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**AN ECOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HMONG REFUGEES'
PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES IN MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES**

By

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ABSTRACT

AN ECOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HMONG REFUGEES' PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES IN MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES

By

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The number of refugees in the world continues to increase rapidly. Once resettled, refugees struggle to adjust to life in a new place while overcoming past traumas. Unreceptive communities often exacerbate this adjustment process. Therefore, it is important to understand the processes through which refugees can become integrated and accepted into their new communities. One important vehicle is community participation (e.g., Jong, 1989). In order to promote the community involvement of one refugee group and understand their unique challenges and experiences, an ecological investigation of participation which considered the contextual conditions within a particular setting (three multiethnic housing developments) and the characteristics of specific community members (54 Hmong refugees) was conducted. Interviews with quantitative and qualitative components revealed that Hmong residents participated both formally and informally in their communities and valued it highly, but that their involvement was limited. They were excluded from most meaningful avenues of participation because of multiple barriers, including language differences, time constraints, discrimination, and a lack of awareness of existing opportunities. No supports to address these issues existed in their communities. Implications for the Hmong, refugee adjustment, and participation in multiethnic communities are discussed.

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However, most importantly, I would like to acknowledge and dedicate this to my Hmong friends and former students, both in the United States and in Thailand, from whom I have learned to value community in a way I did not understand before. I appreciate their willingness to share their experiences with me (especially the participants I interviewed for this project). My inspiration and motivation to do this work is often rekindled by my desire to make the dreams of one former student become a reality. Soon after resettling in the United States, she wrote to me, “I have something I’ll tell you, when I was arrived in the United States, I looked around the world and the whole country. It was beautiful country and I liked it very much and I thought it will be a very comfortable place for me to make a new life.” I believe that we all have a role to play in fulfilling the hopes of this young woman.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

Over the last 20 years, the number of refugees and displaced persons in the world has rapidly increased. Ethnic conflict, famine, civil war, and other political struggles have forced millions of people to flee from their homes and homelands. Between 1984 and 1995, the number of refugees in the world increased over 50 percent to 15.3 million (United States Committee for Refugees, 1996). As a country founded by immigrants seeking religious and political freedom, the United States has provided a safe haven of resettlement for more refugees than any other country (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1998).

Refugee resettlement is an important part of legal immigration in the United States. Since the late 1970's, profound changes in immigration patterns have occurred, including a large increase in the number of refugees and immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. This changing legal immigration, as well as illegal immigration and fluctuating birthrates among different ethnic and racial groups in the United States, has resulted in an increasingly diverse country (Allen & Turner, 1990; Edmondson, 1996). As a result, neighborhoods are becoming increasingly multiethnic and increasingly racially integrated. However, despite living in close proximity, different ethnic and cultural groups often remain isolated from each other and negative attitudes and misperceptions among groups persist (e.g., Merry, 1980, 1981; Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995). In some areas, conflict, violence, and hate crimes have increased, often with

refugees and immigrants as the targets (Hein, 1995; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1988).

These demographic changes have been accompanied by new challenges faced both by refugees and immigrants and by other Americans. Refugees and immigrants struggle to adapt to ways of life that are very different from their previous experiences and often face discrimination and prejudice (Hein, 1995; Westermeyer, 1991), while Americans often struggle to accept changes to their neighborhoods and communities which they may not have expected or wanted (e.g., Benson, 1990; Goode, 1990). Therefore, the impetus to understand the processes through which refugees and immigrants can adjust to life in the United States and become integrated and accepted into their resettlement communities, while maintaining their own cultural identities, is strong. One important vehicle for facilitating such adjustment is refugees' participation in their communities (e.g., Jong, 1989).

Participation in one's community has been linked with numerous positive outcomes, including individual, intergroup, and community benefits. Many researchers have found that participation can be an empowering process for individuals (e.g., Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman, 1995). For immigrants and refugees, participation in the broader community is an important process through which they can acquire the language skills, cultural knowledge, and connections they need to access resources and adjust to a new, unknown environment. Intergroup benefits include the facilitation of individuals' integration into their broader community (Tomeh, 1974). In addition, voluntary participation in integrative social settings can facilitate interactions, reduce prejudice, and increase understanding among members of

different groups (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Jong, 1989; Kelly, Azelton, Burzette & Mock, 1994). There is also evidence that individuals' participation in voluntary organizations can lead to empowered communities that gain power, resources, and decision-making influence (e.g., Speer & Hughey, 1995) and is associated with improvements in the physical, social and economic conditions of neighborhoods (Florin & Wandersman, 1990).

Although community participation is a valuable process which contributes to both individual and community development, it is not necessarily common. Researchers have long recognized that usually only a small percentage of community members are actively involved in organizations and activities in their communities (Devereux, Bronfenbrenner, & Harding, 1960). Participation and local community involvement is often less common among recent refugees and immigrant subgroups that may have much to gain by becoming involved in their new communities.

Recent refugees and immigrants face many obstacles to participation in their neighborhood because they are often struggling to adjust to a new environment with an unfamiliar language and culture. They may tend to rely on members of their own ethnic or cultural group in order to support them in meeting the demands of adjustment. Although within-group sense of community and ethnic support networks are very important for newcomers and have been extensively documented as facilitating immigrant adjustment (e.g. Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Church, 1982), becoming involved in the larger community is essential for the development of non-native language abilities and the acquisition of skills and knowledge to succeed in a new country (e.g., Rumbaut, 1991b). However, limited research has examined the participation of refugees in their

communities. Does participation really lead to positive adjustment and the additional benefits discussed above for refugees? If it does, then how can we promote the participation of refugees, especially given the language differences and other barriers newcomers may face to getting involved in their communities?

In order to answer these questions, we must develop an ecologically valid model of participation. An ecological perspective, which incorporates individual and contextual variables, is fundamental to an understanding of people, processes, and communities in context. Trickett (1996) notes that an ecological perspective is an ideal way to incorporate culture and context into research and it is through an ecological perspective that an understanding of the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups can be developed. In an ecologically valid model of participation, we would need to understand a population, their setting, and the unique factors which facilitate and impede participation of these particular individuals in their specific setting.

Therefore, this study examined members of one ethnic group and the specific context in which participation occurred for them. An investigation of participation of the Hmong (a recent refugee group) living in three multiethnic housing developments in Lansing, Michigan was conducted. Because research in this area is limited, the study was exploratory and addressed three questions: 1) How do Hmong participate in their multiethnic community? 2) What factors are related to Hmong participation in their multiethnic community? 3) Is participation in their broader community related to positive adjustment for Hmong? With an emphasis on diversity and context, this investigation of participation contributes to a more thorough understanding of both the adjustment experiences of Hmong refugees and participation in multiethnic communities in general.

Refugees and Immigrants in the United States

In the last two decades, significant political and economic transformations have been accompanied by ethnic conflict, famine, civil war, and other political struggles throughout the world. As a result, the number of displaced persons has rapidly increased. Between 1984 and 1995, the number of refugees in the world increased over 50 percent to 15.3 million (United States Committee for Refugees, 1996). As a country founded by immigrants seeking religious and political freedom, the United States has accepted more refugees for resettlement than any other country. In 1995 (the latest year for which statistics are available), the United States resettled 99,490 refugees, and had 468,896 pending asylum cases (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1998). In the last several years, total legal immigration in the United States (including refugees) was almost 1 million people each year (Idelson, 1995).

Since the late 1970's, profound changes in immigration patterns have occurred. Previously, the majority of immigrants and refugees were of European descent. However, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removed discriminatory country-by-country quotas that favored Europeans and Canadians. Subsequently, the United States experienced an influx of refugees from Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 80s as a result of the Vietnam conflict and the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. Recent refugees from conflicts in Africa (e.g., Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zaire) and the Middle East (e.g., Afghanistan, Palestinians, Iran, Iraq), have also changed the faces of newcomers.

With these recent waves of immigration and the fluctuating birthrates of different ethnic groups, the demographics of this country have been rapidly changing (Allen & Turner, 1990; Edmondson, 1996). As a result, many neighborhoods are becoming

increasingly multiethnic and increasingly racially integrated. Census Bureau projections estimate that by the year 2050, Americans who are members of racial and ethnic “minority” groups will outnumber non- Hispanic whites (Edmondson, 1996). In fact, there are already many counties in the United States where no ethnic or racial group is a majority (Allen and Turner, 1990). This diversification is especially apparent in communities with limited resources. However, despite living in close proximity, different ethnic and cultural groups often remain isolated from each other and negative attitudes and misperceptions among groups persist (e.g., Merry, 1980, 1981; Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995). In some areas, conflict, violence, and hate crimes have increased, often with refugees and immigrants as the targets (Hein, 1995; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1988).

Refugee Adjustment

These demographic changes have been accompanied by new challenges faced both by refugees and immigrants and by other Americans. Refugees and immigrants struggle to adapt to ways of life that are very different from their previous experiences and often face discrimination and prejudice, while Americans often struggle to accept changes to their neighborhoods and communities which they may not have expected or wanted. Newcomers to the United States bring with them unique perspectives, skills, and traditions which have the potential to make great contributions to our country. Therefore, the impetus to understand the processes through which refugees and immigrants can adjust to life in the United States and become integrated into their resettlement communities, while maintaining their own cultural identities, is strong.

By the time refugees arrive in their country of resettlement, they have most often suffered numerous hardships, including: war, violence, religious and political persecution, famine, death of loved ones, loss of home, destruction of community, torture, and the difficulties of flight and life in refugee camps (Ahearn & Athey, 1991). However, their struggles are not over; they must then adjust to life in a new place, which usually has a different language, culture, technology, and social and economic systems. In addition, the native people in the refugees' country of resettlement usually do not understand them and often resent their arrival (Hein, 1995).

Clearly, refugees face many challenges in the processes of adjusting to their new lives. Adjustment is the focus here because most refugees in the United States will never be able to return to their homelands, and, therefore, must adjust and adapt to life here to promote their own psychological, physical, and economic well-being. It is important to facilitate refugee adjustment because refugees who are able to adapt and adjust are more proficient in English, achieve higher socioeconomic status, have better physical and psychological health, and are more self-sufficient (Rumbaut, 1991b). However, it is important not to equate adjustment with assimilation, which occurs when individuals become part of the larger society without maintaining their unique cultural identities. Adjustment, on the other hand, occurs when individuals change in such ways as to reduce the conflict between themselves and their environment (Berry, 1976), without necessarily losing their cultural values, beliefs or practices. Adjustment is often accomplished through integration, a process in which individuals maintain their own cultural identity while also valuing relationships with the larger society (Berry, 1991). For instance, individuals may continue to speak their native language at home and maintain their

traditional cultural and religious practices, while learning to speak English, becoming integrated economically in the United States, and seeking contact with Americans who can assist them and connect them with resources.

Some researchers conceptualize refugee adjustment in terms of acculturation or cultural adaptation (e.g., Rumbaut, 1991a). However, it is also important to emphasize general indicators of adjustment that are important to all people and do not necessarily involve the loss of unique cultural traditions or beliefs. Two such dimensions of adjustment are socioeconomic adjustment and psychological adjustment. As might be expected given the challenges faced by refugees discussed above, extensive research shows that refugees and immigrants often struggle with both types of adjustment (e.g., Rumbaut 1991a; Westermeyer, Neider & Callies, 1989).

In one study of refugee adaptation, over half of the Hmong refugees interviewed reported problems with psychological adjustment, and the rate of demoralization and distress among all Southeast Asian refugee groups was three times higher than that among the American population (Rumbaut, 1989). The socioeconomic adjustment of Southeast Asian refugees has also been particularly challenging (Bach & Argiros, 1991). In addition, it is important to note that psychological adjustment and socioeconomic adjustment are often related to one another (Mirowsky & Ross, 1986; Rumbaut, 1991b).

Socioeconomic adjustment includes employment status, educational level, and socioeconomic status and is important because it indicates individuals' abilities to ensure and support their physical survival. For refugees, socioeconomic adjustment also indicates that they have become integrated into the economic fabric of the community. Given recent welfare reform, which has eliminated most benefits previously available to

legal immigrants who are not citizens of the United States, employment and education are particularly important for refugees. For the Hmong in particular, socioeconomic adjustment is related to several positive outcomes, including higher grade point averages, test scores, and educational aspirations among youth (Rumbaut, 1996), and greater happiness and less distress among adults (Rumbaut, 1991b).

Psychological adjustment has been conceptualized in terms of life satisfaction (e.g., Rumbaut, 1991b), happiness and low levels of demoralization (e.g., Ying & Akutsu, 1997), and low levels of psychosocial problems and psychiatric symptoms (e.g., Westermeyer, et al., 1989). This type of adjustment is important to consider because psychological well-being affects multiple aspects of individuals' lives, including their mental health and physical health (Rumbaut, 1989). In addition, it is important because it captures individuals' happiness and experiences of the world, rather than an outsider's assessment of what appropriate adjustment involves. Many studies have found that refugees experience greater psychological distress than others (e.g., Berry, 1986; Williams and Westermeyer, 1986), in particular Southeast Asian refugees (Hirayama, Hirayama & Cetingok, 1993; Rumbaut, 1991b), which makes it an important dimension of refugee adjustment to understand. Adult Southeast Asian refugees' positive psychological adjustment is associated with many important outcomes, including higher socioeconomic status (Rumbaut, 1991a), physical health (Rumabut, 1991a) and their children's success in school (Rumbaut, 1991b).

Adjustment is often more challenging for refugees than for other immigrants because their relocation and contact with a new culture is involuntary (Rumbaut, 1991a). Because they were forced to leave their native countries, they may be more hesitant to

embrace aspects of their new environment and may focus more energy on hoping for return to their homeland. During their migration, refugees usually experience more undesirable change and danger and less control over their lives. In addition, once resettled, they are “challenged to resolve dual crises: a ‘crisis of loss’ – coming to terms with the past – and a ‘crisis of load’ – coming to terms with the present and immediate future” (Rumbaut, 1991a, p.57). Therefore, it is important to understand those processes that can facilitate refugee adjustment. One important vehicle for refugee adjustment is participation in one’s new resettlement community (e.g., Jong, 1989).

Importance of Participation

The value of community participation is widely recognized and the benefits for individuals and communities are numerous. Many researchers have found it useful to conceptualize the positive outcomes of participation within a framework of empowerment (e.g. Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988, Zimmerman, 1995). There are several reasons for thinking about participation from an empowerment perspective, primarily because there is considerable evidence that participation in voluntary organizations can be empowering. Participants have been shown to develop higher competencies and self-confidence, and lower feelings of helplessness (Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman, 1995). There is also evidence that participation in voluntary organizations can empower communities because they are often effective vehicles through which communities acquire power and decision-making influence (Speer & Hughey, 1995). In addition, participation has been linked with improvements in the physical, social and economic conditions of neighborhoods (Cassidy, 1980; Florin & Wandersman, 1990), community crime reduction (Washnis, 1976), and the increase in

decision-making power and resources of communities (Speer & Hughey, 1995). Finally, participation facilitates individuals' integration into their broader community (Tomeh, 1974), which is particularly important for refugees and immigrants.

Participation and Refugee Adjustment

Community participation is particularly important for refugees and immigrants who have recently resettled here because it involves processes that have been shown to contribute to their adjustment in the United States (e.g., Rumbaut, 1989). First, through involvement in their local communities, newcomers to the United States have the opportunity to improve their English skills, learn about and acquire community resources, make connections with people and services, and gain a voice in society. These processes are essential initial steps in the adjustment process for refugees and immigrants (Westermeyer, Neider, & Callies, 1989) because they facilitate components of socioeconomic adjustment, including finding employment, gaining access to educational opportunities, and improving one's socioeconomic status (e.g., Rumbaut, 1989). Increased income, employment, and English proficiency, in turn, can contribute to several areas of psychological adjustment for the Hmong and other refugees, including: greater life satisfaction (Rumbaut, 1991b), greater happiness and less demoralization (Ying & Akutsu, 1997), and decreased psychosocial problems and psychiatric symptoms (Westermeyer, et al., 1989). Therefore, because increased community participation contributes to the initial processes of learning English and making connections to resources, it should be an important link to socioeconomic and psychological adjustment for refugees and immigrants.

An Ecological Perspective

Refugees come from all areas of the world. Although refugees share certain common experiences (forced flight from their homes and countries), each individual and each group has a different background, a different culture, and a unique worldview. For a meaningful understanding of refugee participation, we have to look at the participation experiences of members of one group in their particular setting – an ecological perspective. An examination of individuals in context is fundamental to an understanding of people, processes, and communities. Trickett (1996) notes that an ecological perspective is an ideal way to incorporate culture and context into research and it is through an ecological perspective that an understanding of the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups can be developed.

An ecological perspective is also important because it allows for the examination of within-group differences. Within-group differences must be understood in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of a particular group's participation experiences, which is an essential precondition to developing effective interventions for the group. Different factors may be relevant for different groups. For instance, a construct such as psychological empowerment, which has been linked to participation in several studies of white and African American respondents (e.g., Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990) may not be relevant to individuals from collectively oriented cultures. Interventions developed and implemented without this awareness often fail, and can even result in the disempowerment of individuals or communities which researchers intended to empower (Strawn, 1994). Therefore, this study focuses on developing an understanding of a specific group of people – adult Hmong refugees, in a particular

setting – multiethnic housing developments, the unique factors which might facilitate or impede their participation in the setting, and what participation means for these individuals in this setting.

The Hmong

Although all refugees face great struggles during the resettlement process, the Hmong have been particularly challenged in their adjustment to life in the United States. Numerous factors have contributed to their difficulties: significant language and cultural differences, limited previous education (which puts any individual or group at a disadvantage in the United States), limited transferable occupational skills, and the particular context into which they were relocated (most Hmong arrived here in the 1980's in the midst of a severe economic recession with high unemployment). As a result of these factors, the Hmong have experienced a large gap between the abilities they possess and the skills required to meet the needs they must fulfill in the United States (Scott, 1982). It is therefore important to consider processes which might lessen their adjustment difficulties. Because Hmong culture emphasizes the importance of the community, community involvement is likely an essential aspect of their adjustment. Thus, participation might be a valuable venue for adjustment for the Hmong.

Background/History

In order to explore the participation experiences of Hmong refugees in multiethnic housing developments in the United States and develop an ecologically valid model of their participation in these settings, it is important to understand the background and the historical circumstances which have brought the Hmong to the United States, as well as their current situation here. These are important components of the first of three major

contexts identified by Haines (1989) as essential in understanding the adaptation of any refugee group: the cultural, social, and personal histories of the refugees, the society in which refugees are relocated, and the assistance refugees have received through their particular resettlement program (Haines, 1989).

The Hmong are a hill tribe people from Laos, whose resettlement in the United States in the last twenty years marks the end of a long history of persecution and suffering as an ethnic minority in several countries. Originally from China (where approximately 5,000,000 Hmong still live), many fled Chinese efforts of forced assimilation and migrated to the mountains of Laos and Vietnam about 150 years ago. In Laos, the Hmong lived in the mountains and remained largely segregated from the Laotian people, who often discriminated against them and viewed them as backward and inferior.

During the Vietnam War, the Hmong in Laos fought against the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao (their Communist allies in Laos), whom they perceived as threats to their autonomy and ways of life. The Hmong resistance was co-opted and eventually directed by the United States Central Intelligence Agency. At least 30,000 Hmong (ten percent of their population in Laos) died during the conflict. In 1975, when the Pathet Lao gained control of Laos, the CIA withdrew and left most of the Hmong to fend for themselves. About 100,000 Hmong began a mass exodus across the Mekong River into Thailand, where they were put into refugee camps by the Thai government. Eventually, most were resettled in the United States, France, and Australia, although beginning in 1991, some of the Hmong were repatriated to Laos.

Current Situation

The Hmong in the United States have had an exceptionally difficult adjustment process (Fass, 1986). They have faced the language and cultural barriers which most immigrants and refugees experience, but their transition has been additionally complicated by their limited previous exposure to education and technology, their rural backgrounds, limited transferable occupational skills, the context of their entry which occurred during a severe economic recession, and the immense differences between their traditional culture and way of life and life in the United States.

Over 100,000 Hmong currently live in the United States, and the number of Hmong in the United States is increasing at the fastest rate of any Asian group. From 1980 and 1990, the Hmong population in the United States increased by 1,165% (Yang & Murphy, 1993). As their population here has increased, the impact of the Hmong's adjustment struggles have become magnified. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Commerce indicate that in 1990, the median household income was \$14,300, 67% of Hmong households received public assistance, 87% of Hmong lived in rental units, 86% did not have a high school degree, 60% were linguistically isolated, and 91% of non-U.S. born Hmong were not U.S. citizens (Hein, 1995). In Lansing, Michigan, there are more than 250 Hmong families (approximately 3000 people), 50% of whom depend on federal and state assistance, and 90% of whom live below the poverty line. Seventy-three of these families (40%) have lived in the Lansing area less than five years and approximately 30% of the Hmong in Lansing live in public housing developments (Hmong American Community, 1996). Although it is typically expected that refugees and immigrants require time and perhaps several generations before their group as a

whole is thriving, these statistics indicate the situation in the Hmong community is precarious and that identifying venues for improving their adjustment is important. If such processes are not identified, the Hmong have a greater chance of becoming mired in a cycle of poverty.

Hmong Culture and Strengths

In order to identify successful adjustment strategies for the Hmong, it is essential to understand some of the important aspects of Hmong culture and its strengths. Hmong culture is community-oriented and clan-based. There are approximately 13 different clans in the United States and decisions made by the clan leaders affect all members of the clan in a given city or area. Hmong culture is also patriarchal and women traditionally marry when they are quite young (14 or 15 years old), although this has been slowly changing for the Hmong in the United States. The Hmong have a higher birthrate than any other ethnic group in the United States (Rumbaut & Weeks, 1986).

These aspects of Hmong culture are important to understand because they often result in larger families than what is typical in the United States, and the Hmong usually place greater emphasis on the family, the clan, and the community in general. For instance, relatives who are considered cousins in American culture are considered brothers and sisters by the Hmong, while anyone in the same clan is considered a cousin. This emphasis on clan and community is an important strength of the Hmong community, which commonly results in an incredibly extensive and strong support system. Hmong families often pool economic resources and support each other in making decisions and overcoming hardships.

This collective orientation also makes participation a potentially powerful vehicle for promoting adjustment because community involvement is inherently valued by many Hmong. In addition, for individuals such as the Hmong whose cultures emphasize collective (rather than individual) well being, community participation may also be important for reasons not typically emphasized or explored. Rather than individual gains in empowerment and competencies, some Hmong may seek collective action to work towards common goals. Research has shown that empowerment and community involvement mean different things to different people, and are facilitated by various processes for different individuals (Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnal, Legler & Yapchai, 1998; Strawn, 1994).

Another strength within Hmong culture is the value placed on education and the strong motivation of many individuals to take advantage of educational and other opportunities to improve their lives here. These attributes have been important as many Hmong struggle to overcome the traumas they have experienced in the past while facing the transition to life in a new and extremely different culture and environment. They are trying to preserve their own cultural traditions while also developing proficiency and capabilities in the United States.

Many aspects of Hmong culture have been shaped by their experience as a minority group in every country where they have lived. They have worked hard to preserve their cultural identity and, as their patterns of migration show, will move rather than be forced to assimilate. Their immigration to the United States has challenged the integrity of their culture more than any other relocation because it is difficult to remain completely autonomous here. The United States intentionally dispersed the Hmong when

they were resettled here to lessen the impact on any one community, and it has not been possible for them to lead self-sustaining lives as farmers as they have always done in the past. Through secondary migration within the United States the Hmong have regrouped themselves somewhat, but most recognize that some degree of integration and involvement in the broader community is essential. It is important, therefore, to understand the individual factors and the characteristics of communities or contexts which facilitate participation of Hmong refugees in their local communities so that they can acquire the necessary skills, language ability, and resources to successfully make the transition to life in the United States, while still preserving their Hmong identity.

Multiethnic Communities

The particular setting in which participation occurs is essential to consider. As discussed above, researchers have established a connection between participation and numerous positive outcomes. However, there is a stipulation to these relationships that has not been adequately addressed: participation may not be empowering or lead to adjustment and integration in new communities if organizations or other settings are not representative of or at least open to participation by all of the members of the communities in which they are embedded. Gruber and Trickett (1987) found that organizations within larger settings of inequality cannot empower people. Therefore, it is important to understand the particular setting in which participation occurs and the participation opportunities within the setting.

The focus in this study is on participation in multiethnic communities. There are several important reasons for this emphasis. First of all, most refugees resettle in urban areas because these are the primary locations of sponsors, jobs, and housing (Hein, 1995).

The urban neighborhoods in which refugees are located are often low income and if not multiethnic before, become so as newcomers arrive. Communities with diverse ethnic and racial groups commonly face specific challenges: language and cultural divisions and strained intergroup relations. It is because of these added difficulties that facilitating participation in these communities is even more important. It is essential to help bridge potential language and cultural gaps and bring people together to work towards common goals (Jong, 1989).

One specific type of multiethnic community is public housing developments, which are unique because they are most often home to low income residents living in very close proximity to each other. Residents of public housing may be in greater need of making connections to resources in the community. In addition, public housing developments often have community centers, resident councils and other formal opportunities for community involvement. Thus participation in public housing developments may be both more urgent and more possible. Given that participation in these communities is important, it is necessary to consider what factors may facilitate participation in these communities.

Types of Participation

One purpose of this study is to examine the factors that are related to Hmong participation in multiethnic housing developments. However, although relationships between formal community participation and numerous positive outcomes have been established, this research has been based on participation as defined by researchers. We know, however, that people want to have control and influence in their environments in different ways (Foster-Fishman, et al., 1998). Therefore, it is also important to consider

that individuals and groups may participate in unique ways in their communities. In order to incorporate human diversity into research in meaningful and genuine ways, Trickett, Watts, and Birman (1994) caution researchers against imposing their definitions or assumptions of phenomena upon their participants. Instead they suggest that we must first attempt to understand diversity and the phenomena we investigate from participants' perspectives. In other words, we need to "appreciate diversity from the inside out" (Trickett, Watts & Birman, 1994, p. 23). This is particularly important when working with disenfranchised individuals and groups. If the assumptions underlying researchers' conceptualizations and definitions remain unexamined, the results may not only be inconclusive, but can also be inadvertently harmful to participants (e.g., Strawn, 1994). Therefore, in order to understand the participation process for some of the Hmong, the first purpose of this study was to explore qualitatively the types of participation and community involvement that Hmong residents of multiethnic communities pursue, in order to allow the perspectives and voices of the Hmong residents to emerge.

Participation Opportunities in Multiethnic Housing Developments

The second purpose of this study was to examine the factors that are related to one specific type of Hmong participation in multiethnic housing developments – formal participation. There are numerous types of participation possible in communities, and the definition and operationalization of participation varies greatly across studies. An extensive amount of research has been conducted on frequency of participation in voluntary neighborhood and block associations and different roles of participants (e.g., Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Tomeh, 1974; Wandersman, 1981; Wandersman, et al., 1987). There are also numerous investigations of political participation, which includes

voting, campaigning, and contacting elected officials (e.g., Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Lien, 1994). On the other hand, many researchers conceptualize participation in an even broader sense - including activities such as community involvement with friends and neighbors (e.g., Lee, Campbell & Miller, 1991).

