organization to deal with the Communist authorities who were prepared to make illegal profits legally, including those who issued false papers such as identification cards, election cards, and birth certificates."* This co-operation between ethnic Chinese community leadership and Vietnamese authorities is mentioned in the academic article by Porter (1980), p. 57, although specific source for this piece of information is not mentioned.

[486] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48.

[487] The two required documents for registration were the Republic of Vietnam identification card and the National Assembly election voting card. From these two documents the National Assembly voting card was the one which detailed to which minority the individual belonged to. Long provided pictures of the falsified documents he provided to the authorities in his book, see Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 124 for information on the required documents and pictures on the pages between page 94 and 95 for picture of the documents.

exchange for gold.[488] What this program offered to these syndicates was effectively an official "license" to organize departures. These organizations quickly expanded their operations, as with the official approval they could purchase larger boats outside of Vietnam and bring them there to smuggle refugees to Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong.[489] Several large freighters capable of carrying thousands of refugees at a time were brought to Southern Vietnamese harbours between late Fall-1978 and early 1979 and from there the refugees were shipped to different Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong.[490] However, it is important to clarify that not all refugees who registered to leave left with these big freighters, as the size of groups varied in accordance the size of the boat used to depart, normal groups ranged from less than a hundred to five hundred refugees.

Even when there were these syndicates who were organizing big departures, often the trip organizers themselves were just individuals who had connections and gold to organize departure and would also want to leave with the group they were organizing the trip for. Yet, sometimes some of the middlemen would stay behind as organizing trips was lucrative.[491] For each trip, the organizers received a portion of the gathered gold, amounting usually to around 10% of the gold. More trips meant more gold then for the organizers.[492] Gold was not however the only motivation for the organizers. Nguyễn Long described in his account that the man who helped him organize his departure, Chan Hung and his business partner La Truyen both also aimed to get significant

[488] Several articles published in SCMP during the year 1977 mention ethnic Chinese syndicates in Cholon working together with high-ranking Vietnamese officials in the city to organize escapes in exchange for gold and bribes. Official assistance to escape was often required as all vessels leaving ports and rivers were subjected to doubt and rivers and open waters were patrolled, Chang, Harold and Pang, Anthony, "*Chinese point the way to freedom",* SCMP, Jul. 18th, 1977, Chang, Harold and Pang, Anthony, "*Vietnamese escape trail paved with gold"*, SCMP, Jun. 28th, 1977 and "*Vietnamese pay their way in gold",* SCMP, Jun. 17th, 1977.

[489] Porter (1980), p. 57. According to Wain (1981), many of the state-approved ethnic Chinese business groups, such as the Rice exporters Association of Vietnam had extensive contacts outside Vietnam, which were used to buy freighters and bring them to Vietnam, Wain (1981), p. 102.

[490] Starting from late September 1978, several large freighters carrying refugees arrived in Southeast Asian and Hong Kong harbors. The first one of these was the *Southern Cross*, which carried 1250 persons in September to Indonesia. After the first one, several bigger boats followed in the following months: *Hai Hong* (2450 persons to Malaysia) in November 1978, *Huey Fong* (3318 to Hong Kong) and *Tung An* (2300 persons to Philippines) in December 1978 and *Skyluck* (2651 persons to Hong Kong) in February 1979. See Wain (1981), p. 17, 22, 103, 111 and 110 for information about these ships. Cited pages correspond with the order the ships are listed by name in this footnote.

[491] Wain (1981), p. 88.

[492] Wain (1981), p. 87. According to Wain, the 10% figure was usually the typical figure that was awarded to the organizers, with the other 40% going to boat and fuel and 50% to the government. The price of each trip was negotiated separately however, but the cut of the government remained quite constant. All in all, the organizers made considerable gold as the U.S State Department's report estimated that they could make up to $1000 - $2000 per passenger, U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 2.

number of members of their immediate and extended family out of Vietnam by organizing the trip.[493]

In general, while there were differences between the provinces in how the departures were implemented, the exit procedures were relatively similar all over Southern Vietnam. According to Wain (1981), when the program was first commenced in the mid/late-summer of 1978, there was more wiggle room for the organizers to determine the location and the time of the departure themselves, but this changed as the PSB took firmer control of departure arrangements in the months that followed.[494] By late 1978, departures had become more organized throughout the country and in early 1979, the processing time had been cut down from the original six months to as low as one month.[495] Once the details of the trips were negotiated and the price and how many passengers would be leaving were preliminarily agreed upon, those wanting to leave needed to register and submit documents to the authorities.[496] This was handled most often by the middlemen, who would recruit a group of ethnic Chinese and then liaison with the authorities on behalf of the individual refugees. They also gathered the gold from the passengers and delivered it to the PSB officers.[497] The registrations in general had a deadline by which date the gold needed to be paid.[498] For example for Nguyễn Long and his family in Ho Chi Minh City, the registration deadline for his departure was October 1978, but his actual departure happened on April 30th, 1979 due to the delays by authorities.[499]

If we examine the different accounts which describe the prices of the journey, we can quickly see that the total price that the refugees paid varied between where they left from, when, and with which kind of boat. Long stated that the normal fee for leaving was 10 taels of gold for adults and 5 taels for children under 18. According to the rumours he heard, four of those taels was supposed to go to the organizers to cover expenses and six to the government to *"pay the revolution*" as he colloquially described the process.[500] Wain (1981) on the other hand stated that the final payment tended to average between 5 – 8 taels of gold per adult, with children paying half price and for

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[493] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 119.
[494] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 118 – 119 and Wain (1981), p. 88.
[495] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 88.
[496] Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979.
[497] Wain (1981), p. 86 – 87.
[498] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 121. This was the case for Nguyễn Long, but Wain (1981) described that sometimes the payments were split into two parts, one paid when registering and the other nearer to the departure, Wain (1981), p. 86.
[499] Long described the delays as follows: *"Orders emanating from the My Tho security office caused our boat numerous delays in between the time I registered to go abroad officially in October 1978 until we actually left on April 30, 1979.",* Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 135.
[500] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 116 and 119.

kids under 5 or 6 the authorities were not charging anything.[501] According to him, half of this price went to the government for the exit fee.[502] The Hong Kong Government Office estimated based on interviews with recent arrivals from Vietnam that the average price for departure in early summer of 1979 was 10 taels of gold.[503] All in all, judging from the different accounts, the final cost of the journey in Southern Vietnam most cases ended up being 8 – 12 taels for adults, with children under 18 having to pay half price and small children going free.[504] The official exit fee paid to the government in Southern Vietnam averaged between 4 – 6 taels of gold, with usually 50 – 60% of the total price of the gold paid by the refugees going to the government.[505]

When the gold was paid, the actual departures were organized in secret, with little coordination between the different provincial PSBs and the local security authorities of the different provinces.[506] The PSB officers took care of the administrative processes related to the departures and decided when the departures would take place, but the refugees themselves needed to gather at the embarkation point. Often to convene at the embarkation point, the refugees needed to travel to another province by public transport. The permit for the travel needed to be obtained by the refugees themselves and they would need to travel to the location few days before the departure would take place.[507] Before reaching the departure point, the refugees needed to keep their plans secret, as local security officers were tasked with stopping clandestine departures and would arrest those who were travelling without proper reason or found to be trying to leave Vietnam illegally.[508] This was due to the fact that the program was kept secret from those security officers

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[501] Wain (1981), p. 86 – 87.
[502] Wain (1981), p. 87.
[503] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Hong Kong to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jun. 6th, 1979, p. 85-87.
[504] See AP, *"How Hanoi officials bleed the refugees",* SCMP, Mar. 24th, 1979, *"Hanoi to ´export´ 1m ethnic Chinese",* SCMP, Feb. 24th, 1979, Lane, Winsome, *"Huey Fong's ´journey of deceit´",* SCMP, Jun. 8th, 1979. and *"Passengers admit cash",* SCMP, Feb. 9th, 1979 for examples of prices the refugees admitted to paying. Also, in general who received a special price and under what terms seemed to also be negotiable, sometimes half price applied to under 12 year olds, other times to persons under 18, Wain (1981), p. 87.
[505] However, in the case of *Huey Fong*, the ship that carried 3318 to Hong Kong in December 1978, the Vietnamese authorities received 10 of the total 12 taels paid by refugees, according to trial evidence presented in Hong Kong in a case against the ships' crew, Wain (1981), p. 103.
[506] Wain (1981), p. 93.
[507] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 135 and Wain (1981), p. 88. Long received the knowledge that his boat had been ordered to depart only in three days in advance through non-direct channels, he described the moment as follows: *"Hoa, my Chinese student, brought me the news at 10 P.M. on April 27. That morning, she said, the My Tho security office had ordered all registered boat passengers to assemble for departure. I was taken by surprise. Something was wrong. I had seen Chan only two days before and he had known nothing of the impending order. Hoa did not know the departure date but was certain the boat would not leave that night. Passengers for registered boats normally were allowed two days to assemble from Saigon and other points."*, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 140.
[508] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 119. This also meant that once the refugees were registered, they also needed to keep their plans secret from their local and neighbourhood security officials, as suspicious activity that would hint towards a person planning an escape could lead to him being arrested, see Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 135 – 137.

who were not directly involved in it. However, once the refugees would reach the open sea, they were on their own in both good and in the bad, as the journey was full of dangers, but they would also be free to travel towards their country of choice and pursue the freedom that they often had longed for.

