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Exploring the Lived Experiences of Second-Generation Filipina American Emerging Adults:
Navigating Challenges and Meaning-Making of Intersecting Identities and Cultural Values

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology

by

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September 2021

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Mom and dad, I am the woman I am today because of you. Becoming Dr. Hufana is possible because of your unwavering support and tireless sacrifices. I love you both dearly and I will always be your *anako*.

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immigrant daughters who wonder if what they have experienced is valid or if it matters. I see you, I hear you, and yes you matter. You always have, and you always will.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Filipino Americans make up 3.5 million of the U.S. population and are currently the 3rd largest Asian population within the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2010). In addition, 48% of Filipinos in the U.S. are native U.S. born, and 17% of the overall Filipino population within the U.S. are between the ages of 18 and 29 (Pew Research Center, 2017). There is a growing concern, reflected by the “immigrant paradox,” where children of immigrants may experience more undesirable educational and developmental outcomes than those of their immigrant parents (Garcia-Coll & Mark, 2012). Second-generation Filipina American women are notably impacted by this concern as they face various forms of discrimination (e.g., racial and gender), mental health issues with high rates of depression and suicidal ideation, academic challenges in college, and identity development issues (Nadal, 2013; Rumbaut, 1999; Willgerodt & Thompson, 2006). Furthermore, second-generation Filipina American women face the stressful task of managing the influences of two cultures, simultaneously balancing gender roles and expectations of both Filipino culture and American culture (Del-Mundo & Queck, 2017). For second-generation Filipina American women, there are added psychological stressors such as a gender difference in expectations from parents (e.g. staying home to study and focus on school work rather than socializing with friends compared to male identified siblings, household chores, curfew) maintaining their various identities in and out of the home, and upholding the model minority stereotype in school and the workplace (Maramba, 2008).

The historical impact of Spanish colonization and Filipino immigration to the U.S. with instances of marginalization still continue to impact second-generation Filipina American

women (David, 2013; Nadal, 2012). The emotional tension between being “too ethnic” for those in the dominant culture and “too American” from the perspectives of their families as well as the impact of gender role expectations can be demanding and frustrating, yet many may not appear to display distress due to cultural stigma and the expectation to uphold close family ties creating a feeling of being in between (Del-Mundo & Queeck, 2017, p.1).

Second-generation Filipina American women between the ages of 18 to 25, or emerging adults, are at a particular phase of psychological development where they are beginning to establish a sense of autonomy and responsibility for themselves yet are often still closely tied to their parents and family (Munsey, 2006). Second-generation Filipina American women within the emerging adulthood phase may face a variety of challenges including identity development and formation, navigating cultural and familial expectations, while figuring out their own identities and sense of self within the larger context of society (Del-Mundo & Queeck, 2017; del Prado & Church, 2010; Espiritu & Wolf, 2001; Munsey, 2006; Nadal, 2011). In addition, negotiating dissonant messages in terms of varying cultural identities (e.g., gender, sexual, ethnic) may create marginalization, criticism, messages of inferiority, and expectations that may impact their sense of self (Del-Mundo & Queeck, 2017).

A sense of self-worth and value for second-generation Filipina American women are often times placed on themselves. This may occur within the context of success of family relationships and achievement in order to sustain their family image which creates a sense of silence in their suffering (Mabalon, 2013). However, for this group of individuals, the traditional models of what it means to be a woman and specifically a Filipina American woman are no longer the standard (Del-Mundo & Queeck, 2017). Instead, second-generation

Filipina American women are expected to excel in their roles within the workplace, school, and family respectively (Del-Mundo & Queck, 2017). The intersection of such roles may contribute to how they make sense of the challenges they face and how they choose to deal with them.

In spite of these challenges, most Filipina American women have been found to adapt to their internal and external worlds (Del-Mundo & Queck, 2017). Cultural values and interpersonal support have been indicated to aid in overcoming adversities for Filipinos and Filipino Americans (Nadal, 2011; Sanchez & Gaw, 2007). Yet, few studies have explored how this may specifically be experienced within the context of emerging adulthood for second-generation Filipina American women, specifically through personal accounts. Further exploration of how participants navigate challenges of intersecting identities, cultural values, and how they make sense of them may deepen understanding the lived experiences of second-generation Filipina American women emerging adults as it impacts their lives, sense of self, and behaviors.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this exploratory study is to explore the lived experiences of navigating challenges associated with Filipino and American identities and cultural values as a second-generation Filipina American woman, how they deal with these challenges, and how they make sense of their experiences.

This study creates a platform that supports the participants' own constructions of their experiences within their cultural contexts. By utilizing an interpretive phenomenological analysis methodology, this study provides researchers with descriptive

and nuanced experiences of the participants and aims to highlight the meaning-making and interpretations of participants' lived experiences from an idiographic standpoint.

The value for this study lies not only in its multidisciplinary integration of Asian American, Filipino American, and Feminist Studies literature into psychology, but in its focus to embrace the nuance and complexity of this understudied community. The intent of this study is to add to the dearth of extant literature for the Filipina American women community that has been empirically marginalized and continues to be invisible and ignored within the psychological literature (Nadal, 2011). Examining the experiences of these participants can reveal how biculturalism and balancing two cultural value sets can impact a person's mental health. Moreover, the connection of meaning making around challenges and participants' resilience processes, may shed light on the ways in which second-generation Filipina American women overcome challenges and make sense of their experiences.

Research Questions

In order to examine how second-generation Filipina American women make meaning of challenges related to navigating their identities, cultural values, and sense of self, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What are the lived experiences of second-generation Filipina American women who navigate challenges due to intersecting identities and balancing cultural values?
2. How do participants make meaning of and perceive how they deal with challenges related to negotiating their identities, cultural values, and self-concepts?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Key Terms

The scope of this study includes the following terms that historically have been used inconsistently within the published psychology literature: *culture*, *race*, *ethnicity*, *gender*, and *second-generation (immigrant generational status)* (American Psychological Association, 2012, 2015; Ferrera, 2017; Quintana, 2007). Researchers and scholars such as Quintana (2007) have argued that the changing terminology of these terms are a reflection of society's evolution of the definition and understanding associated with them. The relevant terms are defined below for the purposes of this paper.

Culture has been described as an integrated constellation of “human knowledge, belief, and behavior that is learned and transmitted to succeeding generations” shared by a particular group of people (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007, p.404). Scholars have also noted that culture is understood as “constructions or meanings that are dynamic, complex, and representative of a multifaceted experience” (La Roche & Maxie, 2003, p.180). Cultural identities are dynamic, fluid, and flexible, especially when there are individual change processes over time such as migration and interaction with other cultural groups (Berry & Kim, 1988; Carter & Qureshi, 1995; La Roche & Maxie, 2003). Culture may include race, ethnicity, and gender but is not limited to these and is also influenced by other social factors.

Race has been defined by sociologists and psychologists as the classification of humans into categories based on physical features such as skin color, facial form, and eye shape (Jones, 1991; Winant, 2000). Race has been used as a way to create hierarchical categories according to such physical features in society (Winant, 2000). The term *ethnicity*

is described as an individual's membership to a particular national or cultural group and the observance of that group's shared sense of beliefs, customs, and language that are often passed across generations (Phinney, 1996a). In addition, this includes one's self-identification, sense of belonging or commitment to an ethnic group, attitudes towards one's ethnic group, and ethnic involvement (Phinney, 1990). Unlike the socially constructed definition of race, an ethnic group requires a conscious effort to develop a sense of community, belonging, and distinct in-group identity (Phinney, 1996b). Oftentimes the meaning and understandings associated with race and ethnicity have been meant to illustrate privilege, power, and oppression that reinforces political and social status quos (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007; Winant, 2000).

Gender is described as the "attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a culture associates with a person's biological sex" (American Psychological Association, 2015, p.11). The behavior that is compatible with the cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative, cisgender, and those incompatible with cultural expectations are referred to as gender non-conformity or non-binary (American Psychological Association, 2015).

Another term important for the purposes of this paper is *immigrant generational status* is another important term. For the purposes of this study, first-generation is defined as foreign-born parents or individuals born in the Philippines and *second generation* refers to the U.S. born children of at least one parent born in the Philippines (Ferrera, 2017). These terms are highlighted to center the psychological impacts they may have on second-generation Filipina American women and their experiences.

Filipino Americans: Racial and Ethnic Identity

Filipinos and Filipino Americans have commonly been categorized and referred to as the socially constructed racial group Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI). This particular group is heterogenous in that there are over 43 different ethnic groups within Asia. Filipinos and Filipino Americans may experience a unique racial and ethnic identity development process due to a variety of reasons. The Philippines was colonized for nearly 400 years by Spain, a period similar in length of Spanish colonization of most Latin American countries (Nadal, 2011). For example, many Tagalog (the national language of the Philippines) words are identical or similar to Spanish words and meaning (Ocampo, 2016). This experience left the Philippines the only Asian country that identifies itself with Spain. While many East Asian and Southeast Asian individuals may refer to themselves as “Asian,” Filipinos may shift between identifying themselves as “Asian,” “Filipino/Pilipino,” or “Pacific Islander” (Nadal, 2004). Filipinos have been the only ethnic group to lobby for separation from the Asian American category. Scholars have also criticized that the inception of the Asian American movement has excluded Filipino Americans and other phenotypically darker groups such as South Asians and South East Asians. In addition, activists and scholars have called for a “Brown Asian Movement” highlighting tension within the larger Asian American community and experiences of “not feeling Asian enough” (Nadal, 2019, p.3). In the same spirit, researchers have attempted to explicate the identity development and experiences of Filipino Americans.