One particular type of participation that seems fruitful to examine is involvement in formal organizations, programs, and activities located within multiethnic housing developments. This type of formal participation is important because it provides individuals with the opportunity to be involved in decision-making in the institutions and environments that affect them. This is what Wandersman (1984) refers to as citizen participation, and is the process that is related to the many positive outcomes of participation discussed above. In the public housing developments in Lansing, these formal participation opportunities include: attending resident council meetings, holding an elected position on the resident council, voting in resident council elections, attending activities or programs at the community center, and volunteering in the community by either planning events or donating time and materials to events. Capturing these formal activities is important because in communities where all residents have limited resources, participation that brings residents into contact not only with each other, but also with the programs and services in their community is essential. Informal participation, such as social interactions with neighbors, is likely to have different relevant predictors and outcomes (Lee, Campbell, & Miller, 1991) and was not targeted in this study.

Predictors of Participation

With the goal of increasing levels of community participation, many investigators have tried to understand the numerous demographic, psychological, situational, and

cost/benefit factors which facilitate or impede it (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Wandersman, 1981; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981; Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987). These efforts, however, have been limited in several ways. First, little empirical work investigating participation has been conducted in multiethnic neighborhoods or communities. Most participation research that includes respondents of different racial and ethnic groups looks at participation only in racially and ethnically segregated neighborhoods (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987). However, researchers do not always make this explicit. If they do mention it, they do not usually recognize or emphasize the importance of this limitation. With the increasing diversity of communities in the United States, research on participation that focuses only on respondents in ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods or groups fails to capture the experiences of most people.

In addition, few studies have focused on understanding the participation experiences of specific ethnic or cultural groups, and even fewer examine participation among recent refugees and immigrants in the United States. Most studies on the participation of racial and ethnic minorities compares rates of participation among members of different racial and ethnic groups. (e.g. Babchuk & Thompson, 1962; Olsen, 1970; Williams, Babchuk & Johnson, 1973). This focus ignores within-group differences (Cohen & Kapsis, 1978), and, consequently, does not lead to useful points of intervention for a targeted group. The diversity within a group is as important as the diversity among groups, and therefore, in order to develop an understanding of participation in multiethnic

communities, it is necessary to first investigate the experiences of specific groups within the community.

Another limitation of many studies concerns the extent to which context is taken into consideration. More than 15 years ago, Wandersman (1981) noted the importance of investigating contextual variables which affect participation. This work precipitated numerous studies that considered contextual factors such as crime rate, community resources, and physical conditions of the environment (e.g. Wandersman, 1981; Sagy, Stern & Krakover, 1996). Although these are important aspects of community context and have improved our understanding of participation, most studies have not specifically addressed relations among members of diverse racial and ethnic groups, which is also a fundamental part of the context. Within multiethnic communities the importance of considering contextual elements and the community climate is central, given that these factors affect residents' integration into their local communities (Buckner, 1988; Fried, 1982; Sagy, Stern, & Krakover, 1996). Since interaction and participation in multiethnic communities are low (Wirth, 1938), and most often occur within ethnic groups, not between (Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995; Jong, 1989; Humphreys & Woods, 1993; Tomeh, 1974), attention to the climate in ethnically mixed communities and how it influences participation rates is essential. In addition, it is important to consider factors or conditions within a specific neighborhood or community which facilitate participation because, as opposed to individual demographic characteristics, they can often be changed. Also, focusing on the climate and contextual factors that promote participation of refugees and immigrants is an important aspect of shifting the responsibility for the adjustment of newcomers so that it is shared by individuals and their communities.

Finally, most research on participation has been conducted in middle class neighborhoods (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). However, understanding and facilitating participation and sense of community is especially essential in low income areas, including public housing developments, where a large number of people share a limited geographic area and where the need for community development and the acquisition of resources is great. In addition, low-income communities are often multiethnic and home to many recent refugees and immigrants in the United States. Together, these limitations of the research on participation suggest that one important new direction is an ecological investigation of this phenomenon in multiethnic communities.

The extensive literature on community participation includes many approaches to promoting participation and has examined the role of numerous factors that facilitate and impede this process. Primarily, these include emphases on individual-level variables such as demographic, social psychological, and cost/benefit variables (e.g., Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990). Other studies have investigated contextual variables such as crime rates, community boundaries, ethnic heterogeneity, and community conditions (e.g., Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995; Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980). At this point, most researchers agree that participation is facilitated or inhibited by both individual and contextual characteristics and the complex ways in which they interact with each other (e.g., Wandersman, 1984; Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980). The relevance of these factors to the participation experiences of Hmong residents in a multiethnic community is explored below.

Demographic Factors

Smith (1975) as well as many more recent studies (e.g. Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987) have concluded that, in general, demographic characteristics are not useful predictors of participation. Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier (1987) argue that who participates is not as important a question to ask as the why, when, where, and how of participation. This is a useful way to think about community participation, because it focuses intervention efforts on factors that can be controlled or changed, as opposed to demographic variables, which are usually immutable (Florin & Wandersman, 1984). However, the inclusion of certain demographic variables in research on participation may be appropriate. It is important to consider that demographic variables may be useful if they are examined from the perspective of what is relevant for a specific population. In addition, they contribute to our understanding of within-group differences.

Race/Ethnicity. Most participation studies have found no significant racial or ethnic differences between participants and nonparticipants in neighborhood voluntary associations (Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). Therefore, Cohen and Kapsis (1978) argue that researchers should try to understand differences among people of the same ethnic group before continuing to explore differences between groups.

Although an individual's race or ethnicity is not necessarily an effective predictor of participation, members of nondominant ethnic, racial, and cultural groups may have different participation experiences than members of the White majority. Also, specific or unique factors could affect the participation of members of some minority groups, such as

non-native English speakers who may need translators in order to participate. In addition, individuals within a given ethnic, racial, or cultural group may have distinct participation experiences. Therefore, it is important not to assume the generalizability of research with White participants to members of other racial and ethnic groups, and, furthermore, to be careful not to rely only on superficial racial and ethnic categorizations when investigating participation among individuals within these groups. Instead, specific attention should be focused on the participation experiences of individuals and members of groups whose similarities or differences are explored, not assumed. Therefore, the proposed study will examine the individual and contextual factors which facilitate participation for members of a single ethnic group in a specific setting.

For Hmong in multiethnic communities, there are two types of demographic variables that may be particularly relevant: variables that indicate rootedness in the community, both locally and in the United States, (age, age of immigration, length of time at housing development, and length of time in the United States,) and the size of residents' households.

Rootedness. Several studies have found that although demographic variables of status (such as occupation, education, and race) are not significantly related to participation, demographic variables indicating rootedness (such as age, length of residence, and home ownership) are related to participation (Wandersman, Jakubs, and Giamartino, 1981). Rootedness, which involves the degree to which individuals have established roots in their community, is especially important for refugees and immigrants because they have been forced to reestablish their roots in a new country and may vary more in degree of rootedness in their new communities than people who have lived in the

United States all of their lives. A common indicator of rootedness in one's community is home ownership. However this factor is not relevant for this study of Hmong residents of public housing developments because ownership in these developments is not an option. Other common indicators of rootedness are age and length of residence in one's neighborhood. In addition, for the Hmong and other groups of refugees and immigrants, age at which individuals came to the United States and the length of time they have lived in the United States would also be relevant indicators of rootedness in this country. These four indicators are described below.

Age and Age of Immigration. Many studies of participation have found that older residents are more likely to participate in their neighborhood organizations (e.g., Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). However, for the Hmong, the age at which they arrived in the United States may also be relevant. Refugees or immigrants who resettle at a later age often have more difficulty acculturating and playing an active role in their new environment (Rumbaut, 1985). Therefore, it seems important to explore the relationships between both age and participation and age of immigration and participation in this population, especially given that the specific role age of immigration plays in community participation has not received much attention in the literature. Understanding the relationship between age of immigration and participation will provide a basis for the development of specialized supports that may be necessary to facilitate the participation of individuals who resettle at a later age.

Length of Time at Housing Development. Another common indicator of being rooted in one's community is the length of time an individual has lived in his or her

current residence. Numerous researchers have found that people who have lived in their current residence longer are more likely to participate in neighborhood voluntary associations (e.g., Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). Intended length of residence is also positively related to participation (e.g., Wandersman, Florin, Friedman, & Meier, 1987).

Length of Time in the United States. The length of time Hmong have lived in the United States varies greatly; the first Hmong to resettle in Lansing arrived in 1979, and arrival from Thai refugee camps has continued until very recently (1996). The length of time individuals have lived in the United States is an important within-group difference which is often ignored among refugee or immigrant groups, but can account for significant differences in their lives (e.g., Ying & Akutsu, 1997). This factor may be an indicator of individuals' rootedness in the United States and their ability to be rooted in their local community. It is likely to impact refugee and immigrants' involvement in their new community, although there is no evidence to suggest in what way it relates to participation. It seems probable that as the length of time refugees and immigrants have lived in the United States increases, they will participate more in their broader communities because they will have developed language skills which enable them to participate and, perhaps, an increased commitment to their community.

Household Size. Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann & Meier (1987) found that the number of people in an individual's household was not related to participation in neighborhood voluntary organizations. However, they did find that the number of children under the age of 17 was significantly positively related to participation of

individuals in Israel, but not in the United States. Thus, they suggested that cultural differences related to the effect of children in the household on participation existed.

Household size might impact Hmong participation for several reasons. First, many Hmong families often have eight or more children. The average number of children ever born to Hmong women refugees in San Diego was 8.63, higher than any other Southeast Asian refugee group and much higher than the average among other women in the United States (Rumbaut & Weeks, 1986). These larger numbers of children might preclude participation because parents' time and resources are greatly constrained.

On the other hand, older Hmong adults may not have any young children at home. Ordinarily, according to Hmong culture, these older adults would be living with the family of their eldest son, but often the regulations of public housing or welfare require them to live independently (although they may live in the same housing complex or development as one or more of their sons). These older adults might be less likely to participate because of age or more likely to be involved because they have more time. Given that there are particularly large variations in household size within the Hmong community, it seems important to explore whether this factor is related to their participation.

Social Psychological Factors

One potential area for intervention includes the numerous social psychological factors which have been found to be significant predictors of citizen participation. These include: the perceived importance of the block or neighborhood, participation in other voluntary organizations, perceived personal influence in being able to effect change in the neighborhood, perceived sense of community, sense of civic duty, self-esteem, political

efficacy, and power (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). These studies of social psychological variables examined neighborhoods in the United States in which individual blocks were racially homogeneous. Because the block organizations studied were usually comprised of only one racial or ethnic group, the findings may or may not be applicable to multiethnic settings. It is important to consider these social psychological variables in multiethnic communities, but this has not been addressed in the literature. In addition, these factors have not been investigated from the perspectives of newcomers to the United States. This study will target those social psychological variables that appear most relevant to Hmong participants in a multiethnic community.

Sense of Community. Among social psychological variables, sense of community has one of the strongest links to participation (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). Extensive research suggests that a sense of community is positively correlated with participation and involvement in one's community (e.g., Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Hutcheson & Prather, 1988; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980) and is a significant catalyst for participation (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990). In addition to its connection to participation, a sense of community is positively linked to community development and individual well being (Chavis & Newbrough, 1986; Jason & Kobayashi, 1995). Chavis and Newbrough (1986) state, "The building of a sense of community acts as a mechanism to stimulate the healthy development of the environment and the people who inhabit it" (p. 337). While most research does not directly discuss sense of community in multiethnic communities, the link established between sense of community and participation (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990) suggests that the lack of sense of

community, which has long been documented in research on multiethnic communities (e.g., Merry, 1981), could contribute to low participation of certain groups of individuals in these settings. Sense of community seems especially relevant for the Hmong because they emphasize the community rather than the individual in all aspects of their lives.

Sense of community takes context into account. Although it is measured on an individual level as a psychological construct, it refers to individuals' perceptions of their community or context. This measurement approach has been recognized as a valid and meaningful assessment of a targeted context (Schneider & Rentsch, 1988). Because we know that participation is affected by complex interactions between individual and contextual factors (Wandersman 1984), understanding individuals' perceptions of the context in which they can potentially participate is an important point of connection. In addition, a strong sense of community is often particularly important for refugees and immigrants as they negotiate their roles in the broader new environment in which they have resettled (Fitzpatrick, 1966).

Many researchers have sought to develop conceptual definitions of sense of community which could serve as a basis for its operationalization. One of the most widely accepted definitions is McMillan and Chavis' (1986), which divides sense of community into four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. They define membership as the sense of belonging, identification, and personal investment within a community. Influence is the feeling that one matters to the group and also that the group matters to its members. Integration and fulfillment of needs is defined as the belief that one's needs will be met through membership in the community. Shared emotional connection is the sense that

members of the community have shared and will continue to share a common history or certain experiences together. Several studies have confirmed the viability of McMillan and Chavis' definition (e.g., Chavis, Hogge, McMillan & Wandersman, 1986). These definitions will be adopted in this study because they can be applied both to communities defined geographically (i.e., a neighborhood or housing development) and to ethnic communities.

Most individuals are members of several communities or have multiple layers of community. The examination of sense of community is often complicated by these numerous affiliations because a decision must be made about how to define a person's community. Traditionally, community was exclusively defined by where a person lived. The idea of community was tied to place for many years, until three phenomena - the industrial revolution, the increase in scientific knowledge, and the increase in speed of communication - transformed the way many people define their community or communities (Dunham, 1986). More recently, some definitions of community have been based on shared values, goals, and experiences rather than place (e.g. McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

McMillan and Chavis (1986) recognize the many types of communities experienced by individuals today. They state, "The layering of communities is very much part of modern life (Fischer, 1982), in which multiple affiliations are based both on territoriality and tradition (neighborhood, city, state, nation) and on what Durkheim (1964) called 'organic solidarity' (interest, professions, religion, etc.)" (p. 19). It is important to think about these layers of community, especially in a multiethnic

community, where, for example, individuals may be highly involved with their ethnic community, but may also identify with the neighborhood in which they live.

Ethnic communities are probably especially salient for immigrants and refugees who face the hegemony of American culture in the United States and may feel that the survival of their culture is threatened. However, most immigrants and refugees live in urban settings, which are increasingly multiethnic (Allen & Turner, 1990). Within urban areas, public housing developments are common places of residence for people with limited resources and are also usually meaningful communities to their residents. There are several reasons for this. First of all, housing developments are characterized by clear boundaries and have a community name with which residents identify. Also, residents in housing developments usually live in close proximity to each other and share common space and resources. In addition, certain shared values probably connect residents. For instance, it is likely that most residents value a safe place for their children to grow up and opportunities for themselves and their children to improve their living circumstances. Finally, neighborhoods tend to play an important role in the lives of individuals with limited resources (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). It seems clear that a community can be conceptualized both as an ethnic or cultural group and as a neighborhood or other geographically defined area. Sense of community that Hmong residents feel within their ethnic group and within their neighborhood will be examined in this study.

Within-Group Sense of Community. For Hmong refugees in multiethnic communities, it is important to consider how their sense of community within the Hmong community impacts their participation. McMillan and Chavis (1986) said, “As the force of sense of community drives people closer together, it also seems to be polarizing and

separating subgroups of people. The potential for great social conflict is increasing - a side of community that must be understood as well" (p.20). Therefore, it seems essential to determine whether sense of community within different groups of people in multiethnic communities could be impeding participation in the community as a whole.

In multiethnic neighborhoods there is often a strong sense of community within certain ethnic groups (especially immigrant groups), but not a shared sense of community (e.g., Benson, 1990; Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995; Merry, 1980). Although this is not necessarily undesirable, there are most likely some needs of residents that can best be met by residents' involvement in the broader community, especially in housing developments. Primarily, this is because there are shared issues and problems among the residents which can be most effectively addressed collectively. These include crime prevention, safety, and neighborhood development. Therefore, because individuals and communities can experience benefits from the development of a sense of community within a given community as defined by place as well as a sense of community within their ethnic group, it is important to consider both types of sense of community.

The impact of within-group sense of community on participation within a multiethnic neighborhood is especially important to consider among immigrants who tend to rely on members of their own ethnic group during their transition to a new country (e.g., Church, 1982) and among members of collectively-oriented cultures who place more emphasis on their community. Newbrough and Chavis (1986) suggest that there are two reciprocal aspects of belonging: an *I-you sense* that distinguishes individuals from each other and a *we sense* of belonging together. American culture tends to be based more on the I-you distinction, while many other cultures (including Hmong culture)

emphasize collectivity and common interest. In addition, more than any other immigrant group, the Hmong have succeeded in preserving many aspects of their culture, interdependency, and sense of ethnic community (Fadiman, 1997).

The resettlement of the Hmong in the United States is an interesting juxtaposition of several cultures and has required the integration of different levels of community. Most Hmong have many layers of community - among members of their ethnic group in their community, among their clan, and among the community in which they live. Although all of these layers of community are probably important, Hmong residents' proximity to each other within housing developments suggests that particularly salient to Hmong residents would be within-group sense of community among Hmong in their development. Identification with Hmong neighbors may be especially strong given that Hmong traditionally lived in small villages in mountainous regions which impeded their ability to have extensive contact with other villages and because many Hmong in the United States have limited access to transportation. These factors suggest that Hmong might most readily identify with the other Hmong living within their housing development.

However, the degree of within-group sense of community may vary among Hmong residents, depending on their age, the time they have spent in the United States, their English language abilities, and other factors. Hmong residents who have the strongest within-group sense of community may be those who are least able to develop relationships with other residents because of language and cultural differences. On the other hand, some individuals might value and emphasize the development of relationships with all community members and might have a strong overall sense of

community in the housing development and a strong within-group sense of community. These varying levels of sense of community within the housing development and among other Hmong residents are likely to impact participation.

Cultural Factors

It is particularly important to consider cultural factors that may be related to participation because refugees often experience large cultural differences regarding participation norms. Different refugee groups have cultures that value community and participation differently. Also, because refugees have most often endured limited control over many recent aspects of their lives (Rumbaut, 1991a), they may translate these experiences to perceptions that they cannot affect their current environment. In addition, cultural barriers which make interaction and participation difficult are common in multiethnic communities. These cultural differences and gaps can affect individuals' abilities and desire to participate. Cultural factors which are specifically relevant for the Hmong include their level of acculturation, cultural norms (including gender norms), the extent to which, because of the collective nature of their culture, individuals feel they are represented by other members of their household who participate, and the cultural relevance of existing participation opportunities.

Acculturation. Acculturation is a factor that is specifically relevant for all refugees and immigrants. On the individual level, it can be broadly defined as changes in individuals' attitudes and behaviors which result from their contact with a culture different from their own (Berry, 1991). Research on acculturation of the Hmong and other Southeast Asian refugees has often considered acculturation in terms of assimilation, biculturalism, and traditionalism, which are indicators of an individual's

attitudes towards maintaining his/her traditional culture and interacting and accepting aspects of the new culture (e.g., Rumbaut, 1989). An individual who values assimilation is most interested in becoming part of the larger society without maintaining his/her traditional cultural identity. Biculturalism involves maintaining most aspects of traditional cultural identity while also actively seeking to become integrated in the larger society. An individual who values traditionalism seeks to maintain his/her traditional culture and ways of life separate from the larger society.

Research has not examined acculturation and participation together within this framework. However, there is evidence that for both Asian Americans and Mexican Americans, acculturation as indicated by having norms, beliefs, and attitudes commiserate with those prevailing in American political culture is positively linked to political participation (Lien, 1995). Refugees and immigrants who value assimilation or choose to adopt some aspects of the new culture while maintaining their own cultural identity (biculturalism) would seem to be more likely to participate in their new community than those who remain attached only to their traditional beliefs and culture and do not seek to be involved in the larger society (traditionalism). The relationship between participation in multiethnic housing developments and assimilation, biculturalism, and traditionalism was examined for the Hmong in this study.

Cultural Norms for Participation. Another important factor to consider involves the participatory norms within a culture that determine whether participation is appropriate or not. Olsen's (1970) normative theory suggests that participatory norms within an ethnic group are related to their participation. Several studies of participation among African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Whites support this theory (Antunes

and Gaitz, 1975; Cohen and Kapsis, 1978). Many people come from backgrounds where there were no opportunities to express their opinion or control their lives (this is especially relevant for many recent refugee groups, including the Hmong). Such backgrounds often preclude participation in resettlement countries.

Although the Hmong have always emphasized community involvement within the Hmong community and have based most aspects of their lives on group decisions, their minority status in every country they have lived throughout their history (e.g., China, Laos, and the United States) and their experiences of persecution and lack of control over their lives in refugee camps, may have contributed to a sense of futility regarding participation in the larger context. Thus, formal participation in their broader community may be less important or familiar to some Hmong, particularly those who lived in refugee camps for significant periods of their adult lives. These individuals might value participation less and might be less likely to participate.

On the other hand, because many of the Hmong have other cultural norms which value the community so highly, participation in the broader community may be important to them. Hmong individuals who hold cultural norms which value the community highly, may be more likely to participate. Depending on their past and present experiences, Hmong may have different cultural norms regarding participation. Therefore, it is essential to explore the relationship between participation and the importance Hmong individuals ascribe to participation.

Cultural Gender Norms. In several studies, researchers have found that women are more likely to participate than men are (e.g., Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). However, this pattern might not be

consistent within all groups of people. According to traditional Hmong culture, men usually represent their families in clan elections and decisions, while women often do not individually participate in the political process. In some cases, a clan member, such as the oldest brother or male cousin, can represent the interests of multiple families in Hmong community meetings. How these cultural gender norms translate to neighborhood participation is unknown. One hypothesis is that the processes are parallel in that Hmong men who believe that it is more appropriate for Hmong men to participate in the Hmong community than women, might be more likely to participate in the broader community. Hmong women who hold these traditional gender norms might be less likely to participate in the broader community.

However, cultural norms about participation within the Hmong community and participation outside the Hmong community could be different. Hmong men and women might believe that men should participate in the Hmong community, but might feel that it is appropriate for both men and women to participate in the broader community. Some might believe that it is more appropriate for women to participate in the neighborhood community because they may consider it to represent part of the women's domain in the home. Therefore, it is important to explore the relationship between gender norms and participation.

Extent of Household Participation. In order to develop a complete understanding of the impact of gender on participation, it is also necessary to examine the extent to which members of the household other than the respondent participate. As discussed above, Hmong culture is family and clan-based. Traditionally, women do not participate in formal political processes in Hmong culture, but are represented by their husband or

other male head of household. Therefore, it may be that some Hmong families believe it to be more culturally appropriate for only the head of the household to participate in the broader community, rather than each individual. Consequently, it is important to examine each respondent's participation within the context of the participation of the other members of their household. For the Hmong, the participation patterns of each household may be as meaningful as individuals' rates of participation. In this study, the participation of all adults in each household will be assessed in order to understand how and if they affect each other.

Cultural Relevance. Another important factor concerns whether the opportunities for participation within one's community are culturally relevant or not. Avenues of participation in certain communities may not be culturally appropriate for all residents. For instance, participation opportunities in a multiethnic community could be dominated by the interests of the groups which are most represented. Events such as Halloween or Thanksgiving celebrations might not appeal to some Hmong or other newcomers to the United States. Nutrition and health classes might involve foods that the members of certain ethnic groups do not eat. Residents with needs such as English language or citizenship classes might be less able to communicate these to their communities. In addition, resident council meetings may be structured in ways that are uncomfortable or disruptive of refugees' culture (e.g., Hein, 1995). For instance, some refugees may feel that it is inappropriate to raise personal complaints during a meeting or that they do not have opportunities to share their ideas when others are talking. Therefore, the cultural preferences of individuals and the extent to which they view community activities as

relevant to themselves and their culture may affect their participation in existing events and activities in their community.

Resource Factors

Previous researchers (e.g., Wandersman, Jakubs & Giamartino, 1981) have found that when individuals lack certain resources (i.e., time, childcare), they are likely not to participate. Understanding the resources which may affect refugee participation in multiethnic communities is particularly important because residents often lack a common language, are unaware of participation opportunities, and have multiple responsibilities (i.e., childcare, work) which limit their time, all of which can act as barriers to their participation.

Language. One of the most apparent factors which may be related to participation in multiethnic communities is the language barrier faced by many refugees, immigrants, and other non-native English speaking residents in the United States. Individuals' cognitive and behavioral abilities to participate are significant predictors of their participation (Florin, Jones, and Wandersman, 1986; Florin and Wandersman, 1984). For the Hmong, these would include their English skills, which could influence their ability to participate as well as their ability to make themselves aware of the participation opportunities in their communities. This barrier may be especially salient and difficult to overcome for the Hmong, many of whom are illiterate. Depending on several factors including their level of education and the age at which they resettled in the United States, many Hmong often find it extremely difficult to learn English (at least among first generation refugees). Although traditionally in Hmong culture it is often the elder males who participate in community activities, the language abilities of family members might

become a more important determinant of participation. Many elder clan members may not have the English skills to enable them to participate in neighborhood organizations. There is limited research on the impact of language skills on participation, which could be because many studies of participation have focused on ethnically homogenous block organizations (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987) and because multilingual sites pose numerous methodological difficulties. However, it is likely that English language ability is an important factor for the Hmong who live in multiethnic communities.

Awareness. If residents are not aware of the opportunities that exist in their community for involvement, they cannot participate. There may be numerous reasons for lack of awareness of participation opportunities in multiethnic communities: programs, events, and meetings might be publicized only in English, current participants might be unable to communicate with nonparticipating residents about upcoming meetings and events, or participants might be uncomfortable about encouraging participation of members of different ethnic groups.

Guthrie and Hutchinson (1995) examined participation among African Americans and Asian Americans at a housing development in San Francisco. They noted that there was little effort by the staff at the community center in the project to inform or include Asian Americans in activities or programs. This resulted in minimal participation in community meetings and at the community center by Asian Americans. However, Wandersman, Jakubs, and Giamartino (1981) found that people who knew about their block organization but did not join were similar to those who did not know about the block organization, and therefore concluded that the unaware people would not have

joined their block organization even if they had known about it. In a multiethnic, multilingual community, though, lack of awareness cannot necessarily be attributed to residents' being less rooted in their community and caring less about their community than the members of the block organization, as was the case in Wandersman, et al. (1981). The reasons for lack of awareness in the case of non-native English speakers may be different (i.e., language in which information about events and meetings is written may not be comprehensible or residents may lack an understanding of what neighborhood organizations are), and therefore these conclusions might not be applicable. Thus, it is important to explore the relationship between awareness and participation in multiethnic communities.

Time. Time constraints (either not having enough time to participate or being unable to attend meetings or events at their scheduled times) and lack of child care are often prohibitive to individuals' participation. Disenfranchised and disadvantaged people who are in the greatest need of resources and power often do not have the time to participate in voluntary organizations, because they are struggling simply to survive and support themselves (Kieffer, 1984). They may also be more likely to work evenings or other times when neighborhood meetings are typically scheduled. In fact, Wandersman, Jakubs, and Giamartino (1981) found that time constraints were the most significant barrier for the majority of individuals who do not participate in their neighborhood associations.