5.2.1 The corrupt practices that were enabled by the program

The way the program to sell departures to the ethnic Chinese was implemented led to systemic corruption flourishing within the whole departure system, from the lowest officials to higher-ranking party members. As descriptions of these corrupt practices have occupied such an important role in the accounts of the refugees who shared their experiences leaving Vietnam and in descriptions of journalists and academics detailing the actions of the Vietnamese authorities, separating the practices that resulted mostly from individual motives from the practices that resulted from official guidelines is required in this study in order to provide an accurate picture of the whole program.

Although endemic corruption had been a problem since the war years in Southern Vietnam, according to Nguyen and Kendall (1981), the officially sanctioned departure program allowed many party and government officials to benefit in a massive scale. They wrote about the program as follows:

> *The ´going abroad officially´ gimmick provided an official means for the Vietnamese Communist ´revolutionaries´ to obtain bribes in the form of gold, the bluntest ever in Vietnamese history. Those who benefited most were the high-ranking Party and government officials who dealt most closely with the Chinese merchant classes. They were those responsible for security and the management of sea-products offices, and industrial and commercial reconstruction offices.*[509]

Demanding and receiving bribes in addition to the negotiated payments was very much a common practice among the PSB officers and party-members who were in contact with the departing refugees.[510] As Nguyen and Kendall described, the high-ranking officials, especially in the provincial level, were in the best spot to solicit and demand bribes in exchange for services, as they were handling the contract negotiations and generally in charge of giving the greenlight to

[509] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48.
[510] Wain (1981), p. 87.

the individual departures. The extensive autonomy for the provincial authorities to arrange and sell departures and the lax oversight from central government made the bribe-taking relatively risk-free endeavour. This lack of oversight made bribe-taking a common practice for PSB officers on all levels, as Wain (1981) described:

> *It was common practice for PSB officers to solicit and receive bribes in addition the negotiated payment. This was what they took on the side for their services; it did not have to be declared and passed on to the government. The bribes were paid in gold, jewelry, furniture and anything else of value. Rolex watches were especially coveted.*[511]

As the program was perceived to be one of the only reliable ways of getting out of Vietnam, the refugees often had no choice but to pay these bribes that the PSB officers demanded.[512]

The possibility of obtaining lucrative bribes also incentivized PSB officers and party officials to compete amongst themselves for organizing departures. Long described this competition among the authorities in his account as follows:

> *At this time local Communist authorities were competing with each other in the collection of gold and currency from the ethnic Chinese who wanted to register to go abroad officially. They ordered the construction of new boats or the repair of old ones rather publicly and let them put out to sea with no common plan. Any city which had boats and could collect enough gold immediately exported Chinese boat people.*[513]

In a similar manner to the middlemen, the authorities often also personally benefitted from organizing more departures, as more refugees also meant more possibilities to obtain bribes. Supplying and selling boats to refugees and selling departures to ethnic Vietnamese for additional price were examples of services that PSB officers in different parts of Vietnam provided to the refugees in exchange for bribes.[514] Even though the program was officially open only for the ethnic Chinese, according to Wain, on few boats that he examined as many as half the passengers

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[511] Wain (1981), p. 87.

[512] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 120 - 121 and Wain (1981), p. 91. Long described in his account the thought process that went into deciding whether to try to escape illegally or through the official program: *"Chan asked only six taels of gold each for my wife and me and nothing for our children because they were all under ten. This price was about the same or even less than a clandestine escape. With Chan, mutual trust between organizers and participants was no problem; the chances of being arrested at the embarkation site were reduced 90 percent; and safety at sea was more assured. Until late 1978 none of the officially registered boats, usually 60 feet or more, had been wrecked, although many had been forced to wait days or even weeks for landing permission. But landing was a matter of time rather than of safety. For my family safety was more important than time."*

[513] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 118

[514] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 89 – 90.

were ethnic Vietnamese.[515] This was not indicative of the passenger composition on most boats, but in general allowing ethnic Vietnamese to depart for premium price was a common scheme among the PSB officers to earn extra coin.[516] Sometimes refugees would also bribe local officials to allow them to depart secretly from a ship landing place or from other sites that were under the jurisdiction of the co-operating officials. This practice was called "Mua bãi" (literally "buy the landing").[517] Buying the landing was often cheaper than paying to register to leave officially, but also riskier, as the refugees were leaving illegally. According to the description of Nguyen and Kendall, the price was usually one tael for each adult and half for small children.[518]

In addition to selling boats and departures, different kinds of extortive practices and pat downs were also common ways for PSB officers to enrich themselves. One example of this was river and boat patrols from other provinces stopping refugees and demanding bribes, as even if the refugees had paid for their departure and left officially, they could be still be arrested if they were caught by security officers of another province or district or by the navy. Getting out of these kinds of situations required paying bribes.[519] Usually however the authorities would try to organize the official departures in a way where the refugees would get pass the security checkpoints and make past the patrols to the open sea.[520] Another way for the organizing authorities to shakedown the refugees was to also search the refugees for gold and other means of wealth when they were departing.[521]

In general, the safety of the passengers during the trip was seemingly of little concern to the authorities. Once they had departed and reached the open sea, they were generally on their own.[522] Little was done on the part of the authorities to make sure that the boats were seaworthy. According to Wain, in the Southern Vietnamese port city of Rach Gia and its neighbouring city

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[515] Wain (1981), p. 90.
[516] Wain (1981), p. 89 - 90.
[517] See Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 121 and Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 121. The term was comprised most likely of the Vietnamese words for buying "mua" and "bãi hạ cánh" which can be translated as a landing site (usually for aircrafts).
[518] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 121. Nguyen V.C (2017), p. 152 stated that the price was usually 6 taels of gold per refugee, but his statement was most likely wrong, as major part of the cost in the official departure program was the "exit fee" paid to government. Furthermore, Long described in his analysis that the secret escapes were notably cheaper.
[519] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 118.
[520] To combat the authorities of other cities and provinces interfering with the departures, the organizing authorities would sometimes accompany ships until they had a clear path to the open sea, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 151.
[521] AP, *"How Hanoi officials bleed the refugees",* SCMP, Mar. 24th, 1979. As an example of these practices, Pham Dang Bao described in this article how they were searched two times by security officers when departed, first when they boarded a smaller ship to get to departure location and second time when they got on the larger ship that would take them to Philippines. The officers confiscated jewelry, gold rings and watches from the refugees.
[522] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 2.

of Rach Soi in April 1979 for example, around 80 – 100 small river and coastal fishing crafts were converted for refugee departures on PSB's orders.[523] In general, these kinds of vessels, regardless of whether they were supplied by the PSB or the middlemen, were often ill-suited for sea travel. This general disregard for boat safety was likely one contributing factor to why countless ships sank in the rough seas. At least 10 percent of the refugees died during the journey as victims of rough weather, pirates, and unseaworthy ships according to few of the more moderate estimations.[524] Exacerbating these problems was the fact that the ships were often overcrowded as the result of PSB officers selling unofficial departures. What this meant in practice was that PSB officers would recruit their own additional passengers, obtain gold from them and force departing vessels to accept these unofficial passengers that did not appear in any lists as their passengers.[525] Adding their own unlisted passengers to departing boats was common corrupt practice for PSB officers and it resulted in making the ships overcrowded and dangerous to travel in. The U.S State department assessment estimated that perhaps as many as 20 percent of the different departing boats refugees might have been these unofficial passengers.[526] This percentage seems believable as an average, although in many cases the percentage was even higher, as is evidenced by several accounts by refugees and from information received from interviews of refugees.[527] Nguyễn Long also had first-hand experience with this practice when he was at the harbour preparing to board the ship that he would leave Vietnam with. He recounted in his story how the PSB officers, conniving together with the ships' other owner, forced the ships' crew take over additional 100 unlisted passengers for their trip at the moment of the departure. As a result of the additional passengers, the ship was totally overcrowded and Long and his family members had no room to even extend their legs fully for four days.[528]

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[523] Wain (1981), p. 88 – 89.

[524] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. iii. Contemporary estimates often estimated higher percentage for deaths, for example the U.S State department estimated in 1979 that around one-half or two-thirds of those who departed by boat from Vietnam perished at the sea. Other estimations have placed the death rate between 10 to 70 percent, Amer (2013), p. 15. The 10 percent estimate was later used by a CIA's Directorate of intelligence report in 1983 compiling available data on the refugee numbers and by Amer (2013), which both researched the topic extensively, see Amer (2013), p. 15 – 16 and CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus"*, CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 2

[525] Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979 and U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 2.

[526] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 2. This estimation seems believable if we take into consideration that this unofficial group could include both the ethnic Vietnamese who were not officially allowed to leave and those passengers that the PSB recruited themselves.