Nadal (2004) proposed the Filipino American Identity Model, which specifically applies to the racial and ethnic identity development of Filipino Americans. The model is influenced by previous models in that it captures the representation of individual’s understanding of their race and ethnicity (Atkinson, 2004; Atkinson, et al., 1989; Cross,

1971; Helms, 1990; Sue & Sue, 2012). In addition, it attempts to address the unique identity and marginalization of Filipino Americans within the larger Asian and Pacific Islander population that was not previously acknowledged or mentioned in previous Asian American identity development models (Kim, 1981; Sue & Sue, 1971). Specific elements of acculturation, levels of self-awareness around discrimination and oppression, and perceived interpretation of such experiences are mentioned yet limited in other contextual factors such as a multitude of identities (e.g. gender, socioeconomic status), developmental considerations such as age or cognitive abilities, and geographic and regional considerations. Nadal's (2004) model recognized the importance of the unique history, racial and cultural experiences for Filipino Americans and provided a foundation of conceptualizing practical applications in working with Filipino Americans, however may be limiting in only highlighting certain aspects of an individual's experiences and identities that may or may not be salient. Other relevant elements in understanding the Filipino American experience include the role of Filipina American women, and the history and impact of Philippine and U.S. relations, immigration, and implications of colonization.

Historical Underpinnings, Immigration, and the Impact on Filipina American Women

One factor that uniquely distinguishes Filipinos and Filipino Americans from other Asian and Pacific Islanders is that the Philippines is the only Asian country to experience colonization from both Spain and the U.S.. Spain first colonized the Philippines in 1565 for over three hundred years and then was colonized by the U.S. in 1898 for fifty years until 1946, resulting in nearly four hundred years of colonization (David, 2013; Nadal 2011 Posadas, 1999; Root, 1997). In addition, Filipinos were one of the first Asian and Pacific Islander groups documented to arrive in the U.S. in the 1500s to escape persecution or

slavery by Spain (Espiritu, 1995). During this period, indigenous Filipino cultural values and beliefs were either lost or changed to conform to the Spanish and American values imposed on Filipinos. This is notable in Filipino and Filipino Americans' beliefs surrounding Catholicism and Christianity, the educational system which has been influenced by the U.S., a democratic government, and the use of the English and Spanish language (David, 2013, Nadal, 2011; Root, 1997; Sanchez & Gaw, 2007).

The history of colonialism of the Philippines by Spain for nearly four hundred years and the U.S. for fifty years has greatly impacted the psychological experiences of Filipinos and Filipino Americans described as “colonial mentality” (David & Okazaki, 2006a). The term “colonial mentality” has often been used by scholars to describe the denigration of a person's self and culture where the colonizer is viewed as superior, while the individual of a more indigenous identity and/or oppressed experiences is seen as inferior (David, 2008). This phenomenon has been described to have psychological impacts for Filipino Americans such as depression (David, 2008), loss of cultural identity (David, 2013; Nadal, 2011), and loss of cultural values (David et. al., 2017).

Filipinos and Filipino Americans also have a long-standing and complex history within the U.S. that traces back to the 16th century with Filipinos arriving via Spanish trading ships in present-day Louisiana and California. In the first half of the 20th century, wealthy Filipinos migrated to the U.S. to pursue higher education, while those of lower socioeconomic status came to work as field laborers and fish cannery workers in states such as Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, and California. The majority of Filipinos and Filipino Americans living in the U.S. currently came after the Immigration Act of 1965, which allowed for immigrants from any country to come to the U.S and become naturalized

citizens (Posadas, 1999; Nadal, 2011). This wave of immigration brought more highly educated and professional Filipinos (e.g., engineers, nurses) due to previous education in the Philippines with more women and families able to immigrate with male relatives (Nadal, 2011; Posadas, 1999; Takaki, 1998). Immigration history and the historical relationships between the Philippines and U.S. impact how Filipino Americans make sense of their identities who may encounter a variety of challenges which affect their sense of being given this combination of cultures. This includes feelings of not belonging as either Filipino or American (Tuason et al., 2007).

Filipinas specifically have been cited to immigrate to the U.S. because of “a lack of economic opportunities, yearned for an American education, and a belief in the promise of American opportunity (Cordova, 1989, p.42).” Due to the small numbers of women and gender imbalance in the U.S. of Filipinas, this opened up opportunities to negotiate and transform gender roles and expectations, redefine the Filipino American family, and create and preserve Filipino American culture and cultural values (Mabalon, 2013).

Similar to other racial and ethnic groups (e.g. Black and African American, Latinx), immigrant groups, and women of color, Filipina Americans have faced historical and contemporary issues related to negative sociocultural outcomes (e.g., barriers and challenges with education, violence, substance use, various forms of discrimination) (Alvarez et al., 2006; Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2012). In addition to the Model Minority stereotype (Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995), Filipina American women have been subjected to the added layer of stereotypes as Asian American women (e.g., exotic, subservient, passive, sexually attractive and available) and gender discrimination. Cordova (1983) describes Filipino Americans as the “forgotten Asian Americans” and furthermore comments on Filipina

Americans viewed as both admired and oppressed. He described them as: “Brown women: forgotten Filipina Americans... also publicly neglected, omitted, abused, exploited... exalted Filipina Americans... also individually adored, idolized, pampered, loved” (Cordova, p. 147). This dichotomy of oppression and veneration of Filipina American women originate from the historical implications of colonization as noted above, as well as the diversity of experiences including impacted from immigration and acculturation, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, geography and regional influence, and family relations (Cordova, 1983).

Filipino Cultural Values

Scholars have noted that in order to understand the experiences and well-being of Filipina Americans, one must understand the cultural values and elements that encompass the Filipino American experience. The cultural values within the Filipino American experience include historical roots from the indigenous pre-colonial traditions as well as the Spanish and American colonization (Nadal, 2011; Root, 1992). In the study of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology), Enriquez (1982,1997) identified four main values: (1) *kapwa* (fellow being), (2) *utang ng loob* (debt of reciprocity), (3) *hiya* (shame), and (4) *pakikisama* (social acceptance).

Kapwa, in particular, has been acknowledged as the core construct of Filipino mentality and revered as the essence of the Filipino spirit. It is considered the sharing of one’s inner self that cannot and should not be separated from others and the deepest form of unity and connection to others regardless of a blood connection or other contextual factors (Enriquez, 1982; David, et al., 2017). In addition, multiple values held simultaneously (e.g. *kapwa* and *utang ng loob*) drive the cultural expectations of Filipinos and Filipino Americans placing

family first (including extended family) before anyone else. This is included in life activities such as consultation in major life decisions, emphasis on family relations, and cultural traditions in funerals and weddings (Nadal, 2011). The cultural value of *kapwa* drives the thoughts, behaviors, and actions of everyday life for Filipinos and Filipino Americans.

Colonization from Spain brought in the cultural values of religion and traditional gender roles, whereas U.S. colonization brought in an emphasis on individualism and education. Christianity, specifically Catholicism, has had a major impact on Filipino customs, behaviors, and traditions. For example, it is common for Filipinos to attend church regularly, pray the rosary, display statues of Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary (Jesus' mother), and other saints in the home (Nadal, 2011). Although Catholicism is the dominant religion for Filipinos and Filipino Americans, it should not be assumed that Catholic and Filipino values are synonymous with one another.

Education, individualism and competition, and a division between U.S. and non-U.S. individuals, were values that were brought to the Philippines and adopted by Filipinos and Filipino Americans alike. The influence of U.S. values in the early 1900s introduced a hierarchy of beliefs that championed individual success and a value of exceeding or surpassing peers (Nadal, 2011). Although it is widely believed that Asians and Asian families value educational attainment, it was not a priority for Filipinos and Filipino Americans prior to U.S. colonization (Cordova, 1983). These values created a separation of the privileged and educated from those who did not pursue education resulting in in-group discrimination. Due to many Filipino immigrants' desires to assimilate to Western culture, it is common for second-generation Filipino Americans to not speak Tagalog (or their parents' native languages) because of parents' wishes that their children assimilate to American

society and avoid a Filipino accent (Nadal, 2011; Tuason et al., 2007). Present-day Filipino and Filipino American communities still incorporate collectivist or communal (i.e. *bayanihan*) values and beliefs, as well as individual experiences. Identities within these communities are complex and nuanced as they intersect with historical, contemporary, and contextual factors.

