

St. Catherine University

From the Selected Works of Pa Der Vang, PhD, MSW, LICSW

2015

Constructing Hmong American Youth

Pa Der Vang



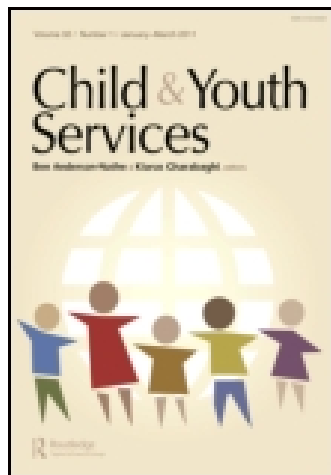
Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/pader-vang/4/>

This article was downloaded by: [Pa Der Vang]

On: 26 May 2015, At: 14:20

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



[Click for updates](#)

Child & Youth Services

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wcys20>

Constructing “Hmong American Youth”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of 25 Years of Academic Literature on Hmong American Youth

Kao Nou L. Moua^a & Pa Der Vang^b

^a School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

^b School of Social Work, St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Published online: 26 May 2015.

To cite this article: Kao Nou L. Moua & Pa Der Vang (2015) Constructing “Hmong American Youth”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of 25 Years of Academic Literature on Hmong American Youth, *Child & Youth Services*, 36:1, 16-29

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0145935X.2015.1015873>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the “Content”) contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms &

Constructing “Hmong American Youth”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of 25 Years of Academic Literature on Hmong American Youth

KAO NOU L. MOUA

School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

PA DER VANG

*School of Social Work, St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas, St. Paul,
Minnesota, USA*

Hmong American youth have been in the United States for 40 years, and yet research still suggests a binary portrayal of their experiences—model minorities or struggling delinquents. In this study, we use critical discourse analysis to examine academic literature and the construction of “Hmong American youth.” We examine academic literature discursive practices and power in controlling the discourse on Hmong American youth and shaping practices and policies. Using critical discourse analysis, we call attention to academic literature and its power, and challenge researchers to reconstruct a more complex discourse of Hmong American youth that captures their histories, possibilities, and desires.

KEYWORDS *critical discourse analysis, Hmong American, Hmong youth*

According to the latest U.S. Census report, there are over 280,000 Hmong in the United States, with 44% of the Hmong American population under the age of 18 (Pfeifer & Thao, 2013). Since the arrival of Hmong, researchers and scholars have had an interest in researching Hmong youth. The research pertaining to Hmong American youth is spread widely across a number of disciplines and covers a number of issues such as acculturation and adjustment (Miyares, 1997; Vang, 2013), mental health (Meschke, 2013; Vang &

Address correspondence to Kao Nou L. Moua, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, 1404 Gortner Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108, USA. E-mail: thao0264@umn.edu

Bogenshutz, 2013), education (S. Lee, 2001; McNall, Dunnigan, & Mortimer, 1994), and cultural and language loss (Bosher, 1997; Nguyen & Brown, 2010). Research on Hmong American youth have impacted practice (Xiong, Detzner, Keuster, Eliason, & Allen. 2006; S. Lee & Hawkins, 2008) and shaped research (Vang, 2004; Xiong, 2010), however, few articles discuss the complexities of Hmong youth identities and experiences, thus creating a limited portrayal of Hmong American youth.

The year 2015 marks 40 years that Hmong will have been in the United States. The arrival of Hmong in the United States has a direct connection to U.S. foreign policy. In the late 1950s, the U.S. government sent CIA officials to Laos. The CIA trained and supplied the Secret Guerilla Unit (SGU), an army of 40,000 Hmong soldiers, to support U.S. efforts to prevent the formation of a communist Vietnam. Hmong, who supported the United States, were given three responsibilities: (1) disrupt the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was the Northern Vietnamese supply line that was partially operated in Laos; (2) rescue any downed U.S. pilots; and (3) direct and protect American pilots as they flew into Vietnam (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993). In addition, Hmong soldiers were trained to fly planes and helicopters into enemy zones and they collected and reported information from communist soldiers (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993; Quincy, 1988). Following the U.S. military's withdrawal from Southeast Asia in 1975, many Hmong were targeted for their support of and involvement with U.S. troops. Hmong fled to refugee camps in Thailand, and were resettled throughout the world, including the United States, Australia, France, and Germany, among others (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993; Morrison, 2008).

