A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF POLYGYNY ON HMONG INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN RAISED IN POLYGYNOUS HOUSEHOLDS

By

Manee Yang

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
With a Major in

Guidance and Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

_____
Investigation Advisor

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
May, 2003

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Yang	Manee	
(Writer) (Last Name)	(First)	(Initial)

A Qualitative Study Examining the Effects of Polygyny on Hmong Individuals Who Had Been Raised in Polygynous Households

(Title)

M.S. in Guidance and Counseling	Leslie Koepke, PhD	05/2003	70
(Graduate Major)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(No. of Pages)

American Psychological Association (APA) Style Manual

(Name of Style Manual Used in This Study)

In the late 1970's, Americans witnessed a large influx of immigrating groups of refugees, one of which was the Hmong. They brought foundational values of respecting hard work, elder leadership, patrilineal families, kinship, reciprocity, and the clan structure. These strong beliefs, taken into account with situational factors, contributed to some Hmong partaking in the long-sustained custom of cultural polygyny as a means for survival. Once seen as a necessity in Laos by some Hmong, it is unsure how many still believe in sustaining the custom in America. Polygamy has always remained a sensitive and controversial topic for the Hmong community. For these reasons, there has been very little research done on polygamy within the Hmong culture.

The purpose of this research was to qualitatively examine whether polygamy has an effect on Hmong individuals and what these effects may be as reported by the participants.

The researcher constructed a survey in Hmong and English, which served as a framework for obtaining narratives from participants concerning their relationships with their fathers, mothers, fathers' other wife, fathers' other children, their view points on polygyny, and advantages and disadvantages of being raised in a polygynous household. There were five participants in this study; all from the same Midwestern community, both female and male and ranging in age from late teens to over sixty-five years. Each interview was audiotaped and took approximately thirty minutes to complete, then, interviews were transcribed.

The researcher and her thesis advisor independently reviewed the transcriptions. Inter-rater reliability was established at .90. Open coding was used to initially name and categorize the data and selective coding was used to develop a more general frame work.

In general, the results from this study support the findings of other researchers showing that polygamy does affect the individual. The five participants listed an overwhelming number of disadvantages of living in a polygynous household as compared to the advantages. The disadvantages were many and included depression, sadness, stress, anger, resentment, too many children, confusion of roles, and lack of the following, love or connection with the father, respect, resources or money, and role model. The number of advantages only numbered three, and they were a higher number of brothers and sisters, freedom and learning from mothers' mistakes. General themes seen throughout the interviews were confusion of roles, lack of resources/money, resentment, lack of love and respect.

If the effects of cultural polygamy can be studied and identified, there may be more momentum set to address the practice and its effects through social work aiming at intervention, prevention, and/or treatment. Due to the sensitivity of this subject, and particularly in the United States where it is illegal, polygyny is not easily studied and researched. Additionally, cultural polygyny is an outgrowth from the culture in which it is based and therefore, polygyny in Africa will be different from polygyny among the Hmong. It would be hoped that people who have lived in polygynous families seek support and gain the help that is necessary and that future research is conducted. In addition, that those who work with individuals from polygynous families, understand the effects so that treatment is effective. Therefore, it is recommended that future research be conducted with Hmong individuals and families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express loving gratitude to her fiancé, Thavone Vongphakdy, son, Anthony Yang and mother, May Yang, who all inspired the author to continue with the study, motivated and stood by the author in times of distress.

The researcher would also like to thank Dr. Leslie Koepke, her thesis advisor, for her patience, guidance, wisdom, support and understanding in the formulation and completion of this paper. Her kindness and understanding allowed this research to be conducted from beginning to end.

Thank you to all who have inspired the author, supported the study, consulted and gave your time. I would especially like to thank Mai Neng Xiong, co-worker and friend, Zer Yang, aunt and translator, and Lee Shipway, supervisor and consultant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In the late 1970's, Americans witnessed a large influx of Southeast Asian refugees arrive into their country with the inability to return home (Koltyk, 1998). These refugees emigrated without choice due to persecution in their own homelands. One of these immigrating groups of refugees was the Hmong (Koltyk, 1998). The Hmong are a group of people who resided in the northern, mountainous regions of Laos, living a simple lifestyle based on sustenance farming and a hierarchal clan structure (Donnelly, 1994; Koltyk, 1998). As a result of their location and their strong opposition to Communism, the Hmong people were actively recruited by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to fight in the Vietnam War because of their vital occupancy in the highlands of Laos (Donnelly, 1994; Cerhan, 1990; Koltyk, 1998). The United States CIA had seen the Hmong's position as a crucial step in preventing the Pathet Lao Army from gaining a hold of Laos and ultimately, to stop the supply line to the communist forces (Koltyk, 1998). Many Hmong enlisted in the CIA's secret army due to promises made by the Americans that they would liberate them from the communists, provide food to feed their families, and money to care for them (Koltyk, 1998).

As the war waged on into the mid 1970s, Americans were losing the battle in Vietnam. In addition, there was intense opposition against the Vietnam War in the United States. By 1975, Americans had pulled out completely from Laos, abandoning their earlier promises of liberating and caring for the Hmong (Koltyk, 1998). As a result of their alliance with the Americans and now limited resources due to the American pullout, many Hmong were tortured and persecuted when the Americans left.

After the American troops withdrew from Vietnam, some Americans began hearing of the secret Hmong army in Laos. Numerous Americans took it upon themselves to fulfill the empty promises and to provide the care the United States government had promised the Hmong long ago. Working along with the United States government, these Americans helped the Hmong settle in the United States, with the first Hmong arriving in the late 1970s. As more and more Hmong arrived and made better lives for themselves in a promising new country, they in turn sponsored relatives who still resided in the refugee camps in Thailand (Koltyk, 1998). By the year 2000, the number of Hmong people residing in the United States had risen to over 160,000 (US Census Bureau, 2000).

Along with their immigration, the Hmong people brought with them a simple, yet rich culture to America. They brought foundational values of respecting hard work, elder leadership, patrilineal families, kinship, reciprocity, and the clan structure (Donnelly, 1994). These values guided many of their decisions and actions, contributing to many of the Hmongs' success within such a short period of time since settling in the United States. As part of the patrilineal structure, clear gender roles for men and women were established; men were the decision makers for the family, while women were the caretakers. The belief that a household was organized into a hierarchy, with the elder men as superior and in control of the power over the family was very common (Donnelly, 1994, Dao, 1993).

This strong belief of maintaining a hierarchal structure within the family, taken into account with situational factors, such as the loss of husbands during the war along with their agricultural lifestyle, contributed to some Hmong partaking in the long-

sustained custom of cultural polygyny as a means for survival (Cooper, 1998). Because the Royal Lao Army fought using guerrilla tactics that many Americans had never seen before or were ready to combat, many Hmong men, as well as American soldiers, died in the war. As a result of the war and high number of fatalities, multiple Hmong women and children were left to fend for themselves in a culture that had already limited their survival skills by initially placing them as caretakers of the family. In addition to this, older single women and divorced women were looked down upon and isolated by others, especially if they had children. This was simply because they lacked affiliation or a relationship to a man. It is thought by many Hmong that without a husband or father, a woman and her children are outcasts, similar to having no value at all (Rice, 2000). This deep-seated belief held by the Hmong made many women feel worthless and lost without a husband. Feelings of hopelessness and despair for providing for their large families forced numerous women to become second, third or fourth wives simply as a means to ensure their children's survival (Foo, 2002).

Within this paper, polygamy and polygyny will be used interchangeably because the literature and the wider community use the term polygamy more often. Polygyny, as defined by the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2003), is "the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at one time". Polygamy is when an individual has more than one spouse, either wife or husband. In the United States, it is illegal to be legally married to more than one person at a given time. For the purposes of this paper, all references to polygamy and polygyny are within the cultural context only and are not within the legal definition of polygamy. This means that only one marriage is legalized, while the subsequent marriages are not. Polygynous marriages in the Hmong culture are

usually performed through cultural ceremonies and are not legalized (Allam, 2002). Because the practice of 'legal' polygamy is illegal in the United States, this cultural custom remains secret, hidden from the dominant culture (Koltyk, 1998). It is rarely talked about to people outside of the Hmong community even though technically, there are usually no laws broken because the additional marriages lack marriage licenses.

Once seen as a necessity of survival in Laos by some Hmong, it is unsure how many still believe in sustaining the custom in America. Although polygamy has never been declared as a traditional custom accepted by the Hmong people (Vang, 2002), many in the Hmong community have tolerated it (Allam, 2002; "Hmong grapple with lingering effects of polygamy," 2003), while a number of them still continue to practice the custom (Cooper,1998). The original basis behind polygamy in America is becoming invalid, yet the practice is still thriving and tolerated (Allam, 2002; "Hmong grapple with lingering effects of polygamy," 2003).

Polygamy has always remained a sensitive and controversial topic for the Hmong community. For these reasons, there has been very little research done on polygamy within the Hmong culture. Although there has been an increase in the number of scholarly books and studies completed on the Hmong people since their arrival to the United States, the writings on polygamy are usually limited to only several paragraphs.

There is a need to study the effects of polygamy on Hmong individuals and families due to its emergent practice and most importantly, the recent fatal tragedies that have been linked to polygamy (Allam, 2002; "Hmong grapple with lingering effects of polygamy," 2003; "Polygamy in Minnesota," 2003). Polygamy within the Hmong community has been brought to the forefront by several situations and courageous people

willing to publicly voice their opinions. There has been an increase in awareness of the practice and its effects due to the recent increase in articles addressing the issue published in many popular Hmong publications and in American newspapers located in highly Hmong-populated areas (Allam, 2002; "Hmong grapple with lingering effects of polygamy," 2003; "Polygamy in Minnesota," 2003). In February of 2002, reports of a Hmong woman, Youa Lee, who felt so trapped in her marriage her only option to prevent her husband from marrying a second wife was to stab him to death and then commit suicide herself made headlines in the Pioneer Press (Allam, 2002). In her eyes, after years of enduring infidelity, shame, and entrapment, this was the only method to stop him (Allam, 2002; Hmong Times, 2002). The very next month, stories of a different Hmong woman, who had disappeared four years earlier, circulated the papers that her body was found. After a decade of physical and emotional abuse and having to succumb to a polygamous marriage, her husband eventually murdered her (Hmong Times, 2002). In California, reports of Hmong teenagers committing suicides in pacts brought the issue to the forefront. Several of the suicides were believed to be due to the stresses of living in a polygamous household. Hnub Tshiab (2001), a publication that advocates for Hmong women's rights, has had a string of articles condemning polygamy from both readers and journalists.

