

SOCIAL MOBILITY OF 1.5 AND 2.0 HMONG GENERATIONS  
IN THE SACRAMENTO – SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

A Thesis

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By

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by

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Abstract  
of  
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by  
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It has been over 40 years since the Hmong have left their homeland to settle in the United States, as a result of the Vietnam War. This study compares the social mobility of the 1.5- and 2.0-generations of Hmong after their arrival to the United States. Within the Asian American population, the Hmong community has the lowest educational achievement, socioeconomic status (SES), and social and occupational mobility. This study explores social-economic status, education, social and cultural influences, as well as other factors, which are likely to affect the social mobility of the Hmong. Furthermore, this research indicates that with higher educational attainment and social and capital resources, the trajectory of Hmong's upward mobility in the Sacramento – San Joaquin Valleys will likely be positive.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Statement of the Problem*

The United States remains the largest destination for immigrants across the world (Bean et al. 2004; Rumbaut 2008); however, upward social mobility for the majority of U.S. immigrants has always been disadvantaged relative to native-born citizens (Borjas 2005). Immigrant families and their children have to find pathways to either assimilate, or acculturate, while keeping up with mainstream American culture. Immigrants face social, economic, political, and cultural challenges, as well as generational changes, which mediates social mobility. Social mobility is “the movement from one class or status to another” (Borgatta and Montgomery 2000: 756) and the ability of individuals or groups to move within a social hierarchy along income, education, and occupation (Scott and Marshall 2009). In any society, whether in one’s home country or abroad, social mobility is a great challenge for anyone. While social mobility is constrained by class stratification, each immigrant group has their own unique hurdles to overcome in order to achieve desirable social mobility. This study is particularly interested in examining social mobility among the Hmong.

There is little recorded history on the Hmong people, except that some 5,000 years ago, Chinese scholars indicated that Hmong were among the inhabitants who had once lived in China (Va 2007). In recent centuries, Hmong was one of the ethnic minorities who migrated to Southeast Asia, and is consider nomadic—without a proper territorial nation. However, it is important to note that bounded nation-states are recent

modern constructions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Anderson 1990; Nevins 2002). The Hmong are not traditional immigrants, but refugees displaced after the Vietnam War. In 1975, over 10,000 Hmong fled to France; 1,600 to Australia; 2,000 to Canada; and over 200,000 chose the United States (Cha and Livo 2000; Va 2007). The resettlements of Hmong mark significant changes in their new livelihood as they adjust to their new culture. In the host country, each immigrant group encountered slightly different experiences depending on where they settled and the kind of support received.

Currently, the population of Hmong is considered very small compared to other minority populations of the U.S.; however, the thriving growth of Hmong quickly makes them a discernible minority (Vang 2012). Other examples of their significance in the U.S. are that the Hmong ethnicity choice is included in the U.S. Census, as well as their recognition in Bing and Google's translation services. Although these translation services are not optimal yet, it can certainly improve the visibility of the Hmong across the nation and the world.

### *Significance of Study*

The significance of this study is to explore the factors that contribute to the social mobility among the 1.5- and 2.0-generations of Hmong in California since their arrival to the United States. The 1.5 are those who arrived under the ages of 13 and the 2.0 are those who were born in the U.S. (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). This study will compare the social economic status, education, social/cultural capital, as well as other cultural influences, which are likely to impact the social mobility of the two generations. The objective is to explore theoretical questions, and not necessarily infer to a larger Hmong

population. This study will serve to guide more inferential research in the future.

The main question explores whether upward social mobility of the Hmong 1.5- to 2.0-generations has progressed since their arrival to the United States, and the variation of each generation's mobility. Within the Asian American population, the Hmong community has the lowest educational achievement, socio-economic status, and occupational mobility. This study could help identify factors that may present unique challenges to this disadvantaged group. Therefore, the results of the study could assist the Hmong in advancing their social mobility and guide future interventions that help refugee communities with similar challenges.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

This study will analyze the gap in the social mobility of Hmong refugee immigrants among the 1.5- and 2.0-generations since the post-Vietnam War and their arrival to California and other areas in the United States. This study will focus on Hmong who are currently residing in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley. Although younger generations of Hmong in America are swiftly assimilating to American culture, achieving educational goals, and establishing stable careers can be very challenging to such a recent immigrant population. Such population may also lack the social and cultural capital valued by mainstream America. Identifying the influences and factors of Hmong's social mobility can enable future generations to sustain upward social mobility. Status attainment and social resources theories inform this study's analysis and hypotheses.

Status attainment theory is one of the earlier models of social mobility, which states that a person's status-attainment is based on their parents' educational achievement and social well-being, which affects their abilities, opportunities to obtain prestigious career, and impacts immigrants' social incorporation into society as well (Blau and Duncan 1967). Furthermore, once a person's parents have achieved desirable statuses, their children's socioeconomic soars in the process. For example, parents achieving higher education or professional careers can increase their children's socioeconomic status (SES). Social resources theory, on the other hand, explains how a person's constructed relations with friends, colleagues, social ties, and people can bring forth potential social success in wealth, status, and power (Lin 1981). These two theories will help examine the perceptions among the Hmong immigrants with regard to their social mobility in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Historical Background*

From the 1920s to the mid-1980s, the United States received over half a million legal permanent residents each year. By 1980, foreign-born immigrants had grown to 14.1 million (Portes 1989). Among this notable trend, Hmong was among one of 150 different foreign nationalities that were coming to the U.S. for economic, sanctuary, or other legal reasons. Portes clarified that recent immigrants, even with a modest background, usually entered the U.S. with a low SES. Striving for improvement in social mobility, the process of acculturation must be examined because it can affect future generations' success. Since Hmong just recently arrived to the U.S. beginning in 1975, they are behind in every category from other Asian immigrants, who largely benefited from the 1965 Hart-Cellar Immigration Act's professional preference category (Portes & Rumbaut 2006).

Hmong, like other immigrants in the U.S., began building their own community. Portes (1989) referred to such immigrant communities as ethnic enclaves. Ethnic enclaves provide immigrants with the opportunity to associate with others from common background, experience, culture, and so forth (Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes 1989). For example, a small Hmong community in Minnesota known as Hmongtown is an example of an ethnic enclave. Minnesota is among other larger states like Wisconsin and California with a high concentration of Hmong (Cha and Livo, 2000). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, California had the most Hmong populace due to economic

opportunities and ethnic ties. The first wave of immigrants, or first generation, did not find the new country as expected because the new country lacked ethnic enclaves. For instance, Portes (1989) observed that labor migrants struggled to adapt due to language and labor laws. Consequently, an ethnic enclave community provided employment opportunities for their immigrant co-nationals, in what otherwise would have been a challenging and limited labor market (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In addition, these ethnic enclaves assisted immigrants to become integrated to the mainstream society over time.