This study is a review of the current literature on Hmong American youth. Using Fairclough's (1992) model for critical discourse analysis (CDA), we examine how "Hmong American youth" has been constructed in 90 articles between 1980 and 2013. Through deconstructing the discourse on Hmong American youth, we call attention to the ways researchers have maintained a discourse on Hmong American youth that does not capture the diversity in the everyday lives of Hmong American youth.

METHODOLOGY

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used to describe both a method to understand the relationships between discourse and the social world as well as to describe a development of social thought within the larger field of discourse analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). CDA as a method assumes that discourse is a form of social practice; through CDA researchers are able to discern the relationship between discourse and power (Janks, 1997). That is, discourse is both a social reproduction (socially shaped) and a mode of action that is socially shaping. Through CDA, we examine how power is

exercised and perpetuated through language as seen in written text. Power is the ability for individuals “in a social relationship to achieve his or her will even against the resistance of others”; CDA is concerned, in particular, with systemic power exerted via discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). We selected CDA as a data analysis method since it aims to generate research that challenges social injustices and inequities (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

In particular, we use Fairclough’s model because it exemplifies the relationships between discourse and the social world. According to Fairclough (1995), “texts are social spaces in which two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and representation of the world, and social interaction” (p. 6). Fairclough’s (1992) model involves examining three interconnected dimensions of discourse: text (object of analysis), discursive practice (the process of producing and consuming text), and social practice (the socio-historical context of the text). Each of these dimensions requires a way to analyze the discourse. Fairclough’s model includes three interconnected processes of analyses, which are text analysis; processing analysis (analyzing the production/consumption of text); and social analysis.

Data Collection

We included only peer-reviewed articles with Hmong youth as the primary research focus. We conducted an online search using the following databases: Academic Search Premier, Hmong Studies Bibliographies, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, and PubMed. Our search terms included: Hmong American youth, Hmong adolescent, United States, and Hmong teenager. Our search yielded 90 articles, ranging from 1986 to 2013. These 90 articles were published in 64 journals by 139 authors and co-authors. Of the 139 authors and co-authors, we identified 21 authors as Hmong.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Text Analysis

While all three analyses (text, discursive practice, and social practice) need to be conducted in order to arrive at an understanding of discourse as social practice, we first began our analysis by examining the texts of each article (Janks, 1997). Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) stated that through analysis of the linguistic features of text, researchers are able to discern interpretations of discourse. Fairclough (1992) provided the following as linguistic characteristics to focus on for text analysis: the relationship between speakers; ethos—that is, how identities are constructed through language and body; use of metaphors, wording, and grammar.

For the text analysis, we categorized the articles into three decades that closely reflect the three waves of Hmong resettlement to the United

States—post-Vietnam War/1980s, the 1990s, and 2000 to present. Our analysis of the text resulted in different framings of Hmong youth during these time periods.

POST-VIETNAM WAR AND THE 1980s

Hmong youth in the 1980s are described primarily by their otherness—refugees to the United States, their lack of English skills, their tribal culture, and their inability to adjust to Western culture and new surroundings. The three most reoccurring codes generated from this time period are *The Hmong*, refugees, and problems.

This notion of Hmong as other is used to explain why Hmong have more challenges in adapting to the United States. For example, Hirayama and Hirayama (1988) wrote, “Unlike the majority of Vietnamese who arrived about the same time as the Hmong but who have since left refugee status, many Hmong are still struggling” (p. 94). Yet in their discussion of their findings, Hirayama and Hirayama (1988) described Hmong as

highly organized . . . self-sufficient, with its own leader, religious figure, marriage negotiator, etc. The Hmong brought this structure to the United States. Thus, where there are Hmong communities, there are Hmong Associations. . . . In this study, the majority of family-heads was employed. Only a few, who had recently lost their jobs, were on welfare. Many wives were also working. . . . Some younger family-heads had enrolled in night courses at local community colleges. (p. 103)

It is troubling that while findings suggest Hmong have a complex system of organizing, participants in this study were employed, and others were attending school, the authors continued to frame Hmong and their transition as problematic.