Currently, there is little to no research done on the effects of cultural polygyny on Hmong individuals. It is for this reason, along with the recent tragedies in the Hmong community, that research investigating the impacts of cultural polygyny on Hmong families need to be conducted and addressed. This paper does not examine why polygamy occurs, whether it is right or wrong or to continue or discontinue the practice,

rather it looks to qualitatively examine whether polygamy has an effect on individuals and what these effects may be as reported by the participants. If the effects of cultural polygamy can be studied and identified, there may be more momentum set to address the practice and its effects through social work aiming at intervention, prevention, and/or treatment.

For those Hmong individuals who agree to participate in the study, individual interviews will be scheduled. Surveys will be available in two languages, Hmong and English. At the beginning of the interview session, the researcher will give the subject a hard copy of the survey in their chosen language. The survey will consist of 13 questions, 11 which are qualitative in nature and 2 which are quantitative. The participants will be asked the questions in order to investigate the effects of polygamy on the individual. This study uses a method where the interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed for accuracy. At the conclusion of the data collection, responses will be analyzed and quantitative data will be available using frequency counts and coding for recurring common themes.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the impact of cultural polygyny by looking at the effects of being raised in a polygynous household as reported by Hmong individuals.

Definition of Terms

Polygyny, as defined by the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2003), is "the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at one time". Polygamy is when an individual has more than one wife or husband. For the purposes of this paper,

all references to polygamy and polygyny are within the cultural context only and are not within the legal definition of polygamy. This means that usually only one marriage is legalized, while the subsequent marriages are not.

The subjects involved in this study are Hmong individuals who are over the age of 18 and have been raised in a polygamous household. The individuals all reside in a Midwest community that is highly populated by Hmong people. The identification of the participants and their location is kept to a minimum to protect their confidentiality and have them remain anonymous.

For purposes of this study, a culturally polygamous household is defined as the subject's father having had more than one wife, concurrently, for a period of more than 1 year. The subject must also have resided within the household for a period of more than 1 year. Hmong professionals in the target community are being used to help identify individuals who meet the criteria. The researcher, using the most comfortable language for the subject, will contact potential subjects through a telephone call to describe the study.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the subjects understand the questions asked of them in the survey and they answered honestly. Although there are a limited number of subjects involved, it is assumed that they represent the Hmong people in general.

Limitations

The sample size of this study was relatively small and represented a whole spectrum of ages ranging from late teens to over sixty-five. In addition, they were all residences of the same Midwestern community. Some of the participant's childhood

years were spent in Laos, while others were in America. A couple of participant's polygynous fathers were not biological, but rather, men their mothers married after the birth of the participant. Because subjects were asked to reflect upon memories and feelings during their childhood years and elsewhere, some of the responses may not be accurate reflections of how they truly felt at the time. It is possible the participants did not answer the questions truthfully, or that environmental and cultural factors may have influenced their responses.

The Hmong culture and distinct gender roles outlined in this paper is based on traditional customs seen throughout Hmong history. Keep in mind that these aspects of the Hmong have been generalized to the overall population. Each clan and/or household may deal with these cultural aspects with varying beliefs and may vary to some level from clan to clan, family to family and even individually. In addition, the impact of the Hmong culture coming into connection with the western world may further influence and change some of these beliefs and customs.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter will review the literature that defines polygyny and polygamy, examines the effects of polygamy on individuals throughout different cultures of the world, and review Hmong history, Hmong culture, Hmong gender roles, and polygyny in the Hmong culture. Because there is very limited research done on polygyny in the Hmong culture, some of the literature dealing with this issue stems from published newspaper articles.

Polygamy and Polygyny

Polygyny is defined as "the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at one time" (Merriam-Webster, 2/14/03), and polygamy is defined as a "marriage in which a spouse of either sex may have more than one mate at the same time" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2/14/03). Polygamous marriages can be practiced through three different methods: polygyny (more than one wife), polyandry (more than one husband), and polygynandry (a group marriage where more than one wife is married to more than one husband) (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). Polygamy is illegal in many states in America, meaning it is against the law for one person to have more than one marriage license at the same time. For this paper, all references to polygamy are in the Hmong cultural context, meaning that there is usually only one marriage legalized, most often times it is the first marriage, and all subsequent marriages are not.

For the purposes of this study, polygamy and polygyny will be used

interchangeably. The interchangeable use of these terms is due to the fact that polygamy is more familiar to the larger population and previous research studying polygyny has used the term polygamy more often. However, keep in mind that the Hmong only practice polygyny and not polyandry. The first wife is often referred to as the elder wife, senior wife or first wife; while subsequent wives are seen as younger wives, junior wives, or second wives (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

The practice of polygamy is seen in many different cultures across the world (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Al-Krenawi, 1997) and frequently occurs in societies which allocate social status based on heredity and inheritance. This particular marriage custom is most prevalent and accepted in Middle Eastern, Asian, African, and Oceanic cultures where "human resources" (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997, p. 447) are vital to sustainable living. Large, extended families, including polygynous household, are occur most often in societies which have to rely heavily on agriculture to provide subsistence. In agricultural societies, the additional labor supplied from the polygamous household lowers the number of outside employees needed to maintain a living and may further perpetuate the family's wealth (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

Nevertheless, there are societies in Europe and North America (Broude, 1994; Scott, 1986), such as the Mormons (Muncy,1974), who practice polygamy as well. Polygamous relationships has always existed in the United States, but they have been frequently categorized as "extramarital affairs" or "illicit relations" (Scott, 1986, page 172), rather than polygamy. In America, polygamy among the black population has grown out of the increasing number of teenage pregnancies and the lack of fathers committing to marry the mother of their children (Scott, 1986).

The practice of polygamy is viewed differently from culture to culture and even within their own cultures (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997; Owuamanam, 1984). Some societies have made polygamy acceptable through the use of intense societal pressures (Ware, 1979, as cited in Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000). Many societies have given higher status to first wives, often designating them as a "senior wife" (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997) or elder wife. Often times, first wives may have more authority over the entire household, including more rights, power, and influence (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997 and Gage-Brandon, 1992, as cited in Gwanfogbe, 1997). Broude (1994) reiterated this finding in his study, describing the first wife as an executive, who administered and directed the other wives duties, activities, and resources. Several societies have demonstrated that polygamous wives benefit from the presence of each other by cooperating and working together to handle family, household and economic duties (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). In a study on African women, Anderson (2000) found that many women preferred polygamous marriages due to the additional support from another female, both economically and in child rearing, and the relational connections made with the second wife. Gwanfogbe et al. (1997) concluded that when husbands were unsupportive and uninvolved, many first wives become more satisfied when there was the addition of another wife. On the other side, research on polygamy among the Bedouin-Arab people has shown that first wives are inferior to subsequent wives, which causes them to suffer adverse effects from the polygynous relationship (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

Effects of Polygamy

Research has shown polygamous families to have many of their own distinctive problems (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000; Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Izzeldin, 2001; Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002; Oyefeso & Adegoke, 1992). Often, these problems arise from situational factors specific to polygamous household, such as a higher number of siblings, a higher number of parental figures, the absence of a father or an authoritative father, jealousy and competition of family members over resources and emotional relations with one father (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000; Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Izzeldin, 2001; Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). Living areas are often crowded (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin, 2001) and economic resources taxed to the limit due to the higher number of dependants. Research on polygamy among the Bedouin-Arab people has shown that first wives are inferior to subsequent wives, which causes them to suffer adverse effects from the polygynous relationship (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). Many junior wives are favored by their husbands, allowing them to obtain more economic resources and support (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). First wives often experience more economic hardship and less satisfying relationships with their husbands (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Izzeldin, 2001; Gwanfogbe et al, 1997). Chaleby (1987) has also noted polygamous marriages causing harmful psychological effects on a significant number of first wives causing many of them to seek psychiatric outpatient mental health treatment. Research has shown several of the psychological disorders seen widely among first wives have included depression, anxiety and somaticized symptoms (Al-Krenawi, 1999) and lower self-esteem (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002).

In a study examining the effects of polygamy on Bedouin-Arab families, Al-

Krenawi, Graham and Al-Krenawi (2000) called for an understanding of the practice, its effects on the women and children, and the implications for working with these families (1997). Polygamous marriages comprised about 17.5% of all marriages among the Bedouin-Arabs (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000). The Bedouin-Arabs were a highly patriarchal society with strong gender differences delineating men and sons as superior and prevailing over women and daughters. Bedouin-Arab people identified themselves through tribal affiliations obtained through husbands, fathers and brothers and women were expected to be nonindividualistic, forfeiting themselves for the family (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). Marriages among the Bedouin-Arabs are arranged early in a girl's adolescence while second, or polygamous, marriages were often made by selection or perhaps, love (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997; Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000). Often times, wives in polygamous households lived under the same roof, although, each may have had her own independent, sub-household where life functioned around her own children (Broude, 1994, as cited in Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997; Cooper, 1998, Lev-Wiesel & Al-Krenawi, 2000). Among the Bedouin-Arabs, first wives are often referred to as the "old wife" and were perceived as less than junior wives, who in turn, were known as the "young wife" (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997, p 451).

Using educational files and interviews with teachers and mothers, authors studied twenty-five children borne to first wives to obtain a better understanding of the family structure and the effects of polygamy. They found that each child was part of a sub-household governed by his/her mother which was then within the main family structure, which was commanded by the father (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

Fathers' ages and level of education were significantly higher than mothers; ranging from 25 to 40 years of age with a mean education of approximately 6 years, while mothers' were between 22 to 35 years with an average education of 2.5 years (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

Relationships with husbands and fathers were described as neglectful by first wives and teachers, emphasizing a lack of interest and minimal interaction with them and their children (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). First wives have a higher risk of depression and a higher number of somatic complaints of aches, insomnia and fatigue, lower self-perceptions (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997), anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity and phobias (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin, 2001). The children displayed problems in two key areas, behavioral and academic problems both at home and at school. These included "disobedience… hyperactivity…repeated lying to a parent or other authority person…sibling fighting…enuresis… stuttering" (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997, p 451) and below average levels of academic achievement. Children displayed an inability to concentrate, had low attendance, incompletion of homework, peer and teacher relational problems and maladjustment to classroom procedures (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). Overall, the study concluded that:

> The findings nonetheless associate polygamous family structures with somatic complaints among senior wives; family dysfunction between the sub-families and within the senior wife headed sub-family; economic deprivation within the senior wife headed sub-family; and behavioral and scholastic problems among senior wives' children. Moreover, the children's behavioral problems noted…correlate polygamy with behavioral problems, sibling rivalries, and drug abuse (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997, p 452-453).

