The Effect of Education on Gender Roles in Hmong Daily Life in China
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Project Summary:
- Summer of July 2012, 8 Hmong students and 2 faculty traveled to Yunnan, China to conduct research about the Hmong and Miao people.
- Find connections between the Hmong and Miao in China.
- The purpose of my research includes:
  - Examine the effect education had on household gender roles within Hmong communities in Yunnan, China
  - Emphasize generational differences and and educational experiences
  - Look into China’s education system

Education in China:
- Maoist – Era: The Chinese education system was centralized
- Today, China is a decentralized system which they implemented the responsibilities of localities to be in charge of education within their areas.
- 2001, Chinese government created a budget in which tried to help decrease the gap between urban – rural education. But, it was not as effective because the Chinese government prefers to spend money in areas that will help benefit the greater economy rather than the rural areas (Guo, 2007).

Hmong Daily Life in China: The past and Present
- During Ancient China, the Hmong lived in the high mountains of China where agriculture was a major part of Hmong daily life.
- The agricultural lifestyle partially contributed to the division of labor amongst family members based on age and gender.
- In the fields, both men and women worked together by preparing, planting, weeding, harvesting the field, and carrying crops home.
- Men often took on more heavier roles where as the women fed animals, made cloth and took care of the home.
- The division of gender roles was affected by two reasons, firstly was to structure the division of labor in which will get the best economic return for the family and secondly the ideologies of gender roles were impacted by a Confucian – male dominated society for the Hmong people in China (Lee, 2005).
- Today the Hmong in China who live in rural areas and high mountains continue to try and practice traditional agricultural methods and traditional ways of life.
- Globalization and technology have an increased impact on daily life due to the lack of funding in rural areas which results in poverty, lack of educational attainment, and moving away from homes to attain education which changes the division of labor amongst family members (Yang, 2008).

Methodology:
- Research question changed during China to include education and its effect due the observation of globalization and its impact on gender roles within Hmong households.
- Visited 16 different Hmong – Chinese communities in Yunnan, China; 12 participants were interviewed.
- Qualitative interviews and observations were conducted and participants were asked some of the following questions:
  - Were you given the opportunity to attend school?
  - Is any of your children enrolled in school?
  - What do you think about education?
  - Why were/can’t you not able to attend school?
  - If currently or plan to seek higher education, do you get support from your family?
- Findings are limited by the amount of time spent in the different Hmong communities and the number of people contacted.
- Out of the 12 participants who were interviewed 5 were male and 7 were female. Six were elders.
- The rest observed included all three generations from elders, teenagers, and young children.

Research Findings:
- Impact on elders:
  - For males and females it was difficult to obtain education due to their families practices of agriculture, which was the main source of income.
  - If able to attain education, men were given the opportunities because of the idea of men being the main provider and head of household.
  - Women did not receive support to get educated because they are put into situations that includes more at home type of work.
- Impact on young adults and teenagers today:
  - In a family where there are more than one child, the youngest sibling was most likely the one to attend school because of families low income.
  - For an only children, the highest education obtained was often high school; most high schools were in the next bigger town.
  - Can either decide to get a college degree in which will have to move away from home or go back home to help work in the fields or find a job.
  - Education is still preferred for males because of traditional gender roles.
  - Economic status determines if more than one child receives a high school education.
  - All those seeking higher education must leave their home villages and create a new life in the bigger cities in order to save and pay for the school that they are attending.
- Impact on children today:
  - The impact of education is becoming more valuable in which almost every household younger children are encouraged to attend school.
  - With the impact of globalization and modernization, those seeking higher education are moving away from homes despite gender.
  - This influences the division of labor within homes. Male and females:
    - Prepare meals together.
    - Take care of one another. For example, male or female help watch the younger children or elders.
    - Welcome and entertain guests.
  - Findings also suggests that more research should be conducted in this area of study due to the lack of resources for the topic of education and its effect on gender roles for the Hmong in China.

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References: