

Hmong Mens' Adaptation to Life in the United States

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[1]

Despite the many studies of Hmong in the United States over the past two decades, little is known specifically about how mature Hmong men are adapting to life following their resettlement. Anecdotes describing the often dramatic problems mature Hmong men encounter suggest a need to more closely study this population. A variety of factors are said to lead to problems for Hmong men after resettlement. Women are finding it easier to find work outside the home and to learn English. The traditional male role of decisionmaker is increasingly devalued as children seek more independence. Furthermore, since youth often serve as intermediaries between adults and mainstream institutions because of their language skills, this again reverses traditional power relationships. The ability of a male head of household to provide for his family is greatly diminished with even the AFDC checks made out in the mother's name. Too often stories circulate of once powerful military officers and village chiefs living in isolated poverty and dependent on others.

[2]

These excerpts from what is believed to be common knowledge, however, are lacking in empirical verification. This writer knows of just one study (Irby and Pon, 1988) which examines the topic of Hmong mens' adjustment. In thier paper Irby and Pon suggest that Hmong men encounter many possible sources of stress as a result of their loss of status, their inability to generate income, and their fear, hopelessness, and despair. No other studies have taken up the focus on Hmong men. Consequently, the issue of Hmong men and their struggle

to adapt to life after resettlement has not been extensively addressed. Their world remains to be explored.

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Ethnographic research about Hmong men is needed because, as noted above, Hmong men seem to be facing changes with more difficulty than other Hmong sub-groups. A qualitative method is most appropriate at this stage of inquiry since a foundational knowledge of Hmong men's problems and needs does not yet exist. Knowing their needs and problems will be helpful for social planners, service providers, educators, and other professionals to effectively plan and provide services to this population group. Such information can also help Hmong men to understand their social condition and to initiate change to move toward more desirable social and economic conditions.

Hmong Men: Socialization and expectations

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In exploring the upbringing of Hmong boys and the expectations Hmong society has for Hmong men we can start to understand the cultural factors relating to their experiences and reality. The Hmong patriarchal clan system, in combination with mountain dwelling, subsistence agriculture, and ancestral worship, unilaterally shapes the upbringing, values, and behavior of Hmong men. This is most definitely the case in the traditional Hmong cultural environment and to a large extent is still the case in the United States for the initial American-born generation. From childhood to old age, Hmong men assume many superior roles, and are perceived by family and society to be the breadwinners, protectors, leaders, and pillars of the family. In addition to being perceived as important and intelligent, male children receive special attention, love, care, training in hunting and leadership, and are viewed as the eventual pillars of the family.

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This special treatment of boys results from their future roles and responsibilities. In addition to carrying on the name of the family, male children will be the primary care providers for parents and elders in old age, and continue to worship the parents and ancestors in the afterworld. [\[1\]](#) Furthermore, married couples are considered part of the husband's family. Thus a son will eventually add more labor power to the family whereas a daughter will take her labor power to a different family -- this is no small consideration in a society for thousands of years based upon subsistence agriculture.

[6]

Authority and respect in Hmong culture come with age and ability. Geddes (1976) states that authority and order in the Hmong household are maintained through known patterns of respect for age and by showing recognition of capacity. He observes that "younger brothers respect their older brothers, sons respect their fathers, and nephews respect their fathers' brothers in order of their seniority of birth" (Geddes, 1976 p.74). Barney (1957) writes that Hmong children are expected to listen to their mother but to obey the word of the father as the final authority. In addition to this social and cultural upbringing, many Hmong men became intensely involved during the Laotian civil war as soldiers, civil servants, village headpersons, and so on.

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The following case of a Hmong man in Fresno illustrates some of the common experiences faced by the older generation of Hmong men:

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Mr. Zang is 67-years-old and a resident of Fresno since 1982. In accord with traditional Hmong practice, Mr. Zang and his wife live with the youngest son and the son's wife. Mr. Zang has two other married sons and a married daughter. The oldest son also lives in Fresno with his family. The second son is a police officer in Modesto and lives there with his wife and three children. The married daughter lives in Wisconsin with her husband.