Contextual Factor - Intergroup Relations in a Multiethnic Community

In the development of an ecological perspective on participation, it is important to look beyond the individual and individual factors, and to consider the context in which

participation occurs. Most researchers have found that participation in multiethnic neighborhoods is low (e.g. Fischer, 1977; Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995; Merry, 1981; Tittle, 1989). People who are members of different ethnic and cultural groups are likely to have less in common (including language, culture, values, and experience) and tend to be less involved with their neighborhood than if their community is comprised only of members of their own group. In addition, in communities where resources are limited, members of different ethnic groups often feel that their financial security is threatened by members of other groups, especially newcomers (e.g., Cho, 1995; Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995). Therefore, it is important to consider how relations among members of different ethnic and racial groups, a specific characteristic of multiethnic communities, affects participation.

Wandersman and Giamartino (1980) found that an atmosphere that is conducive to participation in voluntary block associations, including positive interaction among neighbors, is necessary in order for individual characteristics that facilitate participation to operate. In communities with individuals of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, the environment would not be conducive to participation if intergroup relations among community members were negative. In a discussion of intergroup theory, Alderfer (1986) identifies ethnic groups as one of the fundamental groups (called identity groups) that an individual belongs to from birth. He argues that identity-group membership is more fundamental than organizational-group membership. Intergroup relations is important to consider because community participation in multiethnic communities means interacting with individuals from other identity groups and because the potential for intergroup conflict is great in multiethnic housing developments and

other communities in which many ethnic groups are represented and most residents have limited resources.

Although there is not extensive empirical evidence on the relationship between racial/ethnic relations and participation, organizational theorists have long recognized the importance of understanding intergroup relations (particularly among members of different racial, ethnic, and gender groups) embedded within organizations (e.g., Alderfer, 1986). With a specific focus on a multiethnic community that lacked positive intergroup contact, Merry (1981) characterized the low levels of community involvement as “life in a neighborhood of strangers.” There is also some evidence that negative intergroup relations, characterized by misperceptions and lack of interaction, contributes to low levels of involvement among refugees in multiethnic housing developments (Guthrie & Hutchinson, 1995; Hein, 1995). In addition, negative interaction and conflict with members of different ethnic groups engenders negative attitudes towards those ethnic groups (e.g., Tzeng, 1994), which might preclude participation. Evidence exists to suggest that negative relations among members of different ethnic or racial groups affects their interest and commitment to participating in multiethnic organizations and communities. However, this relationship has not been examined in studies of formal participation. Therefore, it is important to further investigate this phenomenon.

In this study, intergroup relations was considered to be a contextual variable that was measured distinctly from individuals’ perceptions of members of other groups or their perceptions of other groups’ attitudes towards them. Instead, it was assumed to be an objective factor which could be observed by outsiders who were familiar with the communities, spent a significant amount of time in them, and compiled statistics on the

intergroup incidents that occurred there. Positive intergroup relations were considered to exist in a housing development if there were contact among members of different groups, a lack of conflict or negative interaction, and some degree of respect among different group members.

Summary

The issues of refugee resettlement and adjustment have become increasingly complex as the United States accepts larger numbers of refugees and immigrants and the demographics of our country continue to shift. Participation is an important process through which refugees can adjust to life here and become accepted in their new communities. However, there is clearly no simple formula for facilitating community participation; the appropriate methods and strategies depend on the particular individuals involved and their unique settings. In addition to exploring factors that are already known to be related to participation, it is important to consider the unique factors that may affect participation of the Hmong in multiethnic housing developments, including both individual- and contextual-level variables that are specific to this population, their setting, and their experiences.

For Hmong residents within a multiethnic housing development, we would expect several individual and contextual factors to influence participation. Age, age of immigration, length of time in current residence, length of time in the United States, and household size are demographic factors which are particularly relevant for the Hmong. Among social psychological factors, sense of community is most strongly related to participation, and is especially important for the Hmong who emphasize the collective interest and in multiethnic communities given that the community climate is often

particularly strained. Residents may lack the desire or motivation to participate if they do not feel a sense of community (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). In addition, the community climate in multiethnic communities is often more complex, and can be complicated by factors such as residents' sense of community within their ethnic group.

As the Hmong continue to negotiate their existence in a new country, certain cultural factors are also relevant, including acculturation, cultural norms, cultural gender norms, extent of household participation, and cultural relevance. The resources of residents are also essential to consider for the Hmong and other residents of multiethnic communities, where individuals often face language barriers, lack of awareness of community events, and time constraints. It is also important to examine factors beyond the individual-level. As Shinn (1990) notes, most research about communities relies on measures of individual variables, but in order to understand individuals in context, multi-level research which involves organizational-level or community-level variables is essential. Intergroup relations is a particularly relevant contextual variable in multiethnic communities.

It is also important to consider the different ways in which Hmong residents define their participation experiences and envision their involvement in their broader community in multiethnic housing developments because they might vary from common definitions of community participation. Finally, it is important to examine the relationship between participation and adjustment for Hmong in multiethnic communities, in order to validate the assumption that participation is a beneficial process for them. For full inclusion to occur in our society, we must understand the issues, capacities, and cultures within specific communities.

Research Questions

The central questions which were addressed by this exploratory study were:

1. How do Hmong residents participate in multiethnic communities?
 - a. How do Hmong residents value their participation?
 - b. What barriers do Hmong residents in multiethnic communities experience?
 - c. In what ways would Hmong residents like to participate in or improve their communities?
2. What factors are related to Hmong participation in a multiethnic community?
3. Is participation in their broader community related to positive adjustment for the Hmong?

METHOD

Setting

The participants in the study were Hmong residents of three multiethnic public housing developments in Lansing, Michigan: LaRoy Froh, Hildebrandt, and Mt. Vernon, which provide subsidized housing to low-income Lansing residents. LaRoy Froh and Hildebrandt each have 100 residential units and Mt. Vernon has 150. Each site also has a community center with computers, tutoring facilities, and a small gym. According to number of households, LaRoy Froh is 10% Hmong and 19% Asian American (including Hmong), Mt. Vernon is 14% Hmong and 27% Asian American, and Hildebrandt is 15% Hmong and 27% Asian American. Table 1 details the racial and ethnic composition of each development.

Table 1 – Racial/Ethnic Composition of Housing Developments by Household

Race/Ethnicity	LaRoy Froh	Mt. Vernon	Hildebrandt
African-American	73% (69)	50% (69)	48% (47)
American Indian	2% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Asian-American	19% (18)	27% (37)	27% (27)
<i>Hmong</i>	10% (9)	14% (19)	15% (15)
<i>Lao</i>	1% (1)	1% (1)	1% (1)
<i>Vietnamese</i>	9% (8)	12% (17)	11% (11)
Hispanic	1% (1)	8% (11)	12% (12)
Non-Hispanic White	4% (4)	15% (20)	11% (11)
<u>Total</u>	100% (94)	100% (137)	100% (97)

Discussions with residents and staff and the researcher's participant observations at the housing developments suggested that the three housing developments differed considerably in their intergroup relations among residents. In addition, the housing

developments provided the opportunity to access a large proportion of the Hmong in Lansing because approximately 30% of the Hmong families in Lansing live in the three public housing developments.

Sample

The participants in this study were sampled from all of the Hmong adults (over the age of 18) who lived in three public housing developments in Lansing, Michigan (LaRoy Froh, Mt. Vernon, and Hildebrandt). There were a total of 54 Hmong families currently living in the developments; the number of Hmong adults was estimated to be about 100. The fewest number of Hmong families lived at LaRoy Froh (9). Therefore, all of the Hmong families at this site were asked and agreed to participate in the study; 15 interviews were conducted at this site. For each targeted household, attempts were made to interview all adult members. A similar number of family units or households was randomly sampled from the other two sites. A total of 19 interviews were conducted from ten households at Hildebrandt. However, at Mt. Vernon, interviews were conducted with 13 households because many households were headed by single moms or, in one case, a second wife of a man who also lived at Mt. Vernon with his first wife. A total of 20 interviews were completed at this site. The total number of households across all three sites was 32 and the total number of participants was 54. The overall individual response rate was 86%, and the household response rate was 94% (see Table 2 for more details).

Table 2 – Description of Sample

Respondents	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Total
Number of Households	9	13	10	32
Household Response Rate	100%	93%	91%	94%
Number of Individuals	15	20	19	54
Men	5	8	9	22
Women	10	12	10	32
Individual Response Rate	94%	83%	83%	86%

Procedures

Resident Interviews

A structured interview, containing both open-ended and fixed response questions was initially constructed in English. Interview questions were subsequently translated into Hmong by the director of the Hmong mutual assistance agency in Lansing, who is fluent in both English and Hmong. To ensure that the questions were culturally relevant and appropriate, the interview was piloted on two Hmong men and two Hmong women.

In order to increase participation and ensure the project's relevance for the Hmong community, the study was discussed with the clan leaders of the Hmong community in Lansing. The researcher requested and received their support for the study by emphasizing the importance of investigating how Hmong adjustment and well being can be increased by understanding how their participation in the community can be facilitated. Participation provides opportunities for the Hmong to develop skills, language ability, and connections to resources, and to become more integrated in American society. This support was communicated to Hmong residents at the annual Hmong New Year celebration in Lansing, where the researcher and the research project were introduced by the director of the Hmong mutual assistance association in Lansing.

Hmong New Year is a highly attended event, with almost all Hmong families in Lansing present. With support from clan leaders, a high rate of participation in the study was anticipated and achieved.

In order to arrange the interviews, the researcher, accompanied by a translator, knocked on the door of each targeted residence in the housing developments. The translator briefly explained the purpose of the study and inquired about each family's interest and willingness to participate in the study. The translator also determined how many adults lived in each household and the extent of their English and Hmong language abilities. Residents who agreed to participate were interviewed in English or in Hmong with the assistance of a translator, depending upon their preference (eight interviews were completed in English and 46 in Hmong). Interviews occurred either immediately or at an agreed upon time in the future in respondents' homes. Interviews lasted between one and two hours, with most being completed in about one hour.

Translators. A total of four translators were employed. Thirty of the interviews were translated by a Hmong woman in her mid-twenties who resettled in the United States at the age of ten. She completed high school in the United States and possessed a good understanding of American culture, while also remaining rooted in Hmong cultures and traditions (i.e., age of marriage, sewing, and healing practices consistent with Hmong culture). Another Hmong woman in her mid-twenties translated for 10 of the interviews. She was also in her mid-twenties and was similarly bicultural. Four interviews were translated by a Hmong woman in her mid-thirties who was employed as a translator for Refugee Services in Lansing, and two interviews were translated by a Hmong man in his early twenties who was a college student at MSU and resettled in the United States at the

age of nine. All translators were trained by the researcher on interviewing techniques, including appropriate probing and the importance of accurate translations. The translators' training also included reading through the interview questions in Hmong and translating them to the researcher in English to ensure that a shared understanding of the meaning and purpose of each question was achieved. The translators were paid an hourly wage of \$10.

The translators were essential not only to bridge the language gap between the researcher and many of the respondents, but also as important liaisons or gatekeepers. Most Hmong people would probably not agree to an interview (or even open their door) with a non-Hmong individual they did not recognize. Even within the Hmong community, it is important when meeting other Hmong for the first time to know whom their parents are, their clan, and from whom in the clan they trace their lineage. Background is very important to most Hmong and is an essential part of establishing trust. Thus non-Hmong individuals need to be able to make some sort of connection with Hmong people when they first meet. In this case, being accompanied by a Hmong person was an important aspect of developing this trust. It also allowed the researcher to share with Hmong participants her experiences of having worked with Hmong in a refugee camp in Thailand and of currently teaching English to Hmong in Lansing.

Ensuring Accuracy of Data Recorded. In order to ensure that the data collected was authentic and accurate, the following procedures were followed. If the interview was conducted in English, the researcher asked the interview questions and recorded the respondents' answers verbatim. If the interview was conducted in Hmong, the translator asked the interview questions and translated the verbatim responses, which the researcher

recorded in English. It was emphasized to the translators that verbatim responses were required, as opposed to their interpretations of the respondents' statements. Because the researcher was present for all interviews, clarification or further probing occurred whenever necessary.

Staff Surveys

In order to assess intergroup relations, several staff members at each housing development (the site supervisors and the AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers) as well as the Residents Initiative Coordinator for all three sites were surveyed.

Measures

Participation

In a structured interview created specifically for this study, two aspects of participation were targeted: an emergent understanding from the Hmong residents of how they participated in their housing development communities and their degree of formal participation in their communities. To examine Hmong residents' definitions of participation, they were given the opportunity to define their participation and involvement in their community through an open-ended question: "You live here at (name of housing development). In what ways do you participate in this community? How are you involved here? What activities do you get involved in?" (Appendix A, item B1).

To assess the degree of Hmong residents' participation in formal activities, participation was measured through questions about residents' involvement in community activities, meetings, programs, and events at each housing development. The communities had three main avenues for formal involvement: resident council

participation, participation in programs and activities at the community centers, and volunteering to help with events or services.

Resident Council Participation. Resident council participation had three components (Appendix A, items B6-B8): attendance at resident council meetings (In the last year, how many resident council meetings have you attended?), voting in resident council elections (Did you vote in the last resident council election?), and holding an office on the resident council (Do you hold an elected or appointed position on the resident council?). None of the Hmong residents interviewed held a position on the resident council, so this question was not included in the analyses. Two indicators of resident council participation were created. The first was a dichotomous item, which indicated whether a resident participated in the resident council in any way. Respondents received a “1” if they had attended any meetings in the last year and/or voted in the last election, and a “0” if they had done neither of these. The second indicator measured frequency of resident council participation and was created by summing the z-scores of the number of resident council meetings attended in the last year and whether or not respondents had voted in the last election. It should be noted that all three housing developments had monthly resident council meetings and annual resident council elections. Therefore, opportunities to participate in the resident council were equivalent at all sites.

Community Center Participation. Participation in programs at the community center was asked as an open-ended item: How often do you go to the community center (Appendix A, item B26)? Respondents were then asked to indicate what activities or programs they were involved in at the center (Appendix A, item B27), including using the

computers in the Learning Centers, attending English language classes, attending health education classes, and attending special events such as Thanksgiving or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations. They were also given the opportunity to mention other programs or activities they participated in, which included receiving food, clothing or healthcare through programs established at the centers, reporting problems with neighbors or maintenance problems to the manager, and paying their rent.

Two indicators of involvement in community center activities were created. The first was a dichotomous item, which indicated whether a resident participated in any activities at the community center. Respondents received a “1” if they had attended any programs or events at the community center. However, if residents only went to the community center to pay rent or report maintenance problems, or if they did not go to the center at all, they received a “0”. Paying rent or reporting maintenance problems were not considered to indicate participation in community center activities because they were not specifically aspects of programs offered by the center. Instead, they were activities which could have been accomplished by phone or mail and were inherent aspects of being a tenant at the housing developments. The second indicator of participation in community center activities measured frequency of involvement in center activities and was created by standardizing respondents’ answers to the open-ended question of how often they went to the community center into an indicator of their attendance per month. Again, residents who went to the center only to pay rent or report maintenance problems were scored “0” on this item.

Volunteer Activity. Volunteer activity included helping to plan or organize events at the community center (In the last year, have you helped to plan or organize any events,

services, or activities at the community center? If so, how many?) and donating time or materials to events (In the last year, have you donated time or materials to help with events or services at the community center. If so, how many?) (Appendix A, items B28 and B29). As with the other types of participation, two indicators of volunteer activity were created. The first was a dichotomous item, which indicated whether a resident volunteered in the community in any way. Respondents received a “1” if they had helped to plan or organize an event in the last year and/or donated time or materials to help with an event, and a “0” if they had done neither of these. The second indicator measured frequency of volunteer activity and was created by summing the items which asked how often respondents had helped organize events or donated time or materials in the last year.

Overall Participation. In addition to considering each type of formal involvement separately, two scales of overall participation were also created. The first was a measure of breadth of participation in the community and was a sum of five dichotomous items: attendance at any resident council meetings in the last year, voting in the last resident council election, participation in activities at the community center, helping to plan or organize any events in the last year, and donating time or materials to any events in the last year. Thus, the scale had a possible range from 0 (no participation) to 5 (involvement in all five aspects of participation). A resident’s score on this scale reflected the number of different ways in which he or she was involved in the community. The reliability of this breadth of participation scale was low ($\alpha = .47$). This low internal consistency was expected because the scale was composed of five dichotomous items, which truncated the variance in terms of respondents’ frequency of participation. In addition, different avenues of participation in the housing development communities are not

necessarily related. For instance, an individual who obtained free food from the community center would not necessarily be more likely to participate in the resident council than someone who was not involved in the food program. Thus, this reduces even further the possibility of achieving high internal consistency, and also suggests that internal consistency might not be the optimal indicator of reliability for this scale.

The second scale of participation indicated overall frequency of participation. In order to aggregate the five frequency items (number of resident council meetings attended in last year, voting in last resident council election, number of visits to community center per month, helping to plan or organize events, and donating time or materials) into a single measure of participation, the response to each item was transformed into a standardized z-score. The z-scores were summed to obtain a total frequency score of participation for each individual ($\alpha = .65$). It should be noted that the final two volunteering items were included as dichotomous rather than continuous items in the scale because they were extremely rare ($N=3$ and 4 , respectively). The scale of overall frequency of participation was the central participation outcome used in this study, although the other seven indicators of participation were also examined.

Adjustment

The second central outcome in this study was adjustment. Two aspects of adjustment were assessed: psychological adjustment and socioeconomic adjustment.

Psychological Adjustment. Two distinct aspects of psychological adjustment were measured: happiness and distress. Each scale included three items based on questions adapted from the happiness subscale and the demoralization/distress subscale of Rumbaut's (1985) Psychological Well-Being Scale, which has been used successfully

in several studies of psychological adjustment of Hmong and other Southeast Asian refugee groups (e.g., Rumbaut, 1985, 1989; Ying & Akutsu, 1997). The items were measured on a six-point Likert scale with possible responses of never, rarely, sometimes, often, most of the time, and all of the time. The happiness scale ($\alpha = .66$) was created by averaging the scores on the three happiness items (Appendix A, items E2, E4, E6), such as: In the last month, how often have you felt happy or satisfied with your present life? This final score reflected an individual's overall happiness and life satisfaction during the previous month. The distress scale ($\alpha = .78$) was created by averaging the scores on the three distress items (Appendix A, items E1, E3, E5), such as: In the last month, how often have you felt anxious, worried, or upset? This score reflected an individual's overall distress, including stress and demoralization, over the past month.

Socioeconomic Adjustment. Income, employment status, and level of education are indicators that are often used to assess the socioeconomic adjustment of refugee and immigrants (e.g., Rumbaut, 1989). In this study, income was not measured because a requirement for all residents of public housing developments is that they have low incomes. However, employment status (Appendix A, item A14) and level of education (Appendix A, items A10-A13) were assessed in the demographics section of the interview. Employment status was a dichotomous item determining whether the respondent was currently employed. Four indicators of level of education were created. Each respondent was asked about the number of years of education he or she had acquired in Thailand and/or Laos and in the United States. The number of years of education in Thailand/Laos and in the United States were examined as separate indicators and were also summed to obtain a total number of years of education for each respondent.

Finally, respondents were asked to describe the highest educational degree they possessed (none, high school diploma/GED, vocational/technical degree, B.A./B.S., or graduate degree).

Demographic Variables

The resident survey also included questions about respondents' age, age of immigration, gender, level of education, English and Hmong literacy, current employment status, length of residence at the development, length of time in the United States, and number of people in the household (Appendix A, items A1-A24).

Social Psychological Variables

Overall Sense of Community. Questions to measure sense of community within the housing development were based on McMillan and Chavis' (1986) four components: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (Appendix A, items D1-D8). The scale was comprised of eight items (two involving each of the four dimensions of overall sense of community) with reference to all residents of the housing development. The items were measured on a six-point Likert scale which required respondents to indicate whether they agreed with each statement never, rarely, sometimes, often, most of the time, or all of the time. Questions from each dimension include: I don't feel like I belong here at LaRoy Froh (membership), If I want something to change at LaRoy Froh, I can make it happen (influence), My values are similar to the values of other residents at LaRoy Froh (integration and fulfillment of needs), and I usually stop and talk with other residents of LaRoy Froh when I see them (shared emotional connection). Of the eight items, two were negative and were reverse

coded. The scores on all eight items were averaged to obtain a single indicator of overall sense of community ($\alpha = .75$).

Within-Group Sense of Community. Within-group sense of community was measured by the same eight questions employed in the overall sense of community scale (Appendix A, items D9-D16), but with reference to the other Hmong residents in the housing development (i.e., The beliefs of other Hmong at (housing development) sometimes affect my opinions and actions). The mean score of the eight items was calculated to produce a measure of within-group sense of community ($\alpha = .86$).

Cultural Variables

Acculturation. Acculturation was measured by three likert-type items, each assessing a separate dimension of acculturation: assimilation, biculturalism, and traditionalism (Appendix A, items E7-E9). The items were measured on a six-point scale which required respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The assimilation item was “The schools should help our children learn American ways of behaving and to become more like American children in the neighborhood.” Biculturalism was indicated by agreement or disagreement with the following, “We may adapt ourselves to American society in order to earn a living, but we must stay together as a group to preserve our own culture.” The traditionalism item was “The American way of life may be good for others, but not for me.” These items were used previously with the Hmong and other Southeast Asian refugees (e.g., Rumbaut, 1989). Each item was considered to be a separate indicator of one of the three dimensions of acculturation.

Cultural Norms. In order to measure Hmong residents' cultural norms regarding participation in their geographic community, the interview included the following questions: Do you think your participation here in the community is important? Why or why not? The dichotomous response regarding the importance of participation (0 = not important, 1 = important) was used in the statistical analyses. The responses to the open-ended why or why not question were analyzed in the qualitative section of the study.

Gender Norms. Gender norms were assessed by respondents' agreement or disagreement on a six-point scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) with the following item: "It is more appropriate for men to participate in the community than for women." Traditionally in Hmong culture, it is believed that it is more appropriate for men to participate in the community than for women, but the norms of Hmong in the United States vary, depending upon their acceptance of traditional gender norms and gender norms here.

Extent of Household Participation. The extent of participation of the other adult members of the respondents' households was obtained by the respondents' subjective reports of the participation of other members of their household (Appendix A, items B9, B12 and B14). These three items involved other household members' involvement in resident council meetings (Does someone in your household other than you attend resident council meetings here?), resident council elections (Did anyone in your household other than you vote in the last resident council election?), and elected or appointed resident council leadership positions (Does anyone in your household other than you have an elected or appointed position on the resident council?). Although it was originally anticipated that this information could be compared to the objective data

reported by the other adults in the household, this was not possible. Many households were headed by single women, while in several other households, one adult was unable to participate in the project due to time constraints, health reasons, or unwillingness. Thus, the subjective data was used to indicate extent of household participation because it was available for all respondents and it included all adults in the household.

The final measure of household participation was produced as a dichotomous categorization, indicating whether any other adults in the household had participated in resident council meetings or had voted in the last resident council election. If the respondent had answered affirmatively to either or both of these questions (Appendix A, items B9 and B14), then their household participation was coded as a 1. If the respondent answered negatively to both items, then their household participation was coded as a 0. The third question regarding a member of the household who held a position on the resident council was excluded because no Hmong respondents reported that they or anyone in their family held a position on the resident council.

Cultural Relevance. The relevance of existing participation opportunities for Hmong residents was assessed by four dichotomous questions: Do you think resident council meetings are important for yourself or other Hmong people? Do you think that participating in the resident council is worthwhile for Hmong people? Does the community center have activities or services that are interesting for Hmong people? And Does the community center have activities or services that are appropriate for Hmong people? (Appendix A, items B19, B22, B33, and B35). The responses to these items were summed (no = 0, yes = 1) to obtain a total cultural relevance score for each individual, with 0 indicating no relevance and 4 indicating that all participation

opportunities were culturally relevant ($\alpha = .63$). Sixteen respondents were unable to answer one or more of the items because they did not know either about the resident council meetings or community center activities and services. These “don’t know” responses were assigned a value of 0 because the purpose of this scale was to test the relationship between having participation opportunities that were culturally relevant and participation. Those individuals who were not aware of the opportunities available in their communities thus did not perceive or experience culturally relevant options.

Resource Variables

Language. The measure of language as a resource was measured subjectively as respondent’s perceptions of their ability or lack of ability to participate because of limited English and objectively by the researcher as respondents’ English comprehension and speaking abilities.

Subjective Language Assessment. Respondents were asked four dichotomous questions (Appendix A, items B18, B21, B31, and B36): Do you speak English well enough to attend resident council meetings? Do you understand what people are saying at resident council meetings when everyone is speaking English? Do you speak English well enough to participate in everything you would like to at the community center? And Is it difficult to go to the community center because everything that happens there is in English? The fourth item was reverse coded, and then the responses to these four items were summed to obtain a total language score ($\alpha = .91$), with 0 indicating that the individual believed she had no English language resources to participate and 4 indicating that the individual believed that she spoke well enough to participate in all activities in the community.

Objective Language Ability Assessment. The English language ability of each respondent was also assessed objectively at the end of the interview with five questions in English, which were created specifically for this study and were given to respondents by the researcher in increasing order of difficulty (Appendix A, items F1-F5). The techniques and knowledge possessed by the researcher as a long-time instructor of English as a Second Language were used to guide the development of these questions. The researcher judged whether the respondent understood each question (comprehension of questions was worth one point each) and then respondents received an additional point for each question to which they were able to respond appropriately in English. Thus, English ability was calculated on an eleven-point scale from 0=none to 10=fluent. In addition, separate scales were calculated for English comprehension (0 to 5) and English speaking ability (0 to 5). This method of English ability assessment was used to avoid inconsistent or underestimates of ability which might be likely from self-assessments, although it should be noted that it is different from the language scale discussed above which measured respondents' perceptions of possessing the English language ability necessary to enable them to participate.

Awareness. Awareness of opportunities for participation in the community was measured by four dichotomous items (Appendix A, items B16, B20, B30, and B34): Do you know what resident council meetings are? Do you know when and where resident council meetings are held? Do you know about the activities and services at the community center? And Do you know what day and time things happen at the community center? Responses to these four items were summed to produce an overall measure of

respondents' awareness of participation opportunities ($\alpha = .57$), with 0 indicating no awareness and 4 indicating awareness of all opportunities.

Time. The availability of time required for participation in the community was assessed by four dichotomous questions (Appendix A, items B17, B23, B32, and B37): Do you have time to attend resident council meetings? Are you able to attend resident council meetings at the time they are scheduled? Do you have time to go to the community center? And Are you busy during the hours when the community center is open? The fourth item was reverse coded. Responses to the four items were then summed to obtain a total score for time ($\alpha = .81$). Four individuals were unable to answer one of the items. For these respondents, their mean score on the other three items was calculated and then multiplied by four to obtain a comparable score.

Intergroup Relations

Intergroup relations was measured by assessments of intergroup relations by staff at each housing development and by the percent of intergroup incidents reported at each development. Each housing development had one site supervisor and one AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer. There was also one individual who served as the residents' initiatives coordinator for all three sites and spent significant time at each. These seven people were asked to complete a short survey (Appendices B, C and D).

