



# VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

Crime rates  
of minors  
and youths  
in New  
South Wales

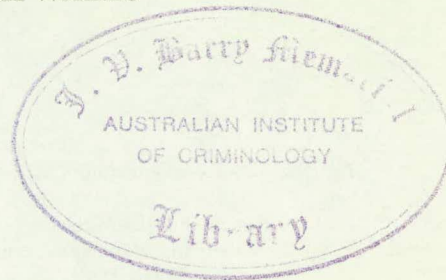
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**VIETNAMESE REFUGEES:**  
**CRIME RATES OF MINORS AND YOUTHS**  
**IN**  
**NEW SOUTH WALES**



**Patricia Weiser Easteal**

**Australian Institute of Criminology**

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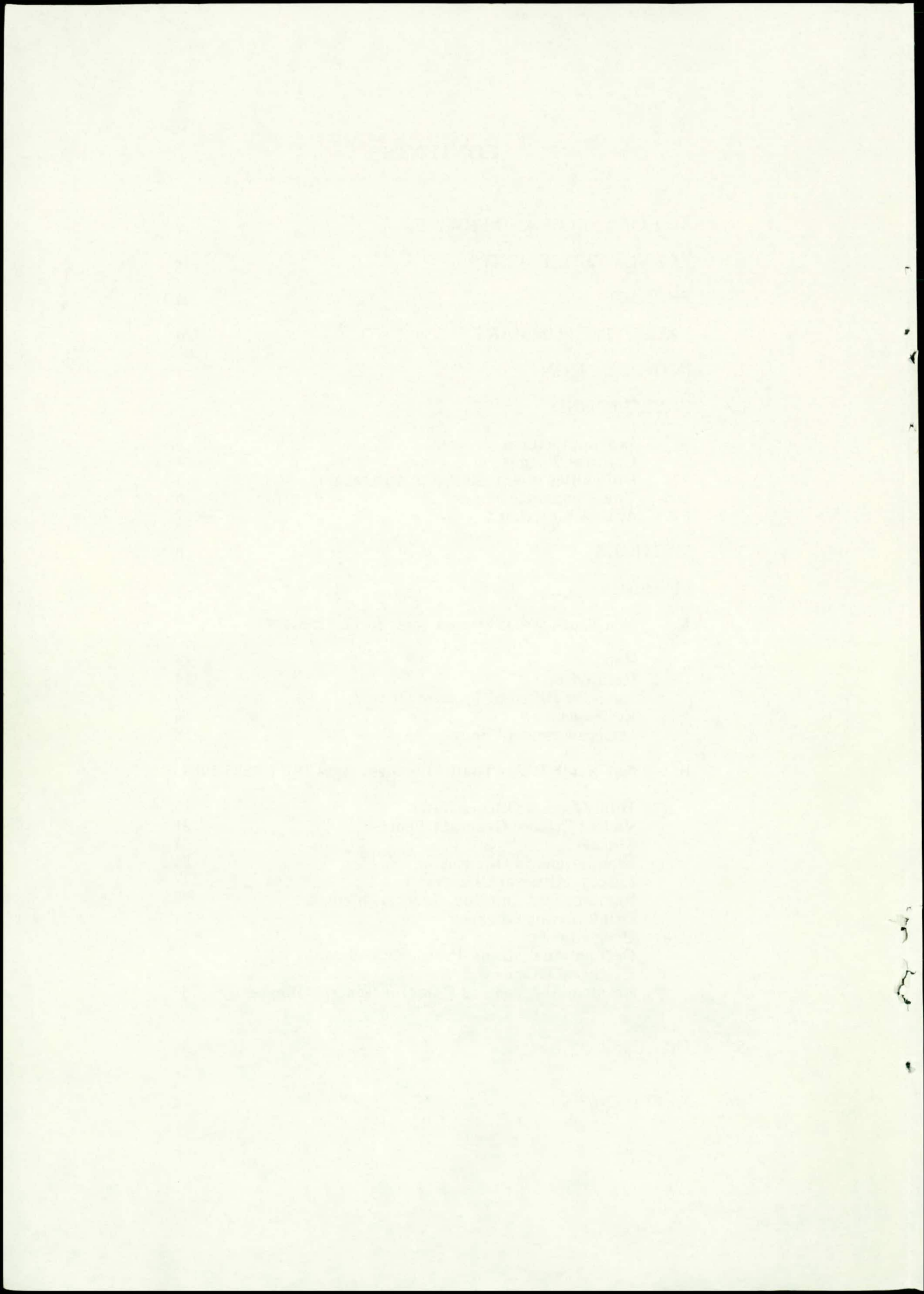
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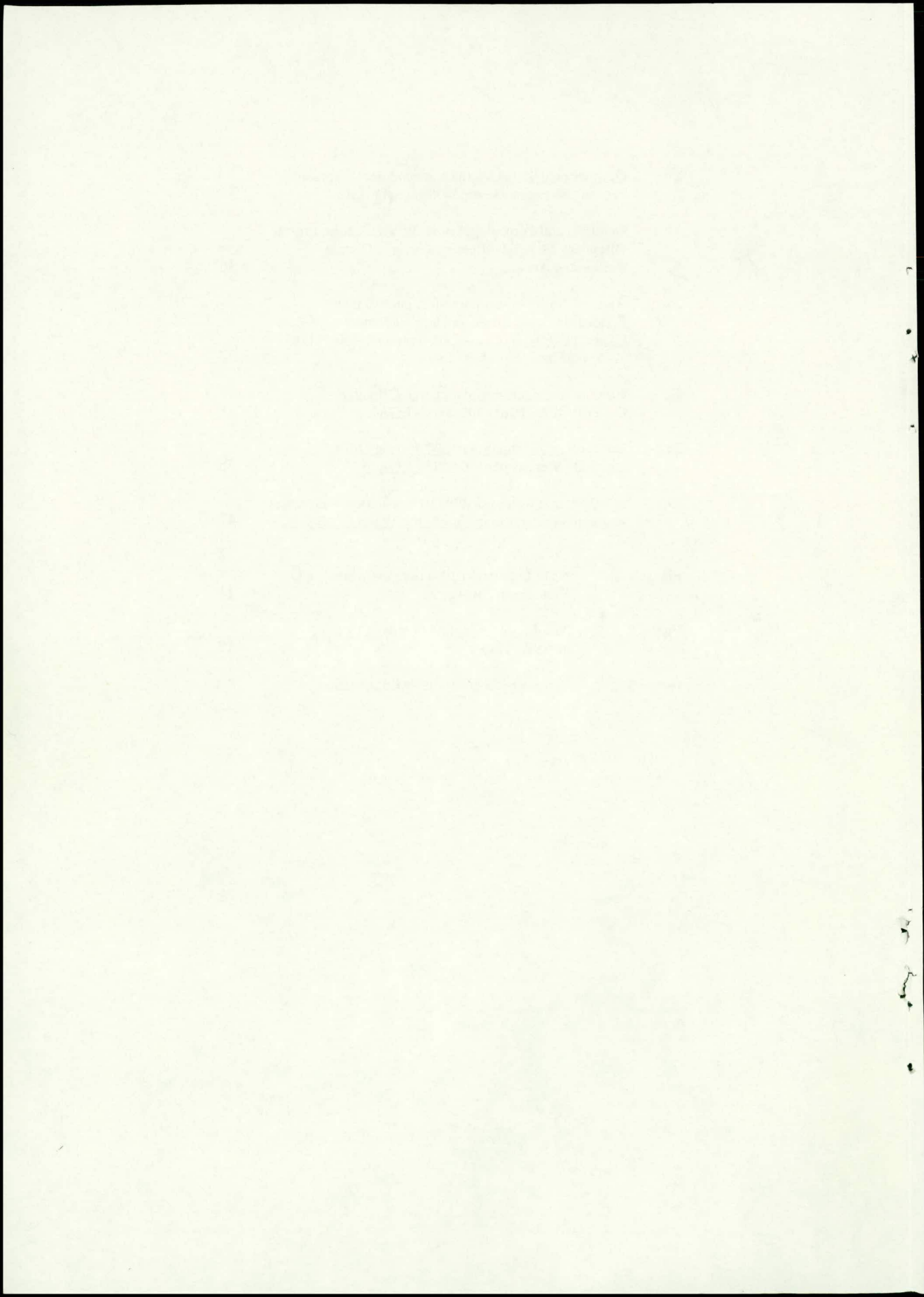
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## PREFACE

Vietnamese youth have been the focus of sensational media reports about the alleged extent of their criminal activity. Such reports have resulted in the Vietnamese community being stigmatised. In order to provide authoritative data on this issue, the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs funded the study described in this report.

It was originally envisaged that quantitative data would be collected and analysed for two states, New South Wales and Victoria. In both states it was necessary to undertake painstaking extraction of records for Vietnamese youth offenders on a case by case basis before the data for this population could be compared with non-Vietnamese data. Unfortunately it was found that court records in Victoria were not centralised, rendering the assembly of complete records for both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese youth offenders in that state impossible within the time constraints of the research. While records for Vietnamese youth offenders were compiled for three courts, there was no way of knowing how representative they were of Victorian courts as a whole, or how they compared with non-Vietnamese youth offenders. Because of these unknown error factors, it was decided to include Victorian data only for comparative purposes at a few points in the report. Nonetheless, there is no reason to doubt that the findings in this study cannot be generalised, and sufficient Victorian data were collected to suggest that the situation of Vietnamese youth offenders in that state may be similar to New South Wales.

The critical finding of the research is that, in New South Wales at least, Vietnamese youth offenders have a significantly lower crime rate than their non-Vietnamese counterparts. This result suggests that sensational media reports are not indicative of the level of criminal activities within the Vietnamese community.

The quantitative analysis which is the focus of this report makes an important contribution to our understanding of the issues. Further research on the topic is recommended, both to assess the applicability of the findings to other locations and over a longer time period, and to undertake qualitative analyses of the socio-economic and cultural circumstances which may affect crime rates and types of crime committed by Vietnamese youth. For example, one question raised by the present research is whether acculturation of the Vietnamese community may increase participation in criminal activities, perhaps to levels similar to the Australian population in general.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vietnamese have experienced many difficulties in adjusting to life in Australia due to the psychosocial problems inherent in refugee status coupled with employment and language barriers. In particular, those youth (unaccompanied minors) who have arrived without their parents and often without other family, have the additional stresses which result from loss of kin folk: a sense of hopelessness, low self-esteem, social isolation and general anxiety. Research was undertaken to investigate whether these factors lead to a disproportionately high crime rate for Vietnamese refugees, ages 10 to 24, accompanied and/or unaccompanied.