[9]

Mr. Zang spends most of his free time visiting relatives and friends, attending cultural and social activities, and participating in dispute settlement in the community. Mr. Zang has managed to learn how to drive a car and has a license. He can drive around town, but his children have attempted to stop him from driving because he has already been involved in two traffic accidents in the past five years.

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Although he remains visible among his relatives, friends, and elders in the Hmong community, his influence has been gradually decreasing and his leadership role is more or less a ceremonial one. Many of the major decisions and responsibilities are indirectly in the domain of the younger bilingual/bicultural and educated members of the family, the clan or the community. He is often consulted before many decisions are made by the younger leaders, but the consultation is no more than a gesture of courtesy by the younger generation. He knows this, too, and he either blesses the decision of the younger ones or defers from involvement in decision making. At any feast that he attends, Mr. Zang is invited to sit on the side of the table for a honored and respected guest, but it is nothing more than a ceremonial role and an expression of courtesy.

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Unlike what would be the case in Laos, Mr. Zang's grandchildren do not come to him to hear stories or to learn from his experience, wisdom, and skills. The children instead watch cartoons on television and play Nintendo. His adult children are too busy with their lives and can only visit him and his wife once in a while. Mr. Zang would prefer that his children live with him under one roof as he and his two brothers did when they were in Laos. He used to have a very large family and it is difficult to live in an "empty house" with only four adults. In his reality, having a large family means prosperity, prestige, power, and security. Life in America, however, makes it almost impossible to build such a large extended family.

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Relatives rarely come to Mr. Zang for advice, consultation, or help as they used to do back in Laos. If they come to visit, it is just a visit. His skills, knowledge, and wisdom are no longer useful in Fresno; and he is no longer the most wealthy person in the community. He disagrees with many values and lifestyles the young people are adopting in this country, but he knows well that he cannot change these young people's minds and has no authority to force them to listen to him. So he keeps his opinion to himself.

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Mr. Zang is illiterate and can hardly read street signs. One of his sisters, who is also in her early 60s, can read better than him. In fact, his sister, who is supposed to be less intelligent than he is (according to the traditional Hmong view), is more independent than he is. She can read, speak English, and go places on her own. It is embarrassing for Mr. Zang to see women do better in learning and to see that poor people are doing educationally and economically better than the wealthy people of twenty years ago.

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Mr. Zang came from a very long way to be where he is now. He was born in the remote mountainous region of northern Laos. His family was very powerful in Laos. His father was a well known chief of many villages and his mother was from a wealthy and powerful Hmong family. Mr. Zang and two brothers learned from their father and developed many traits of traditional leaders. Even after their father died the brothers continued to prosper economically and increase their local influence and prestige.

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Unfortunately, the older brother died of a sudden illness during the peak of the family's prosperity. Mr. Zang took over the leadership position and continued to do well politically, socially, and economically. Mr. Zang led his people to survive through two wars beginning with the "Secret War" of the 1960s and 1970s. Some of his relatives and followers died during the war and everyone under his leadership was impacted by the war in many ways. Some of them had been through displacement, hunger, and family separation. In the early 1970s, the war was on its way to an end, and his business was on its way to booming. The war ended in 1975 and

at that time, he was already a millionaire. He was probably the richest man of the area, and was very influential, not only among his followers, but also with his peers and among high government officials.

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The end of the war marked the beginning of another, unofficial, war: the Hmong resistance against the communist government of Laos during the middle and late 70s. Because of evidence that the new government arrested and sent former allies of the CIA to reeducation camps, and for fear of other retaliation and persecution, he joined other leaders and led a resistance movement to fight against the government. After two years of staying in the jungle and fighting with the new government, he gave up and led many hundreds of his followers to escape from Laos into Thailand. He and his family stayed a year in a refugee camp in Thailand before resettling in the United States in 1980. He came to the United States with all members of his extended family and was first resettled in Portland, Oregon. In 1982, he led his extended family in their move to Fresno.