### *Challenges*

Hmong's resettlement and the second wave migration experiences reflect challenges, because they settled in states with heavy concentrations of Hmong and poor employment and housing opportunities availability (Vang and Flores 1999, cited in Vang 1992). In the case of going through this migration experience, Hmong frequently migrated back and forth between major Hmong communities such as Minneapolis, St. Paul, Sacramento, and Fresno during the late 1980s and 1990s (Vang and Flores 1999). This frequent intra-national migration caused social and economic instabilities and hardships for Hmong families, specifically the 1.0- and 1.5-generations of Hmong. This trend is different in today's Hmong families, especially the 2.0-generation, because the United States' poverty and unemployment rates are high in almost all exceedingly Hmong populated areas (Vang 2012). While similar in material status, the second generation Hmong are more settled and less migratory than earlier generations. Unlike in

the early migration experience, Hmong consistently reside in one close-knit community or state region.

Today's immigrants, especially the U.S.-born second generation who had reached adulthood, found social and economic changes perplexing because of political backlash and animosity toward immigrants (Rumbaut 2008). Hmong faced these challenges; for example, beginning with the second wave of the parents of 1.5-generation, Hmong only made an average of \$12,900 annually, compared to the lowest mean household income of \$17,500 in the U.S. (Hein 1994).

The 2.0-generation of youth immigrants today are also experiencing economic and acculturation challenges in American Society. Portes and Rumbaut (2006) explained that there were three main challenges for 2.0-generation of youth in attaining a good education and career achievement. The first was ongoing racial discrimination; the second was the bifurcation of inequality in the American job market; and third, drug use and street gangs in inner-city America. For instance, in 1995, Pao Yang, a fifty-seven-year-old Hmong father, moved his family from San Diego to Fresno because his son, Khae, age 18 at the time, was disobedient and joined a local gang (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Portes and Rumbaut's Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) documented the challenges the Yang family encountered. For example, traditionally, Hmong children are obedient to their parents especially in their home country, but with a new culture in a new country, a different dimension brought challenges for both the new and old generations. If the larger society devalues Hmong's culture and history, children's relation to their community is hurt. In comparison, Current Population Survey

(CPS) found that children of immigrants remained deprived without human capital (knowledge and ability to perform labor) and the awareness to produce economic value (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In addition, when immigrant parents' SES had a significant net increase of 3 percent, more opportunities were available for their children (Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

The 2.0 and even younger generation of Hmong students also deal with cultural and social family responsibilities that interfere with their educational pursuit. Even in America, acculturation remains difficult for Hmong students given their obligations, such as domestic responsibilities at home. Such family responsibilities can take a toll on the growth of Hmong students and their potential to obtain a good education and increase their social mobility. Hmong had already established some line of prestigious work, from blue collar to small-business farm ownership, or other business entrepreneurship, as well as professional occupations like teachers, physicians, college professors, etc. However, from an assimilationist perspective, old customs and traditional practices can be a barrier for the 1.5 to 2.0 Hmong generations. These barriers include remaining in large family-sized household and employing in low-wage occupations (Vang 2005, cited in Yang 1995). From a segmented assimilation perspective, old customs and new ones are manageable, and those able to fluidly move in and out of the home and host cultures generally have the highest achievement rates (Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

### *Education*

In their home country, the Hmong lived in rural communities and had little exposure to formal educational institutions, which contributes to their disadvantages in



their new home country. On top of limited education, the lack of business skills also made it even more difficult for the Hmong to adapt to urban life in American (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Sakamoto and Woo (2007) also compared the years of schooling of the first and second waves of Hmong. Sakamoto and Woo used Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), from the 2000 U.S. Census, and analyzed the differences between the first and second waves of Hmong immigrants who averaged 1.38 years of school. Hence, the first wave of Hmong immigrants had a higher rate of poverty than the second wave (Sakamoto and Woo 2007). Low educational achievement complicated the Hmong's social mobility.

On the other hand, Rumbaut (2008) found that Asians generally had the highest educational attainment consistently among the first through the third-generations of immigrants. From the Merged Current Population Surveys (MCPS) of 2003-2006, the ages of these immigrants ranged from eighteen to thirty-four years old (Rumbaut 2008). The limitation of Rumbaut's study was that it did not include the Hmong or other smaller minority ethnicities or their place in the educational rank.

Although most of the 1.0-generation of Hmong lacked a formal education, more and more of the 1.5- and 2.0-generations of Hmong obtained formal education. However, within a few decades since Vang's 1992 study, Hmong had acculturated significantly due to more and more Hmong males and females finding themselves in situations as mainstream Americans (Vang and Flores 1999). In addition, more Hmong are waiting until they complete a college education or have maintained a career before getting married. This also changed the dynamics of homogenous marriages as well, since

more Hmong are seeking marriages and spouses outside their ethnicity. Moreover, Vang and Flores (1999) also reported that Hmong Americans in high school and college graduates have rapidly flourished across the country. This signified that educational attainment could lead minorities to a better and more productive life. For instance, in 1995 at Fort Miller Junior High School in Fresno, there were 26-honor roll Hmong students out of 74, and in 1997, 14 Hmong American high school students graduated as valedictorians in the Fresno Unified School District (Vang and Flores 1999).

The trend of Hmong's upward mobility also continues as Xiong (2012) pointed. For example, among the Hmong over the age of 25 who had obtained an education beyond a bachelor's degree rose almost 100% from 7.4 to 14.5 percent (4.9 percent in 1990, 7.4 percent in 2000, and 14.5 percent in 2010), according to the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey of year 2001-2010. In comparison by gender, Hmong females remained behind their males counterparts in high school degree or higher, 63.5 to 69.8 percent (Xiong 2012). This data shows that the 2.0 Hmong generation have shown some improvements in education attainment from previous cohorts. This indicates that Hmong are becoming more aware of the factors and the importance of achieving an education. The key for most is that upward mobility is a result of obtaining an education.

In contrast, Pfeifer (2008) reported that according to the American Community Survey (ACS) from the 2005 data, Hmong's educational level remained the lowest among their Southeast Asian American counterparts. Furthermore, only 20.5 percent of Hmong graduated from high school, and 7.5 percent obtained a bachelor's degree.