Treatment implications to be used among this population was to target the issues

surrounding the distressing and painful transitions from sole wife to a senior wife, the adjustments to the emotional and economic changes in the family, and grieving and coping with the loss of a husband and father; very much like a divorce (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin, 2001). Due to wives' strong allegiances to their husbands, culture, and tribe, the authors emphasized using the children as a catalyst for change by focusing treatment on their emotional and educational needs (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997).

Gwanfogbe et al. (1997) found that within polygynous households, a wife's level of life contentment was statistically correlated to her "wife-order" (p 62), her satisfaction with her marriage, and her socioeconomic level. Senior wives were significantly less happy and satisfied with their lives than junior wives. This was in large part due to their satisfaction with their marriage and the amount of support received from their husbands, which was minimal compared to those offered to junior wives. In addition, the younger the age of the senior wife, the less happy she was with the polygynous marriage her husband partook in. Something else worth noting was that the level of support by husbands was positively correlated with his age.

Al-Krenawi and Lightman (2000) looked at the effects between children from polygamous families and children from monogamous families by comparing their levels of academic achievement, the amount of conflicts within the family and their ability to adjust to social situations. Children from polygamous families had lower levels of scholastic achievement, more difficulty adjusting to the procedures and norms of the school and classroom, and a higher number of conflicts in their homes (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000). Children from polygamous families were found to have had a higher

number of problems in their home lives (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997; Oyefeso & Adegoke, 1992) which in turn, affected their scholastic achievement (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000). Similarities of polygamous families to large families were also noted; emphasizing the larger number of children probably caused a higher probability of conflicts between family members, such as sibling-sibling, parent-child and parent-parent, and dysfunction within the family as a whole (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000; Oyefeso & Adegoke, 1992). Cherian (1991) also found that children's' levels of academic achievement decrease when they were raised in polygamous households.

Polygamy can also have detrimental impacts on the children (Owuamanam, 1984 and Oyefeso & Adegoke, 1992). It was found that children from polygamous families have more negative perceptions of themselves as compared to those from monogamous families (Owuamanam, 1984; Al-Krenawi, Graham & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). After administering self-surveys and analyzing data, conclusions were drawn that the lower self-concepts could have been due to the fact that children from polygamous households struggle harder amongst other siblings to obtain a rightful place within the family (Owuamanam, 1984). These additional sibling competitions found in polygamous families also led Pela (1984) to conclude that children from these types of families were more susceptible to drug use and abuse as well as lower levels of adjustment. In 1992, Oyefeso and Adegoke tested adolescents from polygynous and monogamous households for psychological adjustment. They found that adolescent males from polygynous families fared far worse at adjusting then those from monogamous families. They concluded that the maladjustments seen in the males may have been due to early exposure to a chaotic life where the child was responsible for protecting his mother and

sisters from the dysfunctional stressors of living in a polygamous household (Oyefeso & Adegoke, 1992).

Within the Arab-Muslim population, children from polygamous families were found to have lower self-esteems and higher scores on all three subscales of the Brief Symptom Inventory (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). Authors found adolescents' scores on the Self-Esteem Scale to be significantly lower than those from monogamous families, while reports for "interpersonal sensitivity…depression…and paranoid ideation" were significantly higher. In addition, a statistical number of children from polygamous families reported lower levels of functioning on the McMaster Family Assessment Device (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). Another important aspect of the study was the finding that there was a relationship between lower parental education and polygamy. After careful analysis of data, it appeared that polygamy affected the children through indirect means, such as lower socioeconomic status of the family and lower level of family functioning (Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Slonim-Nevo, 2002).

When asked to illustrate pictures of their family, children from polygamous families drew their own family separate from the junior wife and her children (Lev-Weisel & Al-Krenawi, 2000). The other families were clearly depicted as separate, either through the use of lines and/or colors, while a third of the children drew the other sub-family on the back of the paper. A significant number of the children, 34%, chose to exclude their fathers in their drawings all-together; all of these children were those of the senior wife. When fathers were depicted, they were always portrayed as significantly smaller. These drawings seemed to imply that children definitely see their own families

as separate, which may imply negative feelings, and sometimes even hatred towards the other sub-family and the father (Lev-Weisel & Al-Krenawi, 2000).

Children may be defensive of their own families and display resentment and anger towards the other sub-family (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin, 2001). In times of discord, many of the senior wife's children chose their biological mother over their father due to factors such as half-sibling rivalry, jealousy and loyalty for their own mothers. However, their fathers and the tribe would have expectations that they would side with them. This has caused many of the children significant confusions with their boundaries and loyalties (Lev-Weisel & Al-Krenawi, 2000).

The Hmong

History of the Hmong

There are approximately six million Hmong world-wide, the majority of them still living in China (Koltyk, 1998). The Hmong people have a rich history tracing their origins back many centuries to 2700 B.C. in China (Savina, 1930 as cited in Koltyk, 1998), where they embraced the fertile, flat lands surrounding the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers (Dao, 1993). They were a self-sufficient society, residing there until persecution from the Han dynasty (Dao, 1993) and Chinese expansion (Koltyk, 1998) forced them to flee for their survival. Massacre (Dao, 1993), war, and taxation by the Han dynasty drove thousands (Koltyk, 1998) to seek refuge in Laos, Thailand, Burma and North Vietnam (Cerhan, 1990) after defeat in the early 1800s (Koltyk, 1998). Because of their peaceful characters and to avoid further persecution and taxation, many Hmong were forced to habituate the isolated mountainous regions of Southeast Asia (Dao, 1993; Koltyk, 1998). They resided in the northern, mountainous regions of Southeast Asia,

living a simple lifestyle based on sustenance farming and a hierarchal clan structure (Donnelly, 1994). After War World II, the Hmong people divided their allegiances into two distinct parties; the Lo clan and the Ly clan (Koltyk, 1998).

The Hmong and American relationship began in the 1960s when the United States CIA set into motion "Operation Momentum" ("Being Hmong means being free," 2000). Operation Momentum called for active recruitment of the Hmong to help fight against communist forces in Laos during the Vietnam War (Donnelly, 1994; Cerhan, 1990). What many Americans believed to be a war fighting the Vietcong was in large part, a "secret war" established to fight the Pathet Lao communist Army on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos (Cerhan, 1990). Their participation in the war was vital in preventing the Pathet Lao Army from gaining a hold of Laos and ultimately, in stopping the supply line to the Vietcong communist forces in North Vietnam (Donnelly, 1994; Cerhan, 1990; Koltyk, 1998). Because of their strong opposition to communism, many of the Hmong who sided with the Ly clan enlisted in the CIA's secret guerilla army due to promises that the Americans would liberate them from the communists provide food to feed their families, protection, and resources to care for them (Cerhan, 1990; Koltyk, 1998). At its peak, Operation Momentum grew to over 30,000 Hmong soldiers who fought long and hard with their lives for the American CIA and their freedom. They quickly became an efficient guerilla fighting force against the communist forces now infiltrating Laos ("Being Hmong means being free," 2000).

Sadly, when the Americans pulled out of the Vietnam War in early 1975, many of the Hmong who had sided with the Americans were captured, tortured and killed. A large genocide movement to rid the country of Laos of the Hmong was set into motion by

the new communist government, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Koltyk, 1998). In 1975, the Khaosene Pathet Lao newspaper openly declared that "we must eradicate the Hmong minority completely" ("Being Hmong means being free", 2000) and the cleansing began with mass murders and the use of chemicals, described by the Hmong as "yellow rain" (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000, p.15), a chemical channel. In her personal account of the attacks, Choua Lee described it as "Vietnamese had come to our village and poisoned our people. Chemicals rained down from airplanes. Many families died…" (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000, p.16). Over 30,000 Hmong, both soldiers and civilians, were slaughtered because of their alliance with the United States and many had to surrender to the communists ("Being Hmong means being free," 2000). One women wrote "for nine months, we went hungry with only water to drink and mushrooms to eat. Surrendering to the Vietnamese was our last resort…We became the Communists' slaves, and we did what we were told to do." (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000, p.26)

Over 100,000 Hmong ("Being Hmong means being free," 2000) were able to flee for their lives to refugee camps in Thailand (Cerhan, 1990). The escape to Thailand was not easy either. It was a long and treacherous journey, with travel mostly at night and through the jungle. One Hmong women described her ordeal as "the Communist came and found us. Everybody took off and left us…I told the Communist to kill me…They did not kill me, but they used a shovel and almost cut my foot off instead. For four days, I cried and prayed…" (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000, p.18). Many, many Hmong died enroute because of the lack of food and shelter. In one Hmong's account of the flight to safety, Chia Fong Yang stated:

> We hid in the jungle from 1976 to 1979...We had a group of three hundred people making our way to freedom, but when we got to Thailand, we had only one

> hundred and fifty people left. The others died because they got shot, were hit by bombs, or died crossing the Mekong River. (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000, p.17)

Thousands suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder caused by the war and the horrendous journey to Thailand (Koltyk, 1998). When they did finally arrive in Thailand, they were received by crowded and dirty camps with little food, water and resources. Only the barest essentials were provided in these refugee camps which were frequently caged by wire (Koltyk, 1998). From these refugee camps, the first Hmong began their immigration as refugees to the United States, Canada, France, the French Guyana, and Australia in the late 1970s (Koltyk, 1998).

The United States Office of Refugee Services (ORS) attempted to disperse the Hmong and the other Southeast Asian refugees throughout America in hopes of forming small, ethnic communities as well as to prevent a certain area from experiencing huge economic burdens due to the emigration (Koltyk, 1998). However, the ORS did not take into consideration the strong values of "family, kinship, and ethnic ties" (Koltyk, 1998, p.9) that the Hmong held. After arriving to the United States, the Hmong people began a secondary migration, resettling in communities near relatives and clan members (Koltyk, 1998). By 1979, the majority of them resided in California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Oregon, and Utah (Donnelly, 1994).

By 1980, 5, 204 Hmongs had already settled within the United States borders within several years of their initial movement (Donnelly, 1994). As more and more Hmong continued to emigrate to the United States and fertility and life span rates increased due to a better standard of living, the number of Hmong people had reached 100,000 by 1990 (US Census Bureau, 1990). The most recent census taken in 2000, revealed that the number of Hmong people had grown to 169, 428 (US Census Bureau,

2000).

Hmong Culture

The Hmong lacked a written language up until the 1950s when it was put into written form by missionaries using the Romanized alphabet. Before this, all Hmong history was passed down from generation to generation using only oral communication (Koltyk, 1998). The Hmong people communicated orally and had very limited exposure to written forms of communication (Koltyk, 1998), although some did learn to write and read the Laotian language.