Adaptation Problems

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Adaptation, from the ecological perspective, "refers to the capacity to adjust to surrounding environmental conditions. It implies change. A person must change or adapt to new conditions and circumstances in order to continue functioning effectively" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 1994, p. 13). Coping, on the other hand, is "a form of adaptation that implies a struggle to overcome problems" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 1994, p. 13).

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Hmong men seem to encounter greater adaptation problems than Hmong women. Hmong women, for example, seem to adapt much faster in many aspects. They learn English faster than Hmong men and already have many success stories. For example, the two Hmong recipients of the President's Medal at California State University, Fresno, are both Hmong women. Also, the

first Hmong to be elected to a political office in the U.S. (school board) is a Hmong woman.

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The majority of Hmong men in the United States have many difficulties meeting their acculturation needs. While many Hmong men are now physicians, lawyers, professors and so on, the number of these professionals is very small. Irby and Pon (1988) state that many Hmong men are distressed because of Hmong women's ability to generate income in the United States; the role reversal between the young and the old (i.e., relying on the young for language translation and cultural interpretation); an inability to learn in school; and, feelings of fear, hopelessness, and despair. A study in Long Beach, California, indicates that many Hmong elders experience feelings of family fragmentation; isolation; loss of social status and mobility; fear of crime; and, fear of being sent to a nursing home (Hayes & Kalish, n.d.). These sources indicate that Hmong men are not only facing many acculturation barriers, but might experience many other difficulties that have not yet been explored and identified.

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The cultural adaptation model views cultural adaptation of refugees as a transition from one stage to another. Sometimes a refugee may never go through all of the stages necessary to reach a stage of healthy adaptation. The Training Center for Indochinese Paraprofessionals of the Boston University School of Social Work (1982) developed a model of cultural adaptation predicting that a refugee might adjust to life in the United States by going through a honeymoon stage, a crisis period, followed by second generational stresses.

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Within the first two to four months, a newly immigrated refugee might experience the honeymoon stage of adaptation, during which s/he might feel positive and optimistic about the new country. After this euphoric stage, s/he will go

through the crisis period, in which s/he begins to experience problems with transportation, job skills, and adaptation to the new environment. Further, s/he might feel isolated, insecure and inadequate in the new socio-cultural context. This period might last anywhere from six months to a lifetime, depending on each individual's personality and experiences.

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The last stage of cultural adaption involves second generational stresses which relate to the acceptance and negotiation of the new environment and new culture, and the filtering out of what to give away from the old culture and what to take from the new cultural system. Development of a generation gap, role conflict, and status change might take place during this stage. Several years may pass in overcoming or successfully exiting this stage, depending on each individual's coping skills and life experiences. This model includes previous employment and education, age, sex roles, and socio-economic status as factors influencing the speed of adapting to the new culture. For example, "people of high status (army generals, village elders, teachers) discover that the new culture does not accept them and revere them in the same way" as they are used to being treated in their homeland (The Training Center for Indochinese Paraprofessionals, 1982, p. 12). This experience might contribute to culture shock and/or depression.

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In discussing the process of cultural adjustment, Koshmann, Tobin & Friendman (1981) list four basic reactions to culture shock: (1) fight, (2) flight, (3) going native, and (4) adaptation. These processes might be very helpful to use as a tool in looking at the adjustment of Hmong men to the new life in the United States.

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The refugee cultural adaptation model described above

generates questions concerning what stages Hmong men are currently experiencing and what are their basic responses to their adjustment to life in the West.

The Ethnographic Study

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A potential window into the adaptation process of Hmong men lies within their discussions with each other at meetings and feasts. Specifically, this study is based on the assumption that knowing some of the topics or issues Hmong men often talk about with each other might provide an indication of the reality of Hmong men and generate questions for future research.