Although, the average household size for Hmong was 5.50, which was higher than other Southeast Asians. Furthermore, Pfeifer (2008) described, from the 2005 ACS, that Hmong's median household income was \$39,225 (the lowest) and their poverty rate was 32.7 percent (the highest). In physical capital, such as property, Hmong's homeownership was the lowest at 50.9 percent. Hmong ranked at the lowest in all these indicators of well-being, as referenced from previous 1990 and 2000 census data. Pfeifer, nonetheless, noted that there had been considerable socioeconomic and educational progress among the Hmong.

Along a different view, Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy (2008) disagreed with Pfeifer's findings because of the growth in Southeast Asian communities, which took into account other factors and challenges such as different language needs, parental expectations, and cultural norms (Uy 2008). According to Uy, the 2005 ACS reported that the cause of 5.5 million English Language Learners (ELL) decreased in semantics and grammar were due to their parents' lack of proficiency in English (Uy 2008). The lack of parents' literacy was one of the example that applied to Hmong, since the Hmong were among the lowest in socioeconomic and educational attainment. Uy suggested that in order to ensure the success of [Hmong] American students' language development, more access to resources outside of the classroom are needed, as well as more community involvements with these groups. To accomplish this goal, the first wave of leaders from [Hmong] communities need to establish mutual assistance with the U.S. government. Uy thought this approach was the best way to provide the greatest opportunities and ensure academic achievement for [Hmong] in the future.

According to Vang (2005), pioneer Hmong students lacked proper instructional preparations because they were not placed in college preparation classes, identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. For these reasons, Vang noted the difference between U.S.-born and foreign-born Hmong was that the latter one had more chances of being at risk for school failure, because they were from non-English language backgrounds and had experienced absolute poverty.

#### *Socioeconomic*

Perez and Hirschman (2009) explored the social mobility across race and ethnic categories, focusing on the Asian and Hispanic populations since these groups had the largest growth, from 8% in 1980, to nearly 20% in 2006. Using quantitative and qualitative research in residual methods approach, the authors estimated the intra-racial mobility in the U.S. The authors predicted that continued international migration and intermarriage would change ethnic identities.

Missing from Perez and Hirschman's research was the mixed ancestry children category that claimed only white parents, but changed their name when they found out their biological identity. This was important because, at least the second Hmong generation today have been interacting more outside of their traditional Hmong marriages, which affect their acculturation and mobility in mainstream America. Similarly, Her (2011) showed that even the first Hmong generation arrived in the United States for over 30 years exhibited progress in acculturation as well, with a sample of N=50, with both genders and an average age of 45 years at the time of the sampling. At

least 70% of Hmong reported somewhat or higher on the acculturation scale, and 96% felt it was important to become economically secure in America. Both measures indicate aspirations for a better life.

A component of social class is life chances. As classical theorist, Max Weber described, “We may speak of a ‘class’ when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. This “class situation” simply means that the class status of individuals shapes people’s life chances and identity (Weber 2007: 248). In other words, Weber states that class situation can also become creditor-debtor, as well as giving workers a chance to become self-reliant on the market. If the condition of the market is favorable, there will be less “class struggles” for those that are in the social network of resources. Hmong have gradually, since their arrival to America, build networks beyond their communities, which may improve their labor market opportunities.

When Hmong have improved their life chances and upward social mobility, there will be lower conditions of poverty and benefits to the general community. Moreover, economic power is the ability to produce goods and services, and achieve income and profit. Accordingly, as network opportunities increases, social resources follow (Lin 1981). Lin’s notion of social resources theory identifies the social stratification of all networking from fellow relatives, which can mediate social status attainment.

### *Social Capital*

Aiding social status attainment, people's social resources, such as social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital could be improve. These factors form the habitus or social space defining personal experience and inheritance of a social position (Bourdieu 1977). For example, Bourdieu defines speech habitus as people sharing a specific type of linguistic jargon marking their distinction from others. The complexity or simplicity of the usage of vocabulary can signify a person's cultural capital such as knowledge, tastes, and skills. For instance, higher-class people might prefer drinking from a glass of wine, whereas, people from ordinary class might drink beer from disposable cups. Habitus signifies the social environment of who people are, what they value, and how they associate themselves with the larger society. Powerful institutions like higher education, economy, and the government reflect the habitus of those at the intersections of privilege along race, gender, and class.

The Hmong are largely low-income and racial minorities, and form communities/organization that also reflect their unique habitus. Hmong's habitus, while valuable for the individual and collective health, was not embedded or accepted in mainstream institutions; which complicated the Hmong's social mobility in the U.S. Along segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2008), Hmong selectively acculturate mainstream forms –language, traditions, styles—that help them succeed in the larger society, while also reproducing and maintaining links to their Hmong habitus. Recently, Hmong's habitus has grown in society, because many of them

are moving away from traditional rituals of nuclear Hmong family and communities and extending their networks to achieve better opportunities. Likewise, Hmong Americans have different ways of conversing compared to traditional Hmong. They reflect a unique reality of living in-between two worlds, and reflecting an emergent racial-ethnic identity and habitus that have aspects of both worlds into a new one (Barajas 2009).

### *Standpoint Theory*

Hmong's experiences with mobility can also be inform by standpoint theory. Standpoint theory elaborates on how one can perceive things differently even if they are in the same class, race, or gender. Nonetheless, standpoint theory points to the power of social location and/or grounded knowledge as contributing to the production of more objective knowledge (Harding 2004). For instance, this study is attentive to the Hmong standpoint or reflective knowledge rooted to their own uniquely circumstances and experiences. In terms of the social economic and education situations, not all of Hmong received the same enjoyment and benefits as other families, resulting in different ways of engaging in the world. For this reason, elitist Hmong rarely find as much challenges as those marginalized. In furthering the standpoint theory model, intersectionality is also considered. Likewise, Hmong experience the intersections of being disadvantaged along race, class, and gender in a hegemonic society (Collins 2004). While Hmong families may have different personal experiences, they generally face similar intersectional experiences among their group of peers. In understanding more of the Hmong conditions, people can assess the nature of their social mobility and the importance of intersectionality.

*Hypotheses*

This study—informed by social resources, status attainment theories, and intersectionality—proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Second generation Hmong students will have more social mobility than the 1.5-generation because of their higher access to resources (e.g., education, language, networks).