[527] *"Coping with the refugee tide",* SCMP, Jun. 12th, 1979, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 150, Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979, U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 2 and Wain (1981), p. 90 – 91.

[528] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 150 – 151.

As a conclusion to the topic of corrupt practices that were enabled by the program, It can be stated that the practices themselves were an integral part of how the departure system was implemented in practice, as many of the different practices were so commonplace and affected how many refugees would ultimately leave and how. However, it is important to note that these practices did not result from official guidelines, but rather became common due to the reason that they benefitted the individual PSB officers. For this reason, they must be separated from the other practices and understood to have resulted from how the program was structured rather from stemming from its original motives. The systemic corruption was just one factor which affected how the program ultimately was implemented. In the next sub-chapter, I will examine more in-depth the different events which transpired from the implementation of the departure program and the circumstances which shaped how the whole program ran its course.

5.3 The different phases of the expulsion program in Southern Vietnam

In the second half of 1978, weather-beaten and worn refugees started to arrive on the shores and ports of Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong at an alarming rate. This phenomenon of Vietnamese refugees leaving by boat and arriving to nearby countries was not new by any means, as clandestine escapes (đi "chui", literally "go underground"[529]) had been a thing since the war ended in 1975.[530] However, during the second half of 1978, the number of arrivals shot up to heights that had not been seen before. Whereas the total number of refugees arriving by boat in the years 1976 and 1977 to the nearby countries had been around 12 500 and 17 300, the number of refugees multiplied to 87 800 in 1978, with most of these arrivals taking place in the second half of the year.[531] The Vietnamese refugees who arrived at the nearby countries starting from second half of 1978 were also predominantly ethnic Chinese, whereas previously both ethnic Chinese and ethnic Vietnamese refugees had arrived to these countries in nearly equal amounts.[532] This increased traffic and the changes in the ethnic composition of the refugees were clearly linked

[529] Colloquial Vietnamese expression for escaping (illegally), Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 151.
[530] Amer (2013), p. 15.
[531] See Table 1. CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus"*, CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Jun. 1st, 1983, p. 2. The figures used in this document are rounded estimates and are based generally on U.S Department of State data. They seem reliable and accurate and are generally in line with other figures presented by for example Amer (2013), p. 15 – 16 who researched the demographic developments related to the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese in his study.
[532] see Appendix C., CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus"*, CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Jun. 1st, 1983, p. 27.

to the CPV's expulsion campaign and departure program for the ethnic Chinese that became operational in Southern Vietnam in late summer 1978.

What we generally know of the changes in the implementation of the program relies heavily on the accounts provided by refugees and on investigations by journalists and diplomatic and intelligence agents. These accounts and research reports are fragmented and they focus on different things, but there are enough of them that building a broad picture of the changes in the implementation of the departure program and the reasonings behind them through these accounts has been possible to some degree. Statistics such as the number of refugee arrivals by boat to nearby Southeast Asia countries and Hong Kong provided by Amer (2013), NFAC (1979) and CIA Directorate of Intelligence (1983) also help us assess better when the program was operational, although the statistics tell us little of what happened in Vietnam at the time and which motives were really behind driving the changes.[533]

Based on the Vietnamese refugee arrival statistics for each month in 1978 and 1979 to nearby countries (see Figure 1. on the next page), Ramses Amer divided the operation of the program he referred to with the term "semi-legal departure system" into four distinct phases. The first phase according to him begun in August 1978, when the program was started and this phase lasted roughly until December 1978 when the departures slowed down due to policy changes.[534] The second phase was a phase where the number of departures dropped from the peak of November 1978 and remained comparatively low. According to him, this drop was due to the fact that the number of official departures was cut down as a result of international pressure. The third phase was comprised of the four months after the war, starting from April 1979 and lasting until July 1979. During this phase there was a sharp increase in the number of refugees, with the numbers in May and June over doubling the last years' peak month of November. The last phase of the departure program started in July 1979 after an international conference on the Indochina refugee crisis in Geneva. In this conference according to Amer the Vietnamese authorities pledged to stem the outflow of refugees and after it the departures dropped dramatically, eventually dwindling down to similarly low numbers that had been the norm in early 1978 before the expulsion campaign began.[535]

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[533] See Amer (2013), p. 13 (Figure 1.), CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus"*, CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Jun. 1st, 1983, p. 2 (Table 1.) and CIA NFAC, *"Indochina Refugee Situation",* CIA-RDP81B00080R001400210001-3, Jul. 13th, 1979, p. 4

[534] See Amer (2013), p. 13 – 15 for his analysis of the different phases of the departure system.

[535] Amer (2013), p. 14.

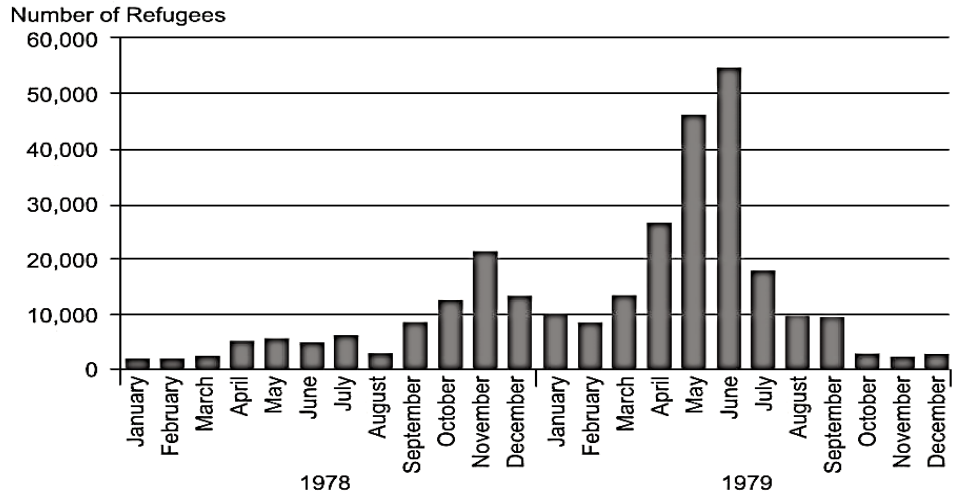

Figure 1: Arrivals of Vietnamese Refugees by Boat in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong in 1978 and 1979[536]

The analysis of the arrival numbers by Amer explains the larger link between CPV policy changes and the refugee flows and demonstrates how the expulsion campaign and the departure program increased the number of refugees arriving to nearby countries notably. The numbers can also give some indication of the refugee departures especially from Southern Vietnam, as most of the ethnic Chinese leaving Vietnam were from there as the ethnic Chinese population was several times than larger there than in the Northern parts and a large portion of the ethnic Chinese community in Northern Vietnam had already fled to PRC.[537] However, while I generally agree with Amer on the fact that we can divide the implementation of the departure program into these four distinct phases based on the patterns of arrivals, and that the changes in the patterns of arrivals corresponded with CPV policy changes, I posit that we can explain the changes and peaks in the patterns seen in the figure even more clearly by examining different sources and accounts that clarify events inside Vietnam and through them highlight even some of the motives behind the policy changes.

If we start from the early days of the program, it can be argued that two major factors drove the expansion of the program. The first one was the widespread desire among the ethnic Chinese in

[536] Amer (2013), p. 13. On the reliability of these refugee numbers, see Amer (1991), p. 82 – 84 and 96. These numbers generally are in line with the other statistics such as with the numbers presented for Indochina arrivals in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong in CIA Directorate of Intelligence, *"Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus"*, CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 2. However, there is one major discrepancy between these two statistics on the number of arrivals and that is the number of arrivals in June 1979, CIA Directorate of Intelligence notes that there were 43 450 arrivals during that month and Amer (1991) lists 54 871 arrivals. The discrepancies between these two statistics are analysed more in chapter 6.1.

[537] Amer (2013), p. 12 – 13. The numbers are not however representative of the total number of departures for each month, as they do not include the numbers of those who left Vietnam but never made it to their destination.

Southern Vietnam to leave the country.[538] The dire economic situation and food shortages combined with the efforts by authorities to move the small traders to work in agricultural production in New Economic Zones made many look for ways to leave Vietnam.[539] Some ethnic Chinese, like the family of Dr. Chung Vinh (author of memoir about leaving Vietnam titled *Where the Wind leads*), saw also the writing on the wall that the government's attitudes towards the ethnic Chinese had changed. [540] There were many factors which ultimately led to people wanting to leave Vietnam, and once the program for the Vietnamese of Chinese descent to go abroad was commenced, many were willing to pay for the chance.