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This researcher assumes that topics and issues most often talked about by Hmong men are those that are important to them and can be an indirect reflection of their reality and concerns. It has been the researcher's past experience to note that Hmong men talk, share news, and discuss issues whenever they get together in a meeting or socio-cultural event. This tendency of Hmong men has influenced this researcher's decision to study topics and issues Hmong men discuss during meetings and feasts.

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Data were collected from observations of Hmong men at social gatherings, as well as conversations with some of them. The subjects were unaware of the observations and presumably behaved as though they normally would in the observed situations. The researcher attended the events he observed as a participant. No notes were taken during the field observations and the researcher generally tried to sit in a location which would allow for the optimum observation of the group of Hmong men. This data was recorded in the form of summaries written soon after the observations and conversations.

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A total of fifteen observations were made. Six out of the fifteen observations were made at gatherings not involving the serving of food. These types of gatherings are categorized as "meetings." In contrast, the other nine observations took place at gatherings involving food and drink and thus have been categorized as "feasts." [{2}](#)

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Access to the observed social or cultural gatherings resulted when the researcher was invited, or someone who knew the host family took him along to the event. He participated in the conversation and any activities as one of the participants. The researcher assumed the role of participant and interacted as an insider along with the other Hmong men he was observing. Subjects were not informed that they were being observed in this manner in order to preserve as much as possible the naturalness of their behavior and interaction. While this presents something of an ethical dilemma for the researcher, it was deemed the only appropriate way to proceed in the given cultural environment.

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Many of the gatherings contained elements similar to a feast at the home of a former district administrator in Laos who is also a prominent Hmong elder in Fresno, California. The feast was held as a welcoming ceremony for his brother-in-law who came from France to visit him. The host slaughtered a cow which provided for a comparatively large feast (a more common centerpiece being a pig). The size of this feast symbolized the host's high social and economic status in the community. It also made for a warm welcome to his brother-in-law.

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Approximately thirty men attended this particular feast. The event began with rituals including blessings and a *baci* ritual -- the tying white strings by guests to the wrist of

the honored visitor to show hospitality, a warm welcome, and pure friendship. The white string is also a symbol of long life, prosperity, and good health. The feasting and drinking began immediately following this ceremony.

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An important part of any such gathering is a series of formal drinks. Two persons officiate this activity and sit together at the head of the table. Their role is to initiate each round of drinks (usually alcoholic, though other beverages such as soda pop or punch may be substituted by individual participants) by designating its purpose and taking the first drinks from shot glasses passed down either side of the table on top of a plate (two glasses on each side). At his turn, each man accepts the plate with full glasses from the man next to him as that man relays to him the name of that particular drink. The participant has to drink the contents of each glass in a single draught. He then refills the glasses and passes them and the name of the drink to the man next to him.

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At this gathering the first drink was for "welcoming the brother-in-law, and all the guests." Food was served as soon as the first drink began. As soon as the two cups reached the end of the table, the two starters began the second drink. It was for the "tying of white string or well wishes." The third drink, which was for "blessing the brother-in-law," followed the same procedure. The fourth, which was for showing thanks to all of the guests, ended the formal drinking, giving guests the freedom to walk away from the table or to continue drinking. By the time the fourth drink passed by, everyone had consumed eight drinks, the equivalent of about three or four beers. Some people began to speak in a loud voice and an accusation was made about cheating by avoiding drinking the full amount in the glasses. A rule was established fining those who cheated with two more cups which must be emptied immediately.

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Some of the discussion taking place during these drinking rounds centered on the keeping of proper relationships among clan members, drinking, and asking for news and information from one another. In addition, other issues were discussed among several people: (1) one young man had just been released from jail for making threats and brandishing a deadly weapon to make the threats; (2) one clan group which lives out of town wanted to get detailed information about an order by General Vang Pao to impeach the president of the Hmong Council; and, (3) an analysis of a fundraising event held for a nonHmong city council member suggesting that he was unaware of the agendas operating behind the event. A man also approached this researcher asking him to speak to the man's children and siblings about education and preparing for higher learning.