Gender Roles Among Filipinas and Filipina American Women

Scholars have suggested that Filipinos and Filipino Americans hold both egalitarian and conservative attitudes toward gender roles (Agbayani-Siewart, 2004; Enrile & Agbayani, 2007) due to the historical impact of the Spanish and American colonialism in the Philippines and its impact on mainstream cultural values. Prior to its colonization, the Philippines was described as a gender-neutral country where men and women were treated equally (Nadal, 2011). An egalitarian or matriarchal system was established with women being well-respected and holding equal power and decision-making roles as men in household and parenting, leadership, and education (Nadal, 2011; Enrile & Agbayani, 2007; Root, 1997; Tompar-Tiu & Sustento-Seneriches, 1995). Filipina women served as *barangay* (community) chiefs, policy and lawmakers, and were recognized as spiritual leaders, *babaylans*, providing community social structure (Root, 1997).

With the arrival of Spanish cultural values in 1521, gender roles shifted from a more gender-neutral society to that of a patriarchy (Nadal, 2011). The values of *machismo* (male dominance) and *marianismo* (female submissiveness) were introduced with the notions of men as dominant and in power and women as pillars of moral strength, pure, and subservient (Heras, 2007; Root, 1997). These gender roles and values continued to shift throughout Spanish colonial rule. U.S. values were introduced, including individualism and

competition, that influenced a more independent and goal-oriented perspective in education and career pursuits (Nadal, 2011).

Contemporary gender roles for Filipina and Filipina Americans reflect a combination of indigenous, Spanish, and American cultural values. Currently, this mix of both individualistic and collectivistic cultures and its dynamic interaction may create a conflict in instances where public display of traditional gender roles is expected in community and society, but within private matters women may have power and voice within family or household decisions (Enrile & Agbayani, 2007; Nadal, 2011; Sue & Sue, 2012). Enrile & Agbayani's (2007) study illustrated the complex relationship between acculturation and attitudes towards Filipina women among Filipinos in the Philippines, Filipino American immigrants, and U.S. born Filipino Americans. Contrary to Enrile & Agbayani's (2007) hypothesis in the study that U.S. born Filipino Americans would have the most egalitarian or liberal attitudes towards women based on acculturation, they found that the immigrant group had the most progressive views on female equality, and as expected Filipinos in the Philippines demonstrated the least progressive attitudes. Enrile & Agbayani (2007) posited that such findings may be due to the immigrant group possessing more progressive and liberal attitudes out of necessity in order to acculturate to the individualistic U.S. society.

Overall, Filipina American women are still encouraged to be successful outside the family, yet simultaneously expected to fulfill family duties and obligations, preserve and maintain Filipino cultural beliefs, values, and practices (Espiritu, 2001). Additionally, remains of traditional gender expectations of love, sexuality, and marriage still impact Filipina Americans today with the expectations to romantically and sexually be involved with men and to remain a virgin until marriage (Mabalon, 2013). These gender role

expectations intersecting with race, ethnicity, and other identities deepen the necessity to understand Filipina American women experiences through an intersectional and nuanced lens.

Intersectionality: Gender, Asian American Women and Filipina American Women

Intersectionality builds upon the notion of the multidimensional nature of social and cultural identities (e.g., ethnicity, race, sexual identity, gender identity, ability status, geographical and regional identity, social class) and the ways in which “interlocking systems of power” impact and affect the most marginalized in society. Critical race theorist Crenshaw (1984; 1988) described it as a way to understand how multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage at times create obstacles that often are not understood within conventional ways of thinking about anti-racism, feminism, and other social justice advocacy structures. This viewpoint operates from the belief that conceptualizing categories of identities and systems as mutually meant oppression exclusive overlook the reality of individuals. Intersectionality emphasizes that the interplay of an individual’s level of experiences and the macro and societal level systems of privilege and oppression (Bowleg, 2008, 2009; Cole, 2008; Parent et al., 2013). For the purposes of this study, intersectional framework centers and highlights the multiples experiences and identities of Filipina American women all together yet acknowledging some may have a varying degree of salience.

Intersectionality is a particular construct that is relevant and salient for Asian American women due to the above-mentioned constant negotiation of experiences, social identities, and cultural identities. Asian Americans, including Asian American women, have been referred to as “Pan-Asian,” a one-dimensional conceptualization of identity that may ignore the whole individual being shaped by other influences of experiences and identities

(Chin, 2000; Suzuki et al., 2013). Historically, Asian American women have been perceived as silent when faced with oppression due to stereotypes of the submissive Asian American woman that often times objectify and disempower them (Suzuki et al., 2013). Asian American women have played the role of bearers of their cultural identities, including Filipina Americans. When forced to choose one identity over another it may lead to silencing aspects of the self and perpetuating the oppressive systems and social statuses that are disempowering (Root, 1992).

In reference to the “Pan-Asian” and “Asian American” experience, Asian American feminist scholar Hong (2018) acknowledged that “intersectionality meant challenging the ideas that communities are brought together by commonality and that identification is the only or even the primary basis for collectivity” (p.28). Furthermore, Hong (2018) noted that intersectionality is the “recognition of difference rather than a demand of uniformity” (p.34), which includes the understanding of the processes and experiences of identified Asian American women as it relates to power relations, social, and cultural identities. Relevant to the purpose of the current study, Hong (2018) articulates the importance of highlighting nuanced experiences as they relate to Asian American women including identified Filipina Americans. Existing studies on intersectionality have called for more literature that recognizes the diverse social realities of various Asian groups including the experiences of Filipina Americans (Suzuki et al., 2013).

The Filipina Feminist Identity Model (Nadal, 2012) was introduced to recognize the intersection of Filipina Americans regarding racial, ethnic, and gender identity. Intersectional identity development is described as an iterative process for the individual where they may experience varying intricate identity statuses including the following:

passive acceptance of internalized sexism and racism; a sociopolitical awakening of awareness around simultaneous racism and sexism; identification as Asian American or Filipino American; and active commitment to integration of identities as Filipina American, Asian American, a person of color, and a woman (Nadal, 2012). As one of the first known identity models to address the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender for Filipina Americans, it has been noted as a significant contribution to the intersectional understanding of these individuals. While the model begins to grapple with the realities of multiple forms of oppression, self-awareness, and perceived identity shifts it may be challenging to account for a diversity of contexts (e.g., cultural values and family of origin, geographic or regional location, mental health issues, acculturation) and lived experiences that may impact one's psychological health and perception of one's identities and experiences. The construct of resilience as it intersects with experiences of adversity and oppression may provide a nuanced perspective and angle to explore the experiences for Filipina Americans and second-generation Filipina American women that capture a more complex and dynamic view of their lived realities.

Second-Generation Filipino Americans

Literature centering second-generation Filipino Americans has often times explored the experiences of feeling in the middle of Filipino and American cultures (Nadal, 2011). After the mass migration of Filipinos to the U.S. after the Immigration Act of 1965, many Filipinos settled in the U.S. to have families and children of their own to live their "American Dream" resulting in today's large population of second-generation Filipino Americans (Nadal, 2011; Ocampo, 2016). However, with this sense of promise and hope for their children, second-generation Filipino Americans had inherited the hardship of living up

to their expectations and navigating both U.S. mainstream and Filipino values in terms of education, gender roles, career, and family (Nadal, 2011). The negotiation of multiple roles, expectations, and identities as second-generation Filipino Americans may contribute to particular hardships they may encounter.

Studies among second-generation Filipino Americans have addressed challenges and issues related to risk and higher rates of mental health issues than their immigrant parents. Second-generation Asian Americans are more likely than their immigrant parents to have emotional disorders due to family conflict, cultural adjustment and changes in gender roles, barriers to seeking mental health services (Alegría et al., 2004). This is supported by the “immigrant paradox,” a phenomenon in which first generation immigrants outperform second-generation or subsequent immigrant generations on a number of developmental and sociocultural outcomes such as mental and physical health, education, and career-related issues (García-Coll & Marks, 2012).

Scholars have noted that second-generation Filipino Americans may experience decreased college attendance and an increase in mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, and suicide (Heras & Revilla, 1997; Wolff, 2004; President’s Advisory Committee on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, 2001). Unfortunately, these pressures with added cultural stigma on seeking mental health services creates challenges that may contribute to suffering in silence or unaddressed mental health issues (David, 2010; Del-Mundo & Queck, 2017; Nadal, 2011; Sanchez & Gaw, 2007). For second-generation Filipina American women, challenges and hardships may be more complex with added intersecting identities, gender expectations, and its implications for their psychological well-being.

Adversities Faced by Second-Generation Filipina American Women

The historical and contemporary impact of intersecting identities, negotiating cultural values and expectations, and concerns in the risk of mental health issues are among salient issues for second-generation Filipina American women emerging adults (i.e., ages 18 to 25). The developmental phase of second-generation Filipina Americans during this time can be defined as that of the age of identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in between, and considering possibilities (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). Yet, there are added stressors for these individuals that, faced with cultural expectations to excel in school and/or work, contribute economically to the family, and abide by family expectations.