Hypothesis 2: The second-generation Hmong's social mobility will benefit the most from their parent's higher level of education (or socioeconomic status).

Hypothesis 3: Hmongs, who are proficiently bilingual, have the greatest level of social mobility.



## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Research Study Question*

Through a self-administered survey, this study evaluates individual Hmong's social mobility since post-Vietnam War, and compares the first and second generations' progress in the United States. The survey was conducted from the human subjects' approval date, April 17, 2013 through March 1, 2014. This study particularly examined the social mobility of Hmong residing in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley. Although many studies have been conducted on the Hmong, little information is available about their road to success or upward social mobility in America. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the scholarly void on the Hmong in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley. Additionally, this study analyzes the factors that affect Hmong's social mobility as well as the amount of mobility experienced. Given the absence of existing data on social mobility, this study collected data that are more relevant to the research questions.

#### *Subjects of Study*

The IRB department approved the study as having no or minimum risks to the study participants and as ensuring their confidentiality and voluntary participation (Approval: 12-13-115 (MAR)). For the Informed Consent Form, see Appendix A. The target number of participants was 100 or more; the initial sample obtained was 95. In screening for the minimal requirements, of the 95 participants, 16 of them did not meet the criteria since they fell into the 1.0-generation category, were not from the intended region of Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley, or failed to indicate the areas of residence.

Therefore the final sample size was of 79 (n=79) respondents who met the requirement of the study. Again, the objective was to explore theoretical questions, and not necessarily infer to the larger Hmong population. This knowledge provides more guidance to more inferential research in the future (See Chapter 1).

The selected participants of the study were at least 18 years old and had lived in the United States for at least 15 years. This minimal residency requirement provided a better in-depth evaluation of the participant's attitude on their social mobility. Since participants who can read in Hmong are typically those who can read in English, the questionnaire survey was only available in the English language. Furthermore, the survey consisted of forty-one brief questions to ensure its full completion. Blau and Duncan (1967) social mobility study informed this survey's questions and helped provide a snapshot of Hmong's current educational attainment, income level, and occupation.

### *Measures*

The study was conducted in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley, which is anywhere from north (Sacramento to Chico) and south (Stockton to Fresno), where Hmong are heavily concentrated. In order to organize and separate by region, areas of residence was recoded into "1=Sacramento Valley" cities consisting of Oroville, Marysville/Yuba City, Roseville/Lincoln, Sacramento, and Rancho Cordova. For the San Joaquin Valley, it was recoded into 2, which included Stockton, Modesto, Delhi, Atwater, Merced, and Fresno. The data collections were primarily from local Hmong churches, family gathering venues, and through a snowball sampling method for recruitment. The

survey was self-explanatory and took participants no more than 20 minutes to complete. After data was collected, it was analyzed with SPSS Statistics version 22.

A conventional use of chi-square modeling was used to analyze the theoretically informed hypotheses. The survey data was broken into five sections: demographics, occupation and employment, education, income/capital, and upward social mobility. Questions 1 through 36 addressed demographic, occupation and employment, education, and income/capital. The social mobility status of the individual's income was the dependent variable (DV) for this study. Question 28 asked for the income of respondent's family household income when the respondent first arrived to the United States; then question 29 asked for respondent's current family household income. Possible responses on both questions 28 and 29 were "1=Under 30,000/yr; 2=30,001 to 49,999/yr, 3=50,000-69,999/yr, 4=70,000 to 89,999/yr, 5=90,000/yr or over." The incomes for these were recoded into fewer categories such as "1= 0 to 29,999/yr, 2=30,000 to 69,999/yr, 3=Over 70,000/yr." These two questions compare the progression of family household income over time. However, only current family household income was analyzed as the dependent variable.

The first independent variable (IV) asked respondents, "Where were you born?" Possible responses are "1=Thailand/Laos, 2=U.S., 3=Other." The answers were recoded into "1=1.5 generation", "2=2.0 generation", and "3=Other/NA/Missing". Another independent variable (IV) was education. Questions 23 through 25 asked about participants and their parent's educational attainment. Respondents were asked three questions, "What is the highest level of education you completed?", "What is the highest

level of education that your father completed?”, and “What is the highest level of education that your mother completed?” Levels of education was coded as, “1=Less than HS/No Education/NA, 2=High School Diploma/GED, 3=Associate’s, 4=Bachelor’s, 5=Master’s, 6=Doctorate (PhD), 7=Professional (MD/DDS/JD, etc.)” The highest level of education was recoded to “1=Less than HS/No Education/NA, 2=High School Diploma/GED, 3=Associates, 4=Bachelor’s or Higher”.

Questions 7 asked the participants about their comfort with their bilingual ability in Hmong and English. It ranks from “1=Extremely Uncomfortable, 2=Uncomfortable, 3=Somewhat Uncomfortable, 4=Comfortable, 5=Extremely Comfortable.” The level of “comfortable” and “extremely comfortable” were recoded into “1=Yes”. The level of “extremely uncomfortable”, “uncomfortable”, and “somewhat uncomfortable” under bilingual were recoded to “2=No.” The abilities of bilingualism was the control variable.

Subsequently, questions 28 through 36 relate to income and capital. Questions 37 through 41 were direct social mobility questions such as “Do you feel you are better off than your parents or grandparents?”, “Do you feel being Hmong is a disadvantage in the job market?”, “Do you feel being Hmong is an disadvantage in obtaining an education?”, “Do you believe education is important to achieve the American Dream?”, and “Do you think being another ethnic race could better your life or career? If you agree or strongly agree, please name what race?” Possible responses for these questions were, “1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat Agree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.”

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

The objective of this research is to explore the factors that contribute to the social mobility among the 1.5- and 2.0-generations of Hmong in California, particularly in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley. The study examines the experiences among the 1.5- and 2.0-generations since their arrival to the U.S. The first section reviews descriptive statistics of general demographics, along with education and income of the participants; and the second section tests the aforementioned hypotheses on social mobility.

#### *Descriptive Findings*

The total number of participants from the Sacramento Valley is 33 females and 28 males (n=61), while, the total for San Joaquin Valley is 11 females and 7 males (n=18). Table 1 shows that there were more participants from the Sacramento Valley than San Joaquin, as well as slightly more female participants among the 1.5- and 2.0-generations. The number of female participants in the 1.5-generation are 15 and the 2.0 is 29 (n=44). For males, there are 14 among the 1.5-generation and 21 for 2.0 (n=35). The distribution of age (n=79) ranges from 18 through 44 years old. The largest age group was 25 years old at 11.4 % (n=9) and the average, 30.23 years of age. The youngest age for the 1.5-generation is 22 and the oldest is 44; whereas, the youngest is 18, and oldest is 32 for the 2.0-generation.