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After several drinks, most of the older men present addressed each other by their former titles, such as captain, major, village chief, district supervisor, mayor, teacher, and so on. Occasions like this seem to be the only events wherein the older men are invited to sit at the head of the table; treated with respect; and, most important of all, get to be together and share news. It seemed to make them feel more at ease; giving them the feeling that they still have some power and authority. Some professionals and well educated individuals did attend this feasting, but they left after the fourth drink. They showed respect and courtesy toward the elders, but they rarely participated in the discussion.

Results

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Analysis of the data involved three stages. First the field notes from all observations were examined to identify types of topics and issues Hmong men discussed. Second, all the identified topics were coded (see [Appendix](#)). This stage also involved forming the topics into a few large groups of

issues, such as acculturation issues, topics about the future, sex, returning to Laos, and so on. Finally, field notes were reviewed for patterns that often occurred during meetings and feasts, but which are not related to the identification of topics and issues Hmong men discussed.

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Fifty one topics and issues emerged from the examination of the field notes for the fifteen observed meetings and feasts (see [Appendix](#)). These subtopics were coded and divided into larger groups of topics, including:

- the acculturation situation;
- Hmong conditions (including evaluation / discussion of Hmong conditions);
- returning to Laos;
- issues related to the future;
- Hmong values and culture;
- sex (including sexual comments, sexual jokes, sexism, prostitution, and so on);
- international issues and news; and,
- others.

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Significant in its absence is the paucity of discussion related to formal education. This might reflect a lack of information and knowledge about the American education system. It at least suggests a need to acquaint more Hmong with the American education system. Since men are still the primary decision makers in families, this is particularly important. Services or intervention programs might be needed to connect Hmong men with the educational system. The more they talk about the education of themselves or their children, the more they will know about this area, and the more they know, the more they can help their children educationally; be actively involved in school; and most important of all, progress toward independence and self-sufficiency.

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In addition to these identified topics and issues, patterns appear in the temporal orientation of the discourse (e.g., past, present, and future). For example, former government and military officials seem to focus their discussion on the past; a time when they were in important positions. One interpretation is that these men perceive the best times of their lives as having occurred in the past with their hope being in the past, and that they refuse to think or accept the future or conditions of today's reality. Apparently most of them have not yet passed through the crisis period of the refugee cultural adaptation model. Also, they seem to respond to adjustment with the basic reaction of "flight" as described in Koshmann, Tobin and Friedman's (1981) "Four Basic Responses to Cultural Shock."

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The present-oriented men tended to be those who come from slash-and-burn agricultural and/or foot soldier backgrounds. Most often, they are illiterate and dependent on public assistance or make their living here by farming. In this group, men tend to concentrate their discussion around their daily lives and routine activity. Their priority seems to be the day-to-day survival which is the first tier in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which lists human needs hierarchically from (1) Basic Needs; (2) Safety; (3) Belongingness; (4) Ego-Status; and, (5) Self-actualization (Training Center for Indochinese Paraprofessionals, Boston University School of Social Work, 1982).

[41]

Men who tend to talk about the future or have hopes and dreams for the years to come, seem to be young, healthy, well educated, professional, entrepreneurial, and/or secure job holders. Their needs seem to be beyond the basic needs in the Maslow Hierarchy. They tend to focus their discussion on future topics such as business projects, buying homes, and involvement in future entrepreneurial activities. It can be interpreted that their present situation is secure and

comfortable, and thus they do not worry about their basic needs. Their priority seems to be the future and reaching the levels of Belongingness and Ego-Status in the Hierarchy. Most of the future-oriented men seem to have already passed all the three stages (honeymoon, crisis period, and second generational stresses) in the refugee cultural adaptation model, and are in the "adaptation" reaction of the "Four Basic Responses to Cultural Shock."