Another challenge for second-generation Filipina Americans is the navigation of gender roles, expectations, and perceived gender identity. For example, Del-Mundo and Quek (2017) examined the meaning of gender identity among nineteen, second-generation Filipina American emerging adults within Southern California and its impact on their sense of self and the world they live in. Findings from this qualitative phenomenological study suggested the existence of a “balancing act,” referring to participants’ statements of being expected to assume both traditional and contemporary gender roles, and in doing so, suffering from feeling overwhelmed by conflicting roles, and having to “split” themselves in order to fulfill their roles “correctly” (Del-Mundo & Quek, 2017).

Cultural expectations and competing cultural values are also noted to greatly impact the psychological well-being of second-generation Filipina Americans. Studies have cited perceived psychological control, or the intrusion of a child’s psychological and emotional world, by second-generation Filipina American women from parents as associated with inhibiting their sense of agency and autonomy (Barber, 1996, 2002; Koepe & Denissen,

2012). Wolf (1997) noted that Filipino immigrant parents expect their daughters to remain virgins until marriage, have a career, and combine their work lives with marriage and children. In addition, Filipino immigrant parents may approach educational attainment and college in contradictory ways. For example, parents may push their daughters to achieve academic excellence in high school, yet “pull the emergency brake” when daughters consider college, by expecting them to stay at home even if it meant going to a less competitive college or not going at all (Wolf, 1997, p.467). Other studies have illustrated intragroup marginalization, where Filipina American women are expected to uphold the model minority stereotype and increase pressure to do well in school and the workplace and are faced with marginalization within their immigrant families if they do not follow and abide by these expectations (Castillo et al., 2007; Maramba, 2008).

The majority of literature for second-generation Filipina Americans addresses the challenges of identity development as well as cultural expectations and competing values, however these are likely to not be the only experiences. In addition, it is also important to address the ways in which these individuals have dealt with and adapted to challenges they have encountered associated with navigating identity development, gender roles, and balancing cultural values.

Navigating Adversities Among Second-Generation Filipina American Women

Previous studies have indicated several cultural values, beliefs, and ways of dealing with adversities for Filipinos and Filipino Americans. For example, religion and spirituality have been cited as forms of physical, mental, and emotional healing for Filipinos and Filipino Americans in adversities such as dealing with immigration and acculturation, mental health-related issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, trauma), physical ailments such as

stroke and cancer, and relational issues with family and friends (Lin et al., 1990; Sanchez & Gaw, 2007). Support systems including family, school, and work peers have also been noted as important aspects of well-being (David et al., 2017; Nadal, 2011). Studies within other related minoritized racial and ethnic groups such as Latinx and Latinx Americans indicate that cultural values of family and religion are helpful cultural values in overcoming adversities (Morgan-Consoli & Llamas, 2013; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Specific indigenous culturally-bound traits for Filipinos and Filipino Americans such as *hiya* (shame), *amor propio* (sensitivity to criticism), *bahala na* (optimistic fatalism), as well as saving face have suggested the ways in which individuals may deal with challenges that negatively or positively affect their psychological health (Sanchez & Gaw, 2007).

Although, there is currently limited research on how second-generation Filipina American women deal with these identity conflicts, gender roles, and cultural values, studies have shown that experiences to think critically about their cultural and ethnic identities to challenge traditional notions of cultural expectations are “sources of resilience” (Ferrara, 2017, p. 249). Exposure to opportunities for examining and making sense of their experiences have been also noted to better ability to negotiate Filipino and American cultures through social consciousness, appreciation for their Filipino culture, respect for Filipinos as individuals or new immigrants, and appreciation for their family’s immigration story (Ferrara, 2017). Second-generation Filipina American women in college have also sought out Filipino American college student organizations in order to learn more about their culture, resolve issues around identity, and receive social support (Nadal, 2011).

The Existing Literature

The empirical literature has provided a substantial amount of research on the unique historical and social experiences of the impact of immigration, colonization, navigating multiple and intersecting identities, and cultural values for second-generation Filipina American experiences. Existing studies have addressed the mental health implications of second-generation Filipina American emerging adults due to the multiple pressures of cultural values and expectations yet there is little research to support the knowledge around how they make sense of these challenges and how they deal with them. Assumptions and misconceptions of the Filipina American experience may be worsened by generalized experiences of Asian American women. Further research is needed on the experiences of adversities and the unique resilience process for Filipina American as well as to disaggregate data within the overall Asian American and specific Filipino American experiences. There have been limited studies on this topic from an intersectional lens and a broad perspective of resilience processes. In addition, there has been little examination of the nuanced experiences that embrace the complexity of privilege and marginalization, power and disempowerment, oppression and resilience that center second-generation Filipina American women.

Since personal and systemic challenges and adversities continue to be ongoing for second-generation, Filipina American women in our society, while we do not want to minimize these struggles, it is important to know the ways in which these participants deal with and overcome such challenges. Filipina Americans have been socialized and treated differently than Filipino American men which may lead to having unique experiences and perceptions of resilience. Research on resilience has identified several ways that have been found to be helpful and effective in navigating or overcoming adversities such as feeling a

sense of connection to one's community (Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2014), religion and spirituality (Jocson & Garcia, 2017), and drawing upon cultural practices and values (Morgan-Consoli & Llamas, 2013). However, there continues to be a scarcity of research for second-generation Filipina American women. The aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of their ability to navigate and deal with their intersecting identities, gender roles and expectations, cultural values in the eyes of the participant from an intrapersonal, interpersonal, and systemic context as it impacts their everyday lives. The study was exploratory in nature and the researcher sought to attain rich information about these experiences that may inform the literature on Filipina American experiences, enable more efficient case contextualization for this population to understand the reasoning behind engaging in behaviors as they deal with various challenges, and aid in the development of programming to help foster strengths-based prevention and intervention efforts.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Rationale for Qualitative Inquiry

A qualitative approach was employed as it lends itself to an inductive and deeper form of inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Heppner et al., 2016). Qualitative research has been found beneficial for capturing the context (i.e. individual, social, institutional, and environment) within which people live (Lyon et al., 2013; Morrow, 2007; Yin, 2011), and helps to center historically under-represented and marginalized groups (Lyons et al., 2013). A qualitative approach served as a “vehicle” to explore nuanced topics, highlight meaning-making of experiences for participants, and inspire action in the development of interventions and wellness programming (Lyons et al., 2013). Understanding the experiences of second-generation Filipina American women gives researchers the ability to understand and empower the future care and support for them in a more culturally informed way.

The underlying interpretive/constructivist paradigm of this dissertation study acknowledged the construct of multiple social realities in contrast to positive and post-positivist paradigms of inquiry. Thus, pursuing qualitative inquiry for this study fits with such views and values. The knowledge generated in this study emerged directly from interactions and interpretations through the lens of the participants and researchers in a co-constructed way (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). Consequently, qualitative research with individuals who identify as second-generation Filipina Americans may deepen the nuanced understanding of their experiences and speak to intervention programs that may facilitate strengths-based perspectives and holistic approaches to well-being. Furthermore, one of the

aims of this dissertation study is to center the needs of, desires of, and benefits for second-generation Filipina American participants in the study.

Research Design

The study used both Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Photo Elicitation (PE) (Alase, 2017; Harper, 2002; Smith et al., 2009). Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews where photographs were used as visual stimuli for interviewing purposes. The study examined how the participant makes sense of the photographs as it relates to their experiences with resilience (Bates et al., 2017). Smith et al.'s (2009) approach to phenomenological interviewing and Wang and Burris (1997)'s approach to visual data was used as a guide for conducting the qualitative, semi-structured interview. Multiple methods of data collection (e.g., semi-structured interviews and photographs) were used to triangulate the informational accounts given by the participants and provide more richness and detail to the participant responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through these qualitative research approaches, the relationships and resulting interactions between these contexts, hermeneutic and idiographic principles, and experiences of participants were explored deeply, focusing on meaning. Specifically, phenomenology attempts to answer questions that focus on the “how” and “what” as opposed to the “why” answers that are generally sought in quantitative methods (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data collection took place over a four-month period and was conducted using semi-structured interviews and photographs taken by participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher reflected about her own identity and lived experiences, the topic of study of resilience and its processes, second-generation Filipina American women, and its related

study constructs in order to commit to the degree of open-mindedness of the IPA approach. The reflection of the researcher's assumptions, perceptions, and processes and preconceptions was to "enable participants to express their concerns and make their claims on their own terms" (Smith et al., 2009, p.42) (see Researcher Positionality section).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a qualitative research framework that is grounded in psychology and influenced by phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. This approach emphasizes "personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context" for a group of people who share the same experience or phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009, p.79). In addition, knowledge is constructed by the perceptions and interpretations of realities can be co-constructed with the researcher. IPA aligns with the epistemological position that knowledge is acquired through participants' accounts of their experiences and more importantly how they understand and make sense of them. For example, participants can experience the same phenomena yet interpret how they make sense of it in different ways. IPA's premise assumes that data can tell researchers something about the way people orient themselves towards the world and how they make sense of it within specific contexts (Smith et al., 2009). IPA approaches participants' lived experiences from an idiographic standpoint, providing a more complete and nuanced understanding of the individual. Interpreting participants' experiences in terms of theory or context is a hallmark of IPA (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). This is an important aspect in considering a particular phenomenon for disenfranchised or marginalized individuals that experience the realities of multiple oppressed identities and experiences, such as second-generation, Filipina

Americans. IPA emphasizes a perspective, not necessarily a “one-size-fits all” phenomenon for a particular group (Miller et al., 2018).

