



# The Role of Religion in Ethnic Self-Identity: A Vietnamese Community

*Paul Rutledge*

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The Vietnamese entrance into the United States - a transition from one culture into a vastly different societal environment in a relatively brief period under "acute" circumstances - has provided an opportunity for investigation and understanding into the processes of adaptation one group makes in response to another. A common denominator through which aspects of this process may be viewed is the institution of religion. Generally speaking, religion represents a basic and common value system for many of the Vietnamese people. Historically, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have combined to form a unique Vietnamese philosophical and religious perspective (Brown 1981:5). In addition, Roman Catholicism has played a dynamic role among a smaller portion of the Vietnamese population, but, nonetheless, is highly represented among the Vietnamese in Oklahoma City.... In the employment of religion and an examination of its role in the resettlement process, a model of ethnicity has emerged among the dynamics of culture contact as the best manner in which to understand the adaptive processes.

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