Although, approximately half of the Hmong population in the United States have converted to and are practicing Christianity (Koltyk, 1998), most of the Hmong world-wide continue to practice animism and ancestor worship (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000; Koltyk, 1998). The Hmong employ the use of shamans as a means of connecting and communicating with the spirit world (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000). There is a belief that there are good spirits, many of which reside within the house, and bad spirits. Bad spirits exist outside of the house and are believed to cause illness, misfortune and death. On the other side, good spirits protect the house and its inhabitants from evil, illness and bad luck. In times of misfortune and illness, good spirits must be called upon to rid the person of the evil spirit through rituals and ceremonies conducted by a shaman using animals, incense and paper money as sacrifices (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000). Ceremonies were also done for naming babies and calling one's spirit at times of marriage and illness (Coulson & Melhorn, 2000).

Hmong society is organized around a hierarchical and patrilineal clan system based on kinship (Koltyk, 1998) and the group, rather than the individual (Dao, 1993).

These kinship ties are central in reflecting one's status, such as "social, political, economic and historical alliances of families" (Koltyk, 1998, p.38). There is an extremely strong emphasis to maintaining the clan's "face" and extensive care put into keeping a family's good name. Continuing one's lineage and clan is highly valued by the Hmong people. (Dao, 1992; Koltyk, 1998; Rice, 2000; Vang, 2003).

There are approximately twenty clans in existence in the Hmong culture; among the most common are Chang, Her, Hang, Kue, Khang, Lee, Lor, Moua, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong and Yang (Dao, 1993; Koltyk, 1998; Cooper, 1998). Descent and clan membership is passed down solely through the male children. No matter how distant the relation, members of the same clan refer to each other as brother or sister (Dao, 1993). Traditionally, family members of the same clan reside near one another organizing themselves into villages so that there is ample use of teamwork and the pooling of resources (Dao, 1993; Koltyk, 1998). These villages are usually governed by a "headman" who is chosen by leaders who are often the oldest males from each clan or extended nuclear family (Dao, 1993; Koltyk, 1998; Rice, 2000). Up until marriage, girls are considered members of their father's clan. At the time of marriage, Hmong girls enter their husband's kinship and are expected to remain there (Dao, 1993). This belief is further supported by allowing the deceased husband's younger brother marry the widow, so that she remains in the family (Rice, 2000). All children are considered part of the father's clan, except if borne to an unmarried woman, then the child belong to the mother's father's clan (Cooper; 1998).

From the clan, Hmong society further sub-divides into lineages where one lineage has a common ancestor that can be traced back for five generations. Continuing and

maintaining one's lineage is highly valued by the Hmong (Dao, 1992; Koltyk, 1998; Cooper, 1998; Rice, 2000; Vang, 2003). Only a son can continue the lineage, therefore it is vital that a son is borne to maintain the family name and status. After this division, lineages divide even further into extended nuclear families (Dao, 1993; Koltyk, 1998). Extended nuclear families may include parents, uncles, aunts, grandchildren, and their offspring each which has originated from the same paternal grandparents (Koltyk, 1998). After this partition, there is the last social grouping into the individual households, which includes the man, his wife or wives, and all their children, including sons, their wives and children, and daughters (Koltyk, 1998).

The act of marriage and children, especially boys, are highly valued by the Hmong people (Koltyk, 1998; Foo, 2002; Rice, 2000). The importance of males is that they are vital in continuing the family name or lineage (Dao, 1992; Koltyk, 1998; Cooper, 1998; Rice, 2000; Vang, 2003). Being married conveys that one is mature, able to relate with others, capable of running a family, and has the ability to function within the clan structure (Dao, 1993; Vang, 1982; Foo, 2002). Children are viewed as the future and are necessary to provide for the future needs of both the older Hmong generation and the ancestors (Koltyk, 1998). Hmong people who are lacking in one, marriage and/or children, are perceived as ill-fated, awkward and incomplete (Koltyk, 1998; Rice, 2000). Without a connection to a spouse and children, it is believed a Hmong person is not yet an adult (Foo, 2002). Traditionally, because of the importance of children in an agriculturally subsistence environment, as the number of children a Hmong couple is capable of raising increases, so does their status within the community. This statement is very true for women; as soon as she gives birth to her first child she gains status and

importance, from that time on being referred to as that child's mother (Foo, 2002; Rice, 2000).

Gender roles of the Hmong

The Hmong have a highly patriarchal society based on hierarchal status where the men are viewed as more valuable then women, and elders more important then the young (Koltyk, 1998; Cooper, 1998; Foo, 2002). One Hmong proverb reiterates this belief, stating "nine fireplaces are not as bright as the sun. Nine daughters are not worth as much as one son" (Foo, 2002, p.148). Family name is passed down from father to son, where "the mother is of no consequence insofar as clan membership is concerned; she counts for nothing in the handing down of the family name" (Dao, 1992, p 23), therefore a son is vital in continuing the family lineage and status (Continuing one's lineage and clan is highly valued by the Hmong people. (Dao, 1992; Koltyk, 1998; Rice, 2000; Vang, 2003). In addition, the clan's acceptance of these patriarchal traditions allows some Hmong men to partake in polygamy and to use physical discipline on their wives and children (Foo, 2002). It is very difficult for married women to show much independence from their husbands ("Polygamy in Minnesota," 2003). Divorce is seldom seen in the Hmong culture and often times it brings disgrace and shame to the woman and her family (Cooper, 1998).

The Hmong culture practices patrivirilocal residency, where women, upon getting married, becomes part of her husband's clan (Dao, 1992; Rice, 2000). For this reason, women are seen as only temporary members of their father's clan. Ultimately, women always "define themselves in relation to the household in which they reside" (Rice, 2000). For example,

before marriage, girls are asked who there father is, after marriage, they are referred to by their husband's name (Yang, 2003).

Traditionally, clans, extended nuclear families, and individual households are governed by the men (Dao, 1992; Cooper, 1998). Traditionally, disturbances or problems in families are handled within the clan through meetings and mediation. Problems are rarely brought to the attention of outside entities in attempts to save face (Koltyk, 1998; Cooper, 1998). Hmong women hardly take active parts in these meetings and discussions, even though the decisions may greatly influence them and their lives. Dao (1992) states that this gender division "results in severe inequality between the genders, an inequality which educated Hmong women are denouncing more and more energetically as they demand their rights" (p 24).

However, this is not to say that women do not have a voice in matters at all. Depending on the couple's relationship, women may be in the background of these meetings, listening and ready to offer her opinion to her husband in the privacy of their own home. From there, men have the option of voicing her concerns at the next meeting but making sure he interchanges it so that the concerns are from his perspective. In this way, Hmong couples have devised a method that allows women to have their opinions voiced, yet still remain respectful of the social structure and the gender roles (Xiong, 2003).

Women are seen as the caretakers of the family and house, as well as the controllers or budgeters of the family finances. Household duties and chores, such as cooking, cleaning and caring for the children, are the mothers and daughters responsibilities (Koltyk, 1998). These duties are often delegated to daughters at a very

early age, sometimes as early as five years old (Koltyk, 1998). Another responsibility of women is to learn the art of needlework, which also begins at an early age. Many Hmong believe that the ability to do good needlework will reflect one's ability to be a good wife and mother (Rice, 2000). P, the lead actress in a play called Hush-Hush, helped portray the typical life of a young Hmong girl. She reported having to do household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, having to learn how to address guests, listen and obey her husband and take care of his children and the house. P's ability to be a successful Hmong woman was determined by how well she partook in these duties (Lo, 2001).

Nevertheless, it is not unusual to see men partaking in household functions as well, especially right after the birth of their child. During this time, the Hmong believe this period is a crucial time for women to rest for at least a month in order to ensure good health (Yang, 2003). Many husbands have been known to prepare meals for their wives during this resting period (Koltyk, 1998). In addition, it is customary for men to help prepare the food used during rituals, ceremonies (Koltyk, 1998), and at large family gatherings.

In terms of early care for children, both men and women share in this responsibility (Koltyk, 1998). Men will often help care for his infant children up until about age three. From that age on, childcare falls mostly into the mothers hands, making them the primary nurturers of the children. Fathers become the authoritarian figure, controlling the dynamics of the household and the disciplining of the children (Koltyk, 1998). Visible signs of affection, such as kissing and hugging, are rarely shown to each other in the Hmong culture. Many Hmong believe love is expressed in other ways, such as providing for each other's wants and needs, like food and shelter (Koltyk, 1998).

Men are the ones who carry on the family name and the ones who perform valuable ceremonies honoring ancestors (Dao, 1992; Koltyk, 1998; Rice, 2000; Vang, 2003). They are also the ones who will take care of their parents in old age (Rice, 2000). Within many Hmong communities, Hmong girls are seen as less valuable than their male counterparts. Bergin and Garvey (2000) described girls in the Hmong society as "other people's daughters," since upon marriage they must move into their husbands' household." Symonds (1994 as cited in Rice, 2000) found that the Hmongs' philosophy was that "men are the 'skeleton of the society' upon which all else is built. If the skeleton breaks down…there is no Hmong society left." Traditionally, there was not a lot of investment placed in daughters, for they would enter another family upon marriage. This meant that if there was a lot invested in them, such as allowing them to attend school or learn a trade, daughters would eventually leave, and her husband's family would benefit, not her own (Vang, 2003). Pastor Benson from St. Paul, Minnesota best described it, "As Hmong women, we've been conditioned ever since we were little kids to think that we deserve less" ("Polygamy in Minnesota," 2003). Traditionally, many women were not allowed to eat until the men are done if male guests are present (Cooper, 1998). Mayli Vang (1999) explained it in her poem written to Paj Ntaub,

> "May now clean the plates of what the men have left. Eat the remains while they pick their teeth with wooden toothpicks. They call this privilege, to be seated at the table of those who were seated before. To partake in this feast of remains… With each bite into the feast beforehand, we remember we are women."

Without connections to a spouse and/or children, it is believed Hmong people, especially women, are unfortunate (Foo, 2002; Rice, 2000; Vang 1994 as cited in Rice, 2000). Traditionally, because of the importance of children in a agriculturally subsistence environment, as the number of children a women gives birth to increases, so

does her status within the community. As soon as she gives birth to her first child she gains status and importance, from that time on always being referred to as that child's mother (Foo, 2002; Rice, 2000). If a Hmong woman is unable to bear children, she is seen as "unlucky and unfulfilled…not regarded highly in the community" (Rice, 2000).