THE 1990s

Issues related to acculturation, generational differences, and social and economic difficulties dominate the narratives of Hmong American youth during this time. Take for example these titles, *Acculturation and Perceived Intergenerational Differences among Hmong Youth* (Rick & Forward, 1992), or *Crises, Continuity, and the Refugee* (Hones, 1999), and lastly, *The Hmong Americans: Identity, Conflict, and Opportunity* (Vang & Flores, 1999). The naming of Hmong American youth experiences as difference, crisis, and conflict continue to highlight the problems and maintain a discourse of challenges.

In naming Hmong American youth experiences as different, authors continue to highlight the *otherness* of Hmong. For example, Timm et al. (1998) wrote:

Laotian Hmong culture was primarily oral; the knowledge of skills, past events, customs, and traditions were handed down from generation to generation. Most children received their education at home and in the fields, where they followed traditional procedures and learned through observation and demonstration. (p. 30)

This description of Hmong culture not only present Hmong and Hmong culture as different, but the use of the past tense in this description frames Hmong culture as archaic, and suggests that oral traditions are no longer used to educate Hmong youth.

Finally, Hmong parents long for the pre-resettlement Hmong youth; that is, in Hmong parents' descriptions of their own experiences as young Hmong people, Hmong adults express nostalgia. They remember when Hmong youth were obedient, respectful and culturally-informed. Vang and Flores (1999) wrote that when Hmong parents are asked what their greatest concerns are in terms of living in the United States, parents responded that "raising 'good children,' who are obedient, responsible, and properly mannered . . . young people quickly adopt customs and behaviors that seem acceptable to [their] peer groups but that are often totally unacceptable to the Hmong American parents" (p.11). Moreover, Vang and Flores (1999) stated that with the resettlement of Hmong families to the United States., more and more responsibilities have been given to Hmong youth because of their ability to speak English. The authors claimed that youth are placed in "positions of prominence in their families before tradition deems it appropriate . . . [as a result] the traditional family structure is often challenged and sometimes destroyed" (p. 11). Similarly, Rick and Forward (1992) suggested that parents are "forced" to depend on their children because they lack the ability to speak English. Hmong *American* youth, then, embody characteristics and values that are not only antithetical to Hmong parents' experiences and memories, but are also antithetical to Hmong culture as it relates to values and family structure.

2000 TO PRESENT

As we read articles in this time period, issues related to acculturation and intergenerational conflict persists, however, questions regarding Hmong American youth identities and being emerge. These articles reveal more complicated and nuanced experiences of Hmong American youth, including health and well-being (Mulasi-Pokhriyal & Smith, 2010; Stang, Kong, Story, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007); racism (DePouw, 2012); and sexual

orientation and gender expression (Boulden, 2009; Ngo, 2012). These articles are the beginnings of more promising research that moves away from the deficit-based, problem-focused and the acculturated and assimilated narratives of Hmong American youth discourse.

In her article on early Hmong marriage and young Hmong women, Ngo (2002) challenged the notion that Hmong girls marry early because of “traditional” cultural practices. Instead, Ngo (2002) suggested young Hmong girls choose to marry early as “a form of opposition to two central institutional experiences—family and education” (p. 166). Rather than simply blame culture for young girls’ decisions to marry early, Ngo (2002) found that Hmong American narratives and practices are much more “negotiated, disrupted, and transformed” than what non-Hmong assume when they ask Ngo about Hmong culture.