Each supervisor was asked to assess the intergroup relations at their site by indicating their level of agreement with 13 items measured on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 6. The survey questions focused on the extent to which residents of different ethnic groups interacted with each other (e.g., Residents of Mt. Vernon interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group), got along with each other (e.g., Most of the problems

among residents at Mt. Vernon are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups), and treated each other equally and respectfully (e.g., The residents of Mt. Vernon respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity). In addition, they were asked about the total number of resident incidents reported at their site in the last three months and the number of these incidents which involved residents who were members of different racial or ethnic groups (see Appendix B). Although AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers were each assigned to a particular site, they worked closely at all three developments. Therefore, they, as well as the residents' initiatives coordinator, were asked to answer the same 13 questions about each development, for a total of 39 questions (see Appendices C and D). Two of the AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers assessed all three sites, but one volunteer felt capable of evaluating only two developments, but not the third.

Thus, two of the developments had a total of five intergroup relations assessment scores: one from each AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer, one from the resident initiatives coordinator, and one from the supervisor of that site, and one development had four intergroup relations assessment scores (two rather than three from AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers). The means of each individual's responses to the 13 items regarding each site were calculated in order to obtain intergroup relations scores for each site by each person who evaluated that site. Then the mean of those five (or four) mean scores was calculated to produce an overall intergroup relations score at each site. Coefficient alpha reliabilities could not be calculated for these scales because the number of respondents (five or four) was less than the number of items for each site (13).

The percent of racial/ethnic incidents at each site was calculated by dividing the number of racial/ethnic incidents reported in the last three months by the total number of incidents reported. However, it became clear during interviews with Hmong residents that many people do not report incidents or problems to the site supervisors. Therefore, the statistics kept by the site supervisors are unlikely to be accurate accounts of the actual number of incidents and there was no alternative way to validate that information. For this reason, the incident reports were not used in data analyses.

Data Analyses

To examine research question 1 (How do the Hmong participate in a multiethnic community?), open-ended questions about participation were content analyzed using a modified grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Analyzing data using grounded theory involves allowing themes to emerge from the data, rather than basing analysis on the researcher's ideas or beliefs about a topic. In this case, it was particularly important to check apriori assumptions about participants' experiences of participation, given that their background and culture differed substantially from that of the researcher. Concepts and themes that were found repeated in respondents' answers were identified and then grouped into larger, related categories. This method is important because the broader structural conditions in which phenomena are embedded also receive particular attention (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Respondents were asked eight open-ended questions: 1) How do you participate in this community? (In what ways do you help out your neighbors or the community? What activities are you involved in here? What meetings do you go to?), 2) (If you want to be more involved), in what ways do you want to be more involved?, 3) Why is (or why isn't)

your participation in the community here important?, 4) If you could change anything about (name of development), what would you change?, 5) What other things make it difficult for you to attend resident council meetings?, 6) What other things make it difficult for you to go to the community center?, 7) What programs, activities, or services would you like the community center to offer for you or your children? And 8) Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I haven't asked you about?

Respondents' answers to these questions appeared to overlap across questions, so their responses were combined to create a narrative for each individual. All of the narratives were read through once, and then re-read looking for themes. A comprehensive list of themes was created and then narratives were read for a third time and coded against the list. Once this thematic coding was completed, these individual codes were aggregated into more substantive themes, which reflected the underlying issues or factors discussed (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). These substantive themes are described below. To confirm the authenticity of this coding framework, an objective third party reviewed the original content analysis and coding framework.

Research question 2 (What factors are related to Hmong participation in a multiethnic community?) was examined in two steps, with the ultimate goal of identifying a linear model which explained the most variance. First, the reliability of each scale in the interview (including the scale of the dependent variable participation and the scales measuring the independent predictors) was computed using Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency. Correlations between each independent variable and participation were then computed and a correlation matrix was created. From this matrix, the factors which were related to participation were determined. Finally, using multiple

linear regression, the most strongly related factors were included in a series of regression equations to examine the relative relationships among them and to determine the model which explained the most variance. Because participation was operationalized in eight different ways (overall frequency of participation, participation/lack of participation in each of three types of participation, frequency of each type of participation, and breadth of participation), correlation matrices were created separately for each measure of participation. However, regression analyses were completed only for the central participation outcome (overall frequency of participation).

Research question 3 (Is participation in their broader community related to positive adjustment for the Hmong?) was examined by calculating the correlations between the happiness and distress subscales of the psychological adjustment measure and each of the eight measures of participation, and the correlations between employment status, the four indicators of education level and each of the eight measures of participation.

RESULTS

Descriptive

As a cultural minority in the United States and a recent refugee group, descriptive information about Hmong communities here is important. Although this study sampled a small percent of the approximately 3000 Hmong in Lansing, the characteristics of these respondents help to illuminate the current situation of one group of Hmong refugees. Of the 54 Hmong residents interviewed, 59% were female and 41% were male. Eighty-one percent were married, 13% were separated or widowed and 6% had never been married. The average age was 46 and the average number of children of each respondent was 6.6 (with a range from 0 to 16). In terms of employment, 44% were employed and 43% identified childcare as their primary role. Of those who were employed, one was a professional (nurse) and the rest worked in factories, supermarkets, or as janitors, cooks, or bus drivers.

Respondents had an average of 6.6 years of education (2.3 years in Thailand/Laos and 4.1 years in the United States). Seventeen percent had no formal education, 85% had no degree, 11% had a high school diploma or GED, and 4% had a college degree (B.A., B.S. or Associates). Seventeen percent of respondents were U.S. citizens and 83% were not (although 74% indicated their desire to take classes to prepare them to pass the citizenship exam). Fifty-nine percent were literate in Hmong and 39% were literate in English, which means that 41% of respondents were not literate in any language. Ninety-one percent said they spoke only Hmong at home and 54% spoke only Hmong outside the home as well.

Question 1 – Self-Definitions of Involvement

In order to understand the ways in which Hmong residents participated in their communities, as well as aspects of their participation experiences, it was important to allow respondents to speak in their own words. Often, the voices of refugees are not heard. Particularly because of language differences, they are often overlooked or invisible. What do Hmong residents say about their participation experiences? How do they value participation? What do they do? What barriers do they face? What do they want?

Below are the substantive themes that emerged across the informants in regards to these questions (see Table 3 for summary of frequencies). What developed was a story of a group of individuals who valued participation and wanted to be involved in their communities, but who were often precluded from meaningful participation because of numerous individual and community barriers. Because of the numerous barriers they experienced, these individuals had many needs and desires both for further involvement and for improvements in their communities.

Importance/Value

The Hmong respondents highly valued participation in their community: 94% said their participation was important, although almost 19% qualified this statement by highlighting that their participation was important only if they could understand and communicate. Respondents identified both individual and community reasons for the importance of participation.

Importance for self. Forty-six percent of respondents felt that participation was important for individual reasons. Participation was valued as important because

Table 3 – Frequencies of Qualitative Themes

Theme	Frequency
Importance/Value of Participation	94%
Important for Self	46%
Important for Community	54%
Current Participation in Community	48%
Formal Participation	22%
Informal Participation	28%
Desire for More Involvement	74%
Former Participation	13%
Individual Barriers to Participation	94%
Language	83%
Time Constraints	44%
Lack of Self-Efficacy	15%
Old Age	7%
Limited Time at Housing Development	7%
Lack of Motivation	7%
Lack of Awareness	6%
Community Barriers to Participation	70%
Discrimination/Intergroup Relations	28%
Not Asked/Welcomed	24%
No Translators	22%
No Childcare	20%
No Voice	9%
Safety	7%
Lack of Resident Council Effectiveness	6%
Expressed Needs/Desires	81%
Opportunities for Children	54%
Personal Development	44%
Improved Intergroup Relations	30%
Material Needs	30%
Community Enhancement	24%
General Assistance	11%
Satisfaction with Life in the United States/Community	13%
Difficult Life in the United States	6%

individuals perceived it as a way for them to learn and acquire knowledge (i.e., English, American laws), to gain experience, to raise their awareness about their community, to be involved with their children, and to get exercise. Others believed that participation was important to ensure that other people would like or respect them, know them, and help them. In their own words:

“I believe that if you participate, you will get more experience and this will help you.”

“It’s very important because you know what’s going on around you.”

“If you are involved, you will know more about the place where you live.”

“It’s important because if they teach American laws and rules, it’s important for me to know them.”

“...if you participate then a lot of people know you and they know you’re good and more people help you and you don’t have a lot of trouble.”

Importance for Community. Respondents also felt that participation was very important for the broader community of the housing development in which they lived, and 54% of respondents talked about this. They valued participation because it involved working together, helping others, disciplining children together, maintaining good relations among community members, and being a part of the community. As several respondents said:

“It’s important because being part of the residents here you must be able to participate here – for the better of the group.”

“Everyone working together is important. It’s like a table, if it has only two legs it won’t work. It needs four legs to stand.”

“Helping others and them helping you is the most important thing about living here.”

“If you live together you should help each other and participate so you can be part of the community.”

“It’s important because living together, you should participate in whatever they have so everyone will get along.”

Although respondents recognized different reasons for its importance, community participation was clearly valued by most people. Some emphasized its value for themselves as individuals, while others focused on its importance for the community. Knowing its importance to Hmong residents, how did they describe their participation?

Ways of Participating

When Hmong residents were asked how they participated in their housing development communities, more than half (52%) reported that they did not participate at all. However, the other 48% of respondents mentioned both formal and informal ways in which they were involved in their communities.

Formal Participation. Twenty-two percent of respondents identified formal ways in which they participated, such as attending resident council meetings and other activities at the center, helping to clean or improve the neighborhood, and volunteering at the community center to clean the laundry room or to help with the Head Start program there.

“I go to meetings, I volunteer to help clean up around the neighborhood and office.”

“I go to meetings whenever I’m home and I know about them, and I share whatever I see around the neighborhood that’s not right, that should be changed.”

“I participate in programs and listen. Then, if they don’t have anything else, I come home. Some families don’t go to the activities, but we do. I also volunteer to help clean the laundry room.”

“Sometimes if there are meetings and my daughter-in-law goes, I go with her, but I don’t understand anything.”

Informal Participation. Respondents were slightly more likely to mention other, more informal ways in which they were involved. Twenty-eight percent of Hmong residents talked about helping their neighbors, relatives and other Hmong in their developments and gardening in the community:

“I have a garden and I always give my neighbors corn and vegetables. When the neighbors fight, sometimes the wife makes the husband leave the house. Then I bring her food.”

“I watch the neighbors’ kids when they play outside, make sure they don’t run into the street.”

“I’m a bad one. I don’t go to meetings or participate in anything. Sometimes if my neighbors need help, I help them.”

“I take care of the Hmong neighbors’ kids.”

“Sometimes Hmong neighbors can’t talk to their landlord so I help them translate. I do what I can.”

Desire for More Involvement. Although the majority of respondents were not involved in the community or were involved in limited ways, most wished that they were more involved. Twenty-eight of those interviewed (52%) reported that they did not participate at all in the community, and most people felt that they could not participate in the community to the extent they would have liked because of the many barriers they faced. However, 40 respondents (74%) wished they were more involved in the community:

“I want to be more involved. If there is anything I can help with, I will. Anything that I can do without talking.”

“If there were things I knew how to do, I would like to get more involved. I’m not sure what those things are.”

“I would like to participate around the neighborhood as long as someone could translate to me and tell me what they needed help with.”

Former Participation. Related to the limited participation of Hmong residents in the community, 13% of respondents mentioned that they had participated in the past, but, because of barriers or frustrations, no longer were involved in the community or went to meetings. These respondents had tried to participate, but their efforts were thwarted:

“I went to meetings before, but when you have a question, they don’t let you say. I raise my hand, but others raise their hands and talk first. The meetings don’t help me, so it wastes my time.”

“Every time they have a meeting, if I go, I just sit there and don’t understand anything, so I don’t go.”

“Two years ago, I volunteered to pick up trash around the buildings, but now they changed managers, and it seems like the new manager doesn’t want any help.”

Although residents were involved in their communities in both formal and informal ways, their participation was limited, which led many residents to express interest in being more involved. For other residents, their participation was frustrating and not meaningful, which led them to end their involvement in the community. Either way, the barriers they faced were a fundamental aspect of their participation experiences.

Barriers to Participation

Respondents discussed numerous barriers that precluded their participation or made it difficult to be actively involved in their community. They mentioned both individual and community barriers. The most frequently mentioned barriers are discussed below.

Individual Barriers. All but three respondents (94%) experienced individual barriers to participation, which are attributes of individual residents that inhibit or

preclude their involvement in the community. These included lack of English language ability, time constraints, lack of self-efficacy, old age, limited time of residence at the housing development, lack of motivation, lack of awareness of participation opportunities, lack of education, disability, cultural gender norms, and poor health.

Language. As would be expected among recent refugee groups, language differences posed great problems for Hmong respondents. Eighty-three percent identified language as a barrier. Residents felt that they could not attend meetings, could not understand meetings, could not express their ideas, and could not really be a part of the community because they could not speak English. Their expressions of the frustration and difficulties accompanying these language barriers are evident in the following statements (translated from Hmong):

“The reason that I don’t go to meetings is that I can’t speak the language. Even if I have a good idea, I can’t tell them so I just stay home and keep it to myself.”

“I think when I speak English very well and understand then I will be more involved. Some people who don’t know me talk very fast or don’t explain what they’re saying. They have no time to explain to you so it’s hard.”

“The problem is the language. If you don’t know how to talk, they think you are lazy. For example, think about bulls fighting. One has long horns and one has short horns. The one with short horns is going to get hurt more. It’s the same with smarter people. In this country, people compete everyday.”

“If you understand English then you can participate and it would be important, but if you can’t understand anything then it’s not important. You should at least know the language before you can participate. It’s difficult for me to participate.”

“I can’t speak English so it takes me away from the group because I don’t understand what they’re saying.”

“If I could speak English, I would go. But if I go now I feel stupid because I can’t understand.”

“I go to meetings and sign my name, but I don’t understand. Then the meetings finish and everyone stands up and goes home. When everyone claps their hands, I clap my hands too.”

Not only did the lack of English language ability experienced by many residents prevent them from participating in the community, it also compounded other barriers and often created additional ones.

Time Constraints. Forty-four percent of Hmong residents described not having enough time to participate in the community. Some were busy working or attending to other responsibilities:

“We’re working so we don’t have time to be involved in the community.”

“For me, I have no time because I work most of the time...There are so many other things I have to do...if I’m free I will go, but if not, the other Hmong families here will share the information with me.”

Taking care of children also precluded many respondents from participating:

“Since my wife works, I take care of the kids so it’s hard for me to participate. If there was childcare, I would be available to participate in activities.”

“My children need me to take care of their children so they can go to work or school.”

Lack of Self-Efficacy. In part due to language differences and lack of familiarity with the community, 15% residents felt that they were not able to participate or make changes in their community. They believed that they did not have the abilities or skills necessary to participate:

“If there was something I could do, I would participate, but other than that, I don’t participate.”

“There doesn’t seem to be anything that I can do or help with...If there was anything that I could do, I would volunteer to help.”

Old Age. Several residents mentioned that they were too old to participate in the community; 7% did not believe that, at their age, they had anything to contribute.

One woman said:

“I feel sorry because I’m old. When you’re young, you have something to add and can participate, but I’m too old so I don’t think they would want me anyway.”

Others felt that the responsibility for community involvement belonged to their children:

“Because I’m old, I don’t know what to change. Whatever our children want to change, we let them.”

Limited Time at Housing Development. Another barrier experienced by some residents was the limited amount of time they had lived in their community. Seven percent of respondents indicated that they did not feel that they could or should participate because they were too new at their particular housing development:

“I’m new here so I don’t think it’s right for me to go looking around.”

“I just moved here last year and I didn’t know a lot of neighbors here...I would like to be more involved because my children go to the center there.”

Lack of Motivation. For various reasons, seven percent of Hmong respondents indicated that they lacked the motivation or desire to be involved in their communities. Some preferred spending their time in other ways:

“I used to take a lot of classes, but right now I just want to enjoy myself and relax.”

“There are so many other things I have to do. It [going to meetings] isn’t a priority for me, so if I’m free I will go, but if not, the other Hmong families here will share the information with me.”

Others were not motivated because they did not perceive their participation to be worthwhile for themselves:

“I have too many problems for myself already. I don’t need to go listen to more.”

“I just don’t feel like I want to go because there is nothing important there to be involved in.”

Lack of Awareness of Participation Opportunities. Six percent of Hmong respondents specifically mentioned that they were not aware of the activities in their communities or opportunities for participation. Often, they suggested this was because they could not speak English and/or were illiterate:

“I don’t know because I don’t speak English and I don’t know what’s going on.”

“Because I don’t know how to read so sometimes I don’t know when the meetings are.”

“I don’t really know what’s going on here.”

Community Barriers. Hmong respondents did not feel that it was only their own individual abilities, resources, and characteristics which made participation difficult for them. Seventy percent also identified aspects of the community which were barriers to their involvement. Community barriers are characteristics of the community or supports lacking in the community which inhibit or preclude individuals’ participation. These included discrimination and harassment by neighbors and center staff, not being heard or listened to by the community, not being asked or welcomed to participate in the community, not having translators available, not having childcare available, lack of effectiveness of resident council meetings, and unsafe conditions.

Discrimination/Intergroup Relations. Twenty-eight percent of Hmong residents identified discrimination or poor treatment by members of other racial/ethnic groups as major barriers to their participation. They experienced this discrimination in meetings, at activities and services held at the community centers, and more generally in

the community. For some, discrimination made it difficult to participate, while for others, it made them not want to participate at all.

“The black people are on the top and you are on the bottom. You have to help yourself first. The police won’t help us. That’s why the meetings don’t help. If you’re very smart and can speak English well then Americans will help you and work together, but if not, forget it.”

“I wouldn’t like to get involved because I’m not a citizen so sometimes people treat me differently than white or black people.”

“If Hmong people go to the meetings or not, it doesn’t matter. Their opinion isn’t counted. There is discrimination now, so Hmong opinions don’t count.”

“There used to be a lot of white people at the community center, but right now mostly black people work and go to the community center, and the police are black, so we don’t go there as much anymore. The black kids sometimes hit the Hmong kids for no reason at all, so the Hmong kids are afraid of them.”

Not Asked/Welcomed. Another barrier that was frequently mentioned was that residents felt they were not asked or invited to participate in the community. Twenty-four percent did not feel that the community was open or receptive to their participation because they were not specifically asked to participate:

“They haven’t asked me anything, so I haven’t done anything.”

“I don’t participate in anything because they don’t ask us. We feel that they do not welcome us to participate here.”

However, respondents were willing to participate, if they felt welcomed and were personally invited:

“If they came to ask me to participate in any activities, I would. But according to my opinion, they already have people to participate and they don’t need me.”

“I would like to participate if they ask me. If they don’t ask me, I probably wouldn’t go.”

No Translators. Hmong residents not only experienced limited English ability as an individual barrier, but also talked about the lack of translators in the community as a barrier to their participation. This is closely related to the theme of individual language barriers discussed above. However, it is different in that it specifically highlights something that is lacking in the community that precludes Hmong residents' participation. If translators were available, Hmong residents could be involved in the community regardless of their English ability. Twenty-two percent of respondents specifically mentioned translators:

"I don't go to meetings because there is no translator."

"If there was a translator, I would participate in anything they have here."

"We don't participate at all because it's too difficult because of the language barrier and there is no translator."

No Childcare. Twenty percent of residents said they would participate in community activities if childcare were available. Although this is related to the individual barrier of not having enough time to participate, it is distinct because it involves specific requests for childcare to be provided by the community to enable residents to participate. In the words of several parents:

"If there was childcare, I would be available to participate in activities."

"I'm busy with my children. I have to take care of my children. If I had a babysitter, I'm willing to participate."

No Voice. Nine percent of residents believed that their voice was not listened to or heard in the community. They thus felt that it was not worthwhile for them to participate in the community:

“We don’t do that much because the problem is they’re picking on us and we don’t feel good. Also, we don’t know the language and when we talk to them, they turn away from us and we don’t think they want us to be involved with them. Very rarely do I go to meetings. We see a lot of papers saying, ‘meeting, meeting’, but we ignore them because if you don’t know the language well, I don’t think they will listen to you.”

“They don’t listen to me, so I don’t go anymore. I told two police at a meeting that we needed a crosswalk from Turner to the liquor store across the street because a lot of children go there to buy candy. They didn’t listen to me, and a few months later, a black child was run over there. It was very sad.”

Respondents also felt they had no voice in the community because events in the community were beyond their control:

“Whatever they do, we have to follow. There’s nothing I want to change.”

“I have nothing to change, and we don’t really have a choice to change or not to change.”

Safety. Unsafe conditions in the neighborhood were mentioned by 7% of respondents as a barrier to their participation. Violent crime and drug dealing worried some residents and impeded their participation. Residents felt that if conditions improved, they would be more likely to participate:

“If there was safety, I would like to participate in whatever they do.”

Lack of Council Effectiveness. Finally, 6% of residents expressed their frustration with the resident council meetings and other activities and services in the community. They felt that these programs were not effective at improving the community or solving community problems. As one long-time resident said:

“According to my opinion, as I have lived here for seven or eight years, I don’t see that the center has helped. I don’t feel that the center can accomplish anything or help. Why could something happen now, if it hasn’t yet?”

Another resident who used to participate in resident council meetings, but was no longer involved, commented:

“Resident council meetings are a lot of talk and no action.”

The barriers faced by residents were obviously numerous. Most respondents mentioned multiple factors, both individual and community, which prevented them from becoming involved in the community. Others had participated in the past, but had ended their involvement because language barriers or discrimination precluded meaningful participation. Unfortunately, these barriers made participation difficult for most Hmong residents.

Expressed Needs/Desires

Because most respondents faced extensive barriers and were not able to participate in many community activities, they had numerous unfulfilled needs. They hoped for activities and services that focused on increased opportunities for their children, their own personal development, improvement of intergroup relations, increased provisions of material needs, and enhancement of their communities. They had the opportunity to express these needs when asked what, if anything, they would like to change in their community and what programs, activities, or services they would like their community center to offer.

Opportunities for Children. More than half of respondents (54%) had numerous desires related to improving the opportunities available to their children and prospects for their children’s futures. A common request was for programs that could help their children to be good people:

“For the children, I would like after school programs for them to learn. I would also like a program to teach our children to be good people and get along with others.”

“I want them to teach our kids how to be good. I want them to help our kids find jobs.”

Parents also hoped for additional tutoring or homework help, job training, weekend programs, money for college, and organized fieldtrips for their children. Some parents felt that programs and activities at the community center should focus solely on their children:

“Anything that the center can provide for my children, such as classes, I am willing to accept. My hope is for my children so I prefer activities and services for my children rather than for me.”

Personal Development. Forty-four percent of Hmong residents expressed interest in educational, recreational, and health programs that would enhance their own personal development. In terms of education, they requested English, math, citizenship, and Hmong literacy classes, job training/assistance, and computer training. As one woman said:

“We’re hoping to find someone who can come and teach English and math to the Hmong women here. There are a lot of Hmong women here who want to learn. We would also like training to prepare us for better jobs. If we don’t have training, no one will hire us and we won’t have money to feed our families.”

Recreation and health programs mentioned included adult exercise classes, programs for adults to get together to share and discuss problems, senior citizen activities, and health classes for the whole family. One woman suggested:

“If they had some program where one or two times a week, all the old people get together. Let’s say we prepare some food and come together and just talk about life. I believe this would help decrease our stress.”

Improved Intergroup Relations. Another common concern among respondents was poor relations among members of different ethnic and racial groups. In addition to expressing their problems with neighbors, 30% of Hmong residents hoped for programs that would help improve the negative relations:

“I would like some programs to help neighbors get along because we have some problems with our black neighbors. The children of some of the black people are mean. They hit the old people.”

“Once in a while bad people come with knives and break our windows. There’s some black families who have young children who bother all the neighbors and me too. When I come home from work, they stand by my car and make fun of me or hit me. Some black children step on all my flowers. I’ve told the manager, but the manager doesn’t seem to care. I think maybe the kids would be afraid if I told the police. I would like someone to help everyone get along.”

“I would like to have a council of people to look out for everyone. Some people would be from each group, Hmong, Vietnamese, American, African American, to share and solve problems together.”

Material Needs. As might be expected in any low income community, many respondents (30%) expressed desires for material items, including food, toys, clothing and jackets, furniture, school supplies, childcare, carpeting, and more computers in the computer centers. One resident said:

“I would like food for the old people, especially fresh meat. I would like toys for the children also.”

Community Enhancement. Twenty-four percent of Hmong residents were also very concerned with ways in which to improve their communities. They expressed desires for a neighborhood that was safer and quieter, an end to drug dealing, and more Hmong neighbors:

“It’s too noisy... I would like people to stay quiet and not make a lot of noise for other people. Some people need to sleep at night.”

“I wish there were more Hmong people on this side [of the housing development]. I would also like the drug dealing to stop.”

“I would like to move to a place where I didn’t meet bad people...Sometimes the older kids play basketball until one or two in the morning and the noise keeps us awake. Some of the younger kids bother and hit our kids when they play on the playground.”

They also wanted improved relations with the manager at each development. Many felt that their manager did not care about their needs or problems and discriminated against Hmong people:

“...the manager didn’t seem to care about our feelings. I would like someone who cared about our needs.”

“Actually, I would like to change the manager. I would like someone who could help and understand, who would listen to our problems and help us rather than argue back to us and tell us it’s our problem.”

“I just don’t like the manager...Sometimes I feel she needs to learn more communication and how to listen more.”

General Assistance. Finally, 11% of Hmong residents did not necessarily identify specific desires or needs, but stated that they hoped for any help available to them:

“We are hoping for any program, any service, any help – we are willing to accept it.”

Life in the United States

Although the focus of most questions was on residents’ participation in the housing development where they lived, some people talked more broadly about their experiences of living and participating in life in the United States. One respondent expressed satisfaction with his life here:

“I appreciate the way we live in America. In Laos, if you want to have a fire, you have to do it yourself. If you want to go somewhere, you have to use your feet and walk. Here in America, you just get in your car and drive. So I appreciate it

here. The reason I'm happy is that all my children have their own families, and I don't have anything to worry about."

Others (13%) were satisfied with life in their communities and indicated that there was nothing they wished to change:

"I'm satisfied here."

"I'm satisfied with what we have right now."

However, another 6% of respondents focused on the difficulties of life in the United States:

"Sometimes we meet American people who may think we want to come to America. We were very happy in Laos, but because of the war, we had to come here and leave Laos. In America, it's not like Laos. The old people suffer. They don't have jobs. Some of them want to die because they have no food. Please tell other Americans this."

"Right now we have a lot of problems...Buying a house, why does it cost double if you don't have the money? It seems like double, not interest, but some people know how to cheat people and they keep doing it. You pay some tax for the government and that's fine, and some interest, but it's more than that. I feel bad with that because you can't own a house and you have minimum wage. I don't think you can buy a house."