The main findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

### **New South Wales Minors, Ages 10-17, 1985-1987**

1. The Vietnamese rate for proven offenders was significantly lower (almost half) than the non-Vietnamese over the three-year period. Thus, this group appears to be **less** at risk for criminal activity than the non-Vietnamese.
2. Growth in the Vietnamese proven offender rate during the three years has been moderate and not statistically significant.
3. Non-Vietnamese girls' court appearances occurred at five to eight times the rate of Vietnamese girls.
4. Each year over 70 per cent of the Vietnamese minors making a court appearance were first offenders. In 1987, the non-Vietnamese rate for those with two or more prior court appearances was over six times that of the Vietnamese.
5. Although the Vietnamese assault rate increased from 1985 to 1987, non-Vietnamese minors showed a similar upsurge in violent crimes.

### **New South Wales Unaccompanied Minors, Ages 10-17, 1985-1987**

1. Of the offending minors sample, 4.1 per cent were unaccompanied, which is markedly low if one considers that

unaccompanied minors make up 12 per cent of the total refugee minor youth.

2. The mean offence rate for unaccompanied minors was 257.7 per 100 000, significantly below the accompanied offenders' rate of 823.4 per 100 000. Thus, this group appears to be **less** at risk for criminal activity than those arriving with their parents.

#### **New South Wales Youth Offenders, Ages 18-24, 1985-1987**

1. The Vietnamese youth crime rate rose significantly from 1985 to 1987 and latterly was more than double the rate for those over age 24. However, proportionate to their respective total populations Vietnamese youth committed fewer crimes than non-Vietnamese youth. This is particularly significant since non-Vietnamese youth constitute a smaller proportion of their total population as compared to the Vietnamese.
2. The non-Vietnamese youth offence rate has also risen significantly since 1985 and is now almost double the crime rate of Vietnamese youth; for males, it was more than two times greater in 1987. Thus, Vietnamese youth are clearly a lower crime risk group.
3. The violent crime rate for Vietnamese youth has increased since 1985 but the increment was not statistically significant. In 1987, the Vietnamese youth violent crime rate continued to be much lower than their non-Vietnamese counterparts.
4. There appears to be a relatively high murder rate within the Vietnamese community, though unfortunately the available statistics are not comparable with the statistics used elsewhere in the report, being available only for the age range 18 and over, and for victims rather than offenders. Given these methodological limitations, and the fact that the apparent finding on murder contradicts the direction of all other findings in the report (i.e. lower Vietnamese than non-Vietnamese crime rates), it is not possible to draw firm conclusions on levels of Vietnamese participation in murder.
5. Non-Vietnamese youth participation in fraud remains significantly higher than for Vietnamese youth.

6. Although the Vietnamese youths' larceny rate doubled from 1986 to 1987, it was still marginally lower than the non-Vietnamese rate.
7. There was a virtual dearth of breaking and entering type offences committed by Vietnamese.
8. The non-Vietnamese drink-driving rate was almost four times that of Vietnamese youth in 1987, consistent with the highly significant difference for the prior two years.
9. In 1987, the Vietnamese youth drug offences rate was almost 15 times lower than the non-Vietnamese rate.
10. For both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese, almost one half of the offenders each year were unemployed.
11. A high percentage of Vietnamese offenders live in four Sydney suburbs. Three of these areas had higher crime rates in 1976, prior to the large-scale influx of Vietnamese, than in 1987. Further, for both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese, these neighbourhoods' crime rates for 1985-1987 were higher than the average for the rest of New South Wales.
12. Females of all ages and populations were less prone to criminal activity than males. The 18-24 year old Vietnamese women's rate exceeded that of Vietnamese women over age 24 in 1987, a reversal of the prior two years. However, they remained virtual non-participants in violent offences, breaking and entering, drink-driving and drug offences.

## **Conclusion**

The data refute the media portrayal of rampant youth violence in the Vietnamese community. Indigenous cultural values such as identity and loyalty of the individual to the family and the 'loss of face' incurred by anti-social activity may act as strong deterrents.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A substantial number of articles and news stories reporting on Vietnamese community crime in Australia has appeared in the media over the last few years. Much of this media attention has focused on youth gangs with quite inconsistent and disparate images of these groups being conveyed. At one end of the spectrum, the gangs are portrayed as pseudo-mafiosa-like, complete with godfathers who induct parentless refugee minors into their 'families' and force them to commit extortion, robbery, car theft and gambling/drug offences. However, this organised crime scenario is disputed by articles that cite case-workers and local Vietnamese community leaders who discredit the idea of criminal gangs but speak instead of small groups of bored and lonely youths gravitating to street corners in the absence of structured recreational support.

What cannot be denied is that some Vietnamese youth groups do exist as evidenced by fights between them and similar Lebanese groups. The extent of criminal activity engaged in by such youths can only be a matter of speculation since there has been no research to date in this area. Studies on Vietnamese refugees in Australia, such as the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales' report (1986) on Vietnamese/Lebanese youth conflict, emphasise the traumatic histories of young refugees (war, 'exile', culture shock) and the current conditions that exacerbate the high stress nature of refugee status (high unemployment, shifting ethnic migration). These descriptions of the past and present problems for refugees often include warning of a high risk potential for anti-social or emotionally disturbed behaviour.

This report addresses these concerns by reviewing the experiential and cultural sources of stress for Vietnamese refugees in Australia, particularly youth and those minors who arrived without parents (unaccompanied minors), and the possible criminal activity correlates that have arisen. Specifically, crime rates for Vietnamese minors (ages 10-17) and youth (18-24) in New South Wales from 1985 through 1987 are presented with a three-fold analytical focus: contrasts among the Vietnamese offenders by age and/or gender; comparisons between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese minors and youth; and detection of any trends during the three-year time period. Overall general offence rates, specific offence rates, occupational and residential background, and recidivism data (for minors) are

described. In addition, criminal participation by unaccompanied youth is analysed.

The study focuses on New South Wales where over 40 per cent of the Vietnamese have settled and where centralised court data are more readily accessible. The findings may well be applicable to other Vietnamese communities in Australia as shown by some limited Victorian data. The findings must be regarded as preliminary and tentative due to a number of methodological issues discussed in Section 3, METHODS. They do however provide a good indication of the nature and extent of Vietnamese youth criminal activity in New South Wales.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### Leaving Vietnam

The many years of war in Vietnam and their aftermath led to increased societal tensions among a population divided by ethnicity, region, class, religion and political orientation (Frieze 1986, pp. 4-5). Economic problems also worsened and ideational changes occurred with the loss of power by the old elite and the spread of the Communist ideology (Viviani 1984, pp. 36-7). In addition to all this instability, 57 per cent of the population were homeless at the end of the war (Hawthorne 1982, p. 117).

Thus there were a large number of push factors that resulted in the exodus of more than one million Vietnamese from 1975 to 1982 in four main waves. The first group to leave (immediately following the fall of Saigon in 1975) was very heterogeneous in class and employment history (Lewins 1985, p. 29). Heterogeneity in ethnicity (Vietnamese, Chinese), religion (Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity) and social class also marked the later waves (Viviani 1984, p. 145).

Those leaving Vietnam were not simply migrants, but refugees, which translated into additional problems of adjustment. As Lewins (1985, p. 27) states, they left out of fear of persecution. This made resettlement more problematic since, as refugees, they could not return to their homeland. They had experienced much physical and emotional hardship, and were often financially and materially bereft. More stress is involved in refugee than in non-refugee migration since little voluntary behaviour is involved (Berry 1986, p. 25). In addition, further economic problems may be posed since refugees, more than migrants, may resist accepting jobs that represent underemployment since they want, or need to recover their lost status (Stein 1986, p. 15).

Leaving Vietnam, often without the family intact was traumatic enough, but the trip to refugee camps by boat or land often ended tragically or, at the least, involved severe deprivation. Also, many refugees, including many youths without families, often waited months in poorly organised camps for permission and/or sponsorship to enter a new homeland.

## **Cultural 'Baggage'**

The Vietnamese were forced to leave their homeland but carried within them many of their traditional values, behaviours and attitudes. These included the following:

1. the importance of the extended family as a primary unit for economic and social co-operation and welfare both among the ethnic Vietnamese and the ethnic Chinese: kin lived within the same household or nearby (Viviani 1984, p. 145);
2. the principle of generational hierarchy as embodied in filial piety: youth owed their respect and loyalty to their elders;
3. the importance of family reputation: a by-product of the family structure and filial piety was the relationship between an individual's actions and the family. A child who performed well, e.g. educationally, brought praise to the kinship unit; an individual's failure(s) resulted in familial disgrace or dishonour. This reflects the concept of 'face' which was perhaps the most important facet of the Vietnamese social code (Barker 1980, pp. 118-20). Family reputation or 'face' was the composite of the individual members' behaviour;
4. the importance of education with the teacher in an authoritarian role and learning primarily by rote (Loh 1985, p. 26);
5. the indirect and usually respectful expression of feelings to others, differing according to the social roles of those involved (Barker 1980, p. 115).

## **Difficulties in Adjustment to Australia**

Over 83,000 Vietnamese-born people live in Australia. Most arrived without the kinship structure which they had depended on in Vietnam. For instance, among those in the first wave of immigration only a little over one-half consisted of even the most basic nuclear families (Lewins 1985, p. 35). Thus, government welfare programs were necessary replacements but according to

Lewins (1985, p. 38) language problems at times hindered the acquisition of necessary benefits.

Some 87 per cent of the first wave refugees started work in unskilled jobs due to their lack of English and a failure of Australia to recognise their past credentials (Lewins 1985, p. 42). This pattern continued with later waves which had a lower proportion of people with white collar backgrounds. In 1984, Vietnamese had the highest unemployment rate (33.9 per cent) in Australia (as opposed to eight per cent for Australian-born).

Other financial difficulties have resulted from the refugees' loyalty to their family back 'home' and their perceived need to send money back to these relatives. According to Lewins (1985, p. 36), this has both depleted resources and contributed to a lack of acceptance of Australia as the new homeland.