The majority of participants from both generation completed at least a high school or GED diploma at 36.7% (n=29), followed by a four-year college degree at 31.7% (n=25). The highest percentage of educational attainment for the 1.5 is 23.4% (n=18),

who received a bachelor's degree or higher. For the 2.0, the highest percentage is also 23.4% (n=18), but in the high school/GED category (Table 1).

Table 1 illustrates that the number of participants who reported making less than \$29,999 per year upon their first arrival to the U.S. was 97.2% (n = 70). This is a combination of 1.5- and 2.0-generational household income upon initial arrival to the U.S. In contrast, the current household income for those that made under \$29,999 per year is 34.7% (n = 26). Today, 62.5% less Hmongs are in the lowest income bracket, indicating some improvement in mobility over time. For the category “30,000 to 69,999 per year”, 42.5% more Hmongs were found in the middle income bracket than when they initially arrived. Table 1 also shows that 45.3% earned in the “\$30,000 to \$69,999 per year” as opposed to the 2.8% at the first arrival income. Also for initial household income, there were no Hmongs reporting “over \$70,000” for both the 1.5- and 2.0-generations (n=0), whereas, the current household income was 20.0%. The 1.5-generation had a 13.3% (n=10) of its members in highest income bracket of “over 70,000” compared to only 6.7% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (n=5).<sup>1</sup>

Table 2 shows a wide range of occupations held by both generations from homemaker to executive director. Moreover, this table shows that the many of 1.5- and 2.0-generations are employed in the education-related industry at 13.9 % (n=11). In addition, there were 24.1 % (n=19) number of participants from both generations that

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<sup>1</sup> This difference is significant, because there were more 2nd generation participants (n=50) than 1.5-generation ones (n=29). Clearly, the notion that income/capital improved across generations is not supported with this data.

yield no response to the question regarding current occupation. Few Hmongs from both generations occupied high-paying professions, such as healthcare and engineering.

### *Cross-Tabulation Findings*

Tables 3.1 through 6 are cross-tabulations analyzing the association of independent and dependent variables testing three hypotheses on social mobility. Hypothesis 1 states that second generation Hmong students will have more social mobility than the 1.5-generation because of their higher access to resources (e.g., education, language, social networks). Table 3.1 shows no significant association between the highest level of education and generation (chi-square = 5.782, d.f.= 3,  $p > .123$ ). Table 3.2 shows there is also no significant association of educational attainment by generation when controlling for bilingual ability (speaking more than one languages). Both the 1.5- and 2.0-generation Hmongs who are bilingual have an education (chi-square = 1.467, d.f. = 2,  $p > .480$ ) and there was no significant association among the non-bilingual respondents<sup>2</sup> (chi-square = 5.893, d.f.= 3,  $p > .117$ ).

Hypothesis 2 states that second-generation Hmong's social mobility will benefit the most from their parent's higher level of education. The mother's education attainment was tested due to the current occupation inclination or single parent. Table 4 illustrates that there is an association between income and education when controlling for

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<sup>2</sup> In effect, while all participants spoke English, those in the 1.5- generation who were bilingual had higher levels of education than the non-bilinguals. It is important to note, that 1.5- generation as a group also had higher levels of education with 23% (n = 18) having a BA or higher compared to only 15.6% (n = 12) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.

mother's education attainment (chi-square = 7.875, d.f. = 2,  $p < .019$ ). In addition, there was no association for parent's with no education (chi-square = 5.330, d.f. = 2,  $p > .070$ ).

Hypothesis 3 states that Hmongs, who are proficiently bilingual, have the greatest social mobility. Table 5 confirms the significant association between income for the 1.5-generation when controlling for bilingualism (Chi-Square = 10.902, d.f. = 2,  $p < .004$ ). Likewise, there is also a significant association between income for the 2.0-generation when controlling for bilingualism (Chi-Square = 10.800, d.f. = 2,  $p < .005$ ). In this category, the 1.5-generation who earned income "over \$70,000 per year" was 28.6% (n=10) versus 16.0% (n=12) for the 2.0-generation, who had fewer respondents.

Participants were asked to respond a question whether or not they believed their upward mobility would be better if they were another ethnic race or relations. The number of respondents with combination of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" that their ethnic race had an impact on their upward mobility is 48.0 %. Moreover, Table 6 shows that among those answered, 85% indicates that they believed the white ethnic race could improve their social mobility.



## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

This study provides a snapshot of factors that partially contribute to the social mobility among the 1.5- and 2.0-generation Hmongs for nearly four decades. Since their first arrival to the U.S., the Hmong population has experienced exponential growth in social, economic, and cultural statuses. There are less Hmongs in the lowest income brackets than there were when (over 90%) Hmong first came to the U.S. Initially, cultural and social gaps interfered with adapting to the mainstream America. For example, as the 1.0 (foreign-born parents) and 1.5-generations slowly adapt to the new country, their education and employment will improve depending on the degree of acculturation. Adaptation to the United States presented obstacles for much of the 1.5-generation, but as the data shows, the second generation also faces similar challenges.<sup>3</sup> This study examined three hypotheses regarding the social mobility of the 1.5- and 2.0-generations. These hypotheses are informed by social status attainment and social resources theories.

Hypothesis 1 expected that Hmong students of the second-generation have more social mobility than 1.5-generation because of the 2.0's higher access to social resources. Table 3b supports hypothesis 1. In this case, both the 1.5- and 2.0-generations' upward social mobility benefited by achieving education attainment when controlling for bilingualism. In addition, the 1.5-generation appeared more embedded in the Hmong

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, the findings clearly show that the 1.5-generation fairs slightly better than the second generation.

community and the larger society than the 2.0-generation. This finding confirms Portes and Rumbaut's segmented assimilation theory that those who are able to remain bicultural or closer to their ethnic communities do better than those who do not. This study also found that the 1.5-generation's social mobility is greater than the 2.0. This is possibly because of the 1.5's closer connections to the Hmong community. Social capital and resources from the Hmong community helps the 1.5-generation, while the 1.5 develops relations beyond their communities. In a way, the 1.5's social resources are broader than those who moved away from the Hmong community.