However this is not to imply that women are not valued in Hmong society. Vang (2003) stated that it is simply the fact that women cannot carry on the family name and Hmong people highly value the family name. In addition, women are necessary to ensure the survival of the Hmong by giving birth and sustaining life with breast milk (Rice, 2000). As one Hmong parable distinctly points out "my wives are feeding our children milk. If I kill them and bring their heads to you, my children will have no food and they will die" (Symonds, 1991 as cited in Rice, 2000).

Polygyny in the Hmong culture

Historically, it is believed that the practice of polygyny in the Hmong culture originated in order to sustain life. The Hmong lived in the highlands, while farming yielded only enough for survival. They frequently moved when the land became infertile. This nomadic, agricultural lifestyle meant that the higher number of people available to work the fields meant an increase in the amount of food cultivated and possibly, economic gains if there was an excess. Because of the limited human and economic resources available, many Hmong chose to partake in polygyny to help them survive. This allowed families that had more than one wife to have a higher number of children, meaning more hands available to work in the farms and take care of the household chores (Rice, 2000).

This concept, along with the Hmong culture's use of a bride price that must be

paid for by the groom, perpetuates the fact that polygamy can only be practiced by the wealthy (Cooper, 1998). This bride price is to be paid to the bride's parents to symbolize the love, work and resources it took to raise their daughter to marrying age (Cooper, 1998; Rice, 2000). Because of the bride price, men who are looking to have more than one wife must have the economic means to make this possible. This means that only men who have enough money to pay the bride price of multiple wives could have more than one wife (Cooper, 1998). On the other hand, it may also be the man's wealth that draws women to want to become second or third wives (Vang, 2003).

The practice of polygyny was exacerbated and accepted even more with the onset of the Vietnam War. The war is thought to have accelerated the practice of polygamy due to the high number of Hmong men being killed during the war (Dao, 1993), resulting in a high number of dependant widows. This fact, taken into account that many women did not have the strength or ability to clear the fields for farming, caused many to look for husbands or to marry their deceased husband's younger brother, many who were already married (Cooper, 1998; Vang, 2003).

The importance of children and the pressure for women to bear children may also encourage polygyny because "infertility in Hmong society is seen as the woman's problem" (Rice, 2000, p.217). If a couple is unable to produce children, especially a son, then "the husband is encouraged to take a second wife" (Rice, 2000, p. 20). This is because the husband's family and clan sees her as unable to produce children, meaning there would be no one who could continue the clan name into the future. Almost always, this causes the first wife to be lowered in status. Her status is worsened by her inability to bear a son who will not only carry on the last name, but will care for his parents in old

age and continue the worship of ancestors since females are not allowed to participate in this. Hmong women in this position are often left feeling worthless, incapable of voicing their opinions against another wife being brought into the relationship, and fearful of being favored over (Rice, 2000). Symonds(1996 as cited in Rice, 2000) also reiterated this belief by many Hmong women in Thailand who had tried the use of contraceptives. Many women complained of the side effects referring to them as causing one to become stressed or "nyuab siab" (p.118, as cited in Rice, 2000), knowing that if they used the contraceptives, their husbands may marry a second wife in attempts to continue the lineage.

In addition, many Hmong practice a custom which allows a man to marry his older brother's wife if she is widowed (Symonds, 1991 as cited in Rice, 2000; Cooper, 1998; Yang, 2003). Historically, this custom was established to protect the wife and her children from abandonment and to keep them in the deceased husband's clan (Rice, 2000; Cooper, 1998; Yang, 2003). Even if the young man was already married, he was allowed, and sometimes encouraged, to marry the widow if she complied. Thus far, this custom set into place to protect the widow and her family but ultimately, also supported the practice of polygyny.

The practice of polygamy is still practiced among the Hmong, and because it is kept away from the dominant culture's knowledge, the numbers of those engaging in polygyny is hard to estimate. Out of the fifty-four men sampled, 17% were found to practice polygamy in a Hmong village in rural Laos. Paster Bea Vue Benson found that out of her twelve youth group members located in St. Paul, Minnesota, half were from polygamous families ("Polygamy in Minnesota," 2003). In her interview with KSTP

television from St. Paul, Minnesota, Foua Hang, an employee of an organization that provides support for Hmong women, estimated that 2% of the Hmong population participates in polygyny ("Polygamy in Minnesota," 2003). Based on estimates calculated for his doctoral dissertation on Hmong families, Blong Xiong "estimates between 270 and 450 men are practicing polygamy in Minnesota, each with an average of two wives and 14 children. That would be as many as 7,600 men, women and children who are living in polygamous families" out of a total population of 42,000 Hmong. This would be .64-1.07 % of the Hmong population ("Hmong grapple with lingering effects of polygamy," 2002).

Told through personal accounts, children from polygynous Hmong families have expressed a variety of mixed emotions, ranging from shame, hurt to depression. As a child, Naly (2001) described herself as ashamed, guilty and depressed for living such a secretive life, leaving herself to wonder if she would have been different if her father had not of been divided between two families. Family life for her was tough for her father came back and forth from his two wives' houses; her father constantly arguing with her mother about intimate details while at their house. Naly described that she and her siblings were always in aggressive competition with the children of the other wife for affection and praise from their father. Ultimately, she was unable to move on until she came to terms with her father's practice of polygyny, defining the roles that he and talking about them with her siblings. In an address to promote Hmong women's issues, MayKao Y. Hang spoke about her deep seated hurt and depression that lasted for five years as a result of her father marrying a second wife and never being there for her (Hang, 2001). Hue Vue, another child affected by polygamy committed suicide after

years off being the mediator of fights between his parents on top of pressures to be the perfect son. It was reported that many of these fights Vue had mediated were due to his father having extramarital affairs and wanting to bring home another wife. In his suicide letter he left behind, Vue explicitly outlined this detail for others to know (A father‘s favored son, 2002).

In the United States, the Hmong continue to remain secretive about polygamy occurring, discussing it only amongst themselves (Koltyk, 1998). In the interviews of Hmong people that Koltyk (1998) performed, second wives were frequently referred to as “cousin, relative, or even wife’s sister” (p15). In her editorial to Hnub Tshiab, Naly Yang (2001) remembered her father had told her to lie to others that he did not have two wives, stating that “I knew for sure that it was a no-no to even breathe a word of our situation, especially to mainstream friends, my teachers, and anyone not Hmong” (p7). Because of this secrecy surrounding the practice, conducting research on polygyny among the Hmong may be difficult to do, but additional research is needed to address the possible effects of polygyny.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the effects of growing up in a culturally polygynous household on Hmong individuals. This chapter will describe the study, including descriptions of the survey development, subjects, sample selection and data gathering, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Survey Development

The qualitative survey was developed by the researcher through consultation with the research advisor and after analyzing the literature on polygamy. The researcher constructed a survey which would serve as a framework for obtaining narratives from the participants concerning their relationships with their fathers, mothers, fathers' other wife, fathers' other children, their view points on polygyny, and advantages and disadvantages of being raised in a polygynous household (Appendix C and D). Because there is very little research on cultural polygyny among the Hmong, this survey was designed to gain a better insight into whether there are effects from being raised in a polygynous household and what these effects may be. The instrument was initially developed in English and then translated into Hmong. A pilot test of the Hmong version of the instrument was conducted on a female Hmong individual who was over the age of 40 and the questions appropriately changed.

The participants were asked by the researcher to identify their sex and age by choosing from male or female and from a range of the following, 18-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and over, respectively. The answers to these questions were

recorded on a separate piece of paper along with the subject's pseudonym to better assure the participants' anonymity of their responses.

The subjects were asked to respond to a series of questions in their chosen language, Hmong or English. The first two questions were designed to gain an understanding of the structure of the family by examining the number of wives their father had and the number of each wife. The following four questions were designed to examine the participants' childhood relationship with their father, mother, father's other wife and her children. The next four questions were designed to examine the participants present relationship with their father, mother, father's other wife and her children. These sets of questions were designed to examine the whether there were changes in the participants' relationships and to examine what effects polygyny may have. After that, participants were asked whether they would or are engaging in a culturally polygynous marriage and the corresponding reasons This question was designed to gain a better knowledge of whether the effects of living in a polygynous household impacted the participant's own decisions whether a polygynous marriage was advantageous to practice or not. The last two questions allowed the participants to discuss whether they saw advantages or benefits and disadvantages or costs of living in or growing up in a culturally polygynous household.

Sample Selection

Because of the sensitive issues surrounding polygyny among the Hmong, there was no attempt to restrict the list of potential subjects in anyway, except that they had to have been raised in a polygamous household for a period of more than one year. In addition there were assumptions that the number of potential subjects would be minimal

and that many would decline to participate due to this delicate topic.

The names and phone numbers of potential subjects were obtained from professionals who worked closely with the Hmong community in this Midwestern metropolis. There were a total of ten names obtained, half of whom declined to participate in the study.

The researcher contacted potential subjects through an initial telephone call to give an overview of the study and explain what their involvement would entail. The subjects were assured that all information would be kept confidentially and each participant would be given a pseudonym to protect their identification. If the individuals agreed to participate, an appointment was scheduled to conduct the interview. The interview occurred in a neutral setting chosen in order to protect the subject from identification in the study by others. The participants were also given information distributed by a non-profit agency outlining resources in the community that offer counseling services.

Description of the Subjects

The participants in this study were all from the same Midwestern community and both female and male ranging in age from late teens to over sixty-five years of age. There were a total of five subjects, three who were female and two who were male. The sample included one female subject in her late teens, one female subject in her twenties, two male subjects in their twenties, and one female subject over the age of sixty. Because the topic of polygyny among the Hmong continues to remain a secretive and controversial issue, there were only a minimal number of subjects willing to participate in the study. In addition, because discussing personal issues openly with others may be seen

as inappropriate among the Hmong, descriptions of the participants and their location was held to a minimum in order to protect the subjects. The identification of participants could result in shunning and isolation by others therefore, only general information was given to ensure protection of the subjects.

Data Collection

Approval for the study was obtained from the University of Wisconsin-Stout Protection of Human Subjects in Research Institutional Review Board after a series of revisions, resubmissions, and a full board review over a period of several months. The long process of approval was necessary so that precautionary steps were taken in order to protect the subjects from unforeseen risks. From these reviews, it was decided that information pertaining to the subjects and the location of the study would be kept to a minimum and only generalized.

In independent interviews with the researcher, subjects were asked to choose a language, English or Hmong, they desired the interview to be conducted in. Then, they were asked to sign two consent forms (Appendix A and B), one which the researcher collected and one to be kept with the participant. Data was collected through independent interviews with each subject where the researcher read the question and the subjects answered. The interviews were audiotaped to ensure accuracy of responses and then transcribed within several days. Tapes were then destroyed within one week of the interview to protect the subjects from possible identification.