Aside from the lack of extended family, the modified family structure has undergone further stresses with traditional gender and age roles shifting. Many women have been forced by monetary necessity to go to work. Some of the more traditional first wave males are reported to be concerned over the new assertiveness which accompanies extra-domestic employment (Lewins 1985, p. 62). The same group expressed concern about the rate of their children's acculturation to Australian values with a consequent loss of belief in the principles of traditional Vietnamese family life. According to Stannard (1985, p. 68) the combination of unemployment and low status work for men and the assimilation of the younger generation has eroded the concepts of respect and filial piety with some young people reportedly preferring to leave their parents' home and live on the dole.

As stated earlier, educational achievement was a traditional social value brought by the refugees to Australia. However, many youth expecting to go on in school are forced to go to work in order to help family survival. Others try but do not succeed. They are older, more experienced and mature, but lacking in education. Most do not arrive with a stable educational background; schooling was severely disrupted in Vietnam in 1975 (Borthwick 1987, p. 5). Also the teacher's role is different in Australia, less authoritative and learning is not primarily by rote.

These obstacles are supplemented by basic communication differences. Aside from difficulties with English, which are not totally overcome by 12-month language schools, there are more subtle communication problems (which also affect employment

and general social adjustment). For example, in Vietnamese one responds, 'yes' to all queries, meaning, 'I can hear you'. This obviously can lead to misunderstandings with a non-Vietnamese speaker. It is also considered ill-mannered to maintain eye contact when talking (Barker 1980, p. 121). This sign of respect could be construed as the opposite or even as slyness in the Australian cultural context.

### **Unaccompanied Minors**

A large proportion of the refugees consisted of single males, ages 15 to 24 (Borthwick 1987). Included were many unaccompanied minors, either alone (unattached) or more commonly migrating with or sponsored by a relative other than parents (detached). The former are considered to be wards of the Minister for Immigration. Zulfacar (1984) and interviews of social workers by Loewald for this study confirm that original care arrangements for detached youths have a high breakdown rate in Australia. The latter report that some leave their sponsors since they are being treated either as domestic servants or are not actually related, just sharing a surname. These youth then become 'isolated' detached minors.

The unaccompanied youths' problems in adjustment are compounded by stress resulting from: a sense of hopelessness; low self-esteem; social isolation and general anxiety (Fry 1985, p. 39). Difficulties with language mentioned earlier hamper their struggle to succeed at school. Many in Zulfacar's (1984) sample spent all their leisure time at home trying to advance educationally. Lindsay (1985, p. 13) interprets this massive scholastic effort as stemming from family pressure, desire to achieve honour for the family, and guilt for being the ones to make it out of Vietnam.

Parentless youth are considered by a number of researchers to be the highest risk group for psychological disorder and maladjustment. However, Krupinski et al. (1986, p. 213) actually found that being unaccompanied was **not** a factor that enhanced the likelihood of developing psychopathology. The 24-month longitudinal study showed that those who were unemployed and not seeking employment had the highest psychiatric morbidity rate. He also found that cultural stresses did not change during the two years, a finding that contradicts Daly and Carpenter (1985, p. 974) who found significant increases in social adjustment over

time. Both Porte and Torney-Purta (1987) and Adler (1985) also discovered that placement of unaccompanied minors in ethnic foster homes reduced depression and improved academic performance.

### **At Risk for Crime?**

Idle and alienated juveniles are traditionally more vulnerable to committing illegal acts (Hazlehurst 1987, p. 23). There is a disproportionately high unemployment rate for refugee youth and internal cultural conflict between traditional socialisation and Australian values. Further, Lin (1986, p. 67) believes that psychopathology which can be manifested in sociopathic behaviour such as shoplifting may result from the stresses of being a refugee. Others (Lindsay 1985; Porte & Torney-Purta 1987) believe the unaccompanied minors are the highest risk refugee group for dysfunction. Given this scenario one might well accept the more sensational depictions of Vietnamese youth gang crime presented in the press. However, studies have shown that, on the whole, migrant persons commit fewer crimes and are less likely to be in prison (as of 1985); in fact, between 1982 and 1985, Asians in Australia had one of the lowest rates (Hazlehurst 1987, p. 10). The situation remains ambiguous since criminal problems may be secreted within ethnic enclaves and there has been little study of immigrant crime rates done, with none focusing on youth. Hopefully, the following analysis will help to clarify the situation with respect to Vietnamese youth crime.

### 3. METHODS

For this study, Loewald identified Vietnamese offenders by surname for 1985, 1986 and 1987 from the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services records (minors, ages 10-17) and the New South Wales adult lower court records stored at the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Information on age, gender, case disposition, occupation and area of residence was obtained.

There are several potential sources of error in determining estimates of offender rates from data acquired in this manner. These include the following:

1. the non-identification of Vietnamese offenders with non-Vietnamese names: Vietnamese ethnicity was assumed for those with Vietnamese names or Chinese names written in the Vietnamese style; however, the ethnicity of a number of names was uncertain and these were not included. In addition, Asian names may have been misspelled by Australian officials and emerge erroneously as non-Vietnamese;
2. the incorrect reporting of age by the Vietnamese refugees: according to Loewald, immigration officers believe that all refugees, including Vietnamese, tend to state their ages as lower, possibly for perceived social benefit gains. This practice may introduce inaccuracies in comparisons between particular age classes;
3. failure to pick up all Vietnamese adult offenders from court record stubs; an additional potential source of error was introduced by the fact that the information on some stubs was missing, incomplete or illegible.

Under-enumeration may also result from the nature of the ethnic community's reporting of crime. Expectations of police vary cross-culturally and migrants bring their perceptions of law enforcement with them (Francis 1981, p. 70). Thus, Vietnamese victims may fail to call the police out of fear and distrust that stem from experiences in Vietnam. However, it should be noted that since 1985, task forces, ethnic liaison police officers and foot patrols have been operant in the New South Wales Vietnamese

communities both to combat crime and to encourage a positive police/community relationship.

Numbers of non-Vietnamese offenders were estimated by subtracting the estimates of Vietnamese numbers from the total number of New South Wales offenders.

Records of offenders of unknown age and/or gender were distributed in proportion to the known age and gender ratios. The validity of the procedure was tested by applying it to situations where, for example, the gender of individuals was unknown but the age was known. The predicted age distribution of such 'unknowns' was always close to the actual distribution.

Comparisons were made between the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese under 17 (minors) and 18-24 (youth) age group, and between the Vietnamese 18-24 and over 24 age group. No comparisons were made between the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese over 24 years. The reason for this, aside from the fact that the focus of the report is on youth crime, is that the age distributions of the two populations above age 24 are quite different. There are proportionally more non-Vietnamese in the older age classes (> 40, Figure 1). Since the number of crimes committed by individuals over the age of 40 is relatively small (Figure 2), comparison of the crime rates between the two groups' older age categories is not valid.

For the same reason, group-wide rate comparisons are invalid given the higher proportion of high crime risk-age adults in the Vietnamese population. The only such rates included in this study are the Local Government Area (LGA) figures for Vietnamese population and offenders' place of residence. Comparisons are limited to analysis of how each group's crime rates have changed and how each compares to the rest of New South Wales. Murder rates and prison rates are based on the total adult population of both groups, and also should be interpreted in the light of demographic imbalance.

Pearson's  $X^2$  values were computed by log-linear modelling methods using the statistical computer package GLIM.

The question of criminal participation by unaccompanied Vietnamese minors was analysed from a different type of data set. The names of 75 per cent of the total Vietnamese offenders, ages 10-17, who made court appearances from 1985 to 1987 were provided by the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services (N = 141). The Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (DILGEA) made available

an historical and current roster of unattached and detached minors in New South Wales. Aside from cross-checking the list by names and birth dates to identify unaccompanied offenders, rates were computed for them and for the 'accompanied' group of offenders. The rates were generated for the mean of the three years since the Vietnamese minors/offenders list was not differentiated by year. The unaccompanied minors' total population size was calculated by including only those individuals who were 10 to 17 and in Australia each of the years; the average was then calculated.