Photo Elicitation (PE)

Photo Elicitation (PE) is a qualitative method in which photographs (researcher or participant-driven) are inserted into the research interview to generate verbal discussion to create data and knowledge (Harper, 2002). Researchers claim that the difference between conventional verbal interviews and PE lies in the way participants respond to symbolic representations within the photos (Glaw et al., 2017; Harper, 2002). This approach is concerned with “different layers of meaning” as it evokes deeper emotions, memories, and ideas (Glaw et al., 2017, p.1). The photograph elicits insights while co-creating such meaning with the researcher (Bigante, 2010). For example, certain photos may create specific verbal and/or emotional responses that may bring different perspectives into the research that may not necessarily have existed with verbal information alone (Glaw et al., 2017). Much of PE is a collaborative effort that involves the co-creation of making meaning of their photographs and experiences associated with them (Harper, 2002). PE gives participants the opportunity to visually and verbally explore their connections to themselves and their physical and social environments for more contextualized meaning-making (Bates et al., 2017). For the purposes of this study, the photographs chosen by participants were used to promote dialogue and a new, deeper understanding of the process of Filipina American resilience. Previous studies have combined PE and IPA to explore phenomenon such as the quality of life for individuals with chronic illness (Burton et al., 2017) as well as possessions and self-concept with hoarding disorders (Kings et al., 2018).

The use of photographs (visual data) and semi-structured interviews (verbal data) may give participants greater autonomy to navigate the direction of the conversation and facilitate discussions. This provided a more nuanced dimension of their experiences through verbal and visual prompts (Papaloukas et al., 2017). PE may enhance the IPA method for this study by adding another dimension of data collection and meaning-making for the participant and the researchers. PE within IPA inquiry can provide second-generation, Filipina American participants a sense of empowerment and creativity through the process of taking photos for the interviews and ensuring participant experiences are central to the knowledge being generated (Letts, 2003). The interview reflected a semi-structured format where participants were given guidance on the sub-topics of their self-identified adversities, ways of overcoming, and the impact of their identities in relation to their photographs and verbal information. This allowed for both focus and flexibility on the topic of interest (Bates et al., 2017).

Researcher Positionality

The lead researcher is a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology who identifies as a cisgender, female, heterosexual, Catholic, able-bodied, and second-generation Filipina American who studies resilience within Filipina/o/x American and Latinx populations, as well as multicultural and social justice issues. The researcher was born and raised in Southern California and spent most of her life there before her doctoral studies. She grew up in a multilingual language household (i.e., English, Ilocano, and Tagalog) and is receptively bilingual in Ilocano. Her personal and professional background in psychology has led to asking critical questions about power, privilege, and oppression from an individual, interpersonal, and systemic perspective. In addition, her lived and professional experiences

led her to creatively thinking outside of traditional ways of knowing in relation to vulnerable populations within psychology.

The lead researcher takes a critical, multicultural, and systems approach to understanding individuals' experiences. The researcher believes that second-generation Filipina Americans may be faced with hardships and challenges of competing Filipino and American cultural values. In addition, she strongly believes that various cultural identities of Filipina American women work together simultaneously to impact their sense of self. Finally, she believes that the salience of identities for second-generation Filipina Americans and meaning drawn to them impact their relationships and self-within-context of society.

While writing and completing this dissertation manuscript from October 2019 to May 2021, the researcher was specifically personally and professionally impacted by the following current events: (1) COVID-19 pandemic that began early March 2020, (2) the amplification of Black Lives Movement beginning in May 2020, and (3) Stop Asian Hate Movement in April 2021. The start of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in early March 2020 towards the end of end of data collection which logistically impacted the final two semi-structured interviews. The researcher and two participants discussed the uncertainty of COVID-19 pandemic's impact on a national and global scale prior to the individual interviews during rapport building. This was also noted particularly during the analysis portion of the study to understand the context of how participants were discussing their stressors and challenges during this point in time.

Another simultaneous current event that impacted the researcher's approach to data analysis was the emergence and amplification of the Black Lives Matter movement in May 2020. While conducting initial data analysis and participant cases, the researcher reflected

on her own personal accounts of experiencing racism and sexism from White individuals and other people of color. This likely impacted my lens of paying closer attention to participants' experiences from a discrimination lens.

Finally, a rise of Anti-Asian targeted hate crimes began throughout the U.S. after it was learned that COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, China. While writing and reviewing the final sections of this dissertation manuscript, the researcher reflected on the collective historical trauma identifying as an Asian American woman. The researcher was also leading an Asian American women's support group and providing clinical crisis and drop in healing spaces for Asian American identified college students at her clinical doctoral internship while finishing dissertation. These experiences influenced the way the researcher saw the purpose of the study shift not only as dissertation to produce knowledge, but to also critique systems of power and privilege such as White supremacy, anti-Asian and people of color sentiment's, as well as violence against marginalized gender identities. These current events greatly amplified the researcher's motivation to produce knowledge with a critical lens that informs and critiques the systems in which these participants operate in. She considered how these events impacted her critical analysis through a stronger feminist and social justice perspective such as critiquing systemic powers of oppression, engaging in difficult conversations about race, colorism, and immigration with personal networks.

During such occasions she revisited the participant data accounting for her own assumptions and attempting to capture participants' authentic experiences and meanings of them rather than her own. She believes particularly during this time the study's importance of emphasizing the participants' experiences that authentically capture their meanings and a

new perspective on the intersection of mental health, privilege and oppression, cultural values, and identities that inform behaviors and actions.

Participants

The researcher used a purposive sampling approach in order to determine structural, textural descriptions or the “essence” of the particular phenomenon of resilience for second-generation Filipina American women (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.80). Criteria for participation include: (1) identifying as cisgender, Filipina American and/or Pinay woman (i.e. a colloquial term for a woman of Filipino descent); (2) ages 18 to 25; (3) identify as second-generation immigrant status (where at least one parent was foreign-born outside of the U.S. and participant is U.S. born); (4) experienced a challenge or challenges related to being an second-generation Filipina American woman and competing Filipino and mainstream U.S. values; (5) have access to existing pictures and/or are able to take pictures via a camera or phone; (6) possess and/or have access to a camera or phone for taking pictures; (7) able and willing to engage in one semi-structured interview to discuss experiences regarding being an second-generation Filipina American woman and challenges navigating competing Filipino and mainstream U.S. values and photographs taken or chosen.

Recruitment. The lead research chose purposeful sampling to recruit participants in order to inform a specific understanding of lived experiences of second-generation Filipina American emerging adults (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Initially, the participants were recruited through community based-organizations, college student groups, and social media. Snowball sampling technique, where existing participants provided referrals for potential participants, was also used as a technique to recruit prospective participants that may be willing and able

to share on rich information pertinent to the phenomenon (Alase, 2017; Johnson, 2015; Smith et al., 2009). After initial recruitment efforts, fifteen individuals expressed interest in the study. During initial recruitment and screening of participants, several did not respond after initial contact made, and a few others decided to opt out of the study after hearing about the photograph portion of the study. The primary researcher offered interested individuals the option of participating in the study without the photograph option, however some denied the opportunity. The current study consisted of a total of eight participants.

A flyer (Appendix A) informed prospective participants of the purpose of the study, inclusion criteria for the participant, and provided contact details for the researcher, enabling eligible individuals to make inquiries and/or indicate their participation interest. An information sheet provided further details about the study, what participants are being asked to do, and their ethical rights during their initial briefing. Associated consent forms (Appendix C) were developed and utilized.

Procedures

Once interested individuals verbally committed to the study and met study criteria, they were given a consent form outlining confidentiality, risks and benefits, participants' rights, and research project goals in English. Once participants consent to the study, they completed a demographic questionnaire that collected information about the participants' age, gender, ethnicity, job/occupation, generational immigrant status (e.g., 2nd generation immigrant status.), socioeconomic income, geographic region, and sexual orientation (see Appendix D). The first six interviews were collected in person, then three months into data collection, in March 2020, the dissertation study was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

that prompted the two last participant correspondence and interviews to be conducted virtually via the online platform Zoom.

Upon completion of the demographic questionnaire, participants engaged in a two step-data collection process as outlined below (Bates et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2009):

1. ***Initial Participant Briefing***. In the first step of this process, the, purpose, plan, and method of the study are explained along with thoroughly going over informed consent. This session took approximately 20-30 minutes in a location that is private, chosen by the participant, and comfortable for the participant (with the last two participants engaging in this virtually via Zoom due to COVID 19 safety regulations). This briefing with the participant served as an introductory meeting and was intended to build rapport between the researcher and participant. During this briefing, the researcher emphasized that participants are experts of their own experiences and they would be asked to capture them in the form of photos. Participants were then instructed to choose three existing photos that they had in their possession or to take three pictures that reflect the prompted guided questions before the interview (Appendix E). They were to bring these photographs to the in-person interview. Participants were informed that the researcher would upload the photos onto a secure, password protected platform with participant consent.