Similarly, S. Lee (2001) described Hmong American youth experiences in school as not only the model minority or the gangster, but as active in shaping their school experiences. She wrote, “Although they proudly assert their American-born status, second-generation youth also express a strong sense of ethnic solidarity. . . . For instance, the Hmong Club had a difficult time finding an advisor. At one point a teacher suggested that the Hmong Club merge with the Asian Club, but the students dismissed this idea . . . the students explained that they wanted their own club” (p. 517). In this, S. Lee (2001) challenged earlier research suggesting that Hmong American youth are acculturating so quickly that they are losing their own culture and identity.

DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

After the text analysis, we moved on to examining the production and consumption of the text. In CDA, analysis of discursive practices examines the social conditions in which texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. We chose to examine academic literature because research oftentimes informs programs, policy, and direction of future research, directly impacting groups and communities, including Hmong youth. Additionally, within the sphere of academic literature, there are identifiable producers, distributors, and consumers of research.

Fairclough (1995) suggested that there is power in controlling the production, distribution, and consumption of texts. The ability to control discourse is the power to maintain the status quo or a discursive practice that dominates other, including oppositional practices, and also illustrates how power works. An example of this is when authors interchangeably use the terms Hmong, refugee, and immigrant, and oftentimes, without regard to birth country. According to Chia (2000), “It is through this process of differentiating, fixing, naming, labeling, classifying and relating . . . that social reality is systematically constructed” (p. 513). The power to name Hmong

youth as refugees and immigrants is the ability to construct a social reality in which Hmong youth are *not* American, therefore, upholding the dominant notion that American equals White. Additionally, Hmong youth were not included as co-authors or co-investigators in any of these articles; their stories and experiences are interpreted by another and their voices are silenced in the academic discourse on Hmong American youth.

We found it important to examine authors' ethnic backgrounds because we were interested in the representation of the emic voice in Hmong research and authors' relationships to and roles in Hmong communities. Of the 139 authors and co-authors, a total of 21 authors were Hmong, and of the 90 total articles, we identified 19 articles in which the first author is Hmong; of those 19 articles, there were 13 unique authors. When others write about another community, it is from the perspective of the outsider. "The etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system. The emic viewpoint results from studying behavior as from inside the system" (Pike, 1967, p. 37). The etic perspective is often wrought with inaccuracies or misperceptions of what is really going on. Much can be lost in translation. For instance, in many early articles on Hmong youth, authors frequently wrote that Hmong meant "free" or "free people." However, M. Lee (1998), in her article on the debate surrounding the meaning of Hmong, argued that not only does Hmong *not* mean "free people," but that researchers have "thoughtlessly" continued to use and promote this definition. Even as late as 1999, we found in our study that Hones (1999) wrote, "The name that the Hmong give themselves means 'free people' or 'those who must have their freedom'" (p. 166).

In addition to literal mistranslations, non-Hmong researchers (some with Hmong co-authors), while intended to be objective, also analyzed data with a biased or limited perspective. In their interviews with Hmong youth about their relationships with their parents, Lamborn and Moua (2008) described some fathers as "hardworking but absent," and even coded one father's behavior as neglectful, when one youth shared, "I don't really see my dad a lot because he's working." These Hmong youth experiences with their fathers were named as *absent* and *neglectful* even when youth shared that they understood why their fathers worked. After saying that he rarely saw his father during the week, an 11-year-old participant said, "He works, our mom tells me that he works just to get money, just to help us with our education at school. To help us get our education, so we can go to college" (p. 426). In this analysis of fathers as "hardworking but absent," the authors fail to hold both experiences as true—having a hardworking father *and* having a father who works and is not home—even though Hmong youth are able to do so. Moreover, their description that having fathers who work second- or third-shift jobs is absent or neglectful parenting is troubling.