Figure 1  
NSW Population, by Age  
1986

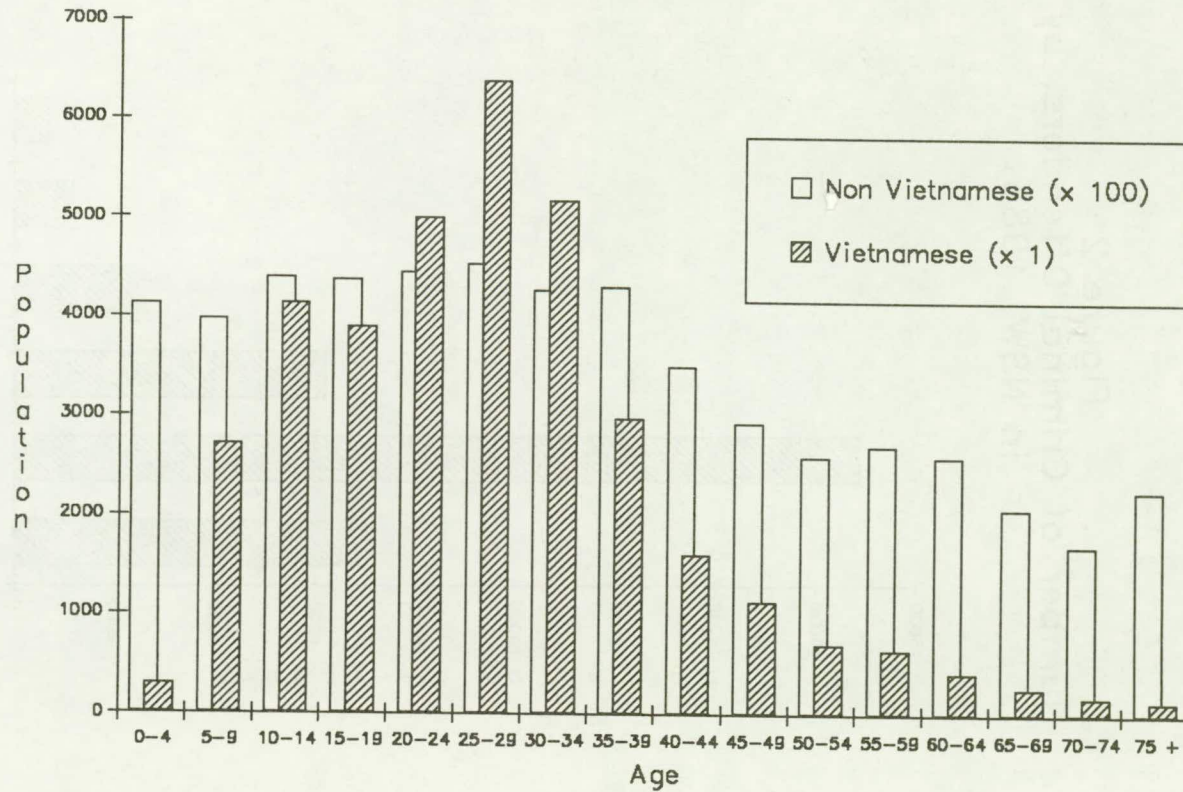
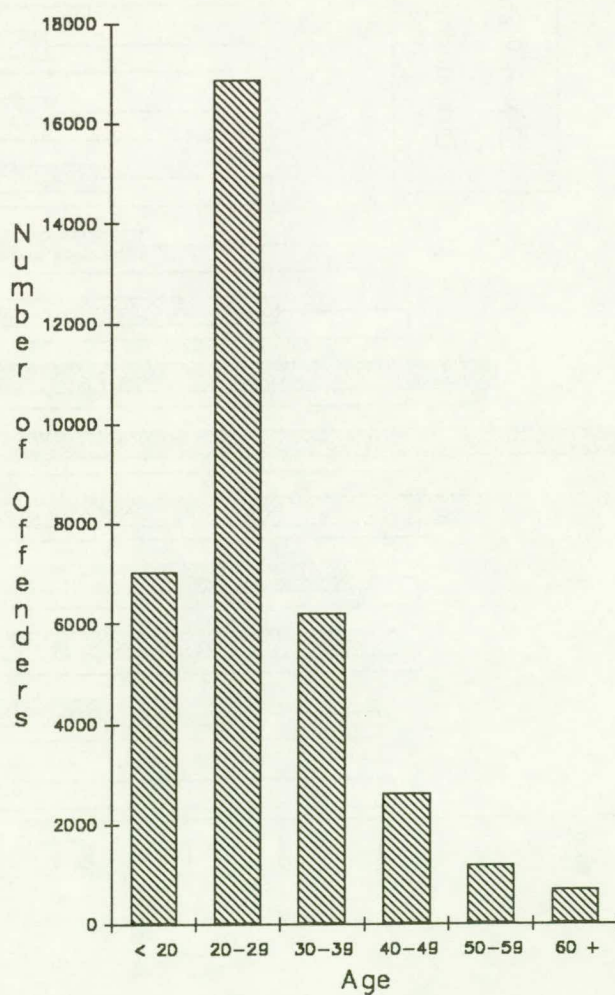


Figure 2  
Number of Criminal Offenders, by Age  
in NSW, 1986



#### 4. FINDINGS

##### A. New South Wales Minors, Ages 10-17, 1985-1987

###### Rates

Data for minors are classified by 'court appearance'. By subtracting 'dismissed' and 'withdrawn' dispositions, proven offender rates were calculated. Table 1 shows that the Vietnamese rate was significantly lower than the non-Vietnamese (1987,  $X_1^2 = 31.6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The growth in the Vietnamese proven offender rate over the three years has been moderate and not statistically significant ( $X_1^2 = 1.09$ ).

TABLE 1: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 PROVEN OFFENDERS, NSW VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE MINORS, AGES 10-17, 1985-1987

TYPE OF MINOR OFFENDER	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese	51	846.3	60	923.9	71	1024.4
Non-Vietnamese	15 377	2161.6	12 762	1794.8	13 986	1963.9

- Notes:
1. **Proven Offenders** are derived by excluding findings of 'dismissed' and 'withdrawn' from court appearance total numbers for both population groups.
  2. **Vietnamese rates** are per 100 000 Vietnamese, ages 10-17 in NSW. Non-Vietnamese rates are per 100 000 non-Vietnamese ages 10-17 in NSW; Vietnamese ages 10-17 are subtracted from total offender and population numbers.

Numbers by gender are only available by court appearance. Table 2 indicates that both for males ( $X_1^2 = 30.0$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and for females ( $X^2 = 13.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) there were significantly lower appearance rates for the Vietnamese in 1987 (and in the earlier years). Vietnamese rate increase has been slow during the time period with females remaining constant at markedly low numbers, for example two or three offenders. The non-Vietnamese rates for both genders show a drop in 1986 with a 1987 total that did not reach the 1985 levels.

**TABLE 2: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION, NSW COURT APPEARANCES, VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE MINORS, AGES 10-17, 1985-1987**

TYPE OF MINOR OFFENDER	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	52	1574.3	64	1815.6	72	1931.3
Non-Viet. Males	13 860	3810.7	11 961	3289.4	13 077	3614.1
Vietnamese Females	3	110.1	2	67.4	3	93.6
Non-Viet. Females	2 521	725.1	1 825	525.3	2 024	585.4
Total Vietnamese	55	912.4	66	1016.3	75	1081.9
Total Non-Viet.	16 381	2302.7	13 786	1938.8	15 101	2134.2

- Notes:
1. **Court appearance** data are used since gender breakdown was not available for proven offences.
  2. **Vietnamese rates** are per 100 000 Vietnamese, ages 10-17 in NSW; male Vietnamese rates are per 100 000 male Vietnamese ages 10-17 in NSW and female Vietnamese rates are per 100 000 female Vietnamese ages 10-17 in NSW.
  3. **Non-Vietnamese rates** are calculated as above for the general population numbers minus Vietnamese offenders and population.

## Recidivism

Tables 3A and 3B shed some light on the rate differences between the groups. Each year, over 70 per cent of the Vietnamese minors making a court appearance were first offenders; consistently 20 per cent less of the non-Vietnamese had no prior court appearances. The latter's appearance rate with two or more prior court cases was far above that of the Vietnamese; the difference between the groups being highly significant ( $X_1^2 = 31.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , in 1987). In fact, in 1987, the non-Vietnamese rate with two or more 'priors' was over six times that of the Vietnamese. Thus, although non-Vietnamese rates are consistently higher independent of recidivism (for example 1.4 times higher for the 'no priors'), there is a definite increase in rate differential when 'priors' are a variable.

**TABLE 3A: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION, PRIOR PREVIOUS PROVEN CRIMINAL APPEARANCES FOR VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE NSW MINORS MAKING COURT APPEARANCES, 1985-1987**

TYPE OF MINOR OFFENDER/NO. OF 'PRIORS'	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese No priors	43	713.6	46	708.3	56	808.0
Non-Vietnamese No priors	8978	1262.0	6914	972.3	7940	1122.1
Vietnamese One prior	8	132.8	10	154.0	12	173.1
Non-Vietnamese One prior	2926	411.3	2384	335.3	2598	367.2
Vietnamese 2+ priors	4	66.4	10	154.0	7	100.1
Non-Vietnamese 2+ priors	1177	629.3	4488	631.2	4563	644.9

Notes: 1. Prior appearance data were not available for proven offenders.

2. Rates are calculated as in Table 1, note 2.

**TABLE 3B: PERCENTAGES, PRIOR PREVIOUS PROVEN CRIMINAL APPEARANCES FOR VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE NSW MINORS MAKING COURT APPEARANCES, 1985-1987**

NO OF PRIOR APPEARANCES	1985		1986		1987	
	VIET. %	NON-VIET. %	VIET. %	NON-VIET. %	VIET. %	NON-VIET. %
No Prior	78.2	54.8	69.70	50.1	74.7	52.6
One Prior	14.5	17.9	15.15	17.3	16.0	17.2
Two+ Priors	7.3	27.3	15.15	32.6	9.3	30.2

As stated above, there has been no significant increase in Vietnamese minors' crime rate from 1985 to 1987. It should be noted in this context that the recidivism rate has not in fact increased steadily during those years but dropped in 1987 (for those appearing with two or more 'priors').

## Rates for Different Types of Offence

Table 4 displays the rates for some of the offences committed by the minors making court appearances. The Vietnamese assault increase from one in 1985 to nine in 1987 does represent a significant upsurge ( $X_1^2 = 6.1$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); however the non-Vietnamese also experienced an increase in assault rate ( $X_1^2 = 15.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). No statistical significance was found between the two groups' 1987 assault rates.

Other serious crimes such as murder, attempted murder, sexual offences and armed robbery have no Vietnamese offenders over the three years except one 1986 attempted murder. Drug and drink-type offences, extortion and fraud were also virtually non-existent among the Vietnamese minors. The non-Vietnamese rates for all of these criminal acts were also extremely low.

Neither group's property offence rates have shown a rate of increase similar to assault. For the Vietnamese, only 'motor vehicle theft' and 'other good order' have shown a steady, albeit slow increase whilst none of the non-Vietnamese property crime rates have gained steadily. In fact, shoplifting, motor vehicle theft and breaking and entering rates dropped moderately in 1986 and then rose slightly in 1987.

## Residence

Although Tables 1 to 3 clearly show the lower level of Vietnamese crime, one should note that most of the crime was localised within a few residential areas. Table 5 illustrates the clustering of Vietnamese offenders in Bankstown, Canterbury, Fairfield and Marrickville. The percentage of the total Vietnamese offending minors living in these suburbs generally exceeded the percentage of the Vietnamese population living in these areas (Canterbury was the exception). The difference narrowed, however, in 1987. In 1985 and 1986, the proportion of non-Vietnamese offending minors in these areas also exceeded the proportion of the general population living there, but only slightly. By 1987, the percentages were about equivalent.