Participants were given specific information about key ethical considerations that should be adhered to when choosing photographs for the interviews (Tinkler, 2013). For example, participants were informed that if they chose photographs of themselves the lead researcher will blur their faces or eyes to protect confidentiality. In addition, if participants chose photographs involving minors, participants needed to gain an informed consent and

assent from the photographed minor and the minor's parents or legal guardians. Finally, participants were not permitted to choose photographs that involved any nudity or illegal activity (e.g., illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia, criminal behavior, harm to others). Participants were informed that they could ask questions about ethical issues and any questions pertaining to the study throughout the entire research process.

Individual in-depth interviews. The interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and were conducted in-person (with the last exception of the last two participants) with the participant's choice of time and location that is private to afford the participants greater autonomy and agency. The researcher then conducted individual, in-person, semi-structured interviews at a later date with each participant, in which participants were asked questions about their challenges associated with being a second-generation Filipina American woman and competing U.S. and Filipino values, how they have dealt with it, and the meaning they attribute to this phenomenon (Appendix F). In addition, during this time participants were guided to discuss their photos with regard to the impact of culture and their identities with their resilience processes. The interview specifically delved into the intersubjectivity and "person-in-context" experiences that explore the participant's experience of the world (Smith et al., 2009, p.17).

Memoing was used throughout data collection by the researcher to document self-reflections and insights about various aspects of the research that would later assist with the analysis process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 1997). Participants also had the opportunity to contribute to the analysis by offering their insights and interpretations of their individual data via individual interviews. For example, participants were invited to

share their own reflections and opinions about their chosen photographs and engaged in dialogue about metaconstructs of intersectionality, trauma, and bicultural identity as they emerged in respective interviews. Through collaboration in discussing the data, themes were refined and a common interpretation towards the phenomenon of the resilience processes for the participants was pursued (van Manen, 1997). The researcher provided participants with local mental health resources (e.g. university counseling services, national suicide hotline number, county mental health resources and stress management strategies) after each interview.

Analysis

Data Organization. The interviews were recorded with permission of the participants and transcribed verbatim by the researcher as soon as possible after the interview. Next, the verbal data was checked for accuracy by listening and comparing it to the transcribed notes. Once all the interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy, the photographs were embedded within the participants' transcripts to indicate where they were discussed during the interview (Wilde et al., 2019). The organization of verbal data (in-depth interviews), and visual data (photographs) were integrated and prepared prior to data analysis.

Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were analyzed using IPA based on the guidelines by Smith et al. (2009). As suggested by Papaloukas et al. (2017) and Plunkett et al. (2013), analysis of photos was conducted with participants within the interview to keep them in context and for triangulation purposes.

Participant Analysis of Data. As the use of PE encourages a collaborative approach of data analysis, participants had the opportunity to carry out participatory analysis of their photographs during the interviews. There are three main general approaches of participatory data analysis by Wang and Burris (1997):

1. *Selection of Photographs.* The participants took photographs that they thought reflect their own strengths and struggles in the context of their communities. They chose the photographs that they wanted to include that they felt were representative of their experiences.
2. *Contextualizing.* Participants contextualized the photographs by telling their own stories about what the photographs meant to them as prompted by a series of questions in the interview.
3. *Codifying.* This was a process of identifying and sorting data into categories of issues, themes, or theories. The participants had the opportunity to comment on themes that they saw or categories for their chosen photographs within the interview.

Researcher Analysis of Data. IPA data analysis is concerned with focusing on the patterns in participants' experiences, namely the way they make meaning of those experiences and interpret them within social and theoretical contexts (Larkin & Thompson, 2011; Miller & Minton, 2016). As the researcher, I performed all the data analysis to include the development of emergent themes. During the first round of data analysis, I attempted to conduct initial coding of the transcripts in the software Dedoose. However, I found difficulty employing an idiographic and hermeneutic approach due to the challenges of fit of a qualitative software feature and limitations of software features (St. John, & Johnson, 2000). Instead, I shifted to conduct all data analysis through the use of printed transcripts,

highlighting, and memoing via pen and paper. In addition, I kept a researcher memo notebook for analysis commentary throughout the study. All participant data and the memo notebook were stored and locked in a private and safe box dedicated to dissertation.

Each participant's data was examined and coded two to three rounds prior to moving onto the next participant following Smith et al.'s (2009) outline for data analysis. First, I read and re-read (two to three times) the overall transcript along with the audio-recording to slow down any tendency to quickly analyze the data and center the participant's rich experiences. This process involved memoing some of my recollections of the interview experience itself and some of my own initial observations about the transcript in my notebook in order. This was in order to identify any of my own assumptions and reactions to the transcript and interview experience that influenced the way in which I perceived the participant and transcript. Second, I implemented line-by-line coding analysis and initial noting to examine the semantic content and language of the participants on an exploratory level. As I became more familiar with the transcript, I began to identify specific ways in which the participant talked about, understood, and perceived their experiences through phrases, sentences, and repeated patterns of text. In addition, I used the overall research questions to guide the description of participant codes and phrases. I also memoed and highlighted noteworthy linguistic significance such as the use of cultural words and phrases and the responses to prompts and questions. The codes emerged via thorough repeated review and noting of each participant's significant statements and reflective memo notebook. This important step allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of each of the participant's experiences and perspectives as well as the basis for interpreting the meanings of their statements.

Third, themes for each participant were coded and memoed before moving onto exploring patterns and themes amongst participants (Finlay, 2011; Smith, 2007). In this last round I engaged in interpretation and reflection to explore the meaning that participants gave to their experiences while referencing participants' extracts. I adopted specific and intentional ways of organizing patterns and connections between emergent themes according to the IPA guidelines (Smith et al., 2009). Specifically, I relied on the overall research questions to guide the organization of analysis in order to tell a cohesive story of the participants. I used two approaches, "contextualization" and "function" as suggestions from existing IPA literature to guide the structure of themes presented. "Contextualization" is defined as an IPA analysis approach that attends to the temporal, cultural, and narrative themes in a manner that frames much the broad picture of narrative into local understandings from the transcript. Participants noted a series of critical events that made it possible to organize themes in terms of their temporal moments related to time. The organization and emergence of themes by "function" is defined as the approach that examines themes according to their specific role within the transcript. In this methodological approach, the use of language is inevitably intertwined with the meaning and thoughts of the participants. I believe it was a substantial fit to highlight the relationship between use of language from participants and the meaning they drew from it (Smith et al., 2009). Participants demonstrated moments of perceived ambivalence from the researcher by using linguistic indicators (e.g., "um", "I'm not sure") and nonverbal pauses when discussing their own responses to cultural values, expectations, and beliefs. The use of "function" in emergent themes drew from discourse and narrative analysis yet featured the experiential aspects of the interview. The themes were organized in the way they were presented due to

the participants' narratives of their lived experiences as they recalled their past, and process the meaning of such in the present. Overall, the analysis was inductive and iterative as called for by the method and went beyond description as to reflect the development and emergence of new and clarified ideas or interpretations of the participant experiences.

Trustworthiness. I established trustworthiness by member checking with participants regarding their data and perceived interpretations of their experiences, using the triangulation of data sources, and an external auditor to conduct a data check. Member checks consisted of sending list of themes along with extracts and to participants via email for their feedback. This was to ensure that the interpretations and analysis reflected participants' voices and their meaning. If there were disagreements with the researcher's interpretations and/or themes from participants, they were then invited to change their responses and clarify what they meant to convey within sections of the interview transcript via Zoom or email exchange. During the review of data, the primary researcher and participants discussed interpretations of the verbal interviews and descriptions regarding the photograph data. Then the primary researcher made final interpretation and analysis conclusions based on participants' input and knowledge of theoretical frameworks of Filipino American psychology and intersectionality.

In addition, organization of the data was arranged in such a format that allows the material to be traced from initial comments on the transcript, through initial clustering and thematic development, into the final structure of themes. Use of supervision, consultation, collaboration, and audit helped test and develop the coherence and plausibility of interpretations being made (Smith et al., 2009). I as a novice IPA researcher used an IPA set of general principles and structure to enhance the trustworthiness, sophistication, and quality

of the study (Smith et al., 2009, p.80). For example, I adopted Smith et al., (2009)'s approach for data analysis that provided recommendations of moving from descriptive to the interpretative analysis (e.g., line-by-line reading and descriptive comments, exploratory noting of linguistic comments, and annotating broader conceptual comments) and moving across participant transcripts for emergent themes. In addition, I consulted a few times with an external researcher who specializes in qualitative research and IPA methodology regarding the use of self as an analytic tool and interpretation.

Overall, the analysis process was multi-dimensional and a constant shift between openness and following the set of procedures that is at the core of qualitative IPA analysis. By approaching this dissertation study in this way, my analysis focused on centering the participants' experiences by using their voices, their experiences of their worlds through photos, and allowed for opportunities to make sense of what it means for them through co-constructed meaning.