"Maybe in my next life I will be born an American with a good education. This life is hard for me. I don't like to talk about it because then the tears will come down my face."

These perspectives are likely to influence individuals' decisions about community involvement in different ways.

Clearly, Hmong respondents had a lot to say. They seemed happy to find someone who wanted to listen to them talk about their experiences in their communities. Residents talked about the value and importance of community participation, the ways in which they participated, barriers they experienced, their desires for their communities, and life in general in the United States. They expressed ideas that were not anticipated

and thus were not included in the other sections of the interview. Without the opportunity to put their experiences in their own words, much of this information would have been missed. Therefore, it was important to have asked these open-ended questions.

Question 2 – Predictors of Participation

The second aspect of this study was to understand what factors were related to Among residents' formal participation in multiethnic housing developments. According to the definition of formal participation in the quantitative section of the interview, 59% of respondents participated in their community in some formal capacity¹. Thirty-five percent participated in the resident council, with 33% having attended a resident council meeting in the last year, only 9% having voted in the last resident council election, and none holding an elected position on any of the resident councils. In terms of participating in programs, activities or services at the community center, 35% of respondents were involved. Volunteering was the rarest form of participation (11%), with only 6% of respondents having helped plan or organize an event at the community center in the last year and 7% having donated time or materials to an event or program at the center.

In this study, participation was conceptualized and operationalized in eight different ways. First of all, it is important to consider the overall frequency of participation across all three types of formal participation. This is an indicator of overall participation rates. However, because there were three conceptually distinct avenues of formal participation in these communities (resident council, community center activities,

¹ This percent is greater than the percent of respondents who reported in the qualitative section of the interview that they participated in their community. This discrepancy is explored in the Discussion. However, it is appropriate to base the following analyses on the quantitative data, which includes an assessment of all formal participation opportunities in the community and is more comprehensive.

and volunteering), it is also important to examine the presence or absence of each type of participation and the frequency of each type of participation separately. Finally, it is important to consider the breadth of participation, which indicates how many different ways an individual is involved in their community. Therefore, although the main focus is on overall frequency of participation, the relationship of each of the eight indicators of participation to the five types of variables examined in this study (demographic, social psychological, cultural, resource, and contextual) is discussed. The means, modes, standard deviations, minimum and maximum of all participation measures are presented in Table 4. The means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum of all other variables used in the analyses are presented in Table 5. The correlation matrix of participation variables is presented in Table 6, and the correlation of all other variables is presented in Table 7.

Table 4 – Descriptive Statistics for Participation Items and Scales

Variable	Mean	Mode	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Individual Items</i>					
Resident Council Meetings (frequency)	.86	0	1.84	0	10.00
Vote in Council Election (dichotomous)	.09	0	.29	0	1.00
Community Center Activities (frequency)	1.66	0	4.59	0	30.00
Plan/Organize Activities (dichotomous)	.06	0	.23	0	1.00
Donate Time/Materials (dichotomous)	.07	0	.26	0	1.00
<i>Participation</i>					
Overall Frequency of Participation (z-score)	0	-.33	.65	-.33	2.30
Breadth of Participation	.91	0	1.03	0	4.00
<i>Resident Council Participation</i>					
Yes/No	.35	0	.48	0	1.00
Frequency	0	-.39	.90	-.39	4.03
<i>Volunteering</i>					
Yes/No	.11	0	.32	0	1.00
Frequency	0	-.18	.92	-.18	6.08
<i>Community Center Activities</i>					
Yes/No	.35	0	.48	0	1.00
Frequency	1.66	0	4.59	0	30.00

Table 5 - Descriptive Statistics of Variables Used in Analyses

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Demographic</i>				
Age	46.26	14.78	19.00	78.00
Age of Immigration	34.51	14.66	12.17	66.17
Time at Development (years)	5.90	4.53	.58	16.08
Time in the United States (years)	11.63	5.93	3.75	22.50
Household Size	6.83	2.93	2.00	11.00
<i>Social Psychological</i>				
Overall Sense of Community	2.41	.90	.57	4.50
Within-Group Sense of Community	3.41	1.05	.88	5.00
<i>Cultural</i>				
Acculturation (<i>Assimilation</i>)	4.94	1.24	1.00	6.00
Acculturation (<i>Biculturalism</i>)	5.24	.97	1.00	6.00
Acculturation (<i>Traditionalism</i>)	3.57	1.40	1.00	6.00
Cultural Norms for Participation	.94	.24	0	1.00
Gender Norms for Participation	3.09	1.77	1.00	6.00
Household Participation	.30	.46	0	1.00
Cultural Relevance of Participation	3.09	1.11	0	4.00
<i>Resources</i>				
Language (subjective)	1.13	1.59	0	4.00
Language (objective)	6.69	3.45	0	10.00
Awareness	1.31	1.22	0	4.00
Time	2.55	1.48	0	4.00
<i>Adjustment</i>				
Psyc. Adjustment (<i>Happiness</i>)	2.62	1.27	0	5.00
Psyc. Adjustment (<i>Distress</i>)	2.13	1.50	0	5.00
Employment Status	.44	.50	0	1.00
Total Years of Education	6.57	7.23	0	39.00
Years of Education – Thailand/Laos	2.32	3.66	0	15.00
Years of Education – United States	4.11	4.58	0	25.00
Educational Degree	1.22	.63	1	4.00

Table 6 - Correlation Matrix for Predictors of Participation

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 Age	1.00																	
2 Age of Immigration	.92*	1.00																
3 Time at Development	.21	-.01	1.00															
4 Time in the U.S.	.22	-.18	.56*	1.00														
5 Household Size	-.46*	-.42*	-.12	-.07	1.00													
6 Overall Sense of Community	.19	.14	.03	.15	-.09	1.00												
7 Within-Group Sense of Com.	.34*	.31*	.14	.11	-.19	.55*	1.00											
8 Acculturation (Assimilation)	.06	.20	-.40*	-.33*	-.08	.12	.07	1.00										
9 Acculturation (Biculturalism)	.05	.08	.09	-.08	.11	.02	.44*	-.05	1.00									
10 Acculturation (Traditionalism)	-.25	-.19	.11	-.17	.27*	-.19	.08	-.18	.36*	1.00								
11 Cultural Norms	-.05	-.06	-.04	.02	.19	.08	-.03	-.02	-.02	.12	1.00							
12 Gender Norms	-.34*	-.32*	.06	-.04	.41*	-.10	-.26	-.19	.11	.14	.25	1.00						
13 Household Participation	.16	.13	.15	.09	.23	-.24	-.11	-.17	.09	.02	.16	.22	1.00					
14 Cultural Relevance	-.06	.03	.04	-.13	-.04	.13	.05	.25	-.11	.00	-.10	.04	-.02	1.00				
15 Language (Subjective)	-.42*	-.55*	.16	.32*	.20	-.06	-.15	-.28*	-.08	-.04	.00	.18	.09	.19	1.00			
16 Language (Objective)	-.57*	-.73*	.14	.41*	.33*	-.09	-.29*	-.25	-.17	.10	-.09	.26	.08	.04	.46*	1.00		

Table 6 (cont'd)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17 Awareness	-.02	-.10	.25	.20	.09	.14	.11	-.18	.03	.09	.16	.24	.15	.35*	.36*	.19	1.00	
18 Time	.33*	.38*	-.07	-.11	-.05	.17	.20	.10	-.06	-.03	.42*	-.02	.13	-.27*	-.35*	-.43*	-.02	1.00

* p < .05

Table 7 - Correlation Matrix for Eight Participation Outcomes

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Overall Frequency of Participation	1.00							
2 Resident Council (yes/no)	.61*	1.00						
3 Resident Council (frequency)	.76*	.92*	1.00					
4 Volunteering (yes/no)	.90*	.48*	.61*	1.00				
5 Volunteering (frequency)	.86*	.45*	.54*	.95*	1.00			
6 Community Center (yes/no)	.16	-.06	-.07	.11	.15	1.00		
7 Community Center (frequency)	.34*	.17	.12	.05	.10	.49*	1.00	
8 Breadth of Participation	.86*	.71*	.78*	.78*	.78*	.48*	.34*	1.00

*p<.05

Overall Frequency of Participation

Initial analyses examined the relationships between overall frequency of participation (including resident council participation, involvement in community center activities, and volunteering) and demographic, social psychological, cultural, and resource variables. The results are presented below.

Demographic Variables. None of the five demographic variables included in the analyses were significantly correlated with overall frequency of participation: age ($r=-.07$, n.s.), age of immigration ($r=-.06$, n.s.), length of residence at housing development ($r=.11$, n.s.), length of time in the United States ($r=-.02$, n.s.), and household size ($r=.22$, n.s.) (see Table 8). However, these correlations were subsequently corrected for attenuation due to measurement error of the participation scale. The low reliability of the

overall frequency of participation scale ($\alpha = .65$) compromised the ability to observe the true relationship between participation and the demographic variables. In addition, the small sample size made it more difficult to observe significant correlations.

Therefore, because our interest is in the theoretical relationship between participation and the demographic variables, it is appropriate to correct for attenuation using Hunter and Schmidt's method (1990). In this method, the observed correlation was divided by the square root of the reliability of the participation scale. If the correlation was between two scale variables, the correlation would be divided by the product of the square roots of both reliabilities.

After such corrections, the relationship between household size and frequency of participation was significant ($r=.27, p<.05$); individuals with large households were more likely to participate frequently in the community. In order to further understand this relationship, the correlations between number of adults in the household and number of children in the household with participation were calculated. Individuals with a greater number of adults living in their household were more likely to participate ($r=.33, p<.05$). After correction for attenuation, this correlation increased ($r=.41, p<.05$). However the number of children in an individual's household was not related to participation either before ($r=.12, n.s.$) or after correction for attenuation ($r=.15, n.s.$). Thus, it was not necessarily the size of the household that was important, but rather the number of adults living in the household. Individuals who live in large households with a greater number of adults are more likely to participate, while individuals who live in larger households with a greater number of children are not.

Table 8 – Correlations of Participation Measures and Predictors

Variable	Overall Freq.	RC yes/no	RC Freq.	Vol. yes/no	Vol. Freq.	CC yes/no	CC Freq.	Total Breadth
<i>Demographic</i>								
Age	-.07 -.09	-.03 ---	.03 ---	-.05 ---	-.15 ---	.15 ---	-.13 ---	.04 ---
Age of Immigration	-.06 -.07	-.08 ---	.03 ---	-.07 ---	-.12 ---	.08 ---	-.07 ---	-.02 ---
Time at Development	.11 .14	.30* ---	.10 ---	.14 ---	.04 ---	.09 ---	-.01 ---	.22 ---
Time in the United States	-.02 -.02	.14 ---	.02 ---	.07 ---	-.07 ---	.21 ---	-.14 ---	.15 ---
Household Size	.22 .27*	.31* ---	.33* ---	.10 ---	.04 ---	-.05 ---	-.02 ---	.23 ---
# of adults	.33* .41*	.31* ---	.46* ---	.21 ---	.15 ---	-.09 ---	-.06 ---	.30* ---
# of children	.12 .15	.23 ---	.25 ---	.04 ---	.02 ---	-.03 ---	.00 ---	.15 ---
<i>Social Psychological</i>								
Overall Sense of Community	.06 .09	.10 .12	.05 .06	.05 .06	-.06 -.07	.17 .20	.05 .06	.16 ---
Within-Group Sense of Community	.11 .15	.02 .02	.13 .14	.15 .16	-.01 -.01	.19 .20	-.02 -.02	.15 ---
<i>Cultural</i>								
Acculturation (Assimilation)	.07 .09	.03 ---	.07 ---	.06 ---	-.04 ---	-.13 ---	.08 ---	-.03 ---
Acculturation (Biculturalism)	.07 .09	.06 ---	.15 ---	.03 ---	-.25 ---	.14 ---	.09 ---	.10 ---
Acculturation (Traditionalism)	.03 .04	.03 ---	.12 ---	.02 ---	-.13 ---	-.17 ---	-.09 ---	-.04 ---
Cultural Norms for Participation	.10 .12	.02 ---	.06 ---	.09 ---	.05 ---	.01 ---	.07 ---	.06 ---
Gender Norms for Participation	.25 .31*	.34* ---	.17 ---	.12 ---	.01 ---	.05 ---	.32* ---	.29* ---
Men	.40 .50*	.48* ---	.56* ---	.20 ---	.20 ---	-.44* ---	-.38 ---	.27 ---
Women	.17 .21	.26 ---	.22 ---	.07 ---	.08 ---	.30 ---	.43* ---	.29 ---
Household Participation	.13 .16	.20 ---	.21 ---	.16 ---	-.11 ---	.03 ---	-.13 ---	.22 ---
Cultural Relevance of Participation	.23 .36*	.15 .19	.16 .20	.19 .24	.14 .18	.06 .08	.17 .21	.21 ---

Table 8 (cont'd)

Variable	Overall Freq.	RC yes/no	RC Freq.	Vol. yes/no	Vol. Freq.	CC yes/no	CC Freq.	Total Breadth
<i>Resources</i>								
Language	.10	-.02	.15	.18	.04	.03	-.14	.10
(subjective)	<i>.13</i>	-.02	.16	.19	.04	.03	-.15	---
Language	-.01	.11	-.01	.02	-.04	-.10	-.05	.00
(objective)	<i>-.01</i>	.11	-.01	.02	-.04	-.10	-.05	---
Awareness of	.49*	.26	.47*	.40*	.13	.10	.17	.43*
Opportunities	<i>.81*</i>	.34*	.62*	.53*	.17	.13	.23	---
Time	.20	.12	.16	.15	.18	.02	.06	.18
	<i>.28*</i>	.13	.18	.17	.20	.02	.07	---

* p<.05

Note: *Italics* indicate correlation when corrected for attenuation due to measurement error of one scale.

Bold italics indicate correlation corrected for attenuation due to measurement error of both scales.

Although only one of the demographic variables was related to participation, many were related to other variables in expected ways. Age and age of immigration were highly correlated ($r=.92$). Although age and age of immigration were not related to participation, they were both highly correlated with English ability ($r=-.57$, $r=-.73$), English literacy ($r=-.41$, $r=-.51$), Hmong literacy ($r=-.46$, $r=-.50$), language resources to participate ($r=-.42$, $r=-.55$), time resources ($r=.33$, $r=.38$), employment status ($r=-.36$, $r=-.28$) and household size ($r=-.46$, $r=-.42$). Older respondents and those who immigrated to the United States at an older age were less likely to be literate in Hmong or English, to speak and comprehend English, to feel they had the English language resources necessary to participate, to be employed, and to have large households, but more likely to have time to participate.

Length of time in the United States was positively related to length of time at housing development ($r=.56$). It was also related to English ability ($r=.41$), English language resources to participate ($r=.32$), number of children ($r=.35$) and years of education in the United States ($r=.45$). Length of time in the United States was negatively related to a preference for assimilation as an acculturation strategy ($r=-.33$). The longer respondents had lived in the United States, the more likely they were to speak and understand English, have the language resources necessary to participate in their communities, have a greater number of children, and have more education in the United States. They were also less likely to believe in assimilation as a preferred acculturation strategy.

In addition to its positive relationship with length of time in the United States (discussed above), the length of time residents had lived at the housing development was positively related to respondents' years of education in the United States ($r=.43$). Length of time at the housing development was negatively related to endorsement of assimilation ($r=-.40$). Thus, the residents who had lived at the housing developments for longer periods of time were more likely to have a greater number of years of education in the United States and less likely to support an assimilation acculturation strategy.

Household size was significantly related to age, ($r=-.46$), age of immigration ($r=-.42$), number of children ($r=.42$), English ability ($r=.33$), Hmong literacy ($r=.28$), an acculturation strategy of traditionalism ($r=.27$), and endorsement of traditional gender norms regarding participation ($r=.41$). Individuals with a greater number of people living in their household were more likely to be young, have immigrated at a younger age, have a large number of children, have better English skills, be literate in their native language, endorse traditionalism (maintaining traditional culture values without attempting to integrate American ways of life), and believe that it was more appropriate for men to participate in the community than for women.

Social Psychological Variables. Two social psychological variables were included in the analyses: overall sense of community and within-group sense of community. Respondents' mean within-group sense of community ($M=3.41$) was higher than their overall sense of community within the housing development ($M=2.41$). This difference was significant ($t=-7.86$, $p<.05$); residents felt more sense of community among other Hmong residents than they did within the entire housing development. In fact, 93% (50 of 54) felt an equal or greater sense of community within the Hmong

community than within their housing development. However, overall sense of community was significantly correlated with within-group sense of community ($r=.55$, $p<.05$), thus individuals who were high on one type of sense of community were likely to be high on the other type as well.

Both overall sense of community and within-group sense of community differed significantly across sites ($F(2,51)=3.21$, $p<.05$; $F(2,51)=8.46$, $p<.05$). Hmong residents at LaRoy Froh had significantly lower overall sense of community ($M=1.94$) than residents at Mt. Vernon ($M=2.66$, $p<.05$). In terms of sense of community among other Hmong, residents at LaRoy Froh had lower within-group sense of community ($M=2.58$) than residents at both Mt. Vernon ($M=3.71$, $p<.05$) and Hildebrandt ($M=3.76$, $p<.05$). Thus, Hmong residents at LaRoy Froh experienced less overall sense of community within the housing development and among Hmong residents.

Neither type of sense of community was significantly correlated with overall frequency of participation ($r=.06$, n.s.; $r=.11$, n.s.). Subsequent corrections of these correlations for attenuation due to measurement error of both scales did not result in significant results ($r=.09$, n.s.; $r=.15$, n.s.). However, overall sense of community was related to the happiness subscale of psychological adjustment ($r=.47$, $p<.05$). Individuals with a higher overall sense of community within the housing development were more likely to be happier with their current lives. Within group sense of community was also related to the happiness subscale of psychological adjustment ($r=.48$, $p<.05$), as well as to age ($r=.34$, $p<.05$), age of immigration ($r=.31$, $p<.05$), English ability ($r= -.29$, $p<.05$), and endorsement of biculturalism as an acculturation strategy. Individuals with a high sense of community among other Hmong residents were more likely to be older, to have

immigrated at a later age, and to value aspects of both Hmong and American cultures and ways of life. They were less likely to be able to speak and comprehend English.

Cultural Variables. Five cultural variables were examined: acculturation, cultural norms regarding participation, gender norms regarding participation, extent of participation of other household members, and cultural relevance of existing participation opportunities.

Acculturation. Acculturation was measured by three separate questions, each assessing a different acculturative stance: assimilation (relinquishing traditional values and adopting the values of the new culture), biculturalism (maintaining traditional values while also integrating into the new culture), and traditionalism (maintaining traditional values without any attempts to change or integrate into the new culture). Respondents were less likely to highly endorse traditionalism ($M=3.57$) than biculturalism ($M=5.24$; $t=8.83$, $p<.05$) and assimilation ($M=4.94$; $t=4.98$, $p<.05$), although, on average, individuals expressed more agreement than disagreement with all three items. None of these three items were significantly correlated with overall frequency of participation ($r=.07$, n.s.; $r=.07$, n.s.; $r=.09$, n.s.). The correlations remained non-significant after correction for attenuation ($r=.09$, n.s.; $r=.09$, n.s.; $r=.04$, n.s.).

Cultural Norms. Cultural norms for participation were assessed in two ways: overall cultural norms valuing participation and gender norms regarding participation. Ninety-four percent of respondents felt that community participation was important. This lack of variance in cultural norms regarding participation resulted in a non-significant relationship with individual's overall frequency of participation ($r=.10$, n.s.). In terms of gender norms, the majority of men (64%) and women (55%) disagreed

with the belief that it was more appropriate for men to participate in the community than for women. Initially, gender norms were not significantly related to overall frequency of participation ($r=.25$, n.s.). However, after correction for attenuation due to measurement error of the participation scale, this correlation was significant ($r=.31$, $p<.05$). Thus individuals who had traditional gender norms were more likely to participate frequently in the community. It also seemed important to examine this relationship separately for women and men given that the issue involved the importance of men's and women's participation. Separate analyses revealed that, after correction for attenuation, traditional gender norms were significantly related to men's community participation ($r=.50$, $p<.05$), but not to women's ($r=.21$, n.s.). Men who believed that it was more important for men to participate in the community than for women were more likely to participate frequently in the community, while women's gender norms regarding participation did not affect their frequency of participation. There were no gender differences in actual frequency of participation ($t=.75$, n.s.).

Household Participation. Only 30% of respondents reported that other adults in their household participated in resident council meetings or elections. The participation of other adults in the household was not significantly related to individuals' overall frequency of participation ($r=.13$, n.s.). After correction for attenuation due to measurement error of the participation scale, this correlation remained non-significant ($r=.16$, n.s.). Because within the Hmong community men participate formally in decision-making and elections of leaders while women do not, it was expected that participation by other household members might be related to an individual's participation differently for men and women. Therefore, the relationship between other

household participation and individual's own frequency of participation was examined separately for men and women. There was a trend indicating that men were more likely to participate frequently if other adults in their household (in almost every case their wives) participated ($r=.35$, $p<.10$). After correction for attenuation due to measurement error of the participation scale, the correlation between household participation and men's frequency of participation was significant ($r=.43$, $p<.05$). However, women's frequency of participation was not related to the participation of other adults in their households ($r=.06$, n.s.), even after correction for attenuation ($r=.07$, n.s.).

Cultural Relevance. Most residents felt that there were culturally relevant participation opportunities in their communities. Only 4% reported that there were no relevant options, while 46% of respondents indicated that all opportunities were appropriate and interesting to them. Although cultural relevance was not significantly correlated with overall frequency of participation initially ($r=.23$, n.s.), after correction for attenuation due to measurement error of both scales, a significant relationship between the two was detected ($r=.36$, $p<.05$). Individuals who perceived opportunities for participation in the community to be culturally relevant were more likely to participate.

Although not all cultural variables were significant, these results indicated that some aspects of culture, in this case gender norms regarding participation, participation by other household members, and the perceived cultural relevance of existing participation opportunities, were related to frequency of participation in the community. However, it was interesting to note that some of these relationships existed for men, but not women. When men's and women's participation were examined separately, traditional gender norms were positively related to men's frequency of participation, but

not to Hmong women's. In addition, men were more likely to participate if other household members participated, but this was not true for women. In terms of cultural relevance, participation was more likely to be frequent when Hmong respondents perceived the participation opportunities in their communities as culturally relevant.

Resource Variables. Three resource variables were included in the analyses: language, awareness, and time. Fifty-seven percent of Hmong residents felt that they had absolutely none of the language resources required to meaningfully participate in their communities, and a total of 82% of respondents identified language as a problem to varying degrees. Probably because language was a barrier for so many respondents, neither their perceived language resources nor their English language ability as evaluated objectively by the researcher were significantly related to overall frequency of participation ($r=.10$, n.s.; $r=-.01$, n.s.).

In terms of awareness of participation opportunities, 32% of respondents were completely unaware of meetings and programs in the community, while 93% of residents' awareness was limited to some extent. Individuals' awareness was significantly related to their frequency of participation ($r=.49$, $p<.05$). Correction for attenuation due to measurement error of both scales resulted in a strong relationship ($r=.81$, $p<.05$). Therefore, it is clear that the more aware Hmong residents are of the participation opportunities in their communities, the more likely they are to participate frequently. It is interesting to note that individuals' awareness of participation opportunities was also significantly related to their subjective appraisal of having the language resources necessary to participate ($r=.36$, $p<.05$), but not to the objective measure of language ability ($r=.19$, n.s.). Thus, individuals who were aware of participation opportunities in

their communities were more likely to believe that they had the language skills necessary to participate, but did not necessarily speak and understand English better.

Sixty-five percent of Hmong residents experienced some time constraints regarding their participation, 17% of whom indicated that they had no time to participate. Although time resources were not initially significantly correlated with participation ($r=.20$, n.s.), after correction for attenuation due to measurement error of both scales, a significant relationship was detected ($r=.28$, $p<.05$). Thus individuals who felt they had time to participate and that the times of meetings and events were convenient to their schedules were more likely to participate.

Possessing certain resources was important in determining Hmong residents' participation. Individuals who were aware of participation opportunities and had time to participate were more likely to participate. Clearly language was also a resource issue for respondents, although it was not significantly related to participation. Possible reasons for this will be discussed below.

Intergroup Relations. Intergroup relations was the contextual variable assessed in these housing developments. The staff and volunteers rated Mt. Vernon and Hildebrandt as having very similar intergroup relations ($M=3.51$, $M=3.47$). The intergroup relations at LaRoy Froh ($M=3.03$) were assessed as somewhat worse than those at the other two sites. This converges with how residents described their sense of community, which was significantly lower at LaRoy Froh ($M=1.94$) than at Mt. Vernon ($M=2.66$, $p<.05$). Sense of community at LaRoy Froh was also lower than that at Hildebrandt ($M=2.52$, n.s.), although not significantly. However, the ability to examine intergroup relations as a contextual variable was limited by having only three different contexts (sites). The rates

of overall participation at the three sites, expressed in z-scores, were: LaRoy Froh -.17, Mt. Vernon -.06, and Hildebrandt .20. A one-way analysis of variance revealed that participation of Hmong residents did not vary significantly across the three sites ($F(2,51)=1.58$, n.s.). Therefore, the effect of intergroup relations on participation could not be examined further.

Regression. A multiple regression analysis was performed in order to determine which variables were most predictive of overall frequency of participation and how much of the variance in participation rates could be explained by the variables included in this study. To compensate for the small sample size, an exploratory multiple regression model was utilized with an emphasis on amount of variance accounted for, rather than the significance of beta weights. The five factors with the highest correlations to participation (household size, gender norms, cultural relevance, awareness, and time resources) were input in a series of multiple regressions, in order to obtain the best-fitting model (see Table 9). Five factors were chosen because this was the maximum number that could be appropriately used with a sample size of 54 (Shavelson, 1988). The most parsimonious model that explained the most variance is discussed below.

Table 9 - Correlation Matrix for Variables in Regression Analyses

Variable	P	HP	GN	CR	A	T
Participation (frequency)	1.00					
Household Size	.22	1.00				
Gender Norms	.25	.41*	1.00			
Cultural Relevance	.23	-.04	.03	1.00		
Awareness	.49*	.09	.24	.35*	1.00	
Time	.20	-.05	-.02	-.27*	-.02	1.00

* $p < .05$

Twenty-eight percent of the variance of the dependent variable (participation) was explained by a model that included awareness ($\beta=.416$, $p<.05$), time resources ($\beta=.257$, $p<.05$), household size ($\beta=.198$, $p<.10$), and cultural relevance ($\beta=.166$, n.s.). Thus demographic variables, cultural variables, and resource variables were all important in predicting participation. The amount of variance accounted for was substantial, especially with only four predictors and suggested that although the beta weights were not all significant (two were and two were not), they probably would have been with a larger sample (see Table 10).