**TABLE 4: NUMBERS (N) AND RATES (R) PER 100 000  
POPULATION, FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF OFFENCE  
FOR NSW VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE MINORS  
MAKING COURT APPEARANCES, 1985-1987**

TYPE OF OFFENCE		1985		1986		1987	
		VIET.	NON-VIET.	VIET.	NON-VIET.	VIET.	NON-VIET.
Assault	N	1	995	7	1019	9	1172
	R	16.60	139.90	107.80	143.30	129.90	165.60
Attempted Murder	N	-	2	1	2	-	4
	R	-	0.28	15.40	0.28	-	0.57
Murder	N	-	5	-	4	-	3
	R	-	0.70	-	0.56	-	0.42
Sexual	N	-	73	-	103	-	95
	R	-	10.30	-	14.50	-	13.40
Armed Robbery	N	-	8	-	8	-	16
	R	-	1.10	-	1.10	-	2.30
Break & Enter	N	5	2403	8	2200	5	2251
	R	83.00	337.80	123.20	309.40	72.10	318.10
Extortion	N	-	9	-	4	1	8
	R	-	1.30	-	0.56	14.40	1.10
Fraud	N	1	288	1	243	2	116
	R	16.60	40.50	15.40	34.20	28.90	16.40
Shoplifting	N	22	1197	5	449	5	769
	R	365.10	168.30	77.00	63.10	72.10	108.70
Motor Vehicle Theft	N	6	2232	10	1575	12	1701
	R	99.60	313.80	154.00	221.50	173.10	240.40
Other Theft	N	4	1781	6	1340	2	794
	R	66.40	250.40	92.40	188.50	28.90	112.20
Drink-Type	N	-	530	-	650	1	638
	R	-	74.50	-	91.40	14.40	90.20
Drug-Type	N	-	809	1	493	1	551
	R	-	113.40	15.40	69.30	14.40	77.90
Other Good Order	N	3	1918	10	1571	16	1567
	R	49.80	269.60	154.0	220.90	230.80	221.50

Notes:

1. Since all committed offences are not included in the Table, rates do not total overall minors' offence rates.
2. **Rates** are calculated as in Table 1, note 2.
3. 'Assault' includes: actual, grievous, other non-sexual, other offence against person, other assault. 'Murder' includes manslaughter, murder, non-vehicle manslaughter. 'Sexual' includes indecent assault, rape, sex without consent, other. 'Motor vehicle theft' includes ride in stolen vehicle, steal motor vehicle, take/use motor vehicle. 'Drink' includes drunk, driving under influence. 'Drug' includes cultivating, deal/traffic, possess/use, other.

**TABLE 5: PERCENTAGES OF VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE OFFENDING MINORS LIVING IN THE MAIN RESIDENCE AREAS FOR NSW VIETNAMESE POPULATION, 1985-1987**

RESIDENTIAL AREA		1985		1986		1987	
		VIET.	NON-VIET.	VIET.	NON-VIET.	VIET.	NON-VIET.
Bankstown	% O	7.3	3.0	10.6	2.6	10.7	2.6
	% TP	9.7	2.8	9.5	2.7	9.2	2.8
Canterbury	% O	10.9	2.1	13.6	1.7	6.7	1.7
	% TP	13.0	2.3	14.2	2.2	15.3	2.3
Fairfield	% O	36.4	3.5	28.8	3.3	34.7	3.4
	% TP	27.1	2.6	28.4	2.5	29.6	2.7
Marrickville	% O	14.6	2.0	18.2	1.7	18.7	1.5
	% TP	12.2	1.5	12.9	1.4	13.6	1.4
Total for Four Areas	% O	69.1	10.6	71.2	9.4	70.7	9.1
	% TP	62.0	9.2	64.9	8.8	67.6	9.2

- Notes:
1. % O = Per cent of Offenders; % TP = Per cent of Total Population.
  2. The Table should be read as follows: in 1985, 7.3 per cent of NSW Vietnamese offending minors lived in Bankstown; 9.7 per cent of the NSW Vietnamese population lived there.
  3. The per cent of population is for total Vietnamese since age breakdown for residential areas was not available. This is why rates have not been calculated.
  4. Numbers of offenders by area were provided by the Department of Family and Community Services, New South Wales.

### Unaccompanied Minors

Six of the Vietnamese offending minors were identified as unaccompanied minors. **This constituted 4.1 per cent of the offending minor sample while unaccompanied minors make up 12 per cent of the total minors on average for each of the three years. The mean offence rate for the unaccompanied Vietnamese minors was 257.7 per 100 000, significantly below the 'accompanied' offenders' rate of 823.4.**

All unaccompanied offenders were male. Three were unattached and arrived in Australia in: 1982 (aged 13), 1983 (aged 12) and 1984 (aged 15). The three detached offenders had been sponsored by: an aunt in 1984 (aged 11), a cousin in 1984 (aged 11) and a brother in 1983 at the age of 12.

## B. New South Wales Youth Offenders, Ages 18-24, 1985-1987

### Total General Offence Rates

Table 6 indicates that the rate of offences has risen from 1985 to 1987 for youth-age Vietnamese ( $X_1^2 = 33.3$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This rise was highly significant for males ( $X_1^2 = 26.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Female offenders' rates also rose, but more moderately ( $X_1^2 = 6.0$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The over 24 year age group did **not** have a corresponding significant rise. Thus, the 1987 rate difference between youth and the over 24's was even more marked ( $X_1^2 = 83.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) than in 1985 and 1986 with the 18-24 year old rate more than double that of the over 24's. Table 6 shows that this age difference only existed for **both** genders in 1987; during the prior two years, the older females' proven offence rates surpassed those of the younger females.

**TABLE 6: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES  
BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE
Males 18-24	58	1527.5	96	2452.1	134	3353.4
Males > 24	106	1139.3	127	1203.0	157	1291.6
Females 18-24	10	382.4	8	300.0	25	928.7
Females > 24	36	442.3	46	499.4	53	527.8
Total 18-24	68	1060.5	104	1580.1	159	2377.4
Total > 24	142	814.0	173	875.2	210	946.1

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** by age and gender are distributed in accordance with the known gender and age ratios.
  2. **Rates** are per 100 000 for age and gender groups; e.g. females 18-24 offender rate is per 100 000 18-24 year old Vietnamese females.
  3. **General offences** include all offences heard by the NSW local courts except for drink-drive and drug crimes.

Although their rate is twice that of the over 24's, the Vietnamese youth, as illustrated in Table 7, are clearly not responsible for as large a proportion of crime committed by Vietnamese as a whole as are the non-Vietnamese youth age class for non-Vietnamese as a whole. This is particularly significant since non-Vietnamese youth constitute a **smaller** proportion of their total population as compared to the Vietnamese.

**TABLE 7: NSW VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES, AGES 18-24, PERCENTAGE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE POPULATION AND OFFENDER GROUPS, 1985-1987**

	1985		1986		1987	
	VIET. %	NON-VIET. %	VIET. %	NON-VIET. %	VIET. %	NON-VIET. %
18-24 years/ total population over 17 years	26.9	15.9	25.0	15.4	23.2	15.1
18-24 year offenders/ total offenders	32.4	49.9	37.5	51.0	43.1	49.8

Note: 1. The Table should be read as follows: in 1985, 26.9 per cent of the NSW Vietnamese community were aged 18-24 whilst 32.4 per cent of the Vietnamese offenders that year were aged 18-24

Table 7 also verifies the rate increase mentioned above; the percentage of total criminal activity committed by the youth has been increasing each year; however it still has not equalled the non-Vietnamese youth's per cent of total non-Vietnamese crime. The reason for this (Table 8) is that the non-Vietnamese youth offence rate has also risen significantly since 1985 ( $X_1^2 = 835.7$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus the rising incidence of youth crime is not restricted to the Vietnamese community. Further, the **non-Vietnamese youth have almost double the crime rate of Vietnamese youth; for males, it was more than two-fold greater in 1987**. The difference between youth-age females dwindled in 1987 to an insignificant amount due to the surge in Vietnamese female youth offenders that year.

**TABLE 8: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	58	1527.5	96	2452.1	134	3353.4
Non-Vietnamese Males	16,520	5205.7	17,425	5580.8	21,350	6880.0
Vietnamese Females	10	382.4	8	300.0	25	928.7
Non-Vietnamese Females	2,487	817.4	2,448	815.9	3,151	1053.2
Total Vietnamese	68	1060.5	104	1580.1	159	2377.4
Total Non- Vietnamese	19,007	3057.7	19,873	3246.2	24,501	4019.8

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** by age and gender are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 2, notes 2 and 3 with ages 18-24 instead of ages 10-17. For example, the 1985 rate, 1527.5 means 1527.5 Vietnamese males, ages 18-24 per 100 000 Vietnamese males, ages 18-24.

### Violent Crimes, General Offences

Violent crime rates (assault and sexual offences) for the Vietnamese are shown in Table 9. Although the number of violent crimes committed by the 18-24 year olds has increased since 1985, the increment is not statistically significant ( $X_1^2 = 0.73$ ). The difference between the age classes' rates is also not significant ( $X_1^2 = 1.35$ ) with the 18-24 year olds evidencing only a slightly higher rate each of the years. During the three years, only two females were found guilty of violent offences in the New South Wales lower courts.

**TABLE 9: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION, NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES - VIOLENT CRIMES, BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE VIOLENT CRIME OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE
Males 18-24	7	184.4	5	127.7	10	250.3
Males > 24	15	161.2	13	123.1	23	189.2
Females 18-24	-	-	-	-	1	37.1
Females > 24	-	-	-	-	1	10.0
Total 18-24	7	109.2	5	76.0	11	164.4
Total > 24	15	86.0	13	65.8	24	108.1

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.
  3. **Violent Crimes** include 'offences against person' (assaults) and 'sexual offences'.

**TABLE 10: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION, NSW HIGHER COURT CONVICTIONS OF VIETNAMESE OFFENDERS, BY AGE AND TYPE OF OFFENCE, 1985-1987**

TYPE OF OFFENCE	1985				1986				1987			
	AGES 18-24		AGES > 24		AGES 18-24		AGES > 24		AGES 18-24		AGES > 24	
	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE
Violent	1	15.6	-	-	2	30.4	3	15.2	3	44.9	2	9.0
Property	1	15.6	-	-	2	30.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drug	-	-	1	5.7	1	15.2	-	-	-	-	1	4.5
Escape	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	9.0
Total	2	31.2	1	5.7	5	76.0	3	15.2	3	44.9	5	22.5

- Notes:
1. **Rates** are calculated by 100 000 of the particular age group.
  2. Data were supplied by the NSW Office of Public Prosecutions.

The higher court data on Vietnamese in Table 10 also show a slight increase in the number of youths tried for violent acts.

However, the variation between age groups was not uni-directional over the three years.