Participant Profiles

For the purposes of participant protection and de-identification, participants have been given pseudo-names (see Table 1). All eight participants identified with and responded to the inclusion criteria. Participant biographies below indicated how participants self-identified across social identities. All participants identified as U.S. citizens and resided in Southern California at the time of the study. However, two participants noted either being born in a U.S. territory or residing outside of the U.S. for a long period of time with U.S. citizenships. Two participants also identified as having mixed racial identity.

For the purposes of this study, the terms Filipinx, Filipino American, Filipina, and Pinay will be used in relation to participants' self-ethnic identity. Filipinx is used to describe a

more ‘gender neutral’ term for Filipino that acknowledges and recognizes LGBTQ+ members of the Filipino community adapted from the term ‘Latinx’. Filipino American describes individuals who are citizens of the U.S. and Filipinos born in the U.S. Filipina is a term that describes a female who is native to the Philippines or of Philippine ancestry. Pinay is a term that is the ‘feminine’ or ‘female’ term for Pinoy, another word for Filipino. The term was originally used to differentiate the experiences of Filipinos immigrating to the U.S., but more recently has been used to describe all those of Filipino descent.

The following are participant profiles with their respective pseudo-names.

Participant 1, Jan. Participant one is a 22 -year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipinx American/Pinay. She is a recent college graduate and works as a customer service associate. Participant one described her experiences as a queer Pinay and its impact on family relationships, fear of losing her Filipinx identity after college, and finding meaning in mentorship from fellow Pinays.

Participant 2, Lynne. Participant two is a 24-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipina Swedish. She is a current doctoral student studying education. Participant two discussed feeling disconnected to American culture, her mixed and bisexual identity, feeling exoticized, and acceptance of self.

Participant 3, Mae. Participant three is an 18-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipina American. She is a first-year undergraduate student at a four-year university studying economics and accounting. She discussed her experiences of not feeling Filipina or American enough, implicit and explicit messages around gender, and learning how to embrace her authentic self.

Participant 4, Julie. Participant four is a 20-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipino American and Asian American. She is a third-year undergraduate transfer student at a four-year university studying economics and accounting. Participant four described experiences of learning how to merge her Filipino and American cultural values, questioning traditional Filipino cultural values, and a desire to connect to her Filipino cultural identity.

Participant 5, Raisa. Participant five is a 21-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Pilipina American. She is a fourth-year undergraduate student at a four-year university studying sociology. Participant five described feeling exoticized and not Filipino enough, reclaiming her womanhood as a Filipino American, and healing through community.

Participant 6, Aimee. Participant six is a 20-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipina American and Pinay. She is a second-year undergraduate student at a four-year university studying communications. Participant six described feeling othered in predominantly White spaces, navigating Filipino and American values, simultaneously, speaking up and using her voice, and finding community.

Participant 7, Evelyn. Participant seven is 24-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipina American. She is a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in higher education and student affairs. Participant seven described navigating challenges with her medical condition, exacerbated stress during COVID-19, pressure to succeed by family's expectations, and learning how to prioritize her own needs.

Participant 8, Jess. Participant eight is a 25-year-old female and identifies as a second-generation Filipino Irish American. She is a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in

counseling. Participant described her experiences of feeling othered by both White individuals and people of color with her mixed identities, learning ways to heal from her sexual assault, and feeling empowered by other Pinays and peers.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Four superordinate themes emerged as a result of the analysis of data related to the research questions and the areas of focus within this study. The four themes were: (1) Who Am I? (2) Ways of Navigating Gender Roles and Expectations (3) Connection to other Filipino/a/x Americans; and (4) Redefining Sense of Self. Subordinate themes followed subsequently adding contextual information and depth to the superordinate themes (see Table 2 for list).

Themes

During the semi-structured interviews, many participants spoke about their childhood experiences of Filipino and American culture, family values, and messages about gender, school, and career. In addition, participants described negotiating messages that at times prioritized the needs of their family and community while attempting to understand their own needs and wants. Participants spoke warmly about meaningful connections with Filipino American family and friends who valued their authentic self while articulating the frustration of cultural expectations as they examined their photographs.

Theme One: Who Am I?

The researcher defined this theme as a mental and emotional examination of participants' multiple identities and its salience to their self-concept. Participants often wrestled with the difficulties of attending to various aspects of their identities and the ways

in which others perceived them. They frequently identified multiple facets of their identity to operate under distinct definitions of race, gender, and generational immigration status, and mirrored some of their examples through examples, stories, and metaphors. In addition, participant responses to questions centered around self-reflection of life experiences through a Filipinx/a/ox American woman lens.

Identity ambivalence. The subtheme of *identity ambivalence* was defined by the researcher as participants' cognitive and emotional process of examining their cultural identities and how they wanted to be perceived by others. Participants referred to their cultural identities as an ongoing process. For example, both Jan and Lynne described the process of questioning of their identities and the meaning behind it.

Jan, a 22-year-old cisgender female and bisexual Filipinx American/Pinay, spoke of her recent undergraduate college experiences and her active involvement as a leader in a Filipinx American student organization. In our conversation, she discussed being knowledgeable about her cultural identities, yet continuing to challenge what they mean for her. In our conversation, she discussed her multiple identities as a second-generation queer Pinay. She stated, "whenever I try to think about who am I? What am I? I also think usually is the first thing in order like I'm Filipinx American. I'm queer. I'm a woman of color. I'm second-generation." Lynne, a 24-year-old, cisgender, Filipina Swede identified female, spoke of her experiences as biracial Filipina and Swedish and the uncertainty of how these racial and ethnic identities impacted her life. In addition, she discussed her unique experiences being an American citizen yet being born overseas. When asked about her immigrant generational status and the cultural values that were notable in her life she replied, "... I don't know if I'm first or second-generation.... I never really feel like I

identify as American... it's not something I've ever been proud of or whatever... I don't know which culture has influenced me. It must have been subconscious.”

Not Filipina/o/x or American enough. This subtheme was defined as the participants' felt tension from others to move between Filipino and American identities, values, and cultural worldviews. Although participants discussed many salient cultural identities they held (e.g. regional/geographic identities, sexual identities, gender identity), they all emphasized their bicultural identities as both Filipina/o/x and American. Many discussed the overt differences between Filipino and American in cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors that led to psychological impacts within their lives and relationships with others. Mae, an 18-year-old Filipina American, discussed her experiences growing up speaking English with an accent and her acculturation process within school. She described that being Filipina American is “a weird experience...I spoke with an accent and when I started to go to school I lost that accent. Even now I'm learning how to say some words in English because my mom says them in a different way... I'm still working towards assimilating.”

Julie, a 20-year-old Filipino American, described feeling different when discussing household items with White American peers in preschool. When discussing her chosen photograph (Figure 1) about her experiences as second-generation Filipino American she replied:

I put the *walis ting ting*, stick broom. It was one of the first times where I thought I was kind of different. In preschool we had to draw different types of pictures and had to draw a broom... I drew the *walis ting ting* and they were like, ‘What is that? That's not a broom!’ I said, ‘That's the one we used at home.’ I didn't know it was a Filipino thing.



Figure 1. Julie’s picture of not feeling Filipina/o/x American enough

Intersectionality and negotiating conflict. This subtheme was described as participants’ self-reflection on holding multiple identities, values, and worldviews as emerging adult women that are in conflict with one another. Participants reflected on the changed meaning behind their cultural identities from when they were young children, adolescents, and to currently as emerging adult women. Jan, in particular, spoke about deepening her connection to her Filipino culture through a college history class and having the opportunity to interview her grandfather about his experiences in the Philippines, immigration, and working for the U.S. Navy. She also discussed recognizing the intersection of her identities, and the meaning of these multiple identities at the time of the interview. She stated:

I guess if you think of being a female it has always come as a second thought to me as either queer identity, being a woman of color, or my ethnic identity...in the last few years I have been trying to understand and pull apart or merge those identities

and it has made it so complex to understand. When you have all those identities stacked next to each other it just really outlines in details and pinpoints who I think I am in my identity and how I interact with the rest of the world... there are few times I ever thought I'm just a woman. It's always I'm a Filipina or I'm a female queer. It's always connected to something else. It's not just a standalone talking about a gender thing.