Data Analysis

The researcher and her thesis advisor independently reviewed the transcriptions of the interviews. Inter-rater reliability was established through the identification of

responses for each question. The average inter-rater reliability was .90. Qualitative data were analyzed using grounded theory methods as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Open coding was used to initially name and categorize the data, and selective coding was used to develop a more general framework. Responses to questions 3-10 from the instrument were coded as negative or positive. The quantitative data was summarized.

Limitations

The sample size of this study was relatively small and represented a whole spectrum of ages, ranging from late teens to over sixty-five. The participants were all residences of the same Midwestern community. Two of the subject's fathers, who were identified as polygynous, were not their biological father, but rather, men their mothers married after the birth of the participant. The gender and ethnicity of the researcher could have also influenced the responses of the participants. In addition, half of the potential subjects declined to participate in the study, while half agreed. There could have been a variety of reasons or a common reason for the refusal. It is unsure to this researcher the reasons for refusal, but some possible reasons could range from support for polygyny, adamantly despising the practice, to simple reluctance of discussing their feelings with others.

In addition, some of the subjects' childhood years were in Laos, while others were in America. Because subjects were asked to reflect upon memories and feelings during their childhood years and elsewhere, some of the responses may not be accurate reflections of how they truly felt at the time. It is possible the participants did not answer the questions truthfully, or that environmental and cultural factors may have influenced

their responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the effects of growing up in a polygynous household on Hmong individuals. This chapter will discuss the results of the data provided by five individuals.

Of the five individuals, three were female and two were male. Of the females, one was in her late-teens, one in her twenties, and one over sixty-five, the researcher has chosen to call them S, P, and X. Of the males, both were in their twenties; their pseudonyms are G and T. All of the subjects had two mothers. All of the female subjects and one male subject, G, were all borne to the second wife, while the other male subject, T, was borne to the first wife. S's father and P's father were not their biological fathers, rather they referred to them as "my step-dad."

All subjects, except for X, resided in separate houses with their own mothers. S's father and P's father resided in both mothers' houses, coming back and forth between the two. G's father resided strictly with G, his mother and his full siblings, while T's father never resided with him. X's father and biological mother, along with the other wife and her children, resided in one house.

1) Childhood relationship with father

In general, the majority of the responses to the question "As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your father" were coded as negative. The general themes from the respondents included no communication or few conversations with father, avoidance of conversations, afraid of asking dad questions, and afraid of not being

recognized as a child. For example, T stated that as a child, "I don't have a close relationship with my dad. I am always afraid of asking the question, you know, never having that close feeling to go and talk to him or asking him for things that I wanted." Both of the younger females had similar relationships with their fathers. S described her relationship as "a funny, uncomfortable feeling being there when he is in the room", and similarly, P stated that "we just didn't have a relationship."

One of the male respondents, G, had a moderately positive relationship with his father. He described his relationship with his father as "Kind of just there...It wasn't really good, but it wasn't bad. So, it was okay."

Of the five responses, X, the oldest female, had a positive relationship with her father during her childhood. She cited that living with her father contributed to her positive relationship and described it as "I was the oldest so I listened and was very hardworking, gardening, hoeing, walking and taking care of the cattle. I was the one who had to water the cattle with heavy buckets so my father loved me a lot."

2) Childhood relationship with biological mother

In general, all of the responses to the question "As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your mother" were positive. The general themes were described as a close relationship, I could talk to her about anything, good communication, and mutual respect. For instance, P described her relationship with her mother as "really good…we would talk and we would do stuff together" and S said her and her mom were "close…good…I am the closest with my mom."

The only moderately positive responses were from one of the males, G, and the older female, X. He described his relationship with his mother as "okay…I wasn't really

close to my mom or dad", while X declared their relationship as "my mom had younger children after me so she stayed in the home to take care of the house and children, take care of the pigs and cook the rice. We were the ones who had to go to sleep at the garden and work the farm. And so my mom was the one who stayed in the house and grinded the rice and boiled the pig, fed the pigs and watched the children in the home."

3) Childhood relationship with father's other wife

In general, the responses to the question, "As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your father's other wife" broke down along gender and age. The males and the older female responded generally positively citing traditional respect, viewing her as different or adoptive mother, and calling her older mom or "nam hlub." G said "I respect her. I called her mom, actually 'nam hlub' because you have to. That's how you greet her". The older female, X, stated that as a child, she was "the oldest so I stayed with the other mom only. My mom 'carried' the younger children so the older mom carried me to sleep and took me to other's houses or the garden…Me, I am with the older mom and became the older mom's child."

However, the remaining two female responses were negative; specifically, they stated there was no contact, avoidance, and discomfort around the other wife. Both S and P described their relationship as nonexistent, citing "I don't talk to them. I think I saw them once…I just looked at them and that's it. I don't think they know who I am" and "I have seen her once but we have never talked," respectively.

4) Childhood relationship with father's other wife's children

In general, the responses to the question, "As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your father's other wife's children" broke down along gender and

age. The males responded generally positive citing that the children were close to me, I called them brother and sister, I viewed them as my own siblings, and we worked and played together. The older female also cited a positive relationship, working together in the farms in Laos.

The younger females, P and S, had negative relationships with the other children, citing no contact, not talking with them, different homes, and not thinking they knew them. P reported the other children as "he was the other mom's kid and he came from them, and because I was trying to avoid all of them."

5) Present relationship with father

The responses to the question "What is your relationship like with your father now" were generally mixed, but the majority was positive responses. One male, T, cited being closer then before to his father citing his own maturity and his better understanding of the culture as helping him to develop the relationship, stating that he "actually calls him dad with feelings now". The other male, G, stated that him and his father had never been really close but that it was okay because he understood the father and son roles in the Hmong culture. The older female also cited a positive relationship with her father due to his generosity and gifts of cattles and pigs at her wedding, "when I was older, I went to marry, my dad loved me and he came to give me some cattle and pigs and chicken to start a life. So my dad came to see me and my husband."

On the other hand, the two younger females, P and S, responded rather negatively, citing no communication, no relationship, and concerns about the possibility of him marrying wife number three. P stated that as she got older she learned to "just take it" and adjust to the situation, but "there is still anger there so I still try to avoid him"

6) Present relationship with mother

In general, all of the responses to the question "What is your relationship like with your mother now" were positive, citing close relationships, talking, sharing, doing things together, and mutual dependency. The only moderately positive response was from G, who stated he was not close with his mother, but rather, had a sense of obligation because she was his mother.

7) Present relationship with father's other wife

In general, the majority of responses to the question "What is your relationship like with your father's other wife now" were negative, citing a lack of contact, no real effort to see one another, don't think she likes us, rumors, and betrayal. S, P and X expressed a negative relationship surrounding around rumors. S said "I don't think she likes my family, because her husband is with my mom. She talks to other people about our family…I was really sad…I didn't want them to think the same about me". P said "She had been talking about our family to other people. Rumors go around…I have more hatred."

X reported a mixed relationship with moderate negativity and positivity, stating "If I have anything to give to my mom, I have to give to the other mom the same. I give so that they are equal so there is no sadness or madness. If I give something, I have to give so that they are equal, so that they is no bad feelings so I give the same…You always hear them, the first wife and her son, talk about you and how much your dad loves you and it makes you very confused. You think that you are happy and loved by everyone, but you really aren't."

The only positive response came from T, who cited "we are more close than

before…they visit us daily" and his own self-maturity.

8) Present relationship with father's other wife's children

The majority of responses to the question "What is your relationship with your father's other wife's children" were negative with the exception of T, who cited having a positive relationship with them, viewing them as part of the family and serving as a role model for them. The four remaining responses cited no contact, no effort to see one another, resentment towards the others, and/or rumors being passed.

9) Present or future engagement in cultural polygyny and their reasons

In general, the responses to the question "Are you or would you engage in cultural polygynous marriages? Why or Why not?" were divided along gender lines. All of the females, regardless of age, firmly stated that they would not participate in polygyny with a "No." Their reasons to not participate included an added avenue for sadness, stress on the family, depression, rumors, resentment, it is wrong, loyalty to one person, and God. Responses from the females were "if there is two or three, the children can't comprehend and don't know how to act so that no one is sad at you or mad at you, or what they can do so that they can love them, so than the children don't know how to love them" (X), "if you are married to a guy or girl, you should stay with one person…That is just wrong, it's not right" (S), and "I take my vows seriously and he should too…I would tell him to get a divorce" (P).

T's initial response was "Probably not" and then "definitely not", citing struggles, a miserable journey, hard for children to grow up without a father, and the legal system as reasons to not engage in cultural polygyny. In addition, G's response was "(laughter) I don't know, I don't think it would be possible. But from (laughter) a guy's point of view,

any guy would probably do it (laughter). If it was okay, any guy would do it." In response to the researcher's question "Which is your answer, yes or no?" G responded "No I wouldn't do it. Umm, maybe I would like to spend more time and give more attention to my kids then what I got."

10) Advantages/benefits of residing in a culturally polygynous household

The responses to the question, "Could you summarize the advantages/benefits of growing up in a polygynous household" were few. The advantages cited to engaging in polygyny included a lot of brothers and sisters to play with and more attention and resources if dad lives with us from G, more freedom if dad does not live with us and no authority figure at home from T, and learning from mistakes and watching how mothers treat one another from S.

11) Disadvantages/costs of residing in a culturally polygynous household

There were more responses to the question, "Could you summarize the disadvantages/costs of growing up in a polygynous household." The disadvantages of living in a culturally polygynous household were numerous (see Table 1). The responses from the five subjects included unfair to mothers (20%), resentment (80%), loyalty or having to take sides (60%), lack of love or connection (80%), lack of a role model (60%), lack of attention (20%), lost of respect and reputation (80%), and too many children (60%). All three of the female respondents listed sadness (60%), stress and anger (60%), and loyalty or having to take sides. All five respondents listed confusion of roles in the family and each other (100%) and lack of money and resources (100%).