The second factor driving the quick expansion of the program was the willingness of the local level authorities to facilitate these departures.[541] The expansion of the program was also dictated heavily by the lucrative economics of the refugee trafficking. As was highlighted by Nguyễn Long in his quote in the previous sub-chapter, the local authorities were quite openly competing with each other for the chance to organize departures and collect gold.[542] Long stated that this unprohibited competition for the human cargo among the local authorities was reined later in 1978 with new regulations from central government that established more orderly schedules for the departures. The purpose of these new regulations was according to him regulate the exportation of boat people.[543]

Alongside the unprohibited competition, what most likely also led to these new regulations were the instances of using big freighters brought in from outside of Vietnam to ship refugees to nearby countries.[544] Members of ethnic Chinese business groups in Vietnam used their contacts outside Vietnam to buy large freighters and to bring them to ports near Ho Chi Minh City. Syndicate members in Ho Chi Minh City recruited thousands of passengers for the departures and negotiated on the terms and prices with the Public Security authorities in the city.[545] The first freighter that was brought into Southern Vietnam to pick up passengers was the *Southern Cross* which set out from Singapore in August 24th 1978 sailing under Honduras' flag.[546] It picked up 1250 refugees

[538] Amer (2013), p. 9, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48 – 49 and Porter (1980), p. 57.
[539] Butterfield, Fox, *"Reasons behind Hanoi persecution",* SCMP, May 30th, 1978, *"Chinese hit by Hanoi food controls"*, SCMP, Aug. 1st, 1978.Chung (2014), p. 83 and Wong, Eileen, *"Vietnam gets tough",* SCMP, May 18th, 1978. In addition to persecution, as can be evidenced by these refugee interviews and accounts, refugees often cited the poor economic and food situation and fear of being forced to go to New Economic Zones as reasons for leaving Vietnam.
[540] Chung (2014), p. 85.
[541] See Wain (1981), p. 85 – 96 for his account of the expansion of the refugee trade in Southern Vietnam.
[542] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 118.
[543] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 118 – 119.
[544] Wain (1981), p. 102.
[545] Wain (1981), p. 102 – 104.
[546] Wain (1981), p. 18.

from port near Ho Chi Minh City and set out to the open sea. According to description of the events by Wain (1981), it seemed that an agreed upon script had been created before the departure for the events that would unfold next.[547] When the ship reached the South China Sea, the ships' crew radio messaged a call for help and claimed that the ship had been swarmed by hundreds of refugees from small fishing junks. From there the ship sailed towards Malaysia and Singapore, which both refused to accept the refugees. After this complication, the ship headed towards Indonesia and once there radioed in near a remote island in Indonesian waters that the ship's hull had been damaged badly and that it could not continue its journey. The refugees on board unloaded to the nearby shore and eventually were given a temporary asylum in Indonesia.[548] In the following months, several big freighters, brough into Southern Vietnam to pick up refugees, would set out and follow a similar script in seeking refugee from nearby Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong. These ships were *Hai Hong* (2450 persons) in which arrived to Malaysia in November 1978 and *Huey Fong* (3318 persons) and *Tung An* (2300 persons) which arrived to Hong Kong and Philippines respectively in December 1978.[549] These big freighters bringing in large quantities of refugees contributed significantly to the notable increase in refugee arrivals in the latter part of 1978 that can be discerned in Figure 1.

The unbridled trafficking efforts drew in a lot of international attention themselves and essentially blew the lid off the covert departure program in late 1978. Pressure mounted from the ASEAN countries who were not willing to accept the refugees and from countries like Australia who were worried about potential refugee flows reaching their shores. Probes were also launched into the origins of these ships.[550] U.S Intelligence information circulated to its allies at the time confirmed that behind the boat departures were authorities in Ho Chi Minh City and that the Vietnamese security agencies were involved in organizing the departures.[551] The amounting international pressure that was brought on largely by this freighter trafficking and increased departures from Vietnam had ultimately an effect also on the Vietnamese policies. A consultative Meeting with Interested Governments on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia was held in Geneva on the 11th and 12th of December 1978 and according to trip organizers interviewed for a FEER article published in mid-1979, the international pressure at this conference caused new

[547] Wain (1981), p. 19 - 21
[548] Ibid.
[549] Wain (1981), p. 17, 22, 103, 110 and 111. A freighter named Skyluck carrying 2651 refugees also arrived at Hong Kong in February 1979 in addition these ships.
[550] Wain (1981), p. 26 - 28
[551] Wain (1981), p. 30.

directives to halt the refugee departures for a while to be sent from Hanoi to the provincial PSBs in January/February 1979.[552] These interviewed trip organizers told the newspaper that:

> *"Nam Cu* [the Vietnamese in charge of the Kien Giang refugee office, since replaced] *told me that boats were stopped by order of Hanoi, because a high-ranking official who was abroad was blamed for the refugees… in March they were told to go ahead again"*[553]

Other accounts, such Wain (1981) also confirm the fact that major refugee exporting centres received such order during this time period of late January/early February 1979.[554] In reality however, behind the decision to halt the departure for a brief moment was most likely other factors also, such as the worsening situation in the Sino-Vietnamese border, where both the PRC and the SRV were preparing for a some form of military confrontation in early 1979.[555]Halting the refugee program, which tied Vietnam's security agencies' resources, in a situation where war between the SRV and the PRC seemed more and more likely was most likely the logical conclusion reached by the Vietnamese policymakers based on the evaluation of the overall situation. All in all, the overall effects of the directives for more orderly departures and of the brief suspension of operations on the number of arriving refugees can be assessed from Figure 1., where it can be seen from that between December 1978 and March 1979, the number of those who reached the nearby countries was nearly half of the peak reached in November 1978 when 20 000 refugees arrived in month to these countries. The suspension of the operation had an effect especially on the arrivals in February 1979, as less than 9000 refugees arrived in the nearby countries in that month.[556] And if we take into consideration that 2651 of these refugees arrived with a big freighter on February 7th to Hong Kong, the effects of the decision to halt departures on the arrivals becomes even clearer.

The decision to halt the departure program was only temporary however, as after the moratorium on the departures, the expulsion policy was continued in late March 1979 with a renewed conviction. As was discussed in earlier in the chapter relating to the expulsions in Northern Vietnam, in the North the ethnic Chinese were given an explicit choice to either leave or move to camps or New Economic Zones.[557] According to Porter (1980), behind these decisions were once

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[552] Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979 and Stein (1979), p. 718.
[553] Ibid.
[554] Porter (1980), p. 58 and Wain (1981), p. 93.
[555] Zhang (2015), p. 88 and 95 – 96.
[556] Amer (2013), p. 13. Statistics in the NFAC document listed 8632 arrivals and Amer (1991) stated that 8568 had arrived during that month, Amer (1991), p. 84 and CIA NFAC, *"The Indochina Refugee Situation: An Update",* Nov. 5th, 1979, p. 1.
[557] Porter (1980), p. 59.

again explicit orders issued by the Ministry of Interior.[558] In Central Vietnam, such as in the coastal cities of Danang and Nha Trang, the situation was quite similar, as harassment of the ethnic Chinese by PSB officers became a daily occurrence and the refugees were also in many cases explicitly told that if they would not leave voluntarily, they would be transferred to New Economic Zones.[559] According to Wain, the PSB authorities were also more directly facilitating the departures in Central Vietnam, as they were organizing land transports to the refugees to departure locations and lowering boat fares in order to accommodate more departures.[560] In Southern cities, the departures that had been on hold were started again, but the amount of coercion seemed to remain similar to the one that had existed before.[561] However, even in the South the expulsion processes were expedited, leading to more departures. The processing time for the applications became much shorter and the wait period between registration and actual departure was cut down to in some cases to as little as one month.[562] As a result of these expulsion orders and less time-consuming administrative measures, the boats were being sent out to the sea at a rate that had not been seen before and refugee arrivals to nearby countries grew exponentially each month after March 1979.[563] This caused the refugee situation to become critical in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand, that were at some points seeing several thousands of arrivals each week.[564]

The reason behind this renewed fervour to expel ethnic Chinese was the war that had taken place between the PRC and the SRV between February 17th and 16th of March. This war shaped the policies of the Vietnamese government and the CPV once again and made them adopt even harsher expulsion policy towards the ethnic Chinese. The government policy became to either move the ethnic Chinese as far away as possible from security sensitive areas or make them leave in the areas that had been near the conflict.[565] The change in tone and actions was visible in the public statements of Vietnamese representatives also few months after the war, as the Hoa who had previously left Vietnam were blamed by deputy foreign minister Đinh Nho Liêm in a speech

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[558] Ibid.
[559] Chan, David, *"War threat worries ethnic Chinese", SCMP*, Aug. 19th, 1979, *"Coping with the refugee tide",* SCMP, Jun. 12th, 1979 and Wain (1981), p. 97
[560] Wain (1981), p. 97 – 98.
[561] Nguyễn Long's ship was for example finally allowed to depart on April 30th, 1979, after six months wait, Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 135.
[562] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 88.
[563] Amer (2013), p. 13 and CIA NFAC, *"The Indochina Refugee Situation: An Update",* Nov. 5th, 1979, p. 1.
[564] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/130, a compendium for the prime minister regarding the Indochina refugee problem, Jun. 25th, 1979, p.174- 204. The total number of refugees in Indochina at this moment was around 300 000 (includes other nationalities than Vietnamese also), with the UNHCR only having the capabilities to resettle only around 10 000 per month.
[565] Ibid.