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The limited scope of the present study should be kept in mind when viewing the above findings. The subjects observed represented an opportunistic sampling approach. They may not represent the entire range of Hmong men living in Fresno and the West. Although the researcher did go to various gatherings hosted by many different families, most gatherings he attended were either hosted by families who knew the researcher or knew someone acquainted with the researcher. As such, the categories and information derived from this inquiry might best be viewed as laying a foundation for possible future directions in research on the adaptation of Hmong men who've resettled in the West. This study does, however, represent a small step toward filling the void of information on Hmong men as outlined earlier.

Directions for future research

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Without having a good knowledge base of Hmong men, service providers may not be able to effectively help the Hmong community in overcoming their acculturation needs and problems. The Hmong are new Americans and will continue to be members of the American society. They will continue to need help and to contribute to the economic, social, political, and educational strengths of this country. To be productive citizens, they need to be successful in adapting to life in the United States, including being successful in education

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To reach the goals of being productive citizens and educationally successful, Hmong men's acculturation barriers and educational needs must be identified and overcome. Scholars and educators have the professional and moral responsibility to study and identify acculturation and educational needs, and to research for workable strategies in overcoming the unmet needs of Hmong men as well as the Hmong community. Without knowledge and accurate information about the needs of the Hmong, service programs will not work. Posavac and Carey (1991) state that "when needs or the context of the people in need are not assessed accurately or only partially understood, program services cannot be as efficient or effective as possible" (p.113). From this view and frame of reference, educators, researchers, and other professionals need to do research and study the Hmong and their acculturation and education needs. Information from research will be a knowledge base for understanding the Hmong and their needs. It will also be helpful in formulating workable strategies to respond to their needs.

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Many questions should be addressed in future research. Some of these research questions are:

1. In a very broad perspective, what are the acculturation needs of Hmong men?
2. How well do Hmong adjust to the new social system in the U.S.?
 - How much do Hmong men know about their new environment?
 - How much do the many service providers in the community know about the needs of Hmong men or their experiences?
 - What can service providers do to reach out to the Hmong community?
3. What strategies can be applied to motivate Hmong men to rapidly adjust to their new life?
4. What are the current life goals of Hmong men?

5. Are many government and private service providers responsive to the acculturation and educational needs of Hmong men? What kind of programs have these agencies developed to assist Hmong men ?

[46]

These questions need to be addressed and studied so that a knowledge base can be built about Hmong men and their acculturation and educational needs. This knowledge base can be used to formulate workable strategies in responding to their needs and to empower them to be active members of the greater community.

Appendix

Coding of the 15 observations

Observation	Size	Event	Age	Food	Beverage	Location
1	15	Feast	35-60	M, GPCs	B, H,	WF
2	15	Feast	27-65	M, B, s	S	SF
3	10	Mting	30-55	None	C, W	EF
4	5	Mting	30-45	None	C, W	EF
5	15	Feast	25-55	m, bpcv	W, V, S	C
6	25	Feast	30-60	M, bps	B, S,	HD WF
7	30	Feast	30-65	M, b, s	B, S,	HD S
8	5	Feast	35-48	M, b, v	B, S, W S	EF9 (A)
9 (A)	5	Mting	25-45	None	S, B	WF9 (B)
9 (B)	3	Mting	40-55	None	S, B	WF
9 (C)	15	Mting	25-45	None	S, B	WF
9 (D)	8	Mting	30-45	None	None	WF
10	8	Feast	25-60	M, p, s	S, W, B	EF
11	25	Feast	35-50	m, b, f, v, s	S, W, B, V, C	
12	15	Feast	35-50	m, b, b,	S, W	S