There is a parallel process in the researcher's roles and responsibilities in respective research communities, and their role and responsibility in the research. We are both Hmong, and know the personal and professional ways we navigate and negotiate identity in our communities. After we complete our research projects, we cannot necessarily leave or move on to the next community. We live, work, and play in Hmong communities, and as such, have a responsibility and are held to a higher standard than those who are not Hmong conducting research in Hmong communities. Researchers who are not Hmong can leave the community and continue to live their lives unaffected. For Hmong researchers, how we treat our communities must parallel the research process. Ethics in research and protection of human subjects is embodied as we live these values in our everyday lives as members of the Hmong community. The findings that we report must be respectful and accurate representations of the community being researched; the way we represent the community in our research has a direct impact on our relationships with the community. This leads those in mainstream research communities to question the objectivity of those doing research in their own community. This is the double bind faced by researchers who belong to the community; the subject of the research. As a member of the community, our emic perspective as researchers is valued, however, as an insider, others question our objectivity as researchers and the rigor of our research. One way this manifests is *where* Hmong authors are published. Of the 19 articles first-authored by Hmong individuals, 11 of those articles (58%) are published in *Hmong Studies Journal*, a peer-reviewed, open-access Internet-based journal founded in 1996. Its focus is Hmong culture, history, and experiences throughout the world, and its editorial board includes both Hmong and non-Hmong scholars from various countries. Herther (2009), in her citation analysis of Hmong studies publications, described *Hmong Studies Journal* as "an important focus for research and researchers specializing in the field [of Hmong studies]" (p. 4); however, she also found that as of 2009, the journal's wider scholarly impact was still relatively unknown because "the field is still in the very early stages of development and growth" (p. 8). As important as this journal is for the field of Hmong studies (i.e., its sole focus on Hmong studies and its role in giving voice to Hmong scholars), the journal remains relatively unknown. Therefore, while the research, the perspectives, the commentaries, the critiques, and the developments within Hmong studies may be familiar to Hmong scholars, these may remain unknown to the wider research community and, as a result, have very little impact on policies, practices, and future research on Hmong youth.

Next, Hmong youth may be the subjects of the research but they are neither producers nor consumers of the research. None of these 90 articles included in this study identified the young Hmong people in the research as collaborators. Hmong participants were also neither identified as co-authors

nor co-investigators. Although Hmong American youth and their experiences were the focus of the research, they were excluded from the production of the text. Rather they were identified as research participants, respondents, and subjects. In some instances, researchers even referred to participants as simply refugees. For example, Meredith and Rowe (1986), in their study of recently resettled Hmong families and their attitudinal changes toward marriage, wrote, "More than 80% of the refugee adults believed that husbands should help care for their children. . . . Although the father should assist, three-quarters of the refugees viewed it as the mother's job to take care of the children" (p. 124). Similarly, Xiong, Eliason, Detzner, and Cleveland (2005) titled their article "Southeast Asian Immigrants' Perceptions of Good Adolescents and Good Parents," even though 21 out of 37 youth participants were either born in the United States or brought to the United States when they were five years old or younger, which questions whether or not the term *immigrant* is the most appropriate term. Lastly, authors refer to Hmong as *the* Hmong, which not only "others" Hmong youth, but also creates a perception that there is little difference within the group. For example, Meredith and Rowe (1986), in their discussion of the findings from their study, wrote, "The results seem to indicate that the Lao Hmong have experienced some change" (p. 124). Rather than limit their findings to the participants in the study, they claimed that their findings indicate changes among Hmong altogether—a claim which can be irresponsible.

Not only were Hmong youth excluded from the production, but they are also, later, excluded from the distribution and consumption of the scholarship. Academic literature is produced by researchers and practitioners *and* consumed by researchers and practitioners, therefore maintaining the voice of the White dominant majority in the discourses on Hmong American youth. Even though several authors challenged the dominant discourses on Hmong youth (Boulden, 2009; S. Lee, 2001; Ngo, 2002), some authors, in their challenging, continue to maintain the dominant discourses. For example, DePouw (2012), in her critique of "culture clash" as a dominant narrative of Hmong American youth experiences, perpetuated her own dominance. DePouw, who described herself as a White researcher and educator, used critical race theory (CRT) to analyze interactions between Hmong students and their experiences on a university campus. Counter-stories is one way CRT challenges Whiteness, documenting the ways racism manifests in the everyday lives of people of color (Hayes & Juárez, 2009). DePouw (2012) did not use counter-stories, but rather used "interview excerpts" from Hmong interviewees to support *her* arguments. So, while Hmong youth voices, narratives, and everyday experiences may be the research interest, Hmong youth are simply used to further the research agendas of researchers and maintain dominant discourses.