to media as having aided the Chinese troops by acting as guides for them.[566] These concerns regarding ethnic Chinese giving assistance to the enemy gave further justifications to continue the large-scale expulsion policy taken towards the ethnic Chinese. However, it is important to note that the expulsions were not only limited to the ethnic Chinese who lived in Central or Northern parts of Vietnam and therefore more of a security risk, but rather to the ethnic Chinese throughout the country. The exponential increase in number of arrivals as shown in Figure 1. in March, April, May and June of 1979 would point to the fact that the departure program and expulsions were put on the fast track in the whole country after the war.[567] In this manner, it was not only the policies in the Northern parts of Vietnam in April-June of 1979 that were *"tantamount to an expulsion"* in their implementation, as has been suggested previously by Amer (2013), but rather the policies in the whole country.[568]

When the refugee problem in the region grew worse in the early summer of 1979, the countries that were directly and indirectly affected by it began searching for a solution. The solution that was pushed in the by the U.K behind the diplomatic curtains was organizing another conference on the Indochina refugee situation, and this became a reality on the 20th and 21st of July as the United Nations Meeting on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia was convened by the UN Secretary General.[569] The meeting was successful in that in it the total number of resettlement places for the region was doubled from 125 000 to 250 000 and $190 million additional in funds were pledged for the refugee efforts for the following year. A form of three-way agreement was however the major result of the conference, as countries of first asylum in the region promised to establish regional processing centres to help resettle the refugees as long as other countries would accelerate the rate of resettlement.[570] In the meeting also the Vietnamese representatives pledged that "*for a reasonable period of time it* [Vietnam] *will make every effort to stop illegal departures"* and this became a part of the agreed upon actions to handle the crisis.[571] This promise and how it was framed gave Vietnam plausible deniability to the accusations that it had been expelling the refugees, providing them boats and extorted gold from them. These accusations Vietnam had naturally denied in the meetings.[572]

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[566] Porter (1980), p. 58. The date of the speech was July 18th, 1979.
[567] Amer (2013), p. 13 and CIA NFAC, *"The Indochina Refugee Situation: An Update",* Nov. 5th, 1979, p. 1.
[568] Amer (2013), p. 15.
[569] U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/130, a compendium for the prime minister regarding the Indochina refugee problem, Jun. 25th, 1979, p.190 - 191 and Stein (1979), p. 716.
[570] Flight from Indochina (2000), p. 86.
[571] Stein (1979), p. 718 and Wain (1981), p. 224 – 225.
[572] Stein (1979), p. 720.

While the meeting was a success and the promise by Vietnam was welcomed with open arms, the decrease in the number of arrivals would point to the fact that Vietnamese authorities had begun to halt the outflow already in June, most likely in anticipation of harsh critique and discussions in the coming conference in Geneva if they would have not done so.[573] The signs would point to the fact that before this conference in Geneva, major rethinking of the expulsion policy had taken place and as a result the expulsion policy was stopped and all forms of departures and escapes were once again to be severely punished. From late-June/early-July onwards, harsh punishments also started to be handed out to trip organizers, whose actions had previously been condoned and even awarded, and those who were caught in the act of escaping were also prosecuted.[574] Most likely this punishment policy was adopted as a response to the coming Geneva meeting, as two days before the meeting Vietnam News Agency published a lengthy article on the subject which admitted that "*some officials were 'getting their palms greased' from the refugee exodus*" and that these officials would be punished severely.[575] The article also mentioned some examples of non-government officials being punished for being involved in organizing the departures and that *"no senior cadre has ever been involved in such affairs.*"[576] The narrative that Vietnam was pushing was that the only local low-level officials and trip organizers had been involved in organizing the departures. In August 1979, Vietnam's Vice-foreign minister Nguyễn Cơ Thạch also told visiting American delegates that 4000 persons responsible for departures had been brough to trial so far and gave every indication that this policy of not allowing departures would continue.[577] All in all, these policy changes had a notable effect on the departures and arrivals, as from July onwards, the number of arrivals decreased from the peaks of the previous months and in October 1979, the number of monthly arrivals finally reached the number pre-expulsion campaign numbers.[578] Furthermore, the way the expulsion policy was halted before the 1979 July Geneva conference also ultimately demonstrates that the possibility of becoming an international pariah was not a risk that the CPV was willing to take for the sake of continuing the expulsions.

As a conclusion to the sub-chapter on the different phases of the expulsion system, it can be stated that it is evident from the different accounts that many different factors inside and outside Vietnam

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[573] Amer (2013), p. 13 and Porter (1980), p. 59.
[574] Wain (1981), p. 230.
[575] Reuter, *"Hanoi to crack down on corrupt officials",* SCMP, Jul 20th, 1979.
[576] Ibid.
[577] Reuter*, "We're checking the exodus, assures Hanoi",* SCMP, Aug. 11th, 1979 and Wain (1981), p. 230. Wain refuted this number and stated that this figure seemed exaggerated, as this would have meant that each day since the policy change, the authorities would have had to bring more than 60 cases to court to reach these numbers. However, if we take into consideration that some of these trials could have been mass trials, the number is possible, although unlikely.
[578] Amer (2013), p. 13 and Wain (1981), p. 227.

ultimately ended up affecting how the departure program and expulsion policy was implemented in Southern Vietnam. The lucrativeness of the refugee trafficking and willingness on the part of the refugees to pay to leave were factors which drove the expansion of the program, while pressure from international community and fear of becoming a pariah state due to the mass expulsion seemed to ultimately inhibit the CPV's ostensible intention of expelling as many ethnic Chinese as it could get away with. Furthermore, the statistics on the number of arrivals give us an indication of how much of the refugee traffic was actually associated with the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign. Based on the numerous accounts that I have presented in this chapter and the statistics on arrivals that I analysed, it is evident that the expulsion policies of the CPV were a large contributing factor in why ultimately so many left Vietnam. Yet, even with this seemingly apparent conclusion, we need to still tackle many unanswered questions in the last chapters of this study, so that we can interpret more clearly the events and actions that took place in Vietnam during the expulsion campaign.

6. Conclusions

This final chapter focuses on evaluating the impacts of the expulsion program in the South and on examining the political reasons behind the expulsions further. In addition to this, the last sub-chapter examines question of how we should ultimately understand these ethnic Chinese and boat people departures in light of what we know of the Vietnamese government involvement in the departures today.

6.1 Evaluating the impacts of the expulsion policies in Southern Vietnam

While the program for the Vietnamese of Chinese descent to go abroad itself was operated under a shroud of secrecy in Southern Vietnam, its effects reverberated throughout selected communities and cities in the region. One of these effects was the growing commerce connected to the refugee trafficking, which flourished in selected coastal provincial capitals and Mekong delta ports in the region. Wain (1981) described the situation in Southern Vietnam's port areas during the time the departure system was operational in his book as follows:

> *Vietnam might have been in the economic doldrums, but Rach Gia, capital of Kien Giang province was bustling. The main activity: exporting boat people. While a limited number of persons were directly involved in the trade, the relative prosperity it generated percolated through the community. Boatbuilders were busy patching up wrecks for the hazardous trip across the sea, and the influx of budding refugees from the Ho Chi Minh City metropolis, awaiting embarkation, offered an opportunity for the sale of rice, vegetables and other services. Refugees seemed one of the few worthwhile ways left to make a free-enterprising dollar in Communist Vietnam.*[579]

This passage illustrates well how the expulsion program did not only affect those who left or enrich those who were organizing the departures, but that it also had transformative effects on the day-to-day life of selected locations in the South. According to some observers, a new boat building industry was established in Southern Vietnam so that the authorities could accommodate the high number of refugee departures.[580] The boats were evidently being built to accommodate the expanding refugee business.[581] In addition to boats, the demand for goods needed for the navigation and survival at sea became also high in the black-market.[582] Several different points acted as the main official departure points of the refugees in the South. Long Thanh, Vung Tau, My Tho, Vinh Long were the principal Southern departure points in the vicinity of Ho Chi Minh City and Tra Vinh, Can Tho, Bac Lieu and Ca Mau were the locations from which the refugees departed from in the Mekong Delta region.[583] These locations were the principal hubs of the refugee trafficking in Southern Vietnam and near them transit camps were set up to accommodate the large number of refugees who were preparing to depart.[584] Although we can offer no real numbers on the amount of refugees that would have passed through these locations week to week, in the most popular locations several departures of boats containing hundreds of passengers were being organized weekly during the most active periods of the departure program.[585]

But what about the total number of refugees during the expulsion campaign in the South? How many persons ultimately ended up leaving Vietnam then through the departure program? These questions are some of the most important ones to answer when we evaluate the impact and scale

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[579] Wain (1981), p. 85.
[580] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1 and Wain (1981), p. 89
[581] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. 1.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Ibid.
[584] Wain (1981), p. 86.
[585] Wain (1981), p. 92.

of these expulsion policies. As we do not have accurate information on the total number of departures, only on arrivals to nearby countries, any number that we present on this topic ultimately ends up being only an estimate. An informed estimate can however give us an idea of the magnitude of the departure program and for this reason I will analyse next the available data on this topic. For this analysis I will rely on two available sources for the total number of arrivals for Vietnamese boat refugees to nearby countries and Hong Kong, Amer (1991, 2013) and the CIA Directorate of Intelligence report (1983).[586] The former was based on studies by Benoit, Wain and estimates by the UNHCR and the latter used U.S department of State statistics.[587]

If we begin by comparing the total number of boat refugee arrivals for the months between August 1978 and July 1979[588], we can see that while there are some discrepancies between these two sources in the number of arrivals they have listed for each month, in general the two numbers in the two sources are quite in line with each other. The CIA report estimates that the total number of arrivals for this period was 240 190, while Amer placed the figure at 236 374.[589] Both of these sources estimate that around 10% of the persons died during the journey, which means that the total number of refugees who departed would have been 264 209 and 260 011 respectively during the time the departure program was operational. This is of course only an estimation, as we have no way of piecing together precise information on what percentage of refugees trying to escape illegally were caught by the PSB officers and the Vietnamese Navy while they were still in Vietnam's territorial waters and what percentage actually died as the result of the journey. Only those who succeeded in leaving Vietnam and made it safely to the nearby countries and Hong Kong became part of these statistics.