The second hypothesis looks at whether the second-generation's social mobility will benefit the most from their parent's higher level of education. This study focused on the mothers' impact on the social mobility of their child(ren) since women are part of the new income earners and generally are more successful in finding employment than men (Espiritu 2003). There is an association between the mother's higher educational attainment and higher social mobility for the 2.0-generation.<sup>4</sup> This is likely because the 2.0-generation may have assimilated with mainstream America and disconnected with local support groups. Thus, the 2.0-generation's upward mobility may be reduce.

The final hypothesis proposes that proficiently bilingual Hmongs will achieve the highest social mobility. There was a significant association with income mobility among the 1.5- and 2.0-generation when controlling for bilingualism. The data shows that being proficiently bilingual did not necessary mean that one would have better social mobility.

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<sup>4</sup> The study did not disentangle whether the 1.5- and second-generation participants come from similar households—with mothers equally matched in levels of education and occupational status.

Nevertheless, the 1.5-generation possess more bilingual skills than the second generation. The ability to speak more than one language is a plus when competing in a job market. Therefore, the 1.5-generation's bilingual ability enhances their opportunities to employment. This also applies to the 2.0-generation, particularly since the data shows that the 2.0 possess less bilingual skills. Acquiring more than one language is essential to the second generation in order to have better employment opportunities in a competitive job market. More opportunities means broader social capital and resources.

Although the 1.5- and 2.0-generations have achieved upward social mobility, it is not as high as other immigrants groups, especially in the Asian American population. Other Asians have faced a different context of reception as shaped by the United States immigration policy, labor market opportunities, and social capital support (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Many recent Asian immigrants benefit from professional preference visa categories and are recruited for their specialized skills; whereas, the Hmong entered the country as displaced refugees who come from humble backgrounds and could not return to their country.

Hmong have unique challenges and disadvantages in their community. As this study's findings suggest, education plays an important role for achieving upward social mobility. By achieving higher education, one would have better social mobility. However, the results show that across generations— in this case, from 1.5- to the 2.0-generations, education did not become more accessible as expected. Future studies must identify the barriers, because English language proficiency and adaptation to the host

society are achieved by the second generation yet mobility remains very low, and even lower than for the 1.5-generation.

Along with education, status attainment and social resources theories point to how parents can produce occupational prestige along with social networking in their community to move social mobility upward. Evidently, these valuable conceptual frameworks (status attainment and resource theories) do not capture or analyze the larger structural context that intersectional theory and standpoint methods bring attention to. Social networks and resources in America have largely been shaped by racial, gender, and class factors, where those at the intersections of these institutional hierarchies face unfair playing fields in the pursuit of a better life for themselves and families. One of the last questions in the survey was whether the participants thought that being another race could better their life or career, and what race would that be? The great majority (85%) said yes, and reported that being White would improve their lives.

### *Conclusion*

The effect of the 1.0-generation's poverty influenced their 1.5 children to seek early employment rather than obtaining an education or securing a stable career. Nonetheless, seeing their parents' scarcities and educational limitations, may have influenced and motivated the 1.5-generation to improve their lives and their families. However, this motivation may partially explain the 1.5-generation's slight advantage over the 2.0-generation.

The 2.0-generation are experiencing a different perception on education. Since parents of the 2.0-generation are becoming more cognizant of the growing need for

educational attainment, education has become a necessity in order to compete in the job market. Moreover, parents of the 2.0-generation perceive education attainment as an important vehicle towards upward social mobility. Since the 2.0-generation is predominately a younger generation, their efforts to become successful would still likely lead towards success if they had more ties to the Hmong community. The 1.5-generation appears to be more successful than the 2.0-generation due to their close-knit ties to the Hmong culture, language, and community. Unfortunately, the Hmong community remains a disadvantaged in nearly every social category of well-being, including health, income, education, and employment, compared to their Southeast Asian counterparts.

As the importance of education and the barriers interfering with the Hmong, are becoming widely recognized, as well as more 1.5 and 2.0 are achieving higher education and prestige occupations, Hmong's social resources will increase. Social resources plays a vital role in the upward mobility of the Hmong, since resources enable people to move beyond their social and occupational mobility. In this study, the Hmong had little or limited resources and faced social stratification, especially the 2.0 or younger generations. Families embedded in marginalized communities with scarce resources—decent housing, employment opportunities, and quality public education—cannot provide the social resources and status attainment advantageous to younger generation. Not to minimize the social capital and culturally specific status attainment among the Hmong, the reality is that their specific networks and cultural wealth are marginalize in the larger society, where race, gender, and class mediate access to social resources and status attainment. All of which contributes to the challenges that today's Hmong are facing.

As this study have indicated, Hmong's income have significantly improved from when they first arrived to the U.S. to their current state, with the 2.0 and younger generations demonstrating more upward mobility. Correspondingly, as shown in the study, there was not a significant difference among the 2.0- and 1.5-generations in obtaining more reputable careers than previous generations. The data shows that the 1.5 are doing slightly better than the 2.0 since the 2.0 are shifting away from the Hmong cultural ties and closer to assimilation to the mainstream America. This could be because of the 2.0's struggle for self-identity while stuck between two worlds, unsure of who they are, and unsure of what language or culture they should maintain. This is why more community resources are necessary, in addition to more emphasis on the importance of sustaining the Hmong culture and language for the 2.0. The success of the 2.0 will be partly due to the upsurge of resources and opportunities that are available to them because of their parents' higher level of education, occupation, and other networks.

The Hmong have come a long way ever since leaving their home country as refugees and arriving to a new homeland, but their journey towards upward social mobility is just beginning. There is much work ahead as the 1.5 provides better opportunities for the 2.0 and the 2.0 strive progressively forward. These opportunities will support the process of building network of resources for the Hmong in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley, as well as for future generations.

#### *Policy Recommendations*

Since Hmong remain marginalized, there should be more Hmong community centers across regions where Hmong are heavily concentrated. These centers can provide

valuable information and resources to not only low SES Hmong families, but to all Hmong families, young and old. As a way of mediating current issues that younger generations are experiencing, these community resources should be tailored towards the challenges that today's second generation face, such as gang violence, cultural competencies and identity crises, prejudice and discrimination, labor rights, among others. In addition, interventions and awareness for critical areas such as education and real-life professional skills should also be promoted. Likewise, there should be more Hmong professors at higher levels of education, as well as a variety of prominent occupational leaders to be mentors for younger generations. Hmong educational leaders, especially at higher institutions, should permit more time to openly guide and counsel Hmong students. Current economic condition in the U.S. makes it difficult to assess whether these recommendations would have a long-term effect on the social mobility of the Hmong in Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley; nonetheless, there is a need to ensure that more resources for the Hmong are establish in the community.