Table 11 indicates that, except for 18-24 year old males in 1985, the non-Vietnamese offender groups' offences consistently include a higher percentage of violent crimes as compared to the Vietnamese. For both populations, the over 24 year old males' violent offence rate was higher than that for male youths'. However, as Table 12 shows, there has been a highly significant increase in the non-Vietnamese youth's violent crime rate in 1987 compared to 1985 ( $X_1^2 = 267.7$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Part of that rise can be attributed to a greater than two-fold increase for the females since 1985 although their assault rate is still much lower than that of the males. Given the greater increase for the non-Vietnamese it is not surprising that **in 1987, the Vietnamese youth violent crime rates were much lower than the non-Vietnamese** ( $X_1^2 = 13.6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**TABLE 11: VIOLENT OFFENCES, PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES, PER CENT OF TOTAL CRIMES COMMITTED BY VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE THAT ARE VIOLENT, BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

	1985		1986		1987	
	VIET.	NON-VIET.	VIET.	NON-VIET.	VIET.	NON-VIET.
	EACH AGE GROUP'S CRIMES THAT ARE VIOLENT					
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Males 18-24	15.4	9.9	5.4	11.8	10.2	12.7
Males > 24	16.0	18.3	11.2	20.7	21.2	22.6
Females 18-24	-	4.5	-	6.4	6.25	7.6
Females > 24	-	4.7	-	5.6	2.9	6.2

- Notes:
1. Violent offences include 'assault-type' and 'sexual'.
  2. Interpreting Table: e.g. 1985 - 15.4 per cent of Vietnamese offenders' (18-24) crimes were violent.

**TABLE 12: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES - VIOLENT CRIMES, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

VIOLENT CRIME OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	7	184.4	5	127.7	10	250.3
Non-Vietnamese Males	1696	534.4	2076	664.9	2628	846.9
Vietnamese Females	-	-	-	-	1	37.1
Non-Vietnamese Females	124	40.8	169	56.3	267	89.2
Total Vietnamese	7	109.2	5	76.0	11	164.5
Total Non- Vietnamese	1820	292.8	2245	366.7	2895	475.0

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 8, note 2.
  3. **Violent Crimes** include 'assault' and 'sexual' offences.

## Murder

A small section on murder is included in this chapter, partly because of the concerns expressed in the media that Vietnamese youths may be involved in this most violent of crimes, and partly because of the need to look at the full range of 'violent' offences. Unfortunately, there are no statistics available for the age range 18-24 years. Instead, murder rates have had to be calculated for the total Vietnamese population aged 18 and over, which means that the data will not be comparable with other offence data contained in this report. A major problem here is that a larger proportion of Vietnamese than non-Vietnamese in the 18 years and over age category is at a high crime risk age. One would therefore predict a higher Vietnamese crime rate.

A second problem with using murder data is that the numbers or rates do not refer to offenders as in the rest of the report, but to victims. Thus the figures do not necessarily reflect

Vietnamese involvement, since the killers of Vietnamese victims may or may not themselves be Vietnamese.

Third, the number (as distinct from rates per 100 000 population) of murdered victims is low overall, making any sudden fluctuations more significant statistically than they may warrant when other factors are taken into account. So, for example, the marked increase in murders of Vietnamese victims from four in 1986 to nine in 1987 takes on a new significance when it is revealed that five out of the nine in 1987 were killed by one person.

Bearing in mind these measurement problems, the rates per 100 000 population have been calculated for reported murder and these appear in Table 13 below. The table shows that although the non-Vietnamese numbers of reported murders have been extremely stable in New South Wales during the three years, Vietnamese murder **victim numbers** jumped from five to nine. As noted above, five of the latter nine were killed by one individual. But, even if mass killings are treated as one offence for analytical purposes, **a highly significant difference in murder rates persists** ( $X_1^2 = 29.1, p < 0.001$ ) **with Vietnamese rates seven to ten times the non-Vietnamese.** However, since a high percentage of the killings have not been cleared: three out of five in 1985, two out of four in 1986, and two of nine in 1987; the implication is that the homicides may have been committed in an extra-domestic context, either by Vietnamese or non-Vietnamese. Thus the rate does not necessarily reflect Vietnamese homicide perpetrators' acts.

**TABLE 13: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
REPORTED MURDER, NSW VIETNAMESE AND  
NON-VIETNAMESE, 1985-1987**

COMMUNITY	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese	5	21.0	4	15.2	9	31.2
Non-Vietnamese	95	2.4	94.5	2.4	87.5	2.2

- Notes:
1. Non-Vietnamese calendar year numbers are estimated from fiscal year data.
  2. **Rates** are per 100 000 ages 17 and over in each population.
  3. In 1987, five of the nine murders were committed by one person.
  4. Vietnamese homicide numbers were supplied by the New South Wales Police Department; data on general population homicide were taken from the *Police Commissioners' Australian Crime Statistics Subcommittee Report*.

## Fraud, General Offences

Vietnamese 18-24 year olds' fraud rate increased slightly during the three years whilst the over 24's rate decreased (Table 14). As a result, the time period has evidenced a reversal of the 1985 higher rates by over 24's to the 1986-1987 youth exceeding their elders' incidence of fraud. Although **the non-Vietnamese youths'** participation in fraud has actually decreased over the three years, their **1987 rate remains significantly higher than the Vietnamese** ( $X^2 = 54.7$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The non-Vietnamese females' fraud rate, although less than one half that of the males, was over three times the Vietnamese female youth rate in 1987 (Table 15).

**TABLE 14: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION, NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES - FRAUD, BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE FRAUD OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Males 18-24	2	52.7	4	102.2	5	125.1
Males > 24	8	86.0	8	75.8	6	49.4
Females 18-24	-	-	-	-	1	37.1
Females > 24	3	36.9	1	10.9	3	29.9
Total 18-24	2	31.2	4	60.8	6	89.7
Total > 24	11	63.0	9	45.5	9	40.5

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.
  3. **Fraud** includes 'counterfeiting' 'forgery', 'bad cheques' and other deceptive practices.

**TABLE 15: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES - FRAUD, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

FRAUD OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	2	52.7	4	102.2	5	125.1
Non-Vietnamese Males	746	235.1	659	211.1	716	230.7
Vietnamese Females	-	-	-	-	1	37.1
Non-Vietnamese Females	321	105.5	283	94.3	314	105.0
Total Vietnamese	2	31.2	4	60.8	6	89.7
Total Non- Vietnamese	1067	171.6	942	153.9	1030	169.0

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 8, note 2.
  3. **Fraud** includes 'counterfeiting' 'forgery', 'bad cheques' and other deceptive practices.

### Larceny, General Offences

According to Table 16, the Vietnamese youths' larceny rate dropped between 1985 and 1986 but then doubled from 1986 to 1987 with a statistically significant increase overall ( $X_1^2 = 4.8$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In part due to a slight drop in the over-24 group's rate, the 1987 difference in rates between the two age classes was highly significant ( $X_1^2 = 24.6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) with the youth rate almost three times that of those over 24. The 1987 female rates show the same pattern although in the earlier two years women over 24 engaged in more larceny-type offences than the younger females.

**TABLE 16: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION,  
NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES - LARCENY, BY AGE AND GENDER,  
1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE LARCENY OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Males 18-24	17	447.7	16	408.7	29	725.7
Males > 24	29	311.7	15	142.1	24	197.4
Females 18-24	6	229.4	5	187.5	13	482.9
Females > 24	22	270.3	32	347.4	28	278.8
Total 18-24	23	358.7	21	319.1	42	628.0
Total > 24	51	292.3	47	237.8	52	234.3

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.
  3. **Larceny** includes 'vehicular theft', 'shoplifting', and some other stealing offences.

Table 17 shows the non-Vietnamese constancy of larceny rates over the time period, with slight drops for both genders in 1986 and slight increases the following year. It is therefore not surprising that **in 1987, although the non-Vietnamese rate remained higher than the Vietnamese, it was no longer a statistically significant difference in contrast to the prior two years.** In fact, the Vietnamese females' rate actually exceeded their non-Vietnamese counterparts with a more than two-fold increase in arrest numbers from 1986 to 1987.

**TABLE 17: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES - LARCENY, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

LARCENY OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	NO.	1985 RATE	NO.	1986 RATE	NO.	1987 RATE
Vietnamese Males	17	447.7	16	408.7	29	725.7
Non-Vietnamese Males	3552	1119.3	3483	1115.5	3488	1124.0
Vietnamese Females	6	229.4	5	187.5	13	482.9
Non-Vietnamese Females	1116	366.8	1023	341.0	1121	374.7
Total Vietnamese	23	358.7	21	319.1	42	628.0
Total Non- Vietnamese	4668	750.9	4506	735.9	4609	756.2

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 8, note 2.
  3. **Larceny** includes 'vehicular theft' 'shoplifting', and some other stealing offences.

### **Breaking and Entering, General Offences**

Tables 18 and 19 illustrate the dearth of this type of criminal activity among the Vietnamese with no proven adult offenders in 1987. The non-Vietnamese rate was significantly higher and extremely similar during the three years with markedly lower rates for females.

**TABLE 18: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION,  
NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES - BREAKING AND ENTERING,  
BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE BREAK AND ENTER OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Males 18-24	-	-	2	51.1	-	-
Males > 24	3	32.2	1	9.5	-	-
Females 18-24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Females > 24	3	17.2	1	5.1	-	-
Total 18-24	-	-	2	30.4	-	-
Total > 24	3	17.2	1	5.1	-	-

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.

**TABLE 19: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
GENERAL OFFENCES - BREAKING AND ENTERING,  
AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

BREAK AND ENTER OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	-	-	2	51.1	-	-
Non-Vietnamese Males	932	293.7	880	281.8	871	280.7
Vietnamese Females	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Vietnamese Females	65	21.4	81	27.0	86	28.7
Total Vietnamese	-	-	2	30.4	-	-
Total Non-Vietnamese	997	160.4	961	157.0	957	157.0

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.

## Drink-driving Offences

There was little difference in Vietnamese youths' rates and older Vietnamese for 1985 and 1987; the younger group had almost double the incidence of such offences in 1986. Neither age class increased their rate significantly during the three years. Vietnamese females of all ages had negligible drink-driving rates (Table 20). Non-Vietnamese rates also did not vary significantly and showed only a slight increase from 1985 to 1987. Table 21 indicates a **highly significant difference between the Vietnamese and the Non-Vietnamese each year** (for example 1987:  $(X_1^2 = 48.6, p < 0.001)$ ) with the latter's rate almost four times that of the Vietnamese youths in 1987.