Table 1: *Disadvantages of Being Raised in a Culturally Polygynous Household*

Disadvantage (Percentage)	S	P	X	T	G
Sadness (60%)	X	X	X		
Too Many Children (60%)	X		X		X
Confusion of Roles (100%)	X	X	X	X	X
Loyalty/Taking sides (60%)	X	X	X		
Resentment (80%)	X	X	X	X	
Lack of Money/Resources (100%)	X	X	X	X	X
Lack of Love/Connection (80%)	X	X	X	X	
Lack of Role Model (60%)	X	X		X	
Lack of Respect/Reputation (80%)	X	X	X	X	
Stress/Anger (60%)	X	X	X		
Lack of Attention (20%)					X
Unfair to Mothers (20%)	X				

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the effects of growing up in a polygynous household on Hmong individuals. In general, the results from this study support the findings of other researchers showing that polygamy does affect the individual. The five participants listed an overwhelming number of disadvantages of living in a polygynous household as compared to the advantages. The disadvantages were many and included depression, sadness, stress, anger, resentment, too many children, confusion of roles, and lack of the following, love or connection with the father, respect, resources or money, and role model. The number of advantages only numbered

three, and they were a higher number of brothers and sisters, freedom and learning from mothers' mistakes. General themes seen throughout the interviews were confusion of roles, lack of resources/money, resentment, lack of love and respect. These were all effects outlined by previous Hmong individuals who had been from polygynous families also (Yang, 2001; Hang, 2001; "A father's lost son," 2000)

The confusion of each family members roles and lack of resources and money were two disadvantageous effects that were universal to all five participants, interpreting these to be common themes. These two distinct aspects seen in polygynous families go along with the recent findings of other researchers. Researchers had found that these type of families lacked the economic resources to support such a large family, often residing in overcrowded areas (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000; Al-Krenawi, Graham & Izzeldin, 2001; Al-Krenawi, Graham & Slonim-Nevo, 2002), as well as having much confusion about roles and loyalty (Lev-Weisel & Al-Krenawi, 2000).

Resentment and the lack of love or neglect have also been identified as effects stemming from polygynous families (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997). The effects of resentment, lack of love or connection, and lack of respect were voiced by four of the five subjects. Being that 80% of the subjects listed these as effects, this researcher interprets this to mean that these are general themes seen in this study, especially since it was only one subject, G, who consistently did not list any of these. One of the most significant differences about G's situation was that his father lived with him full time, while the other wife was in a different community. P, S and X shared their father with the other wife and children in the same community, while T's father was mostly absent up until his adulthood. This one difference could help to explain why G did not list those

effects because he may not have experienced any of them due to his father always being there and the absence of the other family. He would not have experienced resentment towards the other children because they probably did not receive anything from their father. He would not have listed lack of love or respect from his father considering his father was there full time. Considering G's consistent omission and his particular situation, it is assumed that resentment, lack of love or connection, and lack of respect, are common effects seen by individuals raised in polygynous households where the father is more absent.

In their interviews, something common all three females spoke about was that there were rumors circulating among the community concerning their biological mothers. Because many aspects of the Bedouin-Arab and Hmong culture are similar, if the status of the wives among the Hmong is consistent with recent findings among the Bedouin-Arab people, where the first wife is inferior to the second (Al-Krenawi, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 1997), this could help to explain the reason for the rumors. In this study, the three female participants were all children of the second wife. The first wives could have felt lower in status to the new and younger wife, causing her to speak negatively about her and spread rumors in attempts to raise her own status or self-esteem. This explanation would also follow the belief that if a Hmong man takes on a second wife because the couple is childless, then the status and self-esteem of the first wife is extremely lowered (Rice, 2000).

Also common among all the female respondents were sadness, the issue of loyalty or taking sides, and stress or anger as disadvantageous effects to living in a polygynous household. None of the males named any of these. It could have been that the males in

the study did not list these three as disadvantages because they have been ingrained by the traditional Hmong culture to not talk about or feel many emotions. But, if this was the case, then the older female, X would not have listed these as disadvantages also because she was raised even more traditionally then the males, seeing that she spent her childhood and most of adulthood in Laos. Perhaps, it was the female perspective that allowed them to see these emotional disadvantages more so than the males. Or, the males could have been more reluctant to feel and share these feelings with others. Because 60% of the respondents named this as an effect, the researcher interprets these to be common themes seen in this study.

The two effects listed by only one person were lack of attention by G and unfair to mothers by S. It is assumed that G listed lack of attention as one of the effects because he lacked a real connection with both of his parents. He had only moderately positive relationships with both parents throughout his childhood up until his adulthood. As for S's listing of unfairness to mothers, she was also the only one who had said learning from the mother's mistakes was an advantage.

The only positive relationship S and P reported was with their biological mother, while all the rest of their relationships were negative. The two younger females in the study had very similar relationships with their father, biological mother, other mother and other siblings. This could be due to the fact that the fathers were actually step-fathers and not their biological fathers. Both were very angry at the whole situation, including the marriage and their step-fathers. They had explained that most of this anger was because of their mother going from an only wife to a second wife. This could imply that the status of a only wife is much higher and more desired among the Hmong over a second

wife. In addition, both females were adamant against polygyny, stating that it was wrong and listing American values as one of the reasons to not participate in polygyny.

All of the subjects stated that they would not engage in polygyny, while the women declared a firmer "no" then the men. The gender of the researcher could have influenced both the males' and females' answers to this question. The women listed many more reasons to not engage in polygyny as compared to the men. In addition, they may have affirmed a stronger refusal simply because they were female and they understood that the gender roles in the Hmong culture held them as inferior to men already, and that becoming a second wife may lower their status even further.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Recommendations, Conclusions

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the effects of growing up in a culturally polygynous household on Hmong individuals. After reviewing the literature on polygyny, the researcher developed a survey designed to address some of the effects of polygyny and a concise letter of instruction including a confidentiality statement, both written in English and Hmong. The researcher contacted a local agency specializing in surveying the Hmong population, explained the purpose of the study and asked for names of individuals who met the criteria of being raised in a polygamous household. The researcher contacted ten individuals by telephone; and five agreed to participate. The researcher spoke with the individuals, explained to them the purpose of the study, had them read and sign the confidentiality statement and respond orally to the survey. Each interview was audiotaped and took approximately thirty minutes to complete. Then, the researcher transcribed each audiotape. The researcher and the thesis advisor met to review and summarize the themes of the data.

Of the three women and two men responding, each had two mothers. The age range of the sample was from late teens to early sixties. The results from this study support the findings of other researchers showing that polygyny does affect the individual. In this study, the effects of polygyny were found to be the following: depression, sadness, stress, anger, resentment, too many children, confusion of roles, and lack of the following, love or connection with the father, respect, resources or money, and role model. The number of advantageous effects only numbered three, and they were a

higher number of brothers and sisters, freedom and learning from mothers' mistakes. General themes seen throughout the interviews were confusion of roles, lack of resources/money, resentment, lack of love and lack of respect.

Recommendations

This section will discuss recommendations for future study on the effects of polygyny on family members. Due to the sensitivity of this subject, and particularly in the United States where it is illegal, polygyny is not easily studied and researched. Additionally, cultural polygyny is an outgrowth from the culture in which it is based and therefore, polygyny in Africa will be different from polygyny among the Hmong. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted with Hmong individuals and families. Obviously, it is recommended that greater numbers of subjects be interviewed and that individuals of different ages and genders be compared to determine those effects of polygyny. Additionally, research that examines the effects of polygyny on order of mother/wife and the effects seen in wives would be illuminating.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the effects of cultural polgyny on Hmong individuals are shown to be diverse. It is clear that for many, particularly men, that there are positive aspects of living in a polygynous family. For others, it is clear that living in polygynous families results in sadness, depression, confusion, resentment, and a loss of identity and love. It would be hoped that people who have lived in polygynous families seek support and gain the help that is necessary and that future research is conducted. In addition, it is hoped that those who work with individuals from polygynous families, understand the effects so that treatment is effective.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, B. N. & Mburugu, E. (1994), Kikuyu bridewealth and polygyny today, *Journal Of Comparative Family Studies*, 25 (2), 159-167.

Anderson, C. M. (2000). The persistence of polygyny as an adaptive response to poverty and oppression in apartheid South Africa. *Cross Cultural Research*. 34(2), 99-112.

Al-Krenawi, A. (1999), Explanations of mental health symptoms by the Bedouin-Arabs of the Negev, *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 45 (1), 56-65.

Al-Krenawi, A., Graham, J., Al-Krenawi, S (1997). Social work practice with polygamous families. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*. 14(6), 445-458.

Al-Krenawi, A., Graham, J. & Izzeldin, A. (2001), The psychosocial impact of polygamous marriages on Palestinian women, *Women & Health*, 34 (1), 1-16.

Al-Krenawi, A., Graham, J., & Slonim-Nevo, V (2002). Mental Health Aspects of Arab-Israeli Adolescents From Polygamous Versus Monogamous Families. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(4), 446-461.

Al-Krenawi A. & Lightman, E.S (2000). Learning achievement, social adjustment, and family conflict among Bedouin-Arab children from polygamous and monogamous families. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 140(3), 345-355.

Allam, Hannah (2002, September 22). The pain of polygamy. *Associated Press.* Retrieved on May 5, 2003 from http://www.polygamyinfo.com/plygmedia%2002%20124pioneer.htm

Being Hmong means being free (2000). *Wisconsin Public Television*. Retrieved on March 10, 2003 from http://www.wpt.org/hmong/index.html

Broude, G. J. (1994). Marriage, family, and relationships. A cross-cultural encyclopedia. Denver: ABC-CLIO.

Cerhan, J.U. (1990), The Hmong in the United States: An overview for mental health professionals, *Journal of Counseling & Development,* 69 (1), 88-92.

Chelaby, K (1987). Women of polygamous marriages in outpatient psychiatric services in Kuwait. *International Journal of Family Psychiatry*, 8(1), 25-34.

Cherian, V. (1991). Relationship between parental education and academic achievement of Xhosa children from monogamous and polygynous families. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 132*(5), 681-683.

Cooper, R. (Eds. 1998). Vanishing cultures of the world. Singapore: Times Editions.

Coulson, K. M. & Melhorn, P. C. (Eds.) (2000). *Living in two worlds. The Hmong women's project in Fitchburg, Massachusetts*. Ashburnham: Coulson-Melhorn.

Dao, Yang (1993). *Hmong at the turning point.* (J. Blake, Eds) Minneapolis, MN: WorldBridge Associates, Ltd.

Donnely, N. (1994). Changing Lives of Refugee Hmong Women. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

A father's favored son: Hue Vue (2002, August 11). Fresno Bee. Retrieved on March 10, 2003 from http://www.fresnobee.com/special/hmong/vue

Foo, L. J. (Eds.)(2002). *In Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns, and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy.* New York: The Ford Foundation

Gwanfogbe, P. N. & Schumm, W. R. (1997), Polygyny and marital life satisfaction: an exploratory study from rural Cameroon, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 28 (1), 55-72.

Hang, M. (2001, April, Volume 11(2)). The journey starts with you. *Hnub Tshiab, Hmong Women's Publication.* St.Paul, Minnesota.