Table 10 - Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Participation

Variable	B	SE B	β
Awareness	.220	.066	.416
Time Resources	.112	.053	.257
Household Size	.044	.026	.198
Cultural Relevance	.097	.076	.166

Note: $R^2 = .28$

Different Types of Participation

Hmong residents' overall frequency of formal participation in their communities was related to demographic, cultural, and resource variables that were included in this study, and 28% of the variance of frequency of participation was predicted by four of these variables (awareness of participation opportunities, time resources, household size, and perceived cultural relevance of existing opportunities). However, there are three distinct types of participation available in the housing development communities (resident council participation, volunteering, and community center activities) which were aggregated for the initial analyses. It may be that Hmong residents who are involved in

these different types of participation are very different, especially given that these types of participation may require different resources or abilities and have different benefits.

Therefore it is important to consider each type of participation separately. For each of the three types, we can ask two questions: 1) Is there a difference between individuals who engage in this type of involvement and those who do not? and 2) Do individuals' levels of involvement in each type of participation make a difference? Finally, it is also important to examine breadth of participation. In other words, are people who are involved in more types of participation different from those who are not?

Resident Council Participation. Each housing development has a resident council, which is a forum for residents to work together to address community issues, to make connections with other residents and resources in the community, and to plan community events and celebrations. There are three main ways residents can be involved in the resident council: attend meetings, vote in annual resident council elections for officers, and hold a position on the resident council (i.e., president, vice-president, treasurer). However, none of the Hmong residents held office on any of the resident councils, so only attendance of resident council meetings and voting in resident council elections were included in the analyses of resident council participation.

Involvement. Demographic, cultural, and resource variables were related to resident council participation (see Table 8). People who were involved with the resident council had lived for a longer time at their housing development ($r=.30, p<.05$), had larger households ($r=.31, p<.05$), had a greater number of adults living in their household ($r=.31, p<.05$), and were more likely to hold traditional gender norms valuing the participation of men over women ($r=.34, p<.05$). In particular, men with traditional

gender norms were more likely to participate in the resident council ($r=.48$, $p<.05$), while women's gender norms were not related to their participation ($r=.26$, n.s.). After correction for attenuation due to measurement error in the awareness scale, Hmong residents who participated in the resident council were also more likely to be aware of participation opportunities in their communities ($r=.34$, $p<.05$).

Frequency. Frequency of resident council participation was related to demographic, cultural, and resource variables: household size ($r=.33$, $p<.05$), number of adults living in the household ($r=.46$, $p<.05$), and awareness of participation opportunities ($r=.47$, $p<.05$). After correction for attenuation due to measurement error in the awareness scale, this correlation increased substantially ($r=.62$, $p<.05$). In addition, men who held traditional gender norms were more likely to participate frequently in the resident council ($r=.56$, $p<.05$), while, again, women's gender norms did not affect the frequency of their participation in the resident council ($r=.22$, n.s.). Therefore, Hmong residents who participated frequently in the resident council were more likely to have large households, more adults living in their households, and to be aware of participation opportunities in their communities. Men who participated frequently in the resident council were also more likely to have traditional gender norms valuing the participation of men over women.

Volunteering. There were many opportunities for Hmong residents to volunteer in their communities, including helping to plan or organize community events and donating time or materials to events or programs in the community. However, few respondents (11%) actually volunteered in their communities.

Involvement. Although Hmong residents who volunteered were more likely to be aware of participation opportunities ($r=.40$, $p<.05$), volunteering was not related to any of the other variables in this study. After correction for attenuation due to measurement error of the awareness scale, this correlation increased to $.53$ ($p<.05$). Therefore, volunteering depended most on being aware of opportunities in the community.

Frequency. Frequency of volunteering was not related to any variables examined in this study (see Table 8).

Community Center Activities. Each housing development had a community center which offered various programs and events. All three community centers had Learning Centers with computers available for residents' use. Some centers offered English classes, health education classes, and exercise classes. There were also food, clothing, and healthcare programs through which residents could access free food, clothing, and immunizations. In addition, the community centers had large community rooms, in which Halloween, Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King Day, and other community-wide events were held. The community centers also had offices for the housing development manager and community police officer, which made these individuals more accessible to residents. Thirty-five percent of residents took part in programs or activities at the community centers.

Involvement. There were almost no differences between Hmong residents who did participate in community center activities and those who did not (see Table 8). The one significant finding was that men who held traditional gender norms that valued

men's participation in the community more than women's were less likely to participate in community center activities ($r=-.44$, $p<.05$).

Frequency. Respondents who held traditional gender norms that valued the participation of men over women were more likely to frequently participate in activities at the community center ($r=.32$, $p<.05$). However, when this relationship was examined separately for men and women, it was women who held traditional gender norms who were more likely to participate frequently in community center activities ($r=.43$, $p<.05$), while men's frequency of participation in community center activities was not related to their gender norms ($r=-.38$, n.s.). Frequency of participation in community center activities was not significantly related to any other variables in the analyses (see Table 8).

Breadth of Participation. After considering the three types of participation individually, it is also informative to examine breadth of participation. Were individuals who were involved in multiple types of participation different from those who were involved in fewer types? The answer is yes; breadth of participation, measured as a sum of the different ways in which an individual participated in the community, was related to demographic, cultural, and resource variables.

In terms of demographic variables, breadth of participation was positively related to the number of adults in an individual's household ($r=.30$, $p<.05$). Individuals with a greater number of adults living in their household were more likely to participate in their communities in multiple ways. Breadth of participation was also positively related to cultural variables, in particular, traditional gender norms ($r=.29$, $p<.05$). When this correlation was disaggregated by gender, neither men nor women with traditional gender norms were more likely to participate in multiple ways in their communities. In fact,

neither correlation was significant: men ($r=.27$, n.s.), women ($r=.29$, n.s.). However, this is probably due to the reduced sample size which resulted when these relationships were examined separately for men and women. Thus, both Hmong men and women were more likely to participate in their communities in multiple ways if they held traditional gender norms. Resource variables were also important; in particular, breadth of participation was related to awareness of participation opportunities ($r=.43$, $p<.05$). Individuals who were aware of the participation opportunities in their communities were more likely to be involved in their communities in multiple ways.

Given the unique relationships that exist between the different types of participation and demographic, social psychological, cultural, and resource variables, we can conclude that it is important to consider the many forms that formal participation in the community can take. Therefore, it is also important to examine all eight types of participation when considering how participation in the community is related to the adjustment of the Hmong residents in the three housing developments.

Question 3 – Participation and Adjustment

In order to examine the third research question and test the assumption that participation was likely to lead to positive outcomes for the Hmong residents in the housing developments, the relationships between the different measures of participation and psychological adjustment and socioeconomic adjustment were explored.

Psychological Adjustment

Overall Frequency of Participation. The correlation between overall frequency of participation and the happiness subscale of psychological adjustment was .20, which was not significant. However, after adjusting for attenuation of the correlation based on

measurement error in both the participation and adjustment scales, the theoretical correlation was .31 ($p < .05$), which suggests that the more Hmong respondents participated in formal activities in their communities, the more well-adjusted they were. However, psychological adjustment as measured by the distress subscale was not significantly correlated with participation, with or without correction for attenuation ($r = -.07$, $r = -.10$, n.s.). Therefore, participation was not related to residents' levels of distress (see Table 11).

Resident Council Participation. Whether or not Hmong residents were involved with the resident council was not related to their psychological adjustment, either in terms of happiness ($r = .01$, n.s.) or distress ($r = -.12$, n.s.). Subsequent correction for attenuation due to measurement error of the adjustment scales did not alter the significance of these relationships ($r = .01$, n.s.; $r = -.14$, n.s.). However, frequency of resident council participation was related to psychological adjustment. There was initially a trend indicating that frequency of resident council participation was related to happiness ($r = .24$, $p < .10$). After correction for attenuation, a significant relationship was detected ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). Frequency of resident council participation was not related to distress either before ($r = -.17$, n.s.) or after correction for attenuation ($r = -.19$, n.s.). Therefore, individuals who frequently participated in the resident council were more likely to be happy, but not necessarily less distressed.

Volunteering. Volunteering was not related to psychological adjustment in any way. Whether Hmong residents volunteered in their community at all was not significantly correlated with happiness ($r = .19$, n.s.) or distress ($r = -.02$, n.s.). These correlations remained non-significant after correction for attenuation ($r = .23$, n.s.; $r = -.02$,

n.s.). Frequency of volunteering was also not correlated with happiness ($r=.08$, n.s.) or distress ($r=.07$, n.s.). After correction for attenuation, these correlations were still low ($r=.10$, n.s.; $r=.08$, n.s.).

Community Center Activities. Hmong residents' involvement in community center programs and activities was not related to psychological adjustment. Whether respondents were involved in any activities at the community center was not significantly correlated with happiness ($r=.14$, n.s.) or distress ($r=.15$, n.s.). These correlations remained non-significant after correction for attenuation ($r=.17$, n.s.; $r=.17$, n.s.). Neither was frequency of community center participation related to happiness ($r=.00$, n.s.) or distress ($r=.04$, n.s.). Correction for attenuation had minimal impact on these correlations ($r=.00$, n.s.; $r=.05$, n.s.). Thus, involvement in programs and activities at the community center was not related to the psychological adjustment of Hmong residents.

Breadth of Participation. The correlation between breadth of participation and the happiness subscale of psychological adjustment was .18, which was not significant. After adjusting for attenuation of the correlation based on measurement error in the adjustment scale, the theoretical correlation remained non-significant ($r=.22$, n.s.). Psychological adjustment as measured by the distress subscale was not significantly correlated with breadth of participation, with or without correction for attenuation ($r=-.03$, $r=-.05$, n.s.). Therefore, participation in multiple ways in the community was not related to residents' levels of happiness or distress.

Although psychological distress was not related to any type of formal participation in the community, Hmong residents who participated frequently in the community and who were highly involved with the resident council were more likely to be happy. Thus,

type of participation is important. Resident council participation and the global measure of participation were related to psychological adjustment, while volunteering and participation in community center activities were not.

Table 11 – Correlations of Participation and Psychological Adjustment

Variable	Overall Freq.	RC yes/no	RC Freq.	Vol. yes/no	Vol. Freq.	CC yes/no	CC Freq.	Total Breadth
Psyc. Adjustment (Happiness)	.20	.01	.24	.19	.08	.14	.00	.18
	.31*	.01	.30*	.23	.10	.17	.00	.22
Psyc. Adjustment (Distress)	-.07	-.12	-.17	-.02	.07	.15	.04	-.03
	-.10	-.14	-.19	-.02	.08	.17	.05	-.03

* $p < .05$

Note: *Italics* indicate correlation when corrected for attenuation due to measurement error of adjustment scale. ***Bold italics*** indicate correlation when corrected for attenuation due to measurement error of adjustment scale and overall frequency of participation scale.

Socioeconomic Adjustment

For the most part, participation of any kind was not related to the socioeconomic adjustment of Hmong residents (see Table 12). Overall frequency of participation was not significantly correlated with total years of education ($r = -.06$, n.s.), years of education in Thailand and/or Laos ($r = -.03$, n.s.), years of education in the United States ($r = -.06$, n.s.), highest educational degree attained (Spearman $r = -.21$, n.s.), or employment status ($r = -.20$, n.s.). After correction for attenuation due to measurement error of the participation scale, the correlations with total years of education ($r = -.07$, n.s.), years of education in Thailand and/or Laos ($r = -.04$, n.s.), years of education in the United States ($r = -.07$, n.s.), highest degree attained (Spearman $r = -.26$, n.s.), and employment status ($r = -.25$, n.s.) remained non-significant.

Neither existence nor frequency of resident council participation or volunteering was significantly related to any of the indicators of socioeconomic adjustment.

Participation in community center activities was negatively related to employment status ($r=-.27$, $p<.05$), indicating that people who went to the community center were less likely to be employed than those who did not go to the center. Frequency of community center participation was not related to socioeconomic adjustment. Finally, breadth of participation was negatively related to employment status ($r=-.32$, $p<.05$). Thus people who were involved in multiple ways in their communities were less likely to be employed than those who were not.

Table 12– Correlations of Participation and Socioeconomic Adjustment

Variable	Overall Freq.	RC yes/no	RC Freq.	Vol. yes/no	Vol. Freq.	CC yes/no	CC Freq.	Total Breadth
Employment Status	-.20 -.25	-.19 ---	-.20 ---	-.20 ---	-.16 ---	-.27* ---	.05 ---	-.32* ---
Years of Education – Total	-.06 -.07	-.08 ---	-.01 ---	.01 ---	-.07 ---	-.23 ---	-.16 ---	-.14 ---
Years of Education – Thailand/Laos	-.03 -.04	-.05 ---	.04 ---	.04 ---	-.10 ---	-.22 ---	-.17 ---	-.12 ---
Years of Education – United States	-.06 -.07	-.06 ---	-.04 ---	-.01 ---	-.02 ---	-.22 ---	-.13 ---	-.13 ---
Educational Degree	-.21 -.26	-.20 ---	-.21 ---	-.15 ---	-.15 ---	.02 ---	-.05 ---	-.14 ---

* $p<.05$

Note: *Italics* indicate correlation when corrected for attenuation due to measurement error of overall frequency of participation scale.

Profile of Active Participators

Because Hmong residents' participation in many community activities was low, it is important to conclude by looking at whom specifically were the people who did actively participate. What, if anything, made them different from the other Hmong residents interviewed? A profile of the 11% ($N=6$) most actively involved individuals was created to try to understand more about the characteristics of Hmong participators in

these settings. These eight individuals had a z-score of 1.00 or above on the overall frequency of participation scale, which indicates that their participation was at one standard deviation above the mean participation of all respondents. All but one had been to at least one resident council meeting in the last year and four had voted in the last resident council election. Three had participated in activities at the community centers, three had helped to organize or plan events at the centers, and three had donated time or materials for events or programs at the community center in the last year.

In terms of demographic characteristics, active participators were somewhat distinct from the other respondents. Most were women (five of the six). Active participators also tended to be younger ($M=39.83$) than other residents ($M=47.09$), and had immigrated to the United States at a younger age ($M=28.50$) than other residents ($M=35.28$) (see Table 13). In addition, active participators tended to have larger households ($M=8.33$) than other respondents ($M=6.65$) and a greater number of adults living in their household ($M=2.83$) than other respondents ($M=2.25$). The active participators were also distinct in that only 33% were employed, whereas 46% of the other respondents were working at the time of the interviews.

However, active participators had lived at their housing development an average of only six months longer ($M=6.38$) than other residents ($M=5.84$), and the average length of time that active participators and other residents had been in the United States was approximately the same ($M=11.33$; $M=11.67$). None of the active participants had a high school degree or GED, and their years of education ($M=6.17$) were approximately equivalent to those of the other respondents ($M=6.63$). Half of the active participants were literate in English and Hmong and half were not literate in either language. Thus

Table 13 – Descriptive Statistics for Active Participators and Other Residents

Variable	Active Participators Mean (N=6)	Other Residents Mean (N=48)
<i>Participation</i>		
Resident Council Meetings (yes/no)	.83	.27
Resident Council Meetings (frequency)	3.83	.49
Vote in Resident Council Election (yes/no)	.67	.02
Community Center Activities (yes/no)	.50	.33
Community Center Activities (frequency)	6.92	1.00
Plan/Organize Activities (yes/no)	.50	.00
Plan/Organize Activities (frequency)	.40	.00
Donate Time/Materials (yes/no)	.50	.02
Donate Time/Materials (frequency)	5.83	.02
<i>Demographic Variables</i>		
Age	39.83	47.09
Age of Immigration	28.50	35.28
Time at Housing Development	6.38	5.84
Time in the United States	11.33	11.67
Household Size	8.33	6.65
Number of Adults	2.83	2.25
<i>Social Psychological Variables</i>		
Overall Sense of Community	2.63	2.38
Within-Group Sense of Community	3.71	3.38
<i>Cultural Variables</i>		
Acculturation (Assimilation)	5.17	4.92
Acculturation (Biculturalism)	5.33	5.23
Acculturation (Traditionalism)	3.33	3.60
Cultural Norms for Participation	1.00	.93
Gender Norms for Participation	4.33	2.94
Household Participation	.33	.29
Cultural Relevance	3.83	3.00
<i>Resource Variables</i>		
Language Resources (subjective)	1.92	1.03
Language (objective)	6.83	6.67
Awareness of Opportunities	3.17	1.08
Time Resources	3.00	2.49
<i>Adjustment</i>		
Psychological Adjustment (Happiness)	3.44	2.51
Psychological Adjustment (Distress)	2.17	2.12
Employment Status	.33	.46
Years of Education – Total	6.17	6.63
Years of Education – Thailand/Laos	2.50	2.30
Years of Education – United States	3.67	4.17
Educational Degree	1.00	1.25

active participants tended to be female, younger, have immigrated at a younger age, have larger households and more adults in their household, and be unemployed, but were not necessarily more rooted in their local community or the United States or more educated.

Active participators also differed slightly from other residents on social psychological variables; their overall sense of community ($M=2.63$) and within-group sense of community ($M=3.71$) were higher than those of other respondents ($M=2.38$; $M=3.38$). In terms of cultural variables, there were also important differences. Active participators were more likely to endorse an assimilation strategy of acculturation ($M=5.17$) than other respondents ($M=4.92$), but less likely to support an acculturation strategy of traditionalism ($M=3.33$) than other respondents ($M=3.60$). Active participators were also more likely to hold traditional gender norms valuing the participation of men above women ($M=4.33$) than other respondents ($M=2.94$). Finally, active participators were more likely to perceive existing participation opportunities as culturally relevant ($M=3.83$) than were other respondents ($M=3.00$). In fact, all eight active participators felt that the participation opportunities in the community were at least somewhat culturally relevant and they all held cultural norms that valued participation, although only half indicated that they would like to be more involved in the community. This is probably because they were already active in their communities.

In terms of resources for participation, it is interesting to note that active participators felt they had slightly more (although still very limited) language resources for participation ($M=1.92$) than other respondents ($M=1.03$), although their actual objective English language abilities were almost the same ($M=6.83$; $M=6.67$). Active participants were also more aware of participation opportunities ($M=3.17$) than other

respondents ($M=1.08$) and had more time to participate ($M=3.00$) than other respondents ($M=2.49$). In addition, active participants were also more psychologically adjusted. Their happiness was greater ($M=3.44$) than that of other respondents ($M=2.51$), although their level of distress was approximately equivalent ($M=2.17$) to that of other respondents ($M=2.12$). Active participants did not seem to differ from other respondents in terms of socioeconomic adjustment, except for being less likely to be employed, as discussed above. Finally, in terms of context, it is interesting to note that two of the participants lived at Mt. Vernon and four lived at Hildebrandt. None of the active participants lived at LaRoy Froh, which had the lowest intergroup relations score and the lowest mean overall sense of community score.

In summary, active participants were distinct from other respondents in terms of demographic characteristics, social psychological attributes, cultural attitudes, resources to participate, psychological adjustment, and the context in which they lived. They tended to be female and younger, have immigrated to the United States at a younger age, have larger households and more adults in their households, and have greater overall and within-group sense of community. They were also more likely to support an assimilation acculturation strategy and value the participation of men over that of women, and less likely to support a traditionalist acculturation strategy. Active participants also tended to perceive participation opportunities in their communities as culturally relevant, have more language, awareness and time resources for participation, be happier, and live in housing developments with better intergroup relations and higher overall sense of community.

DISCUSSION

As refugees resettle in the United States and transition to their new lives here, their integration into their new communities is central to this process – for themselves, for their children, and for future generations. An important aspect of integration for these individuals is participation in their communities (Vrga, 1971). This study makes three major contributions to our understanding of the participation experiences of Hmong refugees and their struggles to become integrated into their multiethnic communities. First, the importance of participation for Hmong refugees was confirmed by the findings that individuals' participation in their multiethnic communities was related to their positive psychological adjustment and that it was highly valued by almost all Hmong residents.

Second, this study provides strong converging evidence, across both quantitative and qualitative data sources, that Hmong participation in multiethnic communities is influenced by demographic, cultural, resource, and contextual variables. Thus, an ecological perspective, which considered the unique factors relevant for a specific group in a particular setting, was a useful approach to furthering our understanding of the factors which facilitate and impede participation as well as important within-group differences. A related finding was that different types of participation were related to different variables, which emphasizes the complexity of participation and the importance of making distinctions among various participation opportunities, as well as attending to the unique attributes of individuals and settings.

Third, this study highlights the importance of providing disenfranchised individuals and groups with opportunities to tell their stories and have their voices heard. It was only when Hmong residents were given the opportunity to speak in the qualitative section of the interviews, that we learned about their lack of meaningful participation, the multiple barriers they faced, the relevance of contextual issues to their participation, their desires to be more involved, and the disempowerment most experienced. If Hmong residents did not have the chance to speak in their own words, our understanding of their participation experiences would be incomplete and inaccurate.

Participation and Adjustment

Importantly, the findings in this study suggest that Hmong participation in multiethnic communities is significantly related to positive psychological adjustment. Hmong individuals who participated in their communities had higher scores on the happiness subscale of the psychological well-being measure. In particular, overall frequency of participation and frequency of resident council participation were related to positive psychological adjustment. This suggests that not all types of participation have the same benefits. It seems that Hmong residents who are actively involved in their communities, particularly those who are a part of a council working collectively to improve the community, are the individuals who are most well-adjusted. This is consistent with other research, which has found that the community members who were most highly involved in voluntary associations experienced more benefits of participation than others (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990).

In addition, participation in the resident council was the avenue in these multiethnic housing developments that offered residents opportunities for decision-

making and influence within their communities, which is the form of citizen participation that has been linked with most positive outcomes for individuals and communities (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Wandersman, 1984). Participation in the other activities in these settings (volunteering and attending community center activities) may not have offered comparable opportunities for control and influence, and thus may not have provided the same benefits.

However, respondents' levels of distress were not related to their participation. This may be because as low-income individuals and recent refugees, most individuals experienced a high level of distress. Participation might not buffer refugees from daily stressors and other sources of distress in their lives, particularly because much of Southeast Asian refugees' distress has been linked to their pre-arrival (in the United States) experiences (Rumbaut, 1991b). Instead, participation may contribute to an improved psychological state, in terms of happiness, as discussed above. Therefore, this study provides some evidence for the importance of refugee participation, at least for the particular Hmong individuals interviewed. Although other research has shown that community participation is beneficial for refugees and immigrants in helping them integrate into the broader community (Vrba, 1971), this is one of the only studies to examine the link between psychological adjustment and participation for refugees. Future research should explore this relationship among other refugee populations and in other settings.

In terms of socioeconomic adjustment, limited conclusions can be drawn. All of the participants in this study had low incomes and were living in public housing. Thus, variation in socioeconomic status was limited. Employment was actually negatively

related to breadth of participation and community center involvement, but it is likely that this has more to do with the fact that residents who were not working had more time to participate, which we know is an essential resource for participation (e.g., Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). For community center participation in particular, this finding may also be because residents who were not employed were more likely to be home when the community center was open and may have had more need for the free food and clothing and other services provided at the community centers. However, given that we know refugees in general, and Southeast Asian refugees in particular, struggle economically (Bach & Argiros, 1991), and that socioeconomic adjustment is related to psychological adjustment for Southeast Asian refugees (Rumbaut, 1991b) and other positive outcomes (e.g., Rumbaut, 1996), it would be important to further explore the relationship among participation and socioeconomic adjustment among a broader range of refugees, including those who are both thriving and struggling economically.

Overall, this study suggest that community involvement was beneficial for Hmong residents in multiethnic housing developments, and was also highly valued by them. Therefore, it is important to consider the findings regarding the unique factors related to Hmong participation and the contributions these findings make both to our theoretical understanding of participation and to the development of mechanisms for facilitating this valuable process.

An Ecological Model of Participation

The quantitative and qualitative findings of this study provide strong convergent support for an ecological model of participation. Hmong residents' participation in their multiethnic communities was related to individual and contextual characteristics

including demographic, cultural, resource, and contextual variables. Some of the relationships detected are consistent with the findings of other participation research, while others are unique to these Hmong individuals in their particular settings. The specific results are discussed in further detail below.

Individual Variables

Several individual variables were related to Hmong residents' participation in their communities. Resource variables were the most important. In fact, awareness of participation opportunities explained 64% of the theoretical variance of participation, although demographic and cultural variables were also important. Hmong residents who were aware of existing participation opportunities, perceived them as culturally relevant, had greater numbers of adults in their households, and had time to participate were more likely to participate. In addition, men who held traditional gender norms (that their participation in the community was more important than women's participation) were more involved in the community.

Demographic Variables. Overall, the majority of demographic variables included in the analyses (age, age of immigration, length of residence at housing development, length of time in the United States) were not related to Hmong residents' overall frequency of participation in their communities. These findings are consistent with other participation studies that found that demographic variables were generally not predictive of participation in neighborhood voluntary organizations (e.g., Smith, 1975; Wandersman, Florin, Freidman & Meier, 1987).

However, household size was related to Hmong residents' overall frequency of participation in their communities. The greater number of people in an individual's

household, the more likely he or she was to participate in the community. When this relationship was examined separately for the number of adults and children in each household, it became evident that the number of adults in the household was strongly and positively related to participation while the number of children was not. Adults who live in households with other adults may have more opportunities to participate because they may have greater access to the resources and supports required for community participation, such as childcare and time (Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). This would be expected because individuals in households with multiple adults are likely to share many family responsibilities (i.e., earning income, cooking, cleaning).

Many participation studies have found that married people are more likely to participate than single individuals (e.g., Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Wandersman, Florin, Friedman, & Meier, 1987; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981). Although this relationship has usually been interpreted as an indicator of individuals' rootedness in the community, married people may also participate more because of the resources and supports available in their households. For the Hmong in this study, this interpretation is also supported by the qualitative data, in which many Hmong residents highlighted the issues of lack of time and childcare as barriers to their participation.

Most research on participation has not specifically examined the relationship between number of adults in a household and participation, most likely in part because it has been assumed that there are usually only one or two adults in each household. However, this is not the case for the Hmong households in this study, which had a range of one to four adults, with almost one-third of households (30%) having three or four

adult household members. A comparison of the variables related to individuals' participation in Israel and the United States revealed that individuals in Israel who lived in households with a greater number of children under the age of 17 were more likely to participate, while the number of children in individuals' households in the United States was not related to their participation (Wandersman, Florin, Friedman, & Meier, 1987). This finding, taken together with the findings in this study, suggest that different variables may be related to the participation of members of different cultures, in this case, specifically those who have varied family structures.

Social Psychological Variables. In this study, Hmong residents' overall sense of community was not related to their participation in multiethnic housing developments. This finding is important given that, in other populations, sense of community is often the strongest predictor of participation (e.g., Chavis & Wandersman, 1990) or at least positively correlated with it (e.g., Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Hutcheson & Prather, 1988; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980). Although many residents reported high overall sense of community within the development, they may not have been able to translate these community sentiments into participation because of language, awareness, and resource barriers. This highlights the importance of doing within-group analyses, which enable us to understand unique factors that may be important for some individuals and groups, but not for others.

Interestingly, within-group sense of community also did not facilitate or impede Hmong residents' participation in the broader community. In the current climate of fear that individuals' ethnic identifications are a divisive force within the increasingly

multiethnic United States (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992), this suggests that having a strong sense of community within one's ethnic group does not necessarily inhibit broader community involvement. Instead, this within-group sense of community has been linked to the well-being and adjustment of refugees (e.g., Church, 1982), and was associated with positive psychological adjustment in this study. Thus, it is important and perhaps unique to certain refugee, immigrant, or ethnic groups, but is not necessarily related to their participation in the broader community.