**TABLE 20: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION, NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, DRINK-DRIVING, BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE DRINK-DRIVING OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	No.	RATE	No.	RATE	No.	RATE
Males 18-24	23	605.7	33	842.9	25	625.6
Males > 24	66	709.4	54	511.5	74	608.8
Females 18-24	1	38.2	-	-	1	37.1
Females > 24	-	-	1	10.9	-	-
Total 18-24	24	374.3	33	501.4	26	388.8
Total > 24	66	378.4	55	278.2	74	333.4

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.

**TABLE 21: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
DRINK-DRIVING, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

DRINK-DRIVING OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	23	605.7	33	842.9	25	625.6
Non-Vietnamese Males	7388	2328.1	7437	2381.9	7810	2516.8
Vietnamese Females	1	38.2	-	-	1	37.1
Non-Vietnamese Females	666	218.9	642	214.0	734	245.3
Total Vietnamese	24	374.3	33	501.4	26	388.8
Total Non- Vietnamese	8054	1295.7	8079	1319.5	8544	1401.8

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 8, note 2.

## Drug Offences

Table 22 shows that the drug offence rates for all Vietnamese have been extremely low over the three years. The youth age group was more at risk than the over 24's although 1987 witnessed an increase in the latter's incidence whilst the 18-24 year olds' rate dropped from 1986 to 1987. Only one female during the time period was proven guilty of a drug offence. These rates were much lower than those of the non-Vietnamese youths. As Table 23 indicates, although the non-Vietnamese youth numbers and rates actually dropped during the three years, in 1987 their rate was almost 15 times higher than the Vietnamese youth. As with drink-driving, females' rates were significantly lower than the non-Vietnamese males but far exceeded the virtual absence of female Vietnamese participation.

**TABLE 22: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION,  
NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
DRUG OFFENCES, BY AGE AND GENDER, 1985-1987**

VIETNAMESE DRUG OFFENCES OFFENDERS	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Males 18-24	2	52.7	4	102.2	3	75.1
Males > 24	3	32.2	2	18.9	6	49.4
Females 18-24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Females > 24	-	-	1	10.9	-	-
Total 18-24	2	31.2	4	60.8	3	44.9
Total > 24	3	17.2	3	15.2	6	27.0

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 6, note 2.

**TABLE 23: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 POPULATION  
VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS,  
DRUG OFFENCES, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

DRUG OFFENCES OFFENDERS AGES 18-24	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	2	52.7	4	102.2	3	75.1
Non-Vietnamese Males	5252	1655.0	3816	1222.2	3375	1087.6
Vietnamese Females	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Vietnamese Females	813	267.2	609	203.0	514	171.8
Total Vietnamese	2	31.2	4	60.8	3	44.9
Total Non-Vietnamese	6065	975.7	4425	722.7	3889	638.1

- Notes:
1. **Unknowns** are distributed in accordance with the known age and gender ratios.
  2. **Rates** are calculated as per Table 8, note 2.

### **Occupational Status, Proven Offenders, General Offences**

There would appear to be few differences between the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese offenders' backgrounds (Table 24). A slightly higher percentage of Vietnamese offenders were unemployed with the reverse true for unskilled occupations. Student status was higher among the Vietnamese but unfortunately the youth age classes could not be compared (non-Vietnamese occupational data are not available by age). Skilled occupations were roughly equivalent while a marginally higher percentage of non-Vietnamese were semi-professionals or professionals. The primary finding from the data is the similarity in proportion of unemployed. For both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese almost one half of the offenders each year were unemployed.

The backgrounds of Vietnamese youths were similar to their older counterparts although the proportion of unemployed youths was less consistent: for example 67.2 per cent in 1986, and 41.9 per cent in 1987. The latter figure was more commensurate with the older Vietnamese and the non-Vietnamese. Fewer youth offenders were pensioners, domestics or semi-professionals, but not unexpectedly most offenders with 'student' occupation came from this age group.

### **Residential Areas and Rates for General Offences**

Table 25 reveals that just like the Vietnamese minors, a high percentage of NSW Vietnamese general offenders comes from the four Sydney suburbs: Bankstown, Canterbury, Fairfield and Marrickville where the majority of Vietnamese resides. The middle year, 1986, evidenced the highest percentage of Vietnamese offenders from these four areas with an almost 13 per cent drop in 1987.

**TABLE 24: OCCUPATIONAL STATUS, VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES, BY AGE, 1985-1987**

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	1985				1986				1987			
	VIET 18-24 (N=38)	VIET >24 (N=90)	TOTAL VIET (N=132)	TOTAL NON- VIET (N=32 544)	VIET 18-24 (N=67)	VIET >24 (N=117)	TOTAL VIET (N=186)	TOTAL NON- VIET (N=32 413)	VIET 18-24 (N=93)	VIET >24 (N=123)	TOTAL VIET (N=219)	TOTAL NON- VIET (N=36 366)
Unemployed	34.2	41.1	39.4	40.2	69.2	37.6	48.4	41.2	41.9	45.5	43.80	40.0
Unskilled	7.9	22.2	17.4	21.9	7.5	18.8	14.5	21.7	11.8	16.3	14.20	21.3
Student	26.3	-	7.6	1.3	11.9	-	4.3	1.5	16.1	1.6	7.80	1.6
Pensioner	-	3.3	2.3	7.0	-	5.1	3.2	7.2	2.2	6.5	5.00	7.6
Domestic	5.3	11.1	9.8	5.6	-	12.0	8.1	4.6	3.2	12.2	8.20	4.3
Skilled	23.7	17.8	19.7	20.8	13.4	23.9	19.9	21.1	24.7	16.3	20.10	22.4
Semi-Professional	2.6	4.4	3.8	3.0	-	2.6	1.6	2.5	-	0.8	0.45	2.6
Professional	-	-	-	0.2	-	-	-	0.2	-	0.8	0.45	0.2

- Notes:
1. Those with unknown occupation are not included in Table; thus total numbers differ from total numbers in other 'Proven Offender' tables.
  2. Data by age unavailable for non-Vietnamese.
  3. Unknown ages are not included in first two columns for each year but are part of total number (third column), e.g. 1985 two unemployed, one domestic, and one skilled had unknown ages and account for total number of 132 (instead of 128 total of two age groups).

**TABLE 25: NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF NSW VIETNAMESE PROVEN OFFENDERS, GENERAL OFFENCES, LIVING IN THE MAIN RESIDENCE AREAS FOR NSW VIETNAMESE POPULATION, 1985-1987**

RESIDENTIAL AREA	1985		1986		1987	
	No.	% TVO	No.	% TVO	No.	% TVO
Bankstown	11	6.4	25	11.2	32	11.0
Canterbury	27	15.7	41	18.4	46	15.8
Fairfield	42	24.4	91	40.8	93	32.0
Marrickville	28	16.3	30	13.5	33	11.3
Four areas Total	108	62.3	187	83.9	204	70.1
Elsewhere in NSW	64	37.2	36	16.1	87	29.9
Combined Total	172	100.0	223	100.0	291	100.0

- Notes:
1. % TVO = Per cent of Total Vietnamese Offenders.
  2. Numbers provided by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

Table 26 indicates that the general population crime rates in three of the suburbs in 1976, prior to the large-scale arrival of Vietnamese, were actually higher than they were ten years later in 1986. In Canterbury, the rates increased. However, 1987 brought increased crime incidence in all the neighbourhoods which elevated all but Marrickville above the 1976 rates. Unfortunately the total number of 1976 New South Wales offences was not available so comparison of these suburbs' rates to those for the rest of New South Wales for that year was not possible. From 1986 to 1987 the general population rate increase in other parts of New South Wales was less (40.8 per 100 000), than the general population average increase for the four areas (210.0 per 100 000).

**TABLE 26: RATES OF NSW PROVEN OFFENDERS PER 100 000  
POPULATION, VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE  
GENERAL OFFENCES BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA  
(LGA), 1976, 1986 AND 1987, AGES 18-24, 1985-1987**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	1976 RATE	1986 RATE	1987 RATE	CHANGE FROM 1976-1986	CHANGE FROM 1986-1987
Bankstown	721.9	623.7	890.3	- 98.2	+ 266.6
Canterbury	558.7	779.5	958.9	+ 220.8	+ 179.4
Fairfield	981.7	918.0	1074.6	- 63.7	+ 156.0
Marrickville	1577.5	1041.7	1290.7	- 535.8	+ 249.0
Average for above	894.1	816.1	1026.1	- 78.0	+ 210.0
Total NSW minus above	-	696.4	737.2		+ 40.8

- Notes:
1. Total New South Wales data unavailable for 1976.
  2. LGA offender and general population numbers are included as an appendix in *Court Statistics* (annual series since 1976), New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

The rates in Tables 27 and 28 should not be compared since they are derived from total LGA populations and the Vietnamese have a greater proportion of high crime risk age adults. However, the trends and the comparisons with other parts of the state are valid and quite illuminating. Vietnamese offence rates have increased in three of the areas and the average degree of increase for the four towns has been slightly higher than the non-Vietnamese. The latter's rates rose in all four suburbs at a fairly consistent level whereas the Vietnamese rate in Bankstown and Fairfield jumped significantly ahead from 1985 to 1987.

For both populations these neighbourhoods had higher crime rates than the average for the rest of New South Wales; with the exception of the Vietnamese 1986 figures, the differences appear quite low and uniform. Both the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese rates outside of the four areas also increased from 1985 to 1987, but at a marginally lower level than the average gain for the four.

**TABLE 27: RATES OF VIETNAMESE NSW PROVEN OFFENDERS -  
GENERAL OFFENCES PER 100 000 by LGA, 1985-1987**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	1985 RATE	1986 RATE	1987 RATE	CHANGE FROM 1985-1987
Bankstown	340.7	736.4	905.0	+ 564.3
Canterbury	624.7	806.8	776.9	+ 152.2
Fairfield	467.8	894.2	813.9	+ 346.1
Marrickville	693.2	647.8	627.7	- 65.5
Average for above	525.1	803.1	780.4	+ 255.3
Total NSW minus above four	508.6	285.7	696.2	+ 187.6

Notes: 1. Rates are calculated for total population, ages 0 on up. Vietnamese population estimates, provided by DILGEA were obtained by calculation of geometric growth rates.