Hmong grapple with lingering effects of polygamy. (2002, November 16). *Associated Press*. Retrieved May 10, 2003, from http://www.polygamyinfo.com/../../plygmedia%2002%20158ap.htm

Koltyk, J. A. (1998). *New pioneers in the heartland-Hmong life in Wisconsin.* (N. Foner, Eds.) Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Lev-Wiesel, R,& Al-Krenawi, A. (2000). Perception of family among Bedouin-Arab children of polygamous families as reflected in their family drawings. *American Journal of Art Therapy,* 38(4), 98-107.

Lo, Ching (2001, November 16). "Hush-Hush" speaks louder than hush, hush. *Hmong Times.* Retrieved March 1, 2001, from http://www.hmongtimes.com.

Merriam-Webster on-line: The language center dictionary. Retrieved on March 10, 2003 from http://www.m-w.com/home.htm

Owuamnam, D. (1984). Adolescents' perception of polygamous family and its relationship to self-concept. *International Journal of Psychology. 19*(6), 593-598.

Oyefeso, A. & Adegoke, A. (1992). Psychological adjustment of Yoruba adolescents as

influenced by family type: A research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines. 33*(4), 785-788.

Pela, O. (1984). Psychosocial aspects of drug dependence: The Nigerian experience. *Adolescence. 19*(76), 971-976.

Polygamy in Minnesota (2003, February 8). [Television Broadcast]. St. Paul, Minnesota: KSTP Eyewitness News.

Rice, P. L. (2000). *Hmong women and reproduction*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Scott, J. W. (1986), From teenage parenthood to polygamy: Case studies in black polygamous family formation, *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 10 (4), 172-79.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory, 2nd ed*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thao, T. (2002, October 1). Hmong women charged with first degree murder. *Hmong Times*. Retrieved March 10, 2003, from http://www.hmongtimes.com/displaynews.asp?ID=661

U.S. Census Bureau 2000, Retrieved on March 10, 2003 from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?ds_name=D&geo_id=D&mt_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U_PCT005&_lang=en

Vang, K. (1982). *Hmong marriage customs: A current assessment in the Hmong in the west.* (B. Downing & D. Olney, Eds.) Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Vang, Vaughn (2003). Personal communication.

Yang, MayLi (1999, Fall 6(1)) *Paj Ntaub Voice*. St. Paul, Minnesota.

Yang, Naly (2001, January 11(1)). *Hnub Tshiab, Hmong Women's Publication.* St.Paul, Minnesota.

Ware, H. (1979). Polygyny: Women's views in a transitional society, Nigeria, 1975. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 41(1), 185-195.

Appendix A

Participant's Consent Form in English

Dear Research Participant,

My name is Manee Yang and I am requesting your participation in a study that will attempt to look at the effects of cultural polygyny on Hmong individuals. Cultural polygyny is when a man has more than one wife at the same time, where only one or none of the marriages are legalized. I understand that polygyny is a very sensitive and controversial topic for the Hmong community. Therefore, extreme care will be taken to assure the confidentiality of your answers if you choose to participate in this study. Although, cultural polygyny continues to exist in the Hmong culture, no research has ever focused on it or is it readily talked about. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a person who was raised in a polygynous household. With your participation, we can begin to gain vital information of the effects of polygyny on the children in our community.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW OR DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE

Your participation entails a face-to-face interview with the primary researcher answering ten questions surrounding cultural polygyny and you. By participating in the interview, you are giving your consent to participate in this important study. Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate, and your decision to not participate will not provide any negative consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All of your responses will be anonymous and remain confidential. This signed consent form will be kept confidential and will not be attached to any of your responses. It will also be stored separately from notes and tapes. To ensure your anonymity, you will be given a pseudonym. You will not be identified anywhere in the study except by pseudonym. When all interviews have been conducted, responses will be analyzed to identify similarities. All results will be presented in a way that no individual can be identified. The final report will only use generalized information, such as “the Midwest”, “young woman/man”, “middle-aged woman/man” or “older woman/man”.

RISKS

Any research may involve unforeseeable risks to participants. By participating in this survey, you may experience some psychological and/or social risks. If participating in this study makes you completely uncomfortable, you may withdraw from the study without any negative consequences. Attached to the survey is a brochure for a non-profit mental health agency, if you would like to talk with someone about these issues.

INFORMED CONSENT

If you have any questions about your participation in this research, please ask before we proceed to the interview. By participating in the interview, you will have given your informed consent to participate in this research. This means that you understand the nature of the research, the possible risks involved, had an opportunity to ask and obtain satisfactory answers to your questions, and have voluntarily agreed to participate in this research. This signed consent form will be kept confidential and will not be attached to any of your responses. It will also be stored separately from notes and tapes.

If you would like a summary of the results when they become available, please send a card with your name and address to Manee Yang, 208 North Fourth Avenue, Wausau, WI 54401. The University of Wisconsin-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects has approved this study. If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this study, please contact me at the address above or by telephone,
715/848 –0310. Dr. Leslie Koepke, my research advisor, is also available for consultation at 715/232-2237. If you have questions regarding your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Sue

Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751, phone 715/232-1126.

Thank you for your vital contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Manee Yang, B.S. Dr. Leslie Koepke, Research Advisor

I have chosen this form and language to use: ____ Hmong or ____ English

I agree to participate in this study as described in this letter.

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Participant's Consent Form in Hmong

Nyob zoo, (Consent letter in Hmong)

Kuv lub npe hu Manee Yang. Peb sav nug koj siab seb kog puas kaam paab peb saib txug kev kwv yuan nam yau hab lub neeg kaaj sab npaum le caag. Kev kwv yuav nam yau yog thaus leej txiv yav ntau leej tu leej nam. Thaus has txug tej yam le nuav, muaj tej tug nyam, muaj tej tus tsi nyam. Peb xaav has tas Moob tsi xaav hab tsi xaav thaum txug tej nuav le. Peb thov kuas koj paab peb saib rua qhov koj txiv muaj nam yau es zoo le caag rua koj. Yog koj paab tau peb, peb yeej tsi sau koj lub npe rua huv dlaim ntawv. Yog koj paab tau, peb pib paub txug kev kwv yauv nam yau saib lub neeg kaaj sab npaum le caag.

Yog koj paab tau peb, peb xaav kuas koj tuaj ntsib peb, peb pav pem ua kes. Yog koj tuaj pav pem nrug peb, yeej yog has tas koj zoo sab tuaj. Yog koj tsi zoo sab tuaj los yeej tsi ua le caag.

Cov lug kws koj pav tau rua peb, peb yeeg tsi sau koj lub npe rua huv dlaim ntawv. Dlaim ntawv nuas es koj sau npe rua, peb yeeg tsi muab ca nrug koj cov lug kws koj pav taaj rua peb. Yog koj saav, peb maam swv dlua ib lub npe huv peb dlaim ntawv. Huv peb dlaim ntawv, peb luas sau kua lwm tug tsi paub has tas yog koj.

Yog koj tuaj pav pem nrug peb, peb tsi paub koj yuav muab teem mem los tsi muab. Thov cov txaav txim zoo sab ntawm koj tug kheej. Yog thaus twg koj tsi xis pav pem nrug peb los peb nrog tseg tau es tsi ua caag. Nrug dlaim ntawv nuav yog ib dlaim ntawv es qha txug ib cov counselor lub npe.

Yog koj muaj lug nug, thov cov nug ua ntej peb pib. Yog koj pav peb nrug peb, yeeg yog has tas koj zoo sab pav nrub peb, hab koj paub txug cov nqai lub zoo hab tsi zoo ua kev lawm, hab cov muab sib hawm nug hab peb teb tau koj ntej yam koj saav paub, hab yeeg yog koj zoo sab tuaj pav pem. Dlaim ntawv nuav es koj sau npe rua, peb muab khaws ca rua ib qho hab yeeg tsi muab ca nrug koj cov lug.

Yog cov saav twm dlaim ntawv thau peb sau tag, koj sau koj lub npe rua ib dlaim ntawv hab muab saa tuaj rua Manee Yang. Lub tsev kawm ntawv, Univeristy of Wisconsin Stout lub Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects tso cai rua peb. Yog koj muab lug nug, hu xuv tooj tuaj tao rua kuv los rua Dr. Leslie Koepke, 715/232-2237. Yog koj muab lug nug txug tej yam peb ua tsi hum mej sab, hu rua Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, 715/232-1126.

Ua tsaug koj paab tau peb.
Sau npe,

Manee Yang

Kuv xaiv lug nuav: _____ Moob los _____Meskas
Kuv zoo sab hab cov txaav txim ntawm kuv tug kheej pav pem nrug mej.

Sau npe _____ Hli, nub, xyoo_____

Appendix C

Research Survey in English

Survey questions in English

Questions for Adults who have grown up in Polygynous households-

1) How many wives did your father have?
2) How many children did each wife have?
3) As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your father?
4) As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your mother?
5) As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your father's other wife?
6) As a child, how would you describe your relationship with your father's other wife's children?
7) What is your relationship like with your father now?
8) What is your relationship like with your mother now?
9) What is your relationship like with your father's other wife now?
10) What is your relationship like with your father's other wife's children now?
11) Are you or would you engage in a cultural polygynous marriage? Why or why not?
12) Could you summarize the advantages/benefits of growing up in a polygynous household?
13) Could you summarize the disadvantages/costs of growing up in a polygynous household?

Appendix D

Research Survey in Hmong

Survey Questions in Hmong

1) Koj muab ib leeg nam los koj muas ntau leeg nam?
2) Ib tug leeg nam muab pheg tsawv tug mivnyuas?
3) Koj pav pem tsug koj hab koj tsiv nyob le caag tau koj miv aiv.
4) Koj pav pem tsug koj hab koj nam nyob le caag tau koj miv aiv.
5) Koj pav pem tsug koj hab koj tug nam u nyob le caag tau koj miv aiv.
6) Koj pav pem tsug koj hab koj tug nam u cov mivnyuas nyob le caag tau koj miv aiv.
7) Koj pam peb tsug koj hab koj tsiv nyob le caag taam sim nua koj luj lawm.
8) Koj pam peb tsug koj hab koj nam nyob le caag taam sim nua koj luj lawm.
9) Koj pam peb tsug koj hab koj tug nam u nyob le caag taam sim nua koj luj lawm.
10) Koj pam peb tsug koj hab koj tu nam u cov mivnyuas nyob le caag taam sim nua koj luj lawm.
11) Taam sim nua, koj saav has tas koj puas ua nyoog le koj tsiv hab?
12) Thaus has txug kev kwv yuav nam yau, koj saav has tas puas muab ab tsi zoo?
13) Thaus has txug kev kwv yuav nam yau, koj saav has tas puas muab ab tsi tsi zoo?