Sense of Community and Adjustment. Both overall sense of community and within-group sense of community were related to positive psychological adjustment, which suggests that Hmong residents' sense of community within their geographic community and among other members of their ethnic group are important to their well-being. These findings are consistent with general research about sense of community and its positive links to individual well-being and community development (e.g., Chavis & Newbrough, 1986; Jason & Kobayashi, 1995), and the importance that refugees' and immigrants' ethnic identities and groups have in their adjustment to new communities (e.g., Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 1966). Thus, overall sense of community in a neighborhood and within-group sense of community among members of a specific ethnic group are important constructs to understand and facilitate, especially when considering the promotion of refugee adjustment. For the Hmong in particular, these findings highlight the value of one of their cultural strengths – the importance they place on the community and the high sense of community most feel, which this study has shown is beneficial to their adjustment.

Cultural Variables. Several cultural factors were related to Hmong residents' participation in their multiethnic communities. Specifically, residents who perceived the opportunities in their communities as culturally relevant for Hmong people and men who held traditional gender norms were more likely to participate. Acculturation, cultural norms regarding participation, and participation of other household members were not related to individuals' participation.

Cultural Relevance. Hmong residents who believed that the participation opportunities in their communities were culturally relevant were more likely to participate. We know that individuals are less likely to participate in community interventions and projects that are not culturally relevant or appropriate (Marin, 1993; Strawn, 1994). In addition, specific research with Southeast Asian refugees found that they were less involved and committed to a tenants' association and a collective rent strike because the meetings and actions were organized in ways that were counter to their cultural beliefs (Hein, 1995). The importance of these findings is made more apparent when recognizing that many Hmong residents (54%) identified avenues of participation in their community as having limited relevance. This suggests that if the relevance of participation opportunities in the community were increased, participation among Hmong residents might also increase. Participation opportunities will only be culturally relevant if they consider the experiences, wants, and needs of all individuals in a community.

Gender Norms. Although many participation studies have found that women are more likely to participate than men (e.g., Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Wandersman, Florin, Friedman, & Meier, 1987; Wandersman, Jakubs, & Giamartino, 1981), these gender differences were not evident among Hmong residents. However,

gender norms about participation were related to an individual's participation. It is interesting to note that after disaggregating this relationship by gender, traditional gender norms were significantly related to men's overall frequency of community participation, but not to women's participation. Men who believed that it was more important for men to participate in the community than for women were more likely to participate. This was not the case for women. Thus, men's actions were consistent with their gender norms regarding participation, but women's were not.

It is difficult to definitively explain these findings. However, one possible explanation may be related to the marital status of respondents. Twenty-eight percent of the Hmong women interviewed had never been married or were separated or widowed, while only one of the men interviewed was single. Thus, Hmong women's participation may be more affected by the constraints of their situation. For instance, some single women may feel they need to participate because there is no man available to assume that role, while others might be impeded from participating because of the multiple responsibilities inherent in being a single head of household. Thus women's participation may depend less on gender norms and more on these other factors.

However, since all but one of the men in this study was married, their participation was not affected by the same constraints. Therefore, Hmong men may have participated if they believed that they should be the member of the family to participate, but may have deferred to their wife or other family member if they did not believe that it was more important for men to participate than for women. Therefore, among married Hmong couples, the man's gender norms may be more determinative of who in the family participates, while the woman's gender norms may not be as relevant in these cases.

Thus, these explanations suggest why traditional gender norms may have affected the participation of Hmong men, but not have impacted the participation of both single and married Hmong women.

It is also interesting to note that although there were no differences between the overall participation of single women and married women, only one of the nine single women endorsed traditional gender norms, while 57% (13) of the married women did. This may be a function of the role single women have assumed as head of the household, in which they often must work outside the home to support their family. Thus, they are probably more likely to have been exposed to more egalitarian gender norms, as well as to have rejected traditional roles of men and women out of necessity. However, overall, more women than men endorsed traditional gender norms that valued the participation of men over women. This could be because some Hmong women (particularly those who are married) are more restricted to their homes and have had less contact with Americans in workplaces and the larger community (Rumbaut, 1991b), which results in less exposure to more egalitarian gender norms.

In conclusion, it appears that cultural gender norms are shifting among many Hmong individuals. As they have come into contact with different ideas about gender norms, some individuals' ideas about who should participate may have changed, while others' ideas may have not. These patterns of shifting gender norms and family structures as well as their impact on individuals' participation should be explored in more depth in future investigations.

Acculturation. The findings in this study suggest that acculturation was not related to Hmong participation in the broader community. This is inconsistent with

previous research, in particular, that individuals who have a bicultural acculturation style (embracing and adapting to some aspects of American society while maintaining their own cultural identities and traditions) are more well-adjusted (Rumbaut, 1991b; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980) and more able to adapt to their new communities (Ramirez, 1984), and that acculturation is related to participation in recreation activities (Yu & Berryman, 1996). Therefore, the finding that acculturation is not related to participation in this study is somewhat suspect, and may most likely be due to measurement error. The three acculturation constructs were single-item measures and there was little variance in Hmong residents' responses. Also, because responses to the three items (assimilation, biculturalism, and traditionalism) were not mutually exclusive, many individuals highly endorsed two (or sometimes all three) of the items. Although these questions had been used to measure acculturation among Hmong and many other Southeast Asian refugees in the past (e.g., Rumbaut, 1989), it became apparent during data collection that the items were somewhat flawed because the assimilation item referred to the respondents' children, while the traditionalism item referred to the respondents' own lives. Many refugees and immigrants might value assimilation for their children while believing that remaining rooted in their own culture is the preferred (or only) possibility for themselves. Therefore, it would be important to explore acculturation and its relationship to community participation in future studies with multi-item measures, with items that referred both to individuals themselves and their children.

Cultural Norms for Participation. Finally, this study found that cultural norms for participation and extent of household participation were not related to Hmong residents participation in their multiethnic communities. Cultural norms for participation

were measured by a single dichotomous item. Furthermore, almost all Hmong residents responded affirmatively to this item, indicating that their participation in the community was important. These measurement limitations and limited variance probably explain why cultural norms were not significantly related to participation.

Household Participation. In addition, Hmong residents' participation was not affected by the participation of other members of their household. However, it is interesting to note that although 41% of individuals did not participate formally in the community at all, only 19% (six) households did not have anyone participating in the community. Of these six households, three were headed by single mothers and three were two-parent households. It may be that in some families, the participation of one individual served to open up avenues of participation for other family members, while in other families, the participation of one individual may have represented the interests of the whole family. Because of the collective nature of Hmong culture as well as the fact that participation had not been examined at the household level previously, it seemed important to explore how the participation of other household members affected an individual's participation. In the future, it would be instructive to further examine household or family participation in order to more fully understand its effects on individual participation.

Resource Variables. Both qualitative and quantitative data in this study provide strong converging evidence that a lack of resources impeded Hmong participation in their communities. From the qualitative findings, we learned that Hmong residents lacked a variety of resources needed to participate, including language, time, awareness, education, motivation, and self-efficacy. From the quantitative findings, we learned that two of

these resources – awareness and time – are significantly related to participation. Hmong residents who were not aware of the opportunities for involvement in their communities and did not have time, did not participate. The findings are consistent with other research, including that of Wandersman, Jakubs & Giamartino (1981), who found that time was the most important resource required for participation and that individuals who are not aware of participation opportunities are less involved. The findings regarding awareness are also supported by Guthrie & Hutchison (1995), who found that Asian American residents of public housing developments did not participate, in part because they were not aware of activities in their communities. Thus having the time to participate and being aware of participation opportunities are clearly two important resources required for participation.

However, it was surprising that language resources were not significantly related to participation in the quantitative findings, given that in the qualitative responses Hmong residents cited language more than any other resource as something that they needed in order to participate but lacked. Several studies of participation have found that having the perceived skills relevant to participation are related to individuals' participation (e.g. Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986). For the Hmong in this study, English language ability was one of these skills. Residents' qualitative responses suggest that a significant relationship between language and participation may not have been detected because for some Hmong residents, their lack of English language ability completely precluded them from participation, while others did participate, despite their inability to communicate (although this participation was often frustrating and not necessarily meaningful). In addition, it may be that some residents were able to participate despite their lack of

language resources by bringing their children or other people to translate for them. It would be important to examine the relationship between language and participation further to understand how some individuals circumvent this language barrier and participate despite their lack of this resource. Language is rarely examined as a resource for participation, so this study makes an important contribution to the literature by highlighting a resource for participation that is increasingly relevant in the growing number of multiethnic and often multilingual communities, but often lacking.

Within-Group Differences

The above discussion of individual variables related to participation provides evidence of within-group differences. Although commonalities existed among Hmong residents' experiences, many differences were also apparent. First of all, these differences are evident in the significant variability across most individual variables. Hmong residents had different demographic characteristics, social psychological attitudes, cultural values, and resources. Furthermore, some of this variability was related to participation. In particular, Hmong who lived with a greater number of adults in their household were more likely to participate. Men who valued the participation of men over that of women were also more likely to participate. In addition, residents evaluated the same avenues of participation as having different levels of cultural relevance, with those who perceived greater cultural relevance being more likely to participate. Finally, Hmong residents also possessed different time and awareness resources, which affected their participation. For these reasons, it was important to look at participation within a specific group and within a particular context, instead of assuming that all refugees or all Hmong share the same experiences, characteristics, beliefs, or behaviors.

Contextual Variables

The context in which participation occurred was also clearly important. The majority of evidence for this emerged from the qualitative findings rather than from the quantitative. Although this may in part be due to the methodological limitations of measuring context in this study, it also highlights the importance of acquiring an insider perspective and listening to the voices of marginalized individuals and groups rather than relying only on our own or the predominant definitions of issues.

Intergroup Relations. Although the constraint of having only three sites made it impossible to detect differences in individuals' participation due to contextual factors, intergroup relations was clearly an issue for Hmong residents. Many residents mentioned problems that they had with their neighbors who were members of other racial and ethnic groups. Respondents also frequently discussed discrimination that occurred at the community centers. The existence of intergroup conflict impacted individuals' participation in several ways. Some residents did not want to participate because of poor intergroup relations, while others felt that their involvement was not welcomed or valued. This is consistent with other research which has found that negative intergroup relations are prevalent in multiethnic communities (e.g., Guthrie & Hutchison, 1995; Merry, 1981) and that they impede participation (e.g., Guthrie & Hutchison, 1995; Hein, 1995).

Other Contextual Issues. Although intergroup relations was the only contextual variable measured quantitatively, the importance of other contextual variables was highlighted in Hmong residents' qualitative responses. Respondents said that they were less likely to participate because they were not welcomed or asked to participate, they had no voice in their communities, they were not informed of events or activities in the

community, existing participation opportunities were not always culturally relevant, appropriate or effective, their communities were not safe, and supports that they needed to participate, such as translators and childcare, were not provided. We know that individuals' participation is related to characteristics of the context in which it occurs (e.g., Wandersman, 1981; Wandersman & Giamartino, 1980). Therefore, these findings are consistent with existing research, yet extend our knowledge of the unique contextual conditions which are relevant in multiethnic communities and for refugees, immigrants, and other non-English speaking residents.

In conclusion, the findings from this study provide strong support for the importance of an ecological model. There were clearly both individual and contextual variables which were important in determining Hmong residents' participation in their multiethnic communities. An ecological perspective enabled individual within-group differences to be revealed and the importance of context to be highlighted.

Different Types of Participation

Another important finding of this study is that different types of participation are related to different factors. The housing developments had many avenues for formal participation: resident council, volunteer opportunities, and community center activities and events. The findings from this study suggest that we cannot assume that each type of participation requires the same abilities or resources, or is beneficial in the same ways.

Resident Council Participation

In this study, participation in the resident council was related to demographic, cultural, and resource variables. Specifically, residents who had lived in their housing development community longer, had a greater number of adults in their household, and

were more aware of participation opportunities were more likely to participate in the resident council. In addition, men who held traditional gender norms valuing the participation of men over that of women were more likely to participate, while women's gender norms did not affect their participation.

Most of these results are consistent with the findings regarding overall frequency of participation. However, the relationship between an individual's participation and the length of time he or she has lived at the housing development is unique to resident involvement. This finding is consistent with research that suggests that individuals who are more rooted in their communities are more likely to participate (e.g., Devereux, Bronfenbrenner, & Harding, 1960; Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Wandersman, Jakubs, and Giamartino, 1981). Resident council participation was the only form of participation that was related to this indicator of rootedness. This may be because individuals who are more attached and rooted in the community may be more likely to be committed to working to improve their community with other residents through involvement in the resident council.

Volunteering

Volunteering in the community was related to almost none of the variables included in this study, probably because it was so rare (the rarest form of formal participation among Hmong residents), which made it difficult to detect any significant relationships between it and other variables. However, whether or not Hmong residents volunteered was strongly related to awareness of participation opportunities, which suggests that individuals need to know what is going on in their communities in order to know where or how they can help.

Community Center Activities

Participation in events and activities at the community centers was also not related to most factors in this study. This may be because resident council participation is most similar to formal participation studied in other research, while participation in community center activities is conceptually different. Participation at the community centers was probably more relevant to accessing resources and opportunities through established programs than to being involved in decision-making and collective action, which is how citizen participation is typically defined (Wandersman, 1984). Many different people may need food, clothing, English classes, and other services. Thus, this type of participation may be driven more by need than by the desire to be involved in the community. It may be that none of the variables included in this study distinguish individuals who take advantage of these programs and services from those who do not because the nature of their tenancy in the housing developments suggests that many residents have low incomes and need resources.

However, frequency of community center participation was related to traditional gender norms. When this relationship was examined separately by gender, it was women who held traditional gender norms who were more likely to participate frequently at the community center, rather than men. It may be that Hmong women with traditional gender norms have had less contact in the broader community and with individuals outside their culture, and thus may rely more on resources and programs provided at the community centers. In addition, it seems consistent with traditional gender norms that women go to the community centers where they can access resources for the home (i.e., food, clothing) and where programs for their children occur. Hmong men who value the participation of

men over that of women may define participation more as attending resident council meetings where decisions are made, and may not perceive going to the community center as an important aspect of their role.

Breadth of Participation

The number of different ways a resident participated in their community was also examined in this study. This breadth of participation was related to awareness of participation opportunities in the community; Hmong residents who were more aware of participation opportunities were more likely to participate in multiple ways in their communities. It seems clear that awareness of participation opportunities in the community allows Hmong residents to know about the many avenues for participation in their communities and to participate widely.

Breadth of participation was also related to traditional gender norms regarding participation. However, in this case, both men and women with traditional gender norms were more likely to participate in multiple ways in their communities. We know that men with traditional gender norms were more likely to participate in the resident council and overall in terms of frequency, while women with traditional gender norms were more likely to participate at the community centers. Thus, because breadth of participation is a measure of the number of different ways in which residents participate, these gendered tendencies may have been aggregated in such a way as to capture the higher participation of both men and women with traditional gender norms, even though it occurred in different settings.

It is evident from the many different relationships discussed above that participation is complex and that different forms of formal participation in the community

are related to different factors. This is an interesting contribution to our understanding of participation. Most previous research has focused on neighborhoods with primarily one avenue of formal participation – neighborhood voluntary associations (e.g., Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, & Meier, 1987; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). However, Williams and Ortega (1986) found that participation in different types of organizations was related to different variables. The multiethnic housing developments in this study provided a unique opportunity to examine many different types of community participation. From this, we know that different people are attracted to different participation opportunities, and that different types of participation are more beneficial than others.

In addition, it is clear that some factors are important across most types of participation. Awareness of participation opportunities was related to many forms of formal participation and is therefore an essential resource for participation. Having a greater number of adults in a household seems to be another important resource required across multiple types of participation. Finally, gender norms are also related to many types of participation, although in different ways and for different people depending upon the particular form of participation. This suggests that some factors, particularly individuals' resources, may be more globally related to participation, while other factors, such as individuals' attitudes and characteristics, are related differently to participation, depending upon the form it takes.

Given all of these quantitative results, it is important to ask how they correspond with Hmong residents' own descriptions of their participation experiences. Although the quantitative findings indicate that many Hmong residents were involved in their communities, they do not reveal the nature of this participation. An important aspect of

this study was providing Hmong residents with the opportunity to describe their participation experiences in their own words.

Listening to the Voices of Hmong Residents

Developing an understanding of the participation experiences of 54 Hmong refugees from their own perspectives was informative and important. Participation was clearly something that most Hmong residents wanted, despite the fact that they were precluded from most meaningful participation opportunities and frustrated by numerous barriers. This was evident in the quantitative analyses, but was best expressed by respondents in their own words. When provided with the opportunity, Hmong residents had a great deal to say about their participation experiences in multiethnic housing developments.

First, they talked about the importance they placed on community participation. This is not surprising, given the collective nature of Hmong culture and the emphasis most place on the community rather than on the individual. The reasons Hmong residents valued participation were consistent with this in that they discussed the importance of participation for their community more often than they discussed individual benefits. They felt that participation was important for the community because it involved working together, helping others, maintaining good relations among community members, and being a part of the community. Research in other communities has also found that participation has numerous community benefits, such as improvements in social, physical, and economic conditions of neighborhoods (Cassidy, 1980; Florin & Wandersman, 1990) and increased power and decision-making influence of communities (Speer & Hughey, 1995). Interestingly, the community benefits mentioned by Hmong

residents are different than those found in the literature. These differences could be due to the inherent value most Hmong place on the community and collective interests, which may lead to appreciating participation as a process for helping others and working together with community members, rather than focusing on specific outcomes such as improved conditions and influence within communities. Again, these findings emphasize the importance of giving attention to particular individuals, cultures, and contexts (Trickett, 1996).

Some of the Hmong residents mentioned that they participated both formally in resident council meetings and community center events and informally by helping their neighbors and the community. However, more than half of the respondents reported that they did not participate at all. Given the value they placed on participation, this is troubling, but not inconsistent with other findings regarding refugee and immigrant participation (e.g., Guthrie & Hutchison, 1995; Hein, 1995). These findings are also concerning because participation was related to positive psychological adjustment for Hmong residents. Thus, many residents were excluded from a potentially beneficial process.

Many Hmong residents tried to participate and were frustrated by numerous barriers, but many faced such extensive barriers that they were not even able to participate at all. What was clear among both of these groups was that almost all of Hmong residents were precluded from *meaningful* participation in their communities, even the ones who did participate. Numerous explanations for this exclusion were offered by Hmong residents. First of all, according to Hmong residents, their communities did not support their participation. The Hmong residents faced discrimination, they were not

welcomed or asked to participate, they were not informed of events or activities in the community, existing participation opportunities were not always relevant or appropriate, and supports were not provided that Hmong residents needed to participate. Hmong residents' inability to participate was compounded by individual barriers they faced, including language differences, time constraints, and lack of awareness of participation opportunities.

Due in part to their difficulties in participating in their communities, Hmong residents had many unmet needs or desires. These were also probably related to the fact that existing participation opportunities were often not relevant to Hmong residents' specific abilities and needs. Thus, when they were actually asked what they wanted, Hmong residents' ideas were prolific. They hoped for individual opportunities for development, community enhancements, improved intergroup relations, increased opportunities for their children, and additional material assistance. Although the research on refugee adaptation is extensive, the focus is rarely on what refugees themselves want, but more often on predefined areas of adaptation (i.e., economic, psychological, social, cultural). However, from this study it is clear that the needs and wants of a refugee group often do not match the existing opportunities in the community.

Residents recognized that education was essential to their ability to thrive in the United States and therefore expressed their hope for many educational opportunities. This is important because education is a resource that is related to the positive adjustment of refugees (e.g., Rumbaut, 1996) and that opens up the possibilities and choices of all people in the United States. Residents' request for education also suggests that they are not able to access existing educational opportunities in the Lansing community, such as

adult education. It would be important to explore the barriers that may be preventing Hmong residents from taking advantage of these opportunities, which might include lack of transportation, childcare, and awareness.

Hmong residents also valued recreation opportunities and many recognized the potential benefits of these types of activities for their own and other adults' well-being and health. The development of fun, recreational activities could be an avenue for bringing people of different groups together in the community in a positive way, rather than having participation opportunities that only address problems or individual deficits. However, residents were aware of problems in the community, such as safety issues and unresponsive managers at each development, which they hoped could be improved. They also very much wanted ways in which to improve relations among community members. Hmong residents did not merely complain about discrimination and harassment, but wanted to work to end it and to improve intergroup relations. Individuals' perceptions of problems in their community have been found to be positively related to their participation (e.g., Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann & Meier, 1987; Wandersman, Jakubs & Giamartino, 1981), which suggests that Hmong residents' awareness of problems could be a catalyst for their participation. It would be important to investigate in future research how residents' desires to address community problems could be incorporated into relevant participation opportunities.

Opportunities for their children were also very important to Hmong residents. This would be expected, given that many refugees and immigrants are aware that they may never develop the language and other skills that their children will. Children learn new languages more rapidly and adjust much more quickly to a new society than adults

(Rumbaut, 1991a). Therefore, many parents often feel that their children's potential is much greater than their own. Many Hmong parents also struggle with discipline issues in the United States. As Hmong children become "Americanized", their respect for their parents is often diminished. Many children of refugees and immigrants recognize that their parents are not as able to negotiate the new culture in the same way that the children themselves are, and therefore may feel it is less important to listen to what their parents have to say. In addition, most Hmong parents know that the physical discipline strategies employed by many of them in Laos are not acceptable in the United States, but these parents are often not made aware of alternatives, and thus feel that their hands are tied when it comes to disciplining their children. It is likely that, for all of these reasons, many Hmong parents requested classes that could teach their children to be good people. It is important to understand the context from which this request arises as discussed above. With such an understanding, the request for classes to teach their children to be good people appears to involve a desire for programs that Hmong parents could participate in to learn new discipline and parenting techniques. This might also be an example of a program that could unite members of different ethnic groups in coming together to focus on common concerns – their children.

Finally, many Hmong residents had material needs, such as food, clothing, and school supplies. This is to be expected in low-income communities and should be addressed through attempts to bring those material resources into the community or connect residents with organizations and opportunities that can help residents meet their needs. All of the unmet needs discussed by Hmong residents are important to understand

because relevant participation opportunities and community programs will consider these desires and include them.

Defining Participation

This study also illustrated the importance of thinking about whom defines the particular phenomenon targeted in research. In this study, it was evident that the Hmong residents interviewed defined participation differently than the researcher. In the qualitative open-ended section of the interview, 52% of respondents reported that they did not participate in their communities. However, when residents were subsequently asked about specific types of formal participation as defined by the researcher, such as going to the community center, volunteering, and being involved with the resident council, only 41% indicated that they did not participate at all in the community.

This discrepancy may be because some Hmong residents did not seem to define going to the community center as participation unless the activities they engaged in there also involved helping others. It also seemed that many Hmong residents did not really feel that they participated in or were a part of the community when they were initially asked the open-ended questions about their community involvement. However, when they were asked later in the quantitative section about specific activities, they realized that they were involved in some of them.

As researchers, it is important to recognize that phenomena we study are usually understood and conceptualized differently by different people (e.g., Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler & Yapchai, 1998). We cannot assume that our definitions of phenomena or our perspectives as researchers are at all congruent with those of our participants. In fact, we can usually be fairly confident that we do not have shared

meanings or ideas, unless we work to develop these together with our research participants (Kingry-Westergaard & Kelly, 1990). Thus, this incongruency between the quantitative and qualitative data supports the idea that it is essential to let research participants' voices be heard and not to let researchers' assumptions be the basis for all of the research questions (Trickett, 1996). Therefore, although it is important to know quantitatively how many Hmong residents were participating and what factors were related to their participation, our understanding would be incomplete and perhaps misleading if we also did not hear how Hmong residents defined their own involvement and how frustrating and often meaningless much of their participation was.

Experiencing Participation as Meaningful and Empowering

Although more than half of Hmong residents interviewed did participate in their communities, their descriptions of these participation experiences indicate that this involvement was not necessarily meaningful or empowering. For instance, when residents tried to participate and make suggestions, they usually felt excluded by language differences and other barriers. They reported that the ideas they offered were not listened to or acted upon. In addition, the prevalent discrimination and harassment mentioned by residents was not reflected in the intergroup relations surveys filled out by leaders and key staff at the housing developments. This discrepancy between the intergroup relations problems experienced by Hmong residents and made known to staff reflects a major problem and suggests that the voices and concerns of Hmong residents were not heard in their multiethnic communities.

Many researchers have found it useful to conceptualize the positive outcomes of participation within a framework of empowerment (e.g. Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988,

Zimmerman, 1995). This is primarily because there is considerable evidence that participation in voluntary organizations can be an empowering process through which participants develop higher competencies and self-confidence, and lower feelings of helplessness (Florin & Wandersman, 1984; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Zimmerman, 1995). However, if Hmong residents cannot report their problems to housing development staff, they will not feel that they have control or influence in their communities. Whether it is because they do not feel able to communicate as a result of language differences or because they are frustrated with their managers and feel that it is futile to report incidents of discrimination and harassment, they are clearly embedded in contexts which do not support their empowerment. This disempowerment is also reflected in Hmong residents' responses to a particular question in the overall sense of community scale, which states, "If I want something to change at (housing development), I can help make it happen." Almost 54% of Hmong residents said that this statement was true for them never or rarely.

Taken together, the barriers faced by Hmong residents, their inability to report problems, their lack of voice in the community, and their beliefs that they could not effect change in their communities suggest that the settings in which they live were not empowering and that they themselves were not empowered. Specifically, Hmong residents usually lacked the skills (language ability), knowledge (awareness of participation opportunities), and political efficacy (belief that they could make change) which are considered to be essential aspects of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995). Furthermore, their communities not only failed to foster the development of any of these abilities, but also often served to silence their voices.

For Hmong residents, these conditions suggest that an empowering setting would need to offer several opportunities. First, residents need opportunities to improve their English skills so they can participate in their communities in whatever ways they chose (e.g., formally, informally, socially, politically). They also need opportunities to define meaningful collective action as a community, to be heard by their communities, and to understand their potential roles in the democratic process in the United States. Providing these opportunities would be an important step towards making meaningful and empowering participation possible for Hmong residents.

Implications for Practitioners

Given that Hmong residents' participation in their multiethnic communities was not necessarily meaningful or empowering, yet was linked to their positive adjustment and valued by them, it is important to consider what the implications of these findings are for practitioners. As citizens in a country of immigrants, we all recognize to some extent the struggles that refugees face to adjust to a new country. However, most of us do not have a real understanding of this experience. Despite good intentions, the ways in which many environments in our society preclude the participation of refugees and other people with limited English ability is not evident to most of us. Because it is so easy to be oblivious to and ignorant of the challenges refugees often face, we have to listen to what they have to say and respect the uniqueness of their experiences. Listening to Hmong residents about their attempts to participate, what services and activities they wanted their community centers to offer and how they wanted to change their communities was an important step in this process. Needs assessments are another mechanism through which communities can find out what is important and relevant for their residents.