Loneliness as a first-generation college student. This subtheme is defined as feelings of isolation and sadness due to the challenges of navigating the U.S. higher education as a first-generation student. Several participants identified themselves as a first-generation students and described the psychological impact of navigating U.S. higher education. Some described that having limited knowledge of the educational system was stressful and that parents often times trusted them to make “right” decisions towards in their academic career. Mae, an 18-year-old Filipina American first year undergraduate student at a four-year public university, shared, “My mom went to school in the Philippines so I had to figure it out because I was the first one. I don’t have a history with this school.” Aimee, a 20-year-old Filipina American/Pinay and third year undergraduate student at a four-year university, described a situation in which she asked her mother to financially support her in order to graduate earlier than her original academic timeline. She stated, “I know it’s going to be more money but maybe in the end it will save us money so I can graduate earlier. She [mother] was like, ‘I don’t know what any of that means. You know what’s best for you.’ That’s the kind of theme of growing up. They’ve been there and support whatever I chose to do and also they don’t. They don’t know any better.” Raisa, a 21-year-old Pilipina American and fourth year undergraduate student at a four-year university, described her experiences as

a second-generation Pilipina American within the context of higher education. She described:

It's a super long road and you don't really see the end and that's kind of how it feels to be a second-generation Filipino American navigating the higher education system. It was such as a struggle for my mom and I, you know? I didn't know how to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Moving in I didn't know what I was doing or where I was going. No one ever taught me how to sign up for classes. I want to go to graduate school but no one taught me what the GRE (Graduate Record Examinations) was... I'm walking this really long path that is completely alone and everything is just like there's no sign of life out there. The road keeps going...



Figure 2. Raisa's picture of loneliness as a first-generation student.

Theme Two: Ways of Navigating Gender Roles and Expectations

This theme is defined as how participants connected the meaning behind family and community messages involving gender roles and expectations that psychologically impacted their view of themselves and interactions with others. All participants discussed the role and intersection of traditional gender roles within their families and the impact of how they then behaved. Participants frequently identified family members' explicit messages to behave and perform in traditional gender-based and heteronormative ways (e.g., wearing a dress, expectation to date or marry a partner of "opposite sex", cook and clean for family) in order to fulfill family expectations. In addition, some participants also noted that many of the gender-based messages and expectations they received from family and community members (e.g., school, church) were implicit. Some participants noted that they realized many messages of traditional gender roles were based off of the expectation to clean and cook for the family, whereas other male-identified siblings were not held to the same expectation or standard. Participant responses to questions of cultural values often centered around gender roles, expectations, and how they made meaning of them.

"Being a good woman." This subtheme is defined as the message and expectation to behave in a traditional feminine manner that is modest, and in a conservative way that does not create controversy. Jan described her challenges as a Filipina/Pinay American woman and being in the "cross section of Filipino values and modernish American Western values and the gender piece." She went on to discuss that she mostly felt such values and expectation instilled in an implicit way. She stated, "... you know you are just expected to act in a certain way. I know I am a girl and that my brother doesn't have the same expectations. My brother is over there being weird and hanging out with my uncles and started drinking before he was actually legal, but for me it was just not a thing. I'm supposed

to wait until I'm twenty-one... I default to not wanting to draw attention to myself, wanting to make sure everyone is eating [at family parties], but my brother doesn't really care."

Mae, described the messages she received from her mother that the world is a frightening place as woman. She spoke of her mother discouraging her to go out with friends at night-time and that she had to "be careful or you could be kidnapped or murdered." In addition, she discussed her grandmother talking about the chores and expectations between her and her brother. Mae noted the change in the tone of her grandmother's voice that informed her that even though she enjoyed cleaning outdoors, her grandmother expected her to "clean up and cook inside only" whereas her brother's duty to clean was outside the house. Mae discussed that this informed her that "a woman's place was only in the kitchen or house."

Self-sacrifice for family. This subtheme is defined as emphasizing the importance of respect for one's family and a sense of duty to care for family members. Multiple participants discussed the interconnectedness to the well-being of their family members and the genuine passion to emotionally, physically, and financially to provide for them in the near future after finishing school or being more stable in their careers. Julie reflected on the reasons why she is attending a four-year university as a transfer student and that her academic career was in service to family. When prompted about giving back to her family after college she stated, "caring for my parents after. My *lola* [grandmother] before she went back to the Philippines actually lived with us for quite a while in American. Doing something like that where I can pay for them to go on a retirement and things like that or have them live in my home." Evelyn, a 24-year-old Filipina American, discussed how pursuing a master's degree in higher education and student affairs has been informed by her

family and serve as motivation for her. She described, "... my paternal grandparents were educators in some respect. They held education in the highest regard... So that's kind of stuck with me because they have gone through so much. If I look at my family history and the story overall of why they did things it makes me remember I'm privileged, and I know I'm privileged to get to this point. There's always been this theme of keeping your family together and giving the best for your family."

"Always be successful" for the family. This subtheme is described as the belief that one must act in a way to achieve career and academic success in order to be valued by one's family and others. All participants spoke of their experiences of the impact of external stress and tension in order to meet the expectations of family to achieve in academics and career. The message from family was clear that participants felt pressure to achieve and perform in order to be valued. For example, Evelyn shared that "someone who is first-born Filipina American in a family and is already high achieving it can be sometimes so nerve wracking to live up to and that expectations but at the same time take care of yourself."

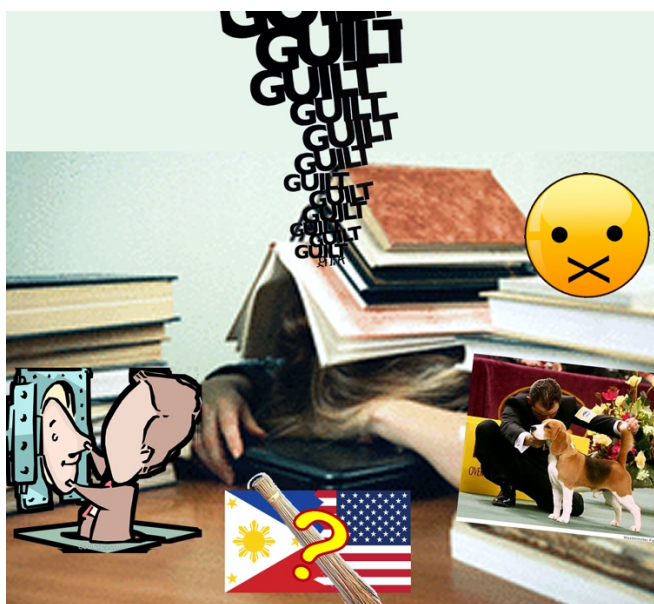


Figure 3. Julie's image of "always be successful"

Julie reflected on her privileged identity as a U.S. citizen and how she experiences the guilt and pressure to achieve for her family. Specifically, she used her reflection on her photograph to describe such experiences. She stated, “I know just being a U.S. citizen compared to my other cousins I have a lot of more opportunity. If I’m not being successful in the way my family deems as successful, then I’m wasting my opportunity. For that, sometimes I feel guilty. Then the student under the books is one of our measures of success being educated, being successful but it’s a lot of pressure. That’s why the guilt is on top of my head.”

Theme Three: Finding Connection to other Filipina/o/x Americans

This theme is defined as participants finding a way to understand their own challenges and joys they’ve experienced through relating to others who share similar cultural identities. All participants discussed how creating or maintaining relationships with certain Filipino/a/x Americans impacted their own understanding of their life experiences. Often times participants described navigating challenges of feeling accepted or belonging to the Filipino and Filipino American community. Yet, participants proactively sought connecting with other Filipino/a/x Americans as a way to seek acceptance, belonging, and understanding of themselves. In addition, participants noted the nuances that multiple identities (e.g., generational status, immigrant status, gender, sexual identity, first-generation student, transfer student, race, ethnicity, geography/region, disability) brought clarity to their own understanding of themselves when speaking with other Filipino/a/x Americans. Many spoke of desiring to take emotional and social risks to find a cultural home or desiring to in order to find a connection to themselves that at times meant going beyond Filipino/a/x American groups or communities. Others gave examples of finding a Filipino/a/x American

community or another identified community through shared interests, other salient identities, and life experiences. Participant responses to questions of dealing with adversities and challenges meant finding community and understanding self within the collective.

Sense of Belonging. This subtheme is defined as participants' longing to be seen and heard by other Filipina/o/x American women that experienced similar life experiences informed by cultural values, beliefs, and practices. Nearly all of the participants verbalized their curiosity if other study participants shared similar experiences or sentiments during the interview process. In addition, all participants wondered if they were "not alone" in their stories and sharing when interviewed. Participants acknowledged their intrinsic diverse experiences from other participants yet felt comforted knowing there were multiple participants who also partook in the study. As Mae reflected on her experiences of participating in the study she stated, "... this is something meant for me. I can talk about my experiences and I'm not ashamed of it, you know? I'm not worrying about I'm not Filipina enough to do this because I am! My experiences are valid. You know what I mean? Being able to talk about it is actually really nice this means that there are other people that also feel either similar or in the sense that there are Filipina Americans that are also second-generation." Evelyn acknowledged her unique perspective and experiences and shared, "not everyone deals with a medical condition. Maybe someone out there does and that may give them some sense of clarity. That I'm going through my own struggles, but this person has this kind of similar feeling and I find comfort in that." Finally, Jess spoke about her doubts in initially participating in this study, stating:

I had this doubt in my mind like should I even reach out? Would she even want to

hear about experiences from someone like me because I'm biracial? I'm glad I did and we talked. It's weird because I don't share about this stuff with anybody, especially not another Filipina woman. That never happens! It's been real interesting because anyone who is around my age, a Filipina woman, just looks at me and just tell me, well, at least you have a White dad. I've never had the space to share this with anybody.

Food as a way