The percentage of the ethnic Chinese among these refugees would have been high as the result of expulsion campaign and departure program. According to the best estimation we have for what percentage of these refugees would have been ethnic Chinese during this period, around 80% of the boat refugees in general would have been ethnic Chinese, and this percentage was even higher for those refugees who went to the PRC or Hong Kong.[590] This means that an estimated 192 152

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[586] See Amer (1991), p. 82 – 82 and 96, Amer (2013), p. 13 and CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus",* CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 2.
[587] Ibid.
[588] As the departure program was started in late July – early August 1978 and shut down sometime between mid-June 1979 and early July 1979, these are the months when the refugees who paid to leave through the departure program most likely arrived to the nearby Southeast Asian countries and Hong Kong.
[589] Ibid.
[590] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus",* CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 27. based on his own consultations with UNHCR during the late 1980s, Amer estimated that around 60 – 70% of the refugees between the years 1975 – 1979 would have been ethnic Chinese, Amer (2013), p. 15 – 16. This is in line with the estimations of the CIA, which placed the total percentage for the year 1975 – 1982 around 65%. However, as is noted in the CIA document, the ethnic

or 189 099 ethnic Chinese would have made it to the nearby countries during the time the departure program was operational in Southern Vietnam, if the ethnic composition of the refugees was exactly 80% ethnic Chinese and 20% Vietnamese during this period.[591] Most of these ethnic Chinese would have also been from Southern Vietnam where most of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam lived and where the impacts of the later stages of the expulsion campaign were the most visible.[592]

This estimation on the number of ethnic Chinese who arrived at the nearby countries during the time the departure program was operational does not however tell us how many people went through the departure program itself. "Buying the landing" and clandestine escapes were also common ways of leaving Vietnam during this period.[593] Many ethnic Vietnamese would also leave with the officially sanctioned boats, either by obtaining false identification papers or by bribing the officials in charge of the program.[594] For these reasons giving estimates on how many people actually left through the official channels is difficult, as depending on the number of unofficial passengers and the popularity of the other ways of leaving Vietnam, the actual number could have been higher or lower than the estimations on the total number of the ethnic Chinese who left during the time the program was operational. Yet, even if these figures are only approximations and rely on certain presuppositions, the fact that there could have been as many as 190 000 ethnic Chinese boat refugees in a period that was less than a year, gives us an indication of the scale and impact of the program. If we compare these numbers to the total number of boat arrivals for Vietnamese refugees in 1976 (12 500) and 1977 (17 300), we can see that the adoption of expulsion policies and the commencement of the departure program led to substantial increase in arrivals (and departures) of boat refugees from Vietnam.[595] The analysis in the previous sub-chapter also demonstrated how inherently the refugee outflows were linked to the CPV policy changes and to the changes in the implementation of the departure program. Even if we cannot give a proper estimation on how many people left through the official departure program, we can see that the expulsion policies, such as the departure program, had a significant impact on the

composition fluctuated with the CPV's policy changes and during 1978 – 1979 the percentage of the boat refugees who were ethnic Chinese was higher than other times.

[591] Not all of these ethnic Chinese refugees were however from Southern Vietnam, as ethnic Chinese from Northern Vietnam also kept arriving especially during to Hong Kong during this period. Unfortunately, we do not have access to any information on how many of the refugees came at different points from Northern Vietnam and how many from Southern Vietnam. However, if we look at the number of refugees who went to the PRC and compare it to the census data on the number of the ethnic Chinese in Northern Vietnam, we can assume that the Northern ethnic Chinese were a small minority among the boat people, see Amer (2013), p. 3 and 15 – 16.

[592] Amer (2013), p. 4 and 14 – 16.

[593] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 120 – 121.

[594] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48 – 49 and Wain (1981), p. 89 – 90.

[595] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus",* CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 2.

number of departures from Vietnam and that the CPV ethnic Chinese expulsion policies was according to all signs the most influential factor in driving the ethnic Chinese exodus from Southern Vietnam. Finally, it could also be argued that these policies were a large contributing factor to why the Indochina Refugee Crisis became serious international humanitarian and refugee crisis in 1978 and 1979, as the sheer number of arrivals to the nearby countries overwhelmed Vietnam's neighbours.

Another aspect that has not been discussed enough in previous academic literature has been the concrete benefits that the Vietnamese government gained from expelling these refugees. There was a clear economic motive also behind the expulsions and departure program that has not been discussed much in previous studies, most likely due to the fear of publishing conjectures and basing claims on incomplete proof. There are however many accounts and investigations from the contemporary period, which point to the fact that the refugee trafficking was wildly beneficial for the Vietnamese government and that the economics of the human trafficking was driving the expansion of the program. Many of these reports were however drafted and researched by diplomatic and intelligence entities and were as a result not published in full until much later.

One of these reports estimating the economic impact of the refugee trafficking was the telegram referenced in the introduction of this study.[596] The document was sent in the name of Governor of Hong Kong Murray MacLehose and it started by stating that:

> *THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL MOTIVATION IN VIETNAM'S SYSTEMATIC EFFORTS TO DRIVE OUT ALL CITIZENS OF CHINESE ORIGIN IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR.*
>
> *EVIDENCE RECENTLY GATHERED IN HANOI AND HO CHI MINH CITY AND FROM REFUGEES NEWLY ARRIVED IN HONG KONG STRONGLY SUPPORT THESE CONCLUSIONS:*
>
> *A: THE GOLD AND HARD CURRENCY BEING EXTORTED FROM THOSE UNDER PRESSURE TO LEAVE NOW AMOUNT TO A MAJOR IF SHORT-TERM PROP FOR VIETNAM'S MISMANAGED AND THREADBARE ECONOMY, WITH REFUGEES PROBABLY CONSTITUTING THE COUNTRY'S SINGLE MOST PROFITABLE EXPORT COMMODITY.*[597]

The other conclusions of the report were that Vietnam's government had authorized to stop any attempts to leave the country which did not go through official networks and that the refugees had

[596] See U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Hong Kong to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jun. 6th, 1979, p. 85-87.
[597] Ibid.

overtaken coal, the country's most important export product, as the largest source of foreign exchange for the country. This was based on what was stated to be reliable information that there was a surge of remittances being sent to the Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City in April 1979 from the ethnic Chinese living abroad.[598] The amount remitted during that month, $242 million, was more than double the amount remitted in any previous month in 1978 and 1979.[599] According to a New York Times article published in June 12th, 1979, the figure for this single month was more than half of the total estimated exports of Vietnam for all of 1978, $416 million.[600] Not all of this went to the boat departures, but according to both New York Times and the Hong Kong government document, it is highly likely that most of the money was designed to pay for boat passages.[601]

Most of the individual claims made in this Hong Kong government document are corroborated by other accounts also. The New York Times corroborated the amount of the remittances cited by the document and provided a source for them.[602] According to several sources, the departure program provided significant amounts of both foreign exchange and hard currency in the form of gold to the Vietnamese government. The FEER estimated that already during 1978, the refugee trafficking provided around $115 million in gold through the exit taxes to the Vietnamese government.[603] Based on the refugee arrival statistics, the profits for the year 1979 would have been even higher than the estimate the FEER gave for 1978.[604]The U.S State department report titled *"Vietnam's refugee machine"* in 1979 found the FEER estimate to be reasonable and added that this amount was roughly equal to the Vietnamese government's known official foreign exchange holdings at the time.[605] In his account, Nguyễn Long also stated that party members that he was in contact with in late 1978 told him that the "*national income from the exportation of boat people was exceeded only by the production and sale of goods.*"[606] This statement was most likely

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[598] Ibid.
[599] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* The New York Times, Jun. 12th, 1979 and U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Hong Kong to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jun. 6th, 1979, p. 85-87.
[600] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* The New York Times, Jun. 12th, 1979 and U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Hong Kong to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Jun. 6th, 1979, p. 85-87. The source for these numbers according to the New York Times article worked within the international banking sector in Hong Kong.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* The New York Times, Jun. 12th, 1979.
[603] Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979.
[604] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus",* CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 2. According to this table, there were 87 00 boat arrivals in 1978 and 205 200 in 1979.
[605] U.S Department of State, *"Vietnam's refugee Machine",* CIA-RDP80T00942A001200070001-3, Jun. 26th, 1979, p. III and 3.
[606] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 119.

accurate based on the numbers of total estimated exports of Vietnam in 1978 and the FEER estimations on the amount of hard currency provided by the departure program to the Vietnamese government. Since 1975, one of the shortfall of Vietnam's economy had been that it lacked foreign currency to buy necessary supplies from international markets due to relatively low amount of exports and small foreign exchange reserves.[607] As a poor developing country recovering from war, its imports significantly exceeded its exports and for this reason foreign exchange was in high demand.[608] All in all, the economic motive for the program and the concrete benefits Vietnamese government gained from expelling the refugees were quite clear.