Additionally, while Hmong youth and Hmong communities are not the targeted consumers of academic literature, they still consume academic

literature as though they were in fact the targeted consumers. They read about themselves as though they were on the outside looking in when in fact, they are living within their community. They read about their communities as though they were the “other” because these articles are written from the etic perspective. Hmong, in turn, reproduce literature about themselves using the voice of the researcher who is the outsider, because: (a) this is the accepted researcher voice they are accustomed to; and (b) this type of literature, with discourses of Hmong youth as model minority or delinquent, are the accepted kinds of discourse that maintain the status quo and the power of the dominant group. An example we found in our study is when Hmong researchers refer to other Hmong in their research as “the Hmong.” Hmong students and researchers begin to other themselves, and maintain dominant discourses that resemble that of non-Hmong researchers.

It would then suggest that the field of academic research possesses the power to normalize a specific researcher’s voice, that of the outsider, or the etic perspective, because up until now, it has been the White researcher who has had the privilege to publish about Hmong. Only recently have we seen more and more research on Hmong produced by Hmong scholars. In addition, researchers, White and Hmong, have a responsibility to produce texts that are consistent with the perspectives of those being researched, and that are accessible to those being researched (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Minkler, 2005).

SOCIAL PRACTICES

The analysis of the social practices examines the socio-historical context of the text (Janks, 1997). The context for academic literature is within academia and higher education. Both of us are affiliated with universities, which have access to large online databases for academic literature. The issue of access is important because we have usernames and passwords that allow us to search databases and journals purchased by our universities. Hmong American young people, if not college students, do not have the same access. A researcher can publish about that community and never run the risk of that community later accessing the published articles and evaluating its accuracy. Researchers are privileged that they can produce research and rarely run the risk of being challenged. Researchers possess institutional and societal legitimization that that gives weight to the texts they produce about others, while the voices of the communities in their research are often marginalized and deemed less credible. As previously mentioned, only 19 of the 90 articles were first-authored by Hmong individuals; and of the total 139 authors and co-authors, only 21 were identified as Hmong. Even when Hmong do produce research, they are marginalized to relatively unknown and low-impact journals. As such, Hmong youth and community members without the

privilege access to an institution of higher education for its library holdings may never gain access to research produced about them.

Additionally, it was not until the late 1990s that Hmong authors began to publish academic literature on Hmong American youth. Even so, Hmong authors produced the same kind of framings and narratives as the previous texts that they had consumed, maintaining not just the status quo, but affirming the discourse by non-Hmong researchers and practitioners. For example, Xiong, Rettig, and Tuicompepee (2008) begin their article, "Crime and delinquency in Southeast Asian immigrant communities have increased dramatically in the United States over the past two decades," (p. 337). They continued to describe Hmong youth, in comparison to other immigrant groups, as "the least acculturated . . . [they] face significantly more adjustment problems . . . [and are] among the poorest ethnic groups in the United States" (p. 338). In doing this, Hmong scholars have "internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines" for conducting research in our own communities (Freire, 1970, p. 47). In higher education and academic institutions, this is one way racism and oppression of disadvantaged groups persists.

CONCLUSION

While Hmong youth have been in the United States for almost 40 years, the discourse on Hmong youth has changed very little, offering essentialized framings of Hmong American youth. In this study, we examined academic literature and its power in controlling the discourse on Hmong American youth and ultimately, shaping practices and policies. Oftentimes, programs and practices with young people are informed by research. The dominant discourse that Hmong American youth are either model minorities or delinquents supports programs for Hmong youth that are limited in scope such as after school academic tutoring and support programs; runaway prevention and intervention programs; gang intervention programs; college preparation programs; and cultural and language programs.