Another contributing factor indicated in the study was that almost all the Hmong respondents of this study believed that their upward social mobility could have been much better if they were of the white identity. This indicates that respondents believed race was a barrier or a factor that affected their occupational or educational opportunities. Since this study did not examine race issues with more depth, this subject should be explored in future studies. Overall, there were similar patterns between the Hmong families of the 1.5 and 2.0 in that respondents from both generations had aspirations for upward mobility.

APPENDICES



## Appendix A

### Consent Form

#### **About the Researcher:**

My name is Max Xiong and I am the principal investigator of this study and a sociology graduate student at California State University, Sacramento. I am seeking to complete a Master's degree in Sociology, with a thesis study on the topic of social mobility among the Hmong people in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. My study will be based on a survey questionnaire that may take from 15 or 20 minutes to answer. Your feedback on the survey will be used to complete this study.

#### **Benefits & Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how much the Hmong have progressed since they first settled in the United States, and/or are currently residing in California, in areas where Hmong are heavily populated. This study explores social economic status, education, social/cultural capital, as well as other cultural influences, which are likely to impact the Hmong's social mobility. The objective is to explore theoretical questions and not necessarily infer to a larger population. The results of the study could benefit the Hmong in order to advance their social mobility as well as prevent future limitations. Within the Asian American population, the Hmong community has the lowest educational achievement, socio-economic status, and occupational mobility. This study could help identify factors that may present unique challenges to this disadvantaged community.

The benefits of this study are that it may provide a better understanding of the Hmong's experiences in California, as well as serve to guide more inferential research in the future.

#### **Confidentiality:**

This survey is strictly confidential. Your name, birthday, or other personal identifiers will not be required as part of the survey thus ensuring anonymity to the participants. All other information on the comment area will be confidential (location of survey) and cannot be linked to you or this consent form. Your answers on the survey will be compiled and presented in the aggregate as a part of the results of the study. Any personal identifiable information will not be revealed. All information on the survey will be kept confidential. All answered surveys will be kept in a secured location and destroyed once the study is completed and thesis is approved.

#### **Risks:**

This study poses minimal risk due to the potential discomfort you may encounter in answering the survey questions. However, the level of discomfort for university/college students should not be greater than those experienced in required university/college courses that address sensitive topics such as racial, ethnic, gender, and economic inequality. If you are not from the university/college, the level of discomfort is not greater from general interactions and experiences in daily life. If at any time, you, the participant, experience emotional discomfort as a result of partaking in the survey, you can skip any question or may terminate the survey at any time with no consequences to you. Furthermore, if I, the investigator encounter any problems, I may also terminate the survey at any time.

If you any further questions about this study or the survey, please feel free to contact my thesis chair advisor, Dr. Manuel Barajas, at (916) 278-7576, or by e-mail at mbarajas@csus.edu. If you are a CSUS student and need counseling services, as a result, of this study, please refer to the Health and Counseling Services at (916) 278-6461. Your participation is greatly appreciated; although, you will not be given any incentive or compensation for your participation.

**Principle Investigator:** Max Xiong, Sociology Master's Program, California State University, Sacramento  
**Chair of Thesis Committee:** Dr. Manuel Barajas, Professor of Sociology, CSU, Sacramento

**If you would like to receive a copy of the results,  
please send an e-mail request.**

**Send E-Mail Request to:**

**xxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.com**

Subject Heading: **Research Study Results**

## Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire

Survey ID # \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how much the Hmong have progressed since they first settled in the United States, as well as to compare the social mobility of the 1.5 and 2.0-generations of Hmong in California. This study will also explore the social economic status, education, physical capital, as well as other cultural influences, which are likely to impact the Hmong's social mobility. This study will serve to guide more inferential research in the future.

**Participant's Statement of Informed Consent**

If you agree with the following statement and wish to participate in this study, please check off the "I agree statement" below.

- I agree statement: *"I am at least 18 years of age, have read and understand the explanation above, and am voluntarily agree to participate in this study."*

**Survey Questionnaire**

**The information on this survey is strictly confidential.  
Please answer the questions to the best of your abilities.**

<b><u>DEMOGRAPHICS:</u></b>				
1. Where were <b>you</b> born?	<input type="checkbox"/> Laos / Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
2. Where were your <b>parents</b> born?	<input type="checkbox"/> Laos / Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
3. Where were your <b>grandparents</b> born?	<input type="checkbox"/> Laos / Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
4. How many years have you lived in the United States?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Total number of years: _____		
5. What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Male	
6. What is the language you <b>mostly</b> speak at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hmong	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

7. How comfortable are you in speaking each of the languages?  Please rate your comfort level for each.	Hmong	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Extremely Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Somewhat Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Extremely Comfortable
	English	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Extremely Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Somewhat Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Extremely Comfortable
	Both	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Extremely Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Somewhat Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Extremely Comfortable
	Other language _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Extremely Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Somewhat Uncomfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Extremely Comfortable
8. What is your marital status?	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
9. What is your political view?	<input type="checkbox"/> Democrat	<input type="checkbox"/> Republican	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
10. What is your cultural belief or practice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/> Christianity	<input type="checkbox"/> Shamanism	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
<b><i>For questions 11-13, please write in your responses:</i></b>						
11. What is the name of the city or town you live in?						
12. How old are you?						
13. What is the number of family members in your household?	Grandparent(s):	Parent(s):	Other Adult(s):	Child(ren):		
<b><u>OCCUPATION &amp; EMPLOYMENT:</u></b>						
14. Have you ever been employed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			<input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b><i>If you answered "Yes" to question 14, please complete questions 15-17:</i></b>						
15. What was your <b>first</b> occupation?						
16. How long did you work in your <b>first</b> occupation?	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years	

17. Are you currently employed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No				
<i>If you answered "Yes" to question 17, please complete questions 18-21:</i>							
18. What is your current occupation?							
19. How long have you been in this occupation?	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years		
20. What was your previous occupation?							
21. How long did you work in your previous occupation?	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years		
<b><u>EDUCATION:</u></b>							
22. Are you currently a student?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
23. What is the highest level of education you completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than HS/No Education/NA	<input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma/GED	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate (PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional (MD, DDS, JD, etc)
24. What is the highest level of education that your <b>father</b> completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than HS/No Education/NA	<input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma/GED	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate (PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional (MD, DDS, JD, etc)
25. What is the highest level of education that your <b>mother</b> completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than HS/No Education/NA	<input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma/GED	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate (PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional (MD, DDS, JD, etc)
If you completed a bachelor's degree or higher, please answer questions 26-27: <i>Check all that apply:</i>							