We cannot rely on the opinions of people who work with particular refugee groups because we clearly cannot assume that staff or other outsiders understand Hmong refugees' experiences or the experiences of any refugee individuals or groups. However, it is also important to remember that individuals cannot speak for or represent an entire group. The within-group differences found in this study and the different experiences described by Hmong residents illustrate that it is inappropriate to expect one Hmong refugee to represent Hmong culture or the experiences of all Hmong refugees.

The findings of this study also emphasize the importance of recognizing the strengths within a particular group or community. For instance, almost all of the Hmong respondents valued community participation, probably in part because of the collective orientation of their culture. Thus the potential for collective action is great, if it were built upon this fundamental value. Hmong collective, clan-based culture and their shared history also provide an incredibly extensive and strong support system, which, among other benefits, has shown to be a protective factor for poor Hmong youth (Call & McNall, 1992). These strengths should be incorporated into a model of participation and the creation of relevant participation opportunities. Often, research and interventions not only fail to incorporate the strengths of the target communities, but actually work against them. An example cited by Strawn (1994) is a perinatal outreach and education program whose goal was to empower low-income women from diverse backgrounds by providing them with access to resources and a social support network. Strawn states that, "the social organization of disempowerment was embedded in the macro-environment and filtered down to the interpersonal interactions between well-intentioned helpers and communities" (p. 172). She attributes this to an emphasis on individual empowerment

that was counter to many of the women's cultures, such as Southeast Asian and Latina cultures.

Although the intervention was structured with careful attention to superficial cultural and linguistic issues (i.e., the program included bilingual case workers, the translation of all materials, and the recruitment of individuals in their own communities), the researchers inadvertently imposed individual constructs of empowerment on communities which had strengths (strong social support networks and collective ideologies), which should have been incorporated into any effort to enable the women to meet their needs and exercise control over their lives. Any intervention designed to facilitate participation of the Hmong in multiethnic communities must be developed with careful attention to the unique attributes of the Hmong.

The findings in this study also suggest that we should not assume that a lack of presence in community settings means a lack of interest. Although many Hmong residents did not participate in their communities very much, most wanted to be more involved. Thus, it is also essential to pay attention to the unique supports individuals and groups need to participate (e.g., do not use fliers to notify residents of events if almost 50% of targeted group is illiterate). As discussed below, providing appropriate supports is an important part of addressing the barriers to participation faced by Hmong residents.

Addressing Barriers to Participation

Clearly, Hmong residents experience numerous barriers to their participation in their multiethnic housing developments, including: language, lack of awareness, time constraints, and discrimination and poor intergroup relations. These barriers can be addressed from both individual and community perspectives. Most often, we focus on

about individuals' deficits, what they need to acquire or do. However, it is important to avoid placing most or all of the responsibility for participation on individual community members because barriers within the larger community often preclude participation. Community barriers exist if communities are not accommodating to the needs of its residents, or if different groups have different access to opportunities to participate (Williams & Ortega, 1986). These include both constraints that exist solely at the community level and those that could be addressed by the community even if they might also be solved at the individual level.

Community barriers to participation are often failures within the community to provide appropriate supports to overcome what may appear to be individual issues. For instance, language barriers can be an individual obstacle, but should also be considered at the community level, and in some cases, might be more effectively addressed from a community perspective. Jong (1989) recognized the importance of language, and found that organizing ethnically-based groups was initially necessary to provide opportunities for participation to immigrants who were marginalized members of a community and who were not fluent in the native language. This might be an important initial step towards broader participation which could be explored at the housing developments in this study. Guthrie and Hutchinson (1995) examined interaction and participation among African Americans and Asian Americans at a housing development in San Francisco. They noted that there were almost never any translators at community meetings and that there was little effort by the staff at the community center in the project to include Asian Americans in activities or programs. These barriers resulted in minimal participation in

community meetings and at the community center by Asian Americans. Unfortunately, the circumstances at the three sites in this study parallel these findings.

Other community barriers include scheduling meetings at times that are inconvenient for many residents and not providing childcare for residents with young children. In order to address all of these barriers, communities must provide opportunities for all residents to communicate the types of programs and services they are able and interested in participating in and find effective ways to communicate the time, place, and accessibility of events. Jong (1989) suggests that in situations in which linguistic and cultural barriers are large, establishing ethnically-based groups may be necessary to achieve greater participation and involvement of marginalized members of the community.

Another major community barrier is poor intergroup relations and discrimination against certain community members. Hmong residents stated that the discrimination and negative relations among members of different ethnic groups discouraged and precluded their participation. Why is it so important to consider intergroup relations and discrimination? Participation in contexts of inequality is not empowering (Gruber & Trickett, 1987). Inherent within settings that are characterized by negative intergroup relations and discrimination is the unequal treatment of community members. Intergroup relations has recently received significant attention in empowerment research. From the standpoint of positive intergroup relations, Riger (1993) was one of the first to emphasize that connection and cooperation among individuals and groups are important, and should not be sacrificed for empowerment of specific individuals or groups over others. She

argued that empowerment has traditionally been shaped by individualistic values and threatens to obscure the importance of sense of community and collective interests.

Fortunately, there is research which addresses contexts in which cooperation and empowerment are not mutually exclusive, and where positive intergroup relations can lead to the development of sense of community and participation and involvement of community members who belong to different groups. Research by Bond and Keys (1993) and Bartunek, Foster-Fishman, and Keys (1996) has shown that coempowerment, defined as more than one group having decision-making power and influence in a given situation, is possible when an organizational culture (or other context) that “supports (a) the groups’ capacity for meaningful inclusion and (b) each group’s access to resources.” (Bond & Keys, 1993, p. 40) is created.

Both Bond and Keys’ and Bartunek, Foster-Fishman, and Keys’ studies have important implications for participation in multiethnic communities. They emphasize strengthening within-group structures and affiliations, while also focusing on common goals and issues. It is probably especially important to maintain the separate integrity of groups constructed around race, and immigrant or refugee status. Members of these groups often have very strong connections with their culture and salient reasons for maintaining their cultural identities, which may be threatened by the hegemony of “American” culture. Yet, individuals living in the same community, neighborhood, or housing development must also recognize their interdependencies, especially when limited resources require collective action. Therefore, participation opportunities which focus specifically on Hmong residents, as well as those which encourage participation

and equal treatment among all residents, are both important. Otherwise, poor intergroup relations are likely to preclude participation.

Too often the majority of the responsibility to overcome the barriers discussed above is placed on individuals. However, communities can be proactive in creating settings which facilitate participation by providing translators at meetings, posting fliers and announcements in the native language of residents, creating alternative non-written processes for notifying residents of events, providing childcare, taking action to reduce prejudices, and making other accommodations. Often the individuals who have more influence and ability to negotiate the system in settings where refugee participation has the potential to occur, think they cannot do anything to remove or diminish these barriers, and therefore leave it all up to those who understand the system the least. For instance, at the housing developments, fliers that notify residents of the meetings were always in English. Although staff were aware that many Hmong and other refugees who live there could not read English and often were not literate in their native languages, there was no attempt to translate fliers or notify residents in alternative ways. In addition, translators were never provided at resident council meetings. Without these supports, this study has shown that the important contributions of many community members are lost.

Recognizing Individual Agency and Strengths

Despite the emphasis here on the context and community barriers, it is also important to recognize Hmong and other refugee groups as being comprised of active, resilient individuals. Most Hmong and other refugees have survived and overcome difficult circumstances; they are not helpless victims. The Hmong have faced challenges, but have continued to actively work towards their own positive adjustment. They have

created mutual assistance associations in their communities so that they are not dependent only on others for help. They have worked hard to preserve many aspects of their traditional culture, and, as clearly evidenced in this study, they want to get involved in their communities and share their knowledge and ideas. However, they need communities ready to accommodate them and opportunities to develop the skills they need to meaningfully participate. As one Hmong man said:

“If I understood English, I have things that I know, that I would like to change, that I would like to make happen, but I can’t share them so I just keep them to myself. Things like how to get along with each other and how to provide for our families. I have a lot of opinions about these things and a lot of other things.”

The Hmong have much to contribute to the United States. One example of potential contributions is the value they place on community. Jason and Kobayashi (1995) cite Stein (1960) as linking a decline in sense of community to the urbanization and industrialization of our society. The resettlement of the Hmong in the United States is an interesting juxtaposition of two times and two cultures - they are pre-Industrial, rural people, who have never before faced threats to their sense of community like industrialization and individually-oriented U.S. culture. It is important to consider how the strengths of their experiences and community cohesiveness could be preserved and built upon to promote their own adjustment and enable them to become integrated into their communities.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that it is based on the assumption that the link between participation and positive outcomes such as positive adjustment, empowerment and community integration are relevant for the Hmong. As Trickett

(1996) points out, “Only through an investigation of phenomena in varying contexts can we discern what is universal and what is culture- or setting-specific, and then only at a particular historical moment” (p.214). However, many aspects of Hmong culture and the specific circumstances of Hmong refugees’ resettlement in the United States suggest that, although participation might not lead to individual empowerment for Hmong newcomers, it may contribute to other important positive outcomes including a sense of collective empowerment, integration in their new communities, increased English language ability and other skills that might help them in their adjustment process, and connections to community resources. This study examined and found a positive relationship between participation and psychological adjustment for the Hmong, but because the information obtained was based on interviews at a single point in time, the direction of this relationship remains unclear. However, it should be noted that Hmong residents identified both individual and community reasons why participation was important to them. This suggests that participation is valued by the Hmong respondents. It would be important in future investigations to further examine, via longitudinal research, how participation is related to adjustment and other positive outcomes for Hmong in multiethnic communities.

It is also important to consider a related assumption underlying this study – that participation in the broader community is the preferred mechanism for refugee adjustment. Instead, it may be most important, after the disruption and relocation in refugees’ lives, to strengthen their own communities first. Some researchers suggest that the focus of programs and policies designed to facilitate refugee adjustment should be on helping refugees rebuild their own communities (Athey & Ahearn, 1991). It may be that

this within-group community building is a precondition to being ready to meaningfully participate in the larger community. This is exactly what Jong (1989) found in a community that first created ethnically-based groups which, over time, enabled refugees and immigrants to become involved in the broader community. However, decisions about whether to focus participation within one's own ethnic group or in the broader community should be based upon wishes expressed by refugee individuals and groups themselves.

It is also important to consider the relevance of the participation opportunities explored in this study to Hmong residents. Are the avenues to community involvement which are available in the community centers at the housing developments effective in improving Hmong residents' lives? Or would different types of collective action be more worthwhile for them? It is possible that participation could have been more broadly defined in this study, or that other forms of participation exist that are more beneficial. This would be important to explore in future investigations.

Another potential limitation of this study is the weak psychometric properties of some of the scales. Five variables were single-item measures (the three dimensions of acculturation, and cultural and gender norms about participation). In addition, several scales had somewhat low reliabilities. Therefore, the ability to detect significant relationships between participation and many of the variables may have been compromised. Correction for attenuation ameliorated this problem for scales with lower than optimal reliabilities, but there was no method that could compensate for the single-item measures.

Finally, the sample size of the study is limited by the small number of Hmong households at one of the housing developments and the need to conduct interviews with a similar number of households at each site. This small sample size limited the power of statistical analyses which were performed with the data. However, this limitation was balanced by the in-depth interviews a small sample size allowed, given the resources available.

Conclusion

By using an ecological perspective to examine participation in context, this study improved our understanding of participation in multiethnic communities and the participation experiences of refugees and immigrants in general, and more specifically of the Hmong. Hmong refugees very much wanted to be involved in their multiethnic communities and struggled to do so, but were often precluded from meaningful participation by individual and community barriers. Most significantly, they lacked the language, time, and awareness resources that would enable them to participate. In addition, no supports to address these issues existed in their communities. However, Hmong residents who did participate seemed to benefit in terms of improved psychological adjustment.

In addition to contributing to the literature on participation, improved awareness of these issues is essential for designing effective programs or interventions that facilitate participation. An essential component of such programs would be diminishing or removing the numerous barriers experienced by refugees and others residents in multiethnic communities. It is also important to develop methods for carefully documenting the particular context in which an intervention will occur, so that other

researchers can make informed decisions about which aspects of past work are relevant to their targeted community. We cannot afford to ignore participation in multiethnic communities and the participation experiences of refugees, not only because of the potential benefits to individuals and the community, but also because it is a mechanism for bringing people together in multiethnic community organizations. It is only through such efforts that the growing ethnic/racial tensions and conflicts that have accompanied the diversification of communities can be addressed and that refugees can be accepted into their new communities and allowed to make valuable contributions that will surely benefit us all.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

RESIDENT INTERVIEW

Background Questions

The first few questions are about yourself and your family.

A1. What is your marital status?

- 1- ☐ single (never been married)
- 2- ☐ married
- 3- ☐ divorced
- 4- ☐ separated
- 5- ☐ widowed

A2. Gender:

- 1- ☐ male
- 2- ☐ female

A3. How old are you? _____

A4. When did you move to LaRoy Froh?

_____ month _____ year

A5. When did you move to the U.S.?

_____ month _____ year

A6. How many children do you have?

_____ children

A7. How many people live in your house now?

_____ people

A8. How many people who live in your house now are over 18 years old?

_____ people

A9. How are these people related to you?

A10. Did you attend school in Laos or Thailand?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A11. How many years of formal schooling did you have in Laos or Thailand? _____

A12. Have you attended school in the U.S.?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A13. What is the highest degree you have received in the United States?

- 1- ☐ none
- 2- ☐ high school diploma/GED
- 3- ☐ Vocational/Technical degree
- 4- ☐ B.A./B.S.
- 5- ☐ Graduate degree (please specify):

A14a. Do you currently work?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A14b. If so, what do you do? _____

A14c. If so, how many hours per week?

—

A15a. Are you currently in school?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A15b. If so, what type of school? _____

A15c. If so, how many hours per week?

—

A16. Instead of working, do you mostly take care of your children?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A17. What is your native language?

1- ☐ Hmong
2- ☐ Other _____

A18. What language do you most often speak at home?

1- ☐ Hmong
2- ☐ English
3- ☐ Other _____

A19. What language do you most often speak outside your home?

1- ☐ Hmong
2- ☐ English
3- ☐ Other _____

A20. Can you read Hmong?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A21. Can you write Hmong?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A22. Can you read English?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A23. Can you write English?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

A24. Where were you born?

1- ☐ Laos
2- ☐ Thailand
3- ☐ United States
4- ☐ Other _____

A25. How long do you and your family plan to live at LaRoy Froh?

1- ☐ would like to move as soon as possible
2- ☐ hope to move in the next year
3- ☐ hope to move in next two years
4- ☐ hope to move in next five years
5- ☐ we have no plans to move
6- ☐ don't know

A26. How satisfied are you with living at LaRoy Froh?

1- ☐ very dissatisfied
2- ☐ dissatisfied
3- ☐ somewhat dissatisfied
4- ☐ somewhat satisfied
5- ☐ satisfied
6- ☐ very satisfied

A27. If you could change anything about LaRoy Froh, what would you change?

Participation

Now, I'd like to talk to you about the activities you are involved with at LaRoy Froh.

B1. You live here at LaRoy Froh. How do you participate in this community? In what ways do you help out (your neighbors, the community)? What activities are you involved in here? What meetings do you go to?

B2. Would you like to be more involved in the community here? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B3. In what ways do you want to be more involved?

B4. Do you think your participation here in the community is important? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B5. Why or why not?

B6. In the last year, how many resident council meetings have you attended? _____

B7. Do you hold an elected or appointed position on the resident council?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes (please describe): _____

B8. Did you vote in the last resident council election? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B9. Does someone in your household other than you attend resident council meetings?
0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B10. If yes, how often? _____

B11. How are you related to this person? _____

B12. Does anyone in your household other than you have an elected or appointed position on the resident council?
0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes (please describe): _____

B13. If so, who? _____

B14. Did anyone else in your household vote in the last resident council election?
0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B15. If so, who? _____

I am interested in reasons that may make it difficult for you to attend resident council meetings. Please tell me whether the following are problems for you or not.

B16. Do you know what resident council meetings are?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B17. Do you have time to attend resident council meetings?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B18. Do you speak English well enough to attend resident council meetings?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B19. Do you think resident council meetings are important for yourself or other Hmong people?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B20. Do you know when or where resident council meetings are held?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B21. Do you understand what people are saying at resident council meetings when everyone is speaking English?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B22. Do you think that participating in the resident council is worthwhile for Hmong people?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B23. Are you able to attend resident council meetings at the time they are scheduled?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B24. Are there other reasons that make it difficult for you to attend? What are they?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B25. Other #2:	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B26. How often do you go to the community center? _____

B27. What do you do at the community center? (check all that apply)

- 1- ☐ I do not go to the community center.
- 2- ☐ Use the computers in the Computer Learning Center
- 3- ☐ Attend special programs or events (for example, Thanksgiving potluck or Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration)
- 4- ☐ Study English
- 5- ☐ Attend health education classes
- 6- ☐ Other _____
- 7- ☐ Other _____

B28a. In the last year, have you helped to plan or organize any events, services, or activities at the community center? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B28b. If so, how many? _____

B29a. In the last year, have you donated time or materials to help with events or services at the community center? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B29b. If so, for how many events? _____

I am interested in reasons that may make it difficult for you to take advantage of services or resources at the community center. Please tell me whether the following are problems for you are not.

B30. Do you know about the activities and services at the community center?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B31. Do you speak English well enough to participate in everything that you would like to at the community center?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B32. Do you have time to go to the community center?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B33. Does the community center have activities or services that are interesting for Hmong people?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B34. Do you know what day or time things happen at the community center?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B35. Does the community center have activities or services that are appropriate for Hmong people?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B36. Is it difficult to go to the community center because everything that happens there is in English?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B37. Are you busy during the hours when the community center is open?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B38. Are there other reasons you don't go to the community center? What are they?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
B39. Other #2:	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B40. Would you be interested in studying ESL at your community center?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B41. How often would you like to study? _____

B42. Are you a U.S. citizen? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B43. Would you be interested in taking citizenship classes at your community center?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

B44. What times are convenient for you to study?

B45. What programs, activities, or services would you like the community center to offer for you or your children?

Hmong Community Participation

I am also interested in how you are involved with the Hmong community in Lansing.

C1. How often do you attend Hmong meetings in Lansing? _____

C2. Do you hold an elected position in the Hmong community? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

C3. If so, what is it? _____

C4. Does anyone else in your household attend Hmong meetings in Lansing?

0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

C5. If so, who? _____

C6. Does he/she have an elected position in the Hmong community? 0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

C7. If so, what is it? _____

C8. How often do you attend Hmong New Year? _____

C9. How often do you attend the Hmong annual picnic? _____

Sense of Community in Housing Development

I am interested in what you think about LaRoy Froh. Please think about the whole community (all of the residents – White, Black, Hmong, Vietnamese, Latino) when answering these questions. Decide if you think each statement is true never, rarely, sometimes, often, most of the time, or all of the time.

	Never	Rarely	Some- Times	Often	Most of the time	All of the time
D1. I am willing to help my neighbors or other residents at LaRoy Froh when they need help.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D2. It is easy to make friends and meet people at LaRoy Froh.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D3. If I want something to change at LaRoy Froh, I can help make it happen.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D4. The beliefs of residents at LaRoy Froh sometimes affect my opinions and actions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D5. My values are similar to the values of the other residents of LaRoy Froh.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D6. I usually stop and talk with other residents of LaRoy Froh when I see them.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D7. I feel like I belong here at LaRoy Froh.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D8. Residents at LaRoy Froh are good at working together to solve problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Within-Group Sense of Community

I am also interested in what you think about the other Hmong people who live at LaRoy Froh. Please decide whether you think each statement is true never, rarely, sometimes, often, most of the time, or all of the time.

	Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Most of the time	All of the time
D9. I am willing to help other Hmong people when they need help.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D10. It is easy to make friends and meet other Hmong people at LaRoy Froh.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D11. If I want something to change for the Hmong at LaRoy Froh, I can help make it happen.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D12. The beliefs of other Hmong at LaRoy Froh sometimes affect my opinions and actions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D13. My values are similar to the values of the other Hmong at LaRoy Froh.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D14. I usually stop and talk with other Hmong people at LaRoy Froh when I see them.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D15. I feel like I belong when I'm with other Hmong at LaRoy Froh.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D16. Hmong residents at LaRoy Froh are good at working together to solve problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Adjustment

Now I have a few questions about your life in the last month.

<i>In the last month, how often...</i>	Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Most of the time	All of the time
E1. Have you felt under strain, stress, pressure?	0	1	2	3	4	5
E2. Have you felt cheerful and light-hearted?	0	1	2	3	4	5
E3. Have you felt anxious, worried, upset?	0	1	2	3	4	5
E4. Has your daily life been full of things that Were interesting to you?	0	1	2	3	4	5
E5. Have you felt sad, discouraged, hopeless, worthless?	0	1	2	3	4	5
E6. Have you felt happy or satisfied with your present life?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Culture

I also have a few questions about living in America.

<i>Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following six questions.</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
E7. The schools should help our children learn American ways of behaving and become more like the American children in the neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E8. We may adapt ourselves to American society in order to earn a living, but we must stay together as a group to preserve our own culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E9. The American way of life may be good for others, but not for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E10. It is important for me to be involved in activities here in my community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E11. It is more appropriate for men to participate in the community than for women.	1	2	3	4	5	6

English Language Ability

I also want to ask you a few questions to find out how much English you know. First, I'll ask you each question in English. Try to answer the question in English if you can. If you don't understand the question, then I will ask you in Hmong.

	Comprehension	Speaking
F1. How old are you? _____	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
F2. How many daughters do you have?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
F3. How long have you lived in the United States? _____	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
F4. Tell me the places you have lived in the United States.	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes
F5. Did you vote in the last election?	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes	0- ☐ no 1- ☐ yes

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

MANAGER SURVEY

As communities in the United States are becoming increasingly integrated and diverse, members of different racial and ethnic groups have more opportunities to interact with each other. Specifically, I am interested in the relations among residents who live in multiethnic communities and the impact these relations have on community involvement. As the manager of LaRoy Froh housing development, you are able to observe the interactions and relations among the residents here. Based on your experience, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos and Asian Americans all get along together at LaRoy Froh.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The residents of LaRoy Froh treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Most Asian/Asian American people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Most of the problems among residents at LaRoy Froh are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The residents of LaRoy Froh respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Most African American people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Most of the problems among residents at LaRoy Froh are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Residents of LaRoy Froh interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The residents of LaRoy Froh are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Most Caucasian people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Relations among residents at LaRoy Froh between residents of different racial and ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Most Latino people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. One of the biggest problems at LaRoy Froh is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. What is the total number of resident incident reports at LaRoy Froh in the last three months?

_____ incidents

14. Of these incidents, how many involved problems between residents of two or more racial or ethnic groups (as opposed to a problem among residents of the same racial or ethnic group)?

_____ incidents

Thank you for your time and assistance!

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

AMERICORPS/VISTA VOLUNTEER SURVEY

As communities in the United States are becoming increasingly integrated and diverse, members of different racial and ethnic groups have more opportunities to interact with each other. I am interested in the relations among residents who live in multiethnic communities and the impact these relations have on community involvement. As an AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer, you have spent a lot of time at Mt. Vernon, Hildebrandt, and LaRoy Froh and have had the chance to observe the interactions and relations among the residents at all three sites. Based on your experience, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, and Asian Americans all get along together at LaRoy Froh.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, and Asian Americans all get along together at Mt. Vernon.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, and Asian Americans all get along together at Hildebrandt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The residents of LaRoy Froh treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The residents of Mt. Vernon treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The residents of Hildebrandt treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Most Asian/Asian American people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Most Asian /Asian American people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Most Asian /Asian American people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Most of the problems among residents at LaRoy Froh are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Most of the problems among residents at Mt. Vernon are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Most of the problems among residents at Hildebrandt are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. The residents of LaRoy Froh respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. The residents of Mt. Vernon respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. The residents of Hildebrandt respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Most African American people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Most African American people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Most African American people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Most of the problems among residents at LaRoy Froh are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Most of the problems among residents at Mt. Vernon are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Most of the problems among residents at Hildebrandt are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Residents of LaRoy Froh interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. Residents of Mt. Vernon interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Residents of Hildebrandt interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. The residents of LaRoy Froh are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. The residents of Mt. Vernon are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. The residents of Hildebrandt are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Most Caucasian people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Most Caucasian people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Most Caucasian people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Relations among residents at LaRoy Froh between residents of different racial and ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Relations among residents at Mt. Vernon between residents of different racial and ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Relations among residents at Hildebrandt between residents of different racial and ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Most Latino people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Most Latino people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. Most Latino people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
37. One of the biggest problems at LaRoy Froh is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. One of the biggest problems at Mt.Vernon is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. One of the biggest problems at Hildebrandt is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank you for your time and assistance!

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

RESIDENT INITIATIVES COORDINATOR SURVEY

As communities in the United States are becoming increasingly integrated and diverse, members of different racial and ethnic groups have more opportunities to interact with each other. I am interested in the relations among residents who live in multiethnic communities and the impact these relations have on community involvement. As the Resident Initiatives Coordinator, you have spent a lot of time at Mt. Vernon, Hildebrandt, and LaRoy Froh and have had the chance to observe the interactions and relations among the residents at all three sites. Based on your experience, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, and Asian Americans all get along together at LaRoy Froh.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, and Asian Americans all get along together at Mt. Vernon.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. African Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, and Asian Americans all get along together at Hildebrandt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The residents of LaRoy Froh treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The residents of Mt. Vernon treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The residents of Hildebrandt treat each other the same, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Most Asian/Asian American people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Most Asian /Asian American people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Most Asian /Asian American people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Most of the problems among residents at LaRoy Froh are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Most of the problems among residents at Mt. Vernon are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Most of the problems among residents at Hildebrandt are between people who belong to the same ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. The residents of LaRoy Froh respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. The residents of Mt. Vernon respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. The residents of Hildebrandt respect each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Most African American people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Most African American people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Most African American people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Most of the problems among residents at LaRoy Froh are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Most of the problems among residents at Mt. Vernon are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Most of the problems among residents at Hildebrandt are between people who are members of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Residents of LaRoy Froh interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. Residents of Mt. Vernon interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Residents of Hildebrandt interact mostly with other people in their ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. The residents of LaRoy Froh are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. The residents of Mt. Vernon are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. The residents of Hildebrandt are accepting of each other, regardless of race or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Most Caucasian people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Most Caucasian people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Most Caucasian people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Relations among residents at LaRoy Froh between residents of different racial and ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Relations among residents at Mt. Vernon between residents of different racial and ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Relations among residents at Hildebrandt between residents of different racial/ethnic groups are good.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Most Latino people at LaRoy Froh get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Most Latino people at Mt. Vernon get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. Most Latino people at Hildebrandt get along better with each other than with other residents.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
37. One of the biggest problems at LaRoy Froh is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. One of the biggest problems at Mt. Vernon is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. One of the biggest problems at Hildebrandt is relations among residents of different races or ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank you for your time and assistance!

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