For the past 40 years, the various topics concerning Hmong American youth have been identified, researched, and written about by adult researchers, who are predominantly non-Hmong. We challenge researchers to engage Hmong American young people in approaches and methodologies that are participatory and empowering. Youth participatory action research (YPAR) provides such an opportunity for young people to "study social problems affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems" (Camarota & Fine, 2008, p. 2). YPAR views young people as not the research subjects but the very researchers and active agents in critical inquiry. A reconstruction of Hmong American youth begins by asking different questions by Hmong American youth; these different questions can inform different programs and policies impacting Hmong youth.

Through this critical discourse analysis, we call attention to academic literature and its producers and consumers. Peer reviewers of these texts must validate the emic perspective of Hmong researchers; where the field values literature that reflects the voices of Hmong through the lens of Hmong themselves. Literature about Hmong youth produced by Hmong researchers are subjected to screening through the lens of members of the dominant community who may be unaccustomed to literature about Hmong and other groups of color written in their own voices, making it difficult for Hmong researchers to gain publications about youth in dominant mainstream journals. This negatively impacts the discourse on Hmong youth in the larger research community, resulting in a one sided perspective of Hmong youth and Hmong in general. Along a similar vein, Hmong researchers themselves must think critically about the literature they produce wherein the literature produced by Hmong researchers often mimic the voices of those outside of the culture resulting in the perpetuation of problematic themes of Hmong youth as outsiders, refugees, and challenged. Finally, researchers who are not from the community being researched must reflect on the use of the dominant perspective in writing about these communities. While problematic discourses appear to get the most attention, it is necessary that researchers are mindful when representing communities of color with only one story. We hope the field will construct a discourse that reflects the complexities of Hmong American young people. We challenge researchers and practitioners to construct more complex discourses of Hmong American youth that allow youth to tell their own narratives rather than having to live out the narratives of their immigrant parents or only share narratives that further researchers' agendas. We challenge researchers and practitioners to re-imagine research that invite Hmong American youth to be co-creators of a discourse that captures Hmong American youth and the diversity of their everyday lived experiences.

REFERENCES

- Bosher, S. (1997). Language and cultural identity: A study of Hmong students at the postsecondary level. *Tesol Quarterly*, 31(3), 593–603.
- Boulden, W. T. (2009). Gay Hmong: A multifaceted clash of cultures. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 21(2–3), 134–150.
- Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Chia, R. (2000). Discourse analysis as organizational analysis. *Organization*, 7(3), 513–518.
- DePouw, C. (2012). When culture implies deficit: Placing race at the center of Hmong American education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15(2), 223–239.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis*. Boston, MA: Addison Wesley

- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Trans. M. Bergman Ramos). New York, NY: Continuum.
- Hamilton-Merritt, J. (1993). *Tragic mountains: The Hmong, the Americans, and the secret wars for Laos, 1942–1992*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hayes, C., & Juárez, B. G. (2009). You showed your Whiteness: You don't get a "good" White people's medal. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(6), 729–744.
- Herther, N. K. (2009). Citation analysis and Hmong studies publications: An initial examination. *Hmong Studies Journal*, 10, 1–22.
- Hirayama, K. K., & Hirayama, H. (1988). Stress, social supports, and adaptational patterns in Hmong refugee families. *Amerasia Journal*, 14(1), 93–108.
- Hones, D. F. (1999). Crises, continuity, and the refugee: Educational narratives of a Hmong father and his children. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(2), 166–198.
- Israel, B. A., Schulz, A. J., Parker, E. A., & Becker, A. B. (1998). Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 19(1), 173–202.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical discourse analysis as a research tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329–342.
- Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lamborn, S. D., & Moua, M. (2008). Normative family interactions Hmong American adolescents' perceptions of their parents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 23(4), 411–437.
- Lee, M. N. M. (1998). The thousand-year myth: Construction and characterization of Hmong. *Hmong Studies Journal*, 2(2), 1–23.
- Lee, S. J. (2001). More than "model minorities" or "delinquents": A look at Hmong American high school students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), 505–529.
- Lee, S. J., & Hawkins, M. R. (2008). "Family is here": Learning in community-based after-school programs. *Theory into Practice*, 47(1), 51–58.
- McNall, M., Dunnigan, T., & Mortimer, J. T. (1994). The educational achievement of the St. Paul Hmong. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 25, 44–65.
- Meredith, W. H., & Rowe, G. P. (1986). Changes in Lao Hmong marital attitudes after immigrating to the United States. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 117–126.
- Meschke, L. L., & Juang, L. P. (2014). Obstacles to parent–adolescent communication in Hmong American families: Exploring pathways to adolescent mental health promotion. *Ethnicity & Health*, 19(2), 144–159. doi: 10.1080/13557858.2013.814765
- Minkler, M. (2005). Community-based research partnerships: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Urban Health*, 82, ii3–ii12.
- Miyares, I. M. (1997). Changing perceptions of space and place as measures of Hmong acculturation. *The Professional Geographer*, 49(2), 214–224.
- Morrison, G. (2008). *Sky is falling: An oral history of the CIA's evacuation of the Hmong from Laos* (2nd ed.). Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

- Mulasi-Pokhriyal, U., & Smith, C. (2010). Assessing body image issues and body satisfaction/dissatisfaction among Hmong American children 9–18 years of age using mixed methodology. *Body Image*, 7(4), 341–348.
- Ngo, B. (2002). Contesting “culture”: The perspectives of Hmong American female students on early marriage. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 33(2), 163–188.
- Ngo, B. (2012). The importance of family for a gay Hmong American man: Complicating discourses of “coming out.” *Hmong Studies Journal*, 13(1), 1–27.
- Nguyen, J., & Brown, B. B. (2010). Making meanings, meaning identity: Hmong adolescent perceptions and use of language and style as identity symbols. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20(4), 849–868.
- Pfeifer, M. E., & Thao, B. K. (Eds.). (2013). *State of the Hmong American community*. Washington, DC: Hmong National Development.
- Pike, K. L. (1967). *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior*. The Hague, the Netherlands: Mouton.
- Quincy, K. (1988). *Hmong: History of a people*. Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University Press.
- Rick, K., & Forward, J. (1992). Acculturation and perceived intergenerational differences among Hmong youth. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 23(1), 85–94.
- Stang, J., Kong, A., Story, M., Eisenberg, M. E., & Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2007). Food and weight-related patterns and behaviors of Hmong adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 107(6), 936–941.
- Timm, J. T., Chiang, B., & Finn, B. D. (1998). Acculturation in the cognitive style of Laotian Hmong students in the United States. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 31(1), 29–35.
- Vang, C. T. (2004). Hmong American K–12 students and the academic skills needed for a college education: A review of the existing literature and suggestions for future research. *Hmong Studies Journal*, 5(5), 1–31.
- Vang, P. D. (2013). Generational differences among a small group of Hmong Americans. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 22(1), 76–92.
- Vang, P., & Bogenschutz, M. (2013). Hmong women, marital factors and mental health status. *Journal of Social Work*, 13(2), 164–183.
- Vang, T., & Flores, J. (1999). The Hmong Americans: Identity, conflict, and opportunity. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 1(4), 9–14.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Methods for critical discourse analysis*. London, England: Sage.
- Xiong, Y. S. (2010). State-mandated language classification: A study of Hmong American students’ access to college-preparatory curricula. *AAPINexus: Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Policy, Practice and Community*, 8(1), 17–42.
- Xiong, Z. B., Detzner, D. F., Keuster, Z. H., Eliason, P. A., & Allen, R. (2006). Developing culturally sensitive parent education programs for immigrant families: The Helping Youth Succeed curriculum. *Hmong Studies Journal*, 7, 1–29.
- Xiong, Z. B., Eliason, P. A., Detzner, D. F., & Cleveland, M. J. (2005). Southeast Asian immigrants’ perceptions of good adolescents and good parents. *The Journal of Psychology*, 139(2), 159–175.
- Xiong, Z. B., Rettig, K. D., & Tuicompepee, A. (2008). Differences in nonshared individual, school, and family variables between delinquent and nondelinquent Hmong adolescents. *The Journal of Psychology*, 142(4), 337–356.