**TABLE 28: RATES OF NON-VIETNAMESE NSW PROVEN OFFENDERS -  
GENERAL OFFENCES PER 100 000 by LGA, 1985-1987**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	1985 RATE	1986 RATE	1987 RATE	CHANGE FROM 1985-1987
Bankstown	598.2	636.1	890.0	+ 291.8
Canterbury	757.8	778.3	967.3	+ 209.5
Fairfield	978.8	919.8	1094.1	+ 115.3
Marrickville	1160.6	1065.0	1334.3	+ 173.7
Average for above	836.2	816.8	1064.4	+ 228.2
Total NSW minus above four	715.9	697.0	870.9	+ 155.0

Notes: 1. Rates for each area are for total population. Vietnamese population estimates and offender numbers are subtracted from New South Wales general population and offender numbers to calculate non-Vietnamese rates.

## 5. DISCUSSION

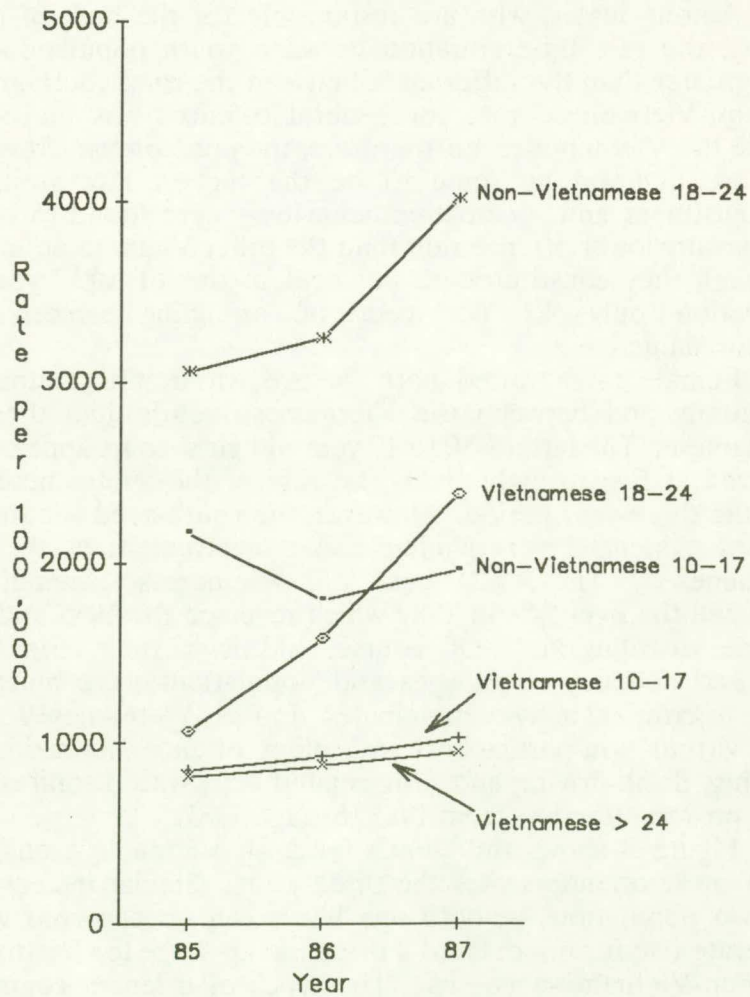
The findings clearly indicate that Vietnamese young people (ages 10 to 24) living in New South Wales have a significantly lower crime rate than their non-Vietnamese counterparts: about one-half the rate of proven offences for minors; about one-half the general offence rate for 18-24 year olds; one-fourth the non-Vietnamese drink-driving rate; and about one-tenth the level of drug offences. In fact, the only Vietnamese youth or minors' rate that exceeded the non-Vietnamese was the female youth rate for larceny.

Among males, who are responsible for the bulk of illegal activity, the rate differentiation between youth populations was even greater than the differences between the total youth groups; the non-Vietnamese rate for general offences was more than double the Vietnamese. Furthermore, the unaccompanied minors who are believed by some to be the highest risk group for maladjustment and sociopathic behaviour, were found to have a significantly lower offence rate than the other Vietnamese minors. Although they constituted 12 per cent of the 10 to 17 year old population only 4.1 per cent of offending minors were unaccompanied.

Female rates varied both by age within the Vietnamese community and between the Vietnamese youths and the non-Vietnamese. The latter's 10 to 17 year old girls' court appearances occurred at five to eight times the rate of the Vietnamese girls over the three-year period. However, the youth-aged Vietnamese females evidenced very similar crime involvement as the non-Vietnamese. The 18-24 year old Vietnamese women also surpassed the over 24's in 1987 which reversed the 1985 and 1986 offence distribution. Of course, although their crime risk increased, females of all ages and populations were much less prone to criminal activity than males. In fact, Vietnamese females were virtual non-participants in violent offences, breaking and entering, drink-driving and drug-related acts, with a total of only three proven offenders from 1985 through 1987.

Figure 3 shows the trends for both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese offenders over the three years. Similar increases for the two populations at both age levels can be observed with a moderate rise for minors and a dramatic up-surge for Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese youths. The types of offences committed with higher frequency in 1987 did not vary by population. Both

Figure 3  
Offender Rates  
per 100,000 population



the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese minors showed a significant increase in violent crimes. This increase also is apparent for that time period for Vietnamese minors who appeared in one Victoria court - Melbourne Children's Court. The violent crime percentage of their total offences leapt from 6.7 per cent in 1985 to 41.9 per cent in 1987. Unfortunately comparative data for non-Vietnamese were unavailable.

The youth-aged offenders did not experience a significant increase in assault and sexual offences. Larceny and driving offences account for the greatest up-surge in rates over the three years for both Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese. Data for Vietnamese offenders in Victoria actually show a decrease in assaults. Thirteen per cent of the adult-aged proven offenders (age breakdown was not available) convicted in 1986 at Prahran Magistrates' Court were in court for assault offences as compared to only 1.6 per cent of those proven guilty in 1987.

Figure 3 depicts the consistently lower rates for Vietnamese minors and youth discussed above. The magnitude of difference should argue against explaining a lower Vietnamese rate simply as the result of data acquisition problems or under-reporting by the community. Neither of these explanations can satisfy either the extent of the lower crime rates or the relatively smaller proportion of youth offenders who contributed to the total Vietnamese community offence numbers as compared to the non-Vietnamese youth percentage of crime. This finding is particularly significant within the context of the relative age class distributions of the two populations. Since Vietnamese 18-24 year olds are a larger percentage of the population than non-Vietnamese youth, one would have predicted the reverse ratio for youth's share of criminal activity.

In addition, the accuracy of the acquisition of the court data can be checked to some degree by examining comparative prison data. As Table 29 indicates, the rate of imprisonment for non-Vietnamese is almost double the Vietnamese. This relatively low rate is consistent with the court findings. In fact, given the relatively high proportion of crime-risk aged adults among the Vietnamese, one might expect that, since prison rates were calculated for the total adult population, the Vietnamese would be slightly higher than the non-Vietnamese. The significantly higher rate for non-Vietnamese ( $X_1^2 = 6.4, p < 0.05$ ) indicates a greater involvement in more serious offence types.

**TABLE 29: NUMBERS AND RATES PER 100 000 VIETNAMESE AND NON-VIETNAMESE IN NEW SOUTH WALES PRISONS, 1985-1987**

PRISONER GROUP	1985		1986		1987	
	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE	NO.	RATE
Vietnamese Males	15	114.5	14	96.7	18	111.4
Non-Vietnamese Males	3892	201.9	3994	204.0	4295	215.6
Vietnamese Females	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Vietnamese Females	208	10.5	222	11.0	238	11.6
Total Vietnamese	15	62.9	14	53.1	18	62.3
Total Non-Vietnamese	4100	104.8	4216	106.1	4533	112.1

Notes: 1. Rates are per 100 000 aged 17 and older within each population group, e.g. per 100 000 Vietnamese males, 17+ in age.

The number of killings in the New South Wales Vietnamese community is somewhat anomalous in the context of the other rates. Furthermore, Victoria Vietnamese 1986 and 1987 homicide rates were well above those of the non-Vietnamese population. One might interpret these higher numbers of killings as a manifestation of organised crime and the gangs in the area; certainly this idea has been implied in the press. It is a plausible explanation given the high percentage of unsolved cases. However, it must also be remembered that in the case of data on murder, the rates indicate the frequency of Vietnamese victims which does not necessarily mean Vietnamese perpetrators. Furthermore, the other criminal activity correlates of organised crime that one would expect to find in the court data, for example high rates for robbery, extortion, violent offences, vice, were not present from 1985 to 1987 for the Vietnamese in New South Wales. At least a part of the explanation for the higher homicide rates does lie in the Vietnamese age distribution. With a larger ratio of 25 to 35 year olds than the non-Vietnamese, one might expect all crime rates, including murder, to be higher for the

Vietnamese. Nonetheless, the demographics do not explain the magnitude of the difference.

The relatively low Vietnamese youth and minors crime rates are somewhat surprising given the psychosociological factors enumerated earlier. The individuals in these groups not only experience the stresses and traumas associated with refugee status but also have one of the highest unemployment rates in Australia. They have settled in neighbourhoods which exhibited higher crime rates than the average for the rest of New South Wales prior to the Vietnamese influx. The crime rates in these areas also continue to rise at a faster pace than the average for the rest of the state which certainly cannot be attributed solely to Vietnamese offences since comparable increases have occurred for the non-Vietnamese. Furthermore, some 12 per cent of the 10 to 17 year olds have the added stresses of arriving without their parents and have been depicted in the press as fodder for organised crime and/or youth gangs. The data entirely refute such portrayals and leave one to speculate on how or why unaccompanied minors and other refugee youth have apparently managed to avoid surpassing or even near equalling the non-Vietnamese offence rates.

One possible contributing factor to the lower Vietnamese rates may be evidenced in the recidivism data for minors. The vast majority of the Vietnamese who appeared in court were first-time offenders as opposed to the non-Vietnamese for whom recidivism appeared normative. The process of acculturation is neither quick nor complete, particularly for refugees who continue to have strong ties to kin back in Vietnam. One's movements in a small ethnic community are not anonymous and are well-known both within the community and to family elsewhere. Thus the cultural values brought to Australia may well be keeping criminal activity down. The loss of 'face', the identity and loyalty of the individual to the family might promote conformity and/or act as a strong deterrent to those who have been arrested once.

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