So was also the fact that portion of the total payment that the refugees paid for the departure ended up into the hands of the government. Besides the numerous accounts which described the Vietnamese government involvement in the program, there exists also many accounts of trip organizers being told by public security officials to deposit the gold from the refugees to Vietnamese national banks to pay for the departures.[609] This was most likely not the normal practice, as usually the intermediaries paid to the PSB officers which in turn according to some accounts delivered the gold to the national banks, but the fact that there were documented instance of trip organizers paying gold directly to these banks highlights the link between the payments and the government even further.[610] According to one unnamed intelligence report that the New York Times cited in an article, in Southern Vietnam the gold was melted down in the Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City and transported to Hanoi to the Bank of Foreign trade.[611] In this manner the money moved from the hands of the refugees to inside the national banking system. From there, according to some sources some of the gold ended up in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe, most likely as payment for the aid and arms Soviet Union provided to Vietnam.[612] This is where the trail of the gold ends, as no further sightings have been publicized. Whether or

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[607]Kimura (1986), p. 1054, Reuter, *"S. Vietnam tries to attract foreign exchange",* SCMP, Jan. 18th, 1976 and Veiga, Joe, *"Vietnam: 90 days of struggle and strife",* SCMP, Jul. 30th, 1975.
[608] Kimura (1986), p. 1054.
[609] See for example Sacerdoti, Guy, *"How Hanoi cashes in",* FEER, Jun. 15th, 1979 and Wain (1981), p. 97
[610] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* The New York Times, Jun. 12th, 1979 and *"Vietnam officials 'examined gold'",* SCMP, Jun. 20th, 1979.
[611] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* The New York Times, Jun. 12th, 1979.
[612] Butterfield, Fox, *"Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese",* The New York Times, Jun. 12th, 1979 and Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 153. Some of the gold showed up in Soviet' gold sales in Europe according to intelligence reports and some Western journalists reported seeing sheets of Vietnamese gold in several Eastern European countries. Renmin Ribao also published an article citing the information from this same report. It largely gave the same details that the gold had ended up in Eastern Europe and was apparently used to buy arms from Soviet Union, but the article also stated that some of the sighted gold apparently also had had vague imprint of the former South Vietnamese government, see Su Yuanchun, "Yuenan nanmin de huangjin daole mosike shou li" [Vietnamese refugees' gold in Moscow's hands], Renmin Ribao, Aug. 1st, 1979.

not this gold was the same that had been extracted from the refugees as payments is most likely impossible to prove, but it is one interesting avenue in the bigger story of the expulsion campaign.

In conclusion, after the expulsion campaign was over in Southern Vietnam a sizable ethnic Chinese population of 877 691 Hoa remained in the area according to 1979 Vietnamese census.[613] The period of less than a year that the departure program was operation in the South had been too short to expel all ethnic Chinese from the region. In addition to the short time frame, as Stern (1985) argued, for some of the ethnic Chinese paying to leave had not been an option due to the expensive payments.[614] Even though the expulsions ended, the ethnic Chinese continued to be regarded with suspicion. Stern described these suspicions as follows:

> "*During 1980-82, there seems to have been a complex and probably not fully articulated attitude of the party and the state toward the Overseas Chinese that was expressed as a feeling or suspicion that the Hoa, always irrepressible, could spring back against Vietnamese society in a moment's time."*[615]

In November 1982, the CPV adopted decree No. 10, which included guidelines in regard to the Hoa. It stated that as Vietnamese citizens they had the same duties and rights as other citizens, but that they would be barred from being able to serve as officers in the military and as having security related employment.[616] In this manner the CPV policies towards the ethnic Chinese continued to address the "threats" the ethnic Chinese were perceived to pose to certain critical sectors in the society. It was not until June 1991 that the Vietnamese government restored full cultural and civil rights and duties to the ethnic Chinese community.[617]

The boat departures from Vietnam also continued after the expulsion campaign, however now once again by means of escaping. In 1980 and 1981 there were 74 100 and 74 400 boat refugees, respectively.[618] The numbers further decreased in 1982, when only 44 900 refugees made it to the nearby countries.[619] Behind these departures was a similar desire to leave Vietnam that had fuelled the hay days of the expulsion campaign, but missing was the government involvement which had propelled the Vietnamese refugee crisis into the proportions it was in the most dire years of 1978 and 1979. In addition to the clandestine escapes, between 1979 and 1991, 352 000 people left

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[613] Amer (2013), p. 4.
[614] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 49 and Stern (1985), p. 522.
[615] Stern (1985), p. 525 – 526.
[616] Amer (2013), p. 18.
[617] Amer (2013), p. 18 - 19. Amer writes about this that this restoration of civil rights must be understood in the context of the process for normalization of relations between the PRC and Vietnam that took place in 1991.
[618] CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "*Indochinese Refugees: The Continuing Exodus",* CIA-RDP84S00558R000400020002-7, Apr. 1st, 1983, p. 2.
[619] Ibid.

through an Orderly Departure Program established in 1979 by the UNHCR and the Vietnamese government.[620] Those who had relatives abroad could through this program be legally resettled abroad.[621] During the early days of this program, ethnic Chinese were apparently a majority among those who left through this program, as a larger portion of ethnic Chinese had relatives abroad than ethnic Vietnamese, but as time passed the portion of ethnic Chinese leaving through the program steadily declined.[622]

Although the absolute number of ethnic Chinese leaving Vietnam declined quite heavily after the expulsion campaign, the larger story of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam after the expulsion campaign has been the story of continued migration. Even to this day, the ethnic Chinese have continued to migrate from Vietnam at a higher pace than their population has naturally grown.[623] While we should not simplify the reasons behind this continued decline as a lot has changed in the past 50 years in Vietnam and outside it, we should not also disregard the question of what role has the complicated recent history of expulsions, discrimination and departures played in this larger story of continued migration and exodus.

6.2 Voluntary departures, expulsions, or profitable extortion?

The question of how we should interpret these boat people departures and the wider ethnic Chinese exodus from Vietnam between 1978 and 1979 and the Vietnamese governments role in the departures has been discussed since the events took place.[624] Whether or not we should understand these departures as having been voluntary or resulted from distinct expulsion policies is a key question that is related to how we should ultimately interpret and understand these events.

In this study I argue that behind the ethnic Chinese exoduses from Vietnam was an organized expulsion campaign and policies, that aimed to facilitate the departure of members of the ethnic Chinese minority from Vietnam. However, the policies aimed mostly to facilitate these departures with methods that relied on the ethnic Chinese leaving voluntarily. What we can observe from the example of the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign is that expulsions were

[620] See U.K Prime Minister's Office, PREM Series 19/129, telegram from Geneva (UNHCR) to London, June 1979, p. 82.
[621] Amer (2013), p. 19.
[622] Amer (2013), p. 19 – 20.
[623] Amer (2013), p. 20.
[624] See for example Wain (1979), p. 161 – 164, Wain (1981), p. 12 – 13 and Amer (1991), p. 102 – 104.

orchestrated in a manner and involved methods which did not necessarily force people to depart, but rather create possibilities for it. The conditions and policies in Vietnam for the departures resembled the ones in East Germany described by famous political economist Albert Hirschman (1993) in his essay *Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History*. He wrote about the authorities' actions towards the opposition in the country as follows:

> *In the following years the authorities systematically used forced exit to reduce voice. The special term abschieben (pushing out or pushing over the border) came into use to denote the decision to get rid of certain critics by allowing, encouraging, or obliging them to leave for the Federal Republic.*[625]

The quote by Hirschman highlights how there were systematic policies in place in the GDR to subtly push people, especially members of the opposition and critics of the regime, to leave the country. Although the situation was not identical in the SRV compared to the GDR, it bears a lot of similarities. In both examples, the regimes effectively created possibilities for certain portions of population that were perceived to be problematic by the authorities to leave.