26. Who/what <b>motivated</b> you to obtain and pursue higher education?	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Professor(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Other(s) _____
27. Who/what are the factor(s) that <b>contributed</b> to your educational completion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Professor(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Other(s) _____
<b><u>INCOME/CAPITAL:</u></b>					
28. What was your family household income when you <b>first</b> arrived in the U.S.?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 30,001-49,999/yr	<input type="checkbox"/> 50,000-69,999/yr	<input type="checkbox"/> 70,000-89,999/yr	<input type="checkbox"/> 90,000 /yr or over
29. What is your <b>current</b> family household income?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 30,001-49,999/yr	<input type="checkbox"/> 50,000-69,999/yr	<input type="checkbox"/> 70,000-89,999/yr	<input type="checkbox"/> 90,000 /yr or over
30. Do you own a home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No		
31. How long have you owned your home?	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 10 years
32. Do you have a college saving for your child(ren)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
33. Do you have a retirement plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
34. What would you say about your own health, in general?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent		<input type="checkbox"/> Good		<input type="checkbox"/> Poor

35. Describe your <b>current</b> living standard or situation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor		
36. Describe your living standard or situation when you <b>first</b> arrived to U.S.?	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor		
<b><u>UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY:</u></b>					
On a scale of 1 to 5, with <b>1=Strongly Disagree</b> and <b>5=Strongly Agree</b> , please rate your opinion on the following questions:					
<b>QUESTIONS:</b>	<b>1 Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>4 Agree</b>	<b>5 Strongly Agree</b>
37. Do you feel you are better off than your parents or grandparents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Do you feel being Hmong is a disadvantage in the job market?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Do you feel being Hmong is a disadvantage in obtaining an education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. Do you believe education is important to achieve the American Dream?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Do you think being another ethnic race could better your life or career?  If you agree or strongly agree, please name what race?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you for your participation!**

## Appendix C

TablesTable 1. *Descriptive Statistics of Background, Education, and Income*

		1.5		2.0		Total
		n	Percent	n	Percent	N
Gender	Female	20	25.3	24	30.4	44
	Male	17	21.5	18	22.8	35
Region	Sacramento	28	35.4	33	41.8	61
	San Joaquin	9	11.4	42	53.2	18
Highest Level of Education	< HS	2	2.6	0	0.0	2
	HS/GED	11	14.3	18	23.4	29
	Associates	6	7.8	10	13.0	16
	Bachelor or >	18	23.4	12	15.6	30
Initial Household Income	Under 29,999	32	44.4	38	52.8	70
	30,000-69,999	1	1.4	1	1.4	2
	Over 70,000	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Current Household Income	Under 29,999	6	8.0	20	26.7	26
	30,000-69,999	19	25.3	15	20.0	34
	Over 70,000	10	13.3	5	6.7	15
Total		N=37	46.8	N=42	53.1	N=79



Table 2. *1.5 and 2.0 Generations by Occupations*

Current Occupations	1.5	2.0	Total
Financial Services	3	1	4
Education Related	5	6	11
Social Services	2	1	3
Food Industry	2	4	6
Retail	1	2	3
Healthcare	3	4	7
Homemaker	2	1	3
Student	1	0	1
Engineer	2	0	2
Automotive Industry	0	2	2
Factory	0	1	1
Office/Clerical	1	6	7
Customer Service	1	0	1
Computer Industry	3	1	4
Courier	1	1	2
Executive Director	1	0	1
Student Services	0	2	2
Total	N=28	N=32	N=60

Table 3a. *Education by Generation (Percentages)*

Education Level	1.5	2.0
Less than HS	2.6	0.0
HS / GED	14.3	23.4
Associates	7.8	13.0
Bachelor's or Higher	23.4	15.6
N = 77	N=37	N=40

Education by Generation: Pearson Chi-Square = 5.782, d.f. = 3,  $p > .123$

Table 3b. *Education by Generation: Controlling for Bilingualism (Percentages)*

		1.5	2.0
Bilingual	Less than HS	0.0	0.0
	HS / GED	34.5	42.4
	Associates	17.2	24.2
	Bachelor's or Higher	48.3	33.3
Non-Bilingual	Less than HS	25.0	0.0
	HS / GED	12.5	28.6
	Associates	12.5	28.6
	Bachelor's or Higher	50.0	14.3
N = 77	N = 37	N = 40	

Income vs. Gener. Controlling for Bilingualism : Pearson Chi-Square = 1.467, d.f. = 2,  $p > .480$

Income vs. Gener. Controlling for Non-Bilingualism: Pearson Chi-Square = 5.893, d.f. = 3,  $p > .117$

Table 4. *Income by Generation: Controlling for Parent's or Mother's Education (Percentages)*

		1.5	2.0
Parent's Educated	\$ 0-29k	0.0	60.0
	30-69k	75.0	20.0
	Over 70k	25.0	20.0
Parent's Non- Educated	\$ 0-29k	22.2	46.7
	30-69k	48.1	43.3
	Over 70k	29.6	10.0
N = 75		N = 35	N = 40

Income vs. Gener. Controlling for Parent's Ed : Pearson Chi-Square = 7.875, d.f. = 2,  $p < .019^*$

Income vs. Gener. Controlling for No Parent's Ed: Pearson Chi-Square = 5.330, d.f. = 2,  $p > .070$

\*  $\alpha < .05$

Table 5. *Income by Generation: Controlling for Bilingualism (Percentages)*

		1.5	2.0
Bilingual	\$ 0-29k	17.9	48.5
	30-69k	46.4	45.5
	Over 70k	35.7	6.1
Non-Bilingual	\$ 0-29k	14.3	57.1
	30-69k	85.7	0.0
	Over 70k	0.0	42.9
N = 75		N = 35	N = 40

Income vs. Gener. Controlling for Bilingualism : Pearson Chi-Square = 10.902, d.f. = 2, p < .004\*

Income vs. Gener. Controlling for Non -Bilingualism : Pearson Chi-Square = 10.800, d.f. = 2, p = .005\*

\*  $\alpha < .05$

Table 6. *Race Identity*

(N=20)	# Responses	Percent
White	17	85.0
Language	1	5.0
Other	2	10.0

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