Observation	Orientation	Educational Background	Topic
1	Past	0-18, M, VC, PUS	S, SC, DWC, PM, WLP, P, FD
2	Present	0-14F, DC, S,	C, G, F, RN, AG
3	Future	12-20P, G, PUS, W	RG, WS, USV, F
4	Future	14-18G, M, PUS	L, HF, FR,
5	Future	12-20 R, G, B, PUS	TC, PC, HUS, BH, IH
6	Past	0-18VC, M, G, WUS	L, W, P,
7	Past	0-18VC, M, G, PUS	CM, LP, L, FR, E
8	Future	6-16G, M, B, PUS	RL, EL, PL, HOL, HL
9 (A)	Present	0-6S, F, V	G, SJ
9 (B)	Pre/Past	0-6F, S, V, M	HS, P
9 (C)	Past/Fut.	0-14M, G, S, F	CP, FE,
9 (D)	Future	14-18G, M, PUS	HF, U, I, G, FH
10	Future	0-18F, PUS	BY, RP, HF, BH
11	Future	12-20R, M, G, B, PUS	PP, N, D, I
12	Future	12-20PUS, B, M, DC	CP, SP, LH

Codes

Size The number of the men in the group

Event The type of the event:

Meeting is any gathering that involved no food,

Feast is any gathering that involved food.

Age The estimated range of age of all men in the group

Food All food served for the event:

M Most of the foods served are meat

b beef

pp pork

c chicken

f fish

g goat

v vegetable

s salad

Beverage All the drinks served for the event:

b beer
V wine
s soft drink
w water

Location Location of the event:

WF West of Fresno
EF East of Fresno
SEF Southeast of Fresno
C Clovis
S Sanger

Educat. Estimate education of all men in the group:

0 no schooling
6 completed primary education
12 high school
14 two year college or AA
16 BA
18 MA/MS**20** Ph.D., DDS, Etc..

Backgrnd Family and occupational background of all men in the group (including their occupation in the US):

R From the ruling family (the elite group)
M military officer (including petty officer)
G Government officials (including civil servant)
VC Village chief
DC District chief (supervisor of many villages)
S Soldier
F Farmer (slash and burn cultivator)
WUS Worker/technician in the US
PUS Professional in the US (dentist, pharmacist, social worker, psychologist, etc.)
B Business/entrepreneur in the US

Topics of discussion:

A Adultery
AG Advice giving
BH Backyard
BY Buying house
C Car

CG Criticizing past government
CP Clan politics
CM Clan membership
D Demonstration
DWC Being dependent on wife and children
EL Economy of Laos
E Education
F Future
FD Food
FE Future economic development
FH Future of the Hmong
FM Farming
GM Game
GR Garage
GA Youth gangs
HF Hmong-Fresno
HL Hmong in Laos
HS Hmong song
HOL Hmong official in Laos
HUS Hmong in the US
I Immigration issues
IH Interpretation of Hmong myth
L Local issues
LP Legal problem
LH Leadership in the Hmong community
N Nationalism/patriotism
NI Sharing News and information
P Polygamy
PM Problem of polygamy
PP Political party among the overseas Laotians
PC Politics in Cambodia
PR Prostitute
RL Relatives in Laos
RP Roast Pig (how to do)
RG Resistance groups
RS Political fundraising
S Sex
SC Sexual comment
SJ Sexual joke
SP Strategic planning
TC Vacation in foreign country
U Unemployment
USV US/Vietnam relation
W Wife

WLP Wealth, liquor, and power
WS Global issues/international issues.

NOTES

{1} Traditional Hmong sprititual beliefs place great importance on maintaining duties or obligations to ancestors which will in turn bring good fortune upon the present members of that line. [Return to text](#)

{2} At such gatherings, it is customary for the men to meet in a separate room and sit around a long table or several tables placed together. The social gatherings observed are a common facet in many Hmong communities and can be held for a variety of purposes such as: weddings, celebrations of good fortune, or to welcome a relative or visitor who has recently arrived in the community. [Return to text](#)

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