This raises the question should we ultimately understand then the departures from Vietnam by their larger surrounding context or through how the individual decisions were formed? I would argue that while the expulsion campaign in Vietnam throughout its different phases relied often on individuals voluntarily departing, the ethnic Chinese exodus should be primarily be understood through the context of the expulsion campaign itself. The policies effectively allowed the ethnic Chinese, who were regarded as being problematic minority, to leave Vietnam more freely than other groups. This is however did not mean that refugees themselves were without agency in their decision to leave. Many were actively looking for a way out, as is evidenced by the account of Nguyễn Long and the story of Dr. Chung in his memoir.[626] Leaving was an active process which required planning, funds, and searching contacts.[627] For some people, departing was not an option, as the either the costs were too high or they could not leave Vietnam for some other reason.[628] In this manner, the expulsion campaign did not expel every single ethnic Chinese from Vietnam by all means necessary, but rather often relied on the ethnic Chinese "removing" themselves, especially in Southern Vietnam. Yet, it is important to also note the general situation in Vietnam regarding the ethnic Chinese around this period and that

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[625] Hirschman (1993), p. 184.
[626] Chung (2014), p. 86 – 88 and Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 47 – 50.
[627] Ibid.
[628] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48 – 50.

behind the expulsion campaign and the departure program were distinct and deliberate policies enacted by the Vietnamese authorities which made leaving possible.

Some scholars, such as Amer (1991), have previously avoided taking too definite stance on what extent the Vietnamese authorities were involved in the departures. Amer stated that:

> *It has not been possible to find out if any decision was taken at top leadership level to implement the semi legal departure system. Thus, any attempt to estimate the degree of involvement from top to bottom in the Vietnamese administration and party is naturally tentative or even speculative.*[629]

While actual Vietnamese government documents have not been forthcoming, and for this reason there are still many questions that we can only tentatively answer as Amer stated, examination of intelligence sources and other new sources in this study highlighted that there were these distinct decisions and policies behind the departure program and the expulsion campaign that according to these sources often came from the highest level. Furthermore, from these sources it was also possible to build an outline of how the Vietnamese government and authorities at different levels of administration were involved in the expulsion program. Based on this, I would argue that the emergence of the large-scale boat people crisis in 1978 and 1979 needs to be understood to have been closely connected to the ethnic Chinese expulsion campaign and to the CPV policies during this period. The involvement of the Vietnamese authorities in the boat people departures is seen as less speculative than Amer (1991) suggested in his original study.[630] Many previous studies, such as Amer (2013), Chang (1982), Chen (2006), Vo (2006) and Wain (1981), have also highlighted several of the links between the authorities' actions and the boat people crisis before, but at the same time they have often, with the exception of Wain and perhaps Amer (2013) in part, failed to highlight the systematic decisions and policies that created the ethnic Chinese exodus and increased the boat departures in 1978 and 1979.[631] The contribution this study brings to this topic is the conclusion that based on the examined new sources and several accounts, as well as re-examination of other available information, we can see that CPV did indeed try to expel ethnic Chinese minority members from Vietnam and enacted policies which led to the ethnic Chinese exodus from Northern and Southern Vietnam

[629] Amer (1991), p. 102.
[630] Amer (1991), p. 102 – 104.
[631] See Amer (1991), p. 102 – 104, Amer (2013), p. 10 – 15, Chang (1982), p. 222 and 227 – 228, Chen (2006), p. 56, Vo (2006), p. 89 – 90 and Wain (1981), p. 84 - 122 for discussions on the Vietnamese government involvement in the boat people crisis and the departures.

between early 1978 and mid-1979. Many of the examined intelligence assessment also provided new information on the specific factors and decisions behind the policies.

The politics of expulsions seemed to be inherently connected to both domestic developments and to the Sino-Vietnamese relations. Due to the emerging conflict between the PRC and the SRV, the unresolved issues revolving around the identity, citizenship and nationality of the ethnic Chinese needed to be resolved quickly. These issues were also in part connected to the relations between these two countries and to the positions both of these countries had on these issues.[632] The expulsions and the policies that the SRV adopted towards the ethnic Chinese cannot really be understood without examining them through the context of the Sino-Vietnamese relations, as the belonging and loyalty of the ethnic Chinese seemed to be reflected through their perceived relationship towards the PRC and through the threats that this minority would possibly cause in a case of widespread conflict between these two countries.

Yet, at the same time equally important were the domestic developments in Vietnam. The politics of the expulsion in Southern Vietnam were in many ways connected to the communist state-making in the South. Although there was at first after the reunification room for private entrepreneurs and economic in the economic sphere of the South, the process of gradual transformation of the national economy in the South slowly changed the economic realities and societal position of many ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam. The branding of the non-comprador bourgeoisie class, to which most of the ethnic Chinese working individuals belonged, as unproductive and the subsequent decisions to try to force members of this class to work in production created a lot of discontent and opposition among the ethnic Chinese.[633] Whether or not the departure program was started as a response to relieve internal pressures brought on by the opposition to the changes in the Southern Vietnam's economic system and confiscation of property, as has been suggested by previously Nguyễn Long is debatable.[634] The departure program certainly became an avenue through which those individuals who no longer saw any future in living in the post-war Vietnam could leave. But it was also channel through which a minority, that that was according to many signs perceived to be a potential fifth column by the Vietnamese authorities, could be removed. Furthermore, before the departure program was started, the opposition to the economic reforms by the ethnic Chinese had been quite strong, and according to Long, the authorities' had themselves approached the ethnic Chinese

[632] Amer (2013), p. 12.
[633] Nguyen, V.C (2017), p. 44 – 45.
[634] Nguyen and Kendall (1981), p. 48.

community leaders, so from this perspective it would be reasonable to suggest that it was at least partly commenced to alleviate the internal pressure and opposition.

The expulsions themselves served a purpose by removing members of this perceived fifth column. In the case of the Southern Vietnam, the risks that the ethnic Chinese were perceived to cause were more likely related to the economic power and societal power that the ethnic Chinese as an influential community had to oppose societal changes that the communists were trying to enact, rather than to security issues that were more prevalent in the North. Naturally, the events in the North and the disputes with the PRC over the ethnic Chinese affected the social position of the ethnic Chinese in Southern Vietnam also throughout the expulsion campaign. The politics of the expulsion were in this manner connected also to the general political situation within the country. Yet, at the same time, there were regional differences in how the expulsions were implemented and from which reasons they seemed to have stemmed from, which demonstrates how during this time the history of political and societal separation and differences still lingered between the areas of the two former Vietnams.

The organized confiscation of property and wealth by the Vietnamese government and authorities in Southern Vietnam seemed to be one of these differences. Interestingly, during my research I was not able to find any evidence or corroborating accounts that the departure program that is discussed in this study would have been operational in Northern Vietnam, but almost all studies done on the topic that have discussed the refugee trafficking and departure program before have presented it as a thing that happened throughout Vietnam.[635] In this manner, many of the previous studies that have discussed the logistics and details of the refugee trafficking have misrepresented this key aspect of the expulsion campaign. Furthermore, in general, the economic motives that were driving the expansion of the expulsion program has also not been discussed enough in previous literature. The confiscation of personal property and the large payments were an integral part of the government run departure program in Southern Vietnam but not it seems in the North, perhaps due to the differences in the wealth and occupations between the ethnic Chinese communities in the region. In many ways, the practice was akin to profitable extortion, as the refugees had to pay to the Vietnamese government covertly for something that would have been illegal otherwise. In addition to this, the Vietnamese authorities were stopping departures through other methods.

[635] See Amer (1991), p. 85 – 87, Amer (2013), p. 12, Chang (1982), p. 222 and 227 – 228, Chen (2006), p. 56, Vo (2006), p. 89 – 90 and Wain (1981), p. 84 – 85.

It is evident that the involvement of the Vietnamese government in a large portion of the departures through the departure program during the years 1978 and 1979 needs to be better acknowledged and discussed in future studies discussing the ethnic Chinese exodus and the boat people crisis. The departures of the refugees also need to be placed in the context they were happening in, as the societal events and political developments pushed many to seek ways of leaving Vietnam, and ultimately to depart. At the same time, it also needs to be acknowledged that the politics of the expulsion and the expulsion campaign were in many ways connected to the broader goals that the CPV had for building the state and society and to the conflict it was having with China. Interestingly, as the ethnic Chinese were not outright forcibly expelled, but rather left in a sense voluntarily through government program (especially in Southern Vietnam) and arrived quite often safely to the nearby countries, in some accounts, such as Vo (2006) they have been even been painted as having been the lucky ones.[636] This type of conclusion naturally largely disregards the realities and the larger societal context surrounding the departures and presents an dishonest picture of the situation, but it also demonstrates, how hard it has ultimately been to interpret and discuss the subtle differences between voluntary and coerced actions when it has come to the boat people departures and ethnic Chinese exodus and how difficult it has been to tell the story of the CPV and the boat people.

[636] Vo (2006), p. 124. Vo wrote about the situation of the ethnic Chinese as follows: "*By contrast to the Vietnamese, the Chinese had been able to buy their way out in an official or semi-official way: they dealt directly with the PSB or local police and got fairly deferent treatment. They traveled with their families and in large groups of a few hundred people. The Hanoi government even loaded them by the thousands in the Southern cross, Hai Hong, Huey Fong and other ships. Since they traveled in groups, they were not subjected to pirate attacks and therefore suffered much less than other boat people. Many of them were lucky enough to be transferred to third countries without vegetating in the camps for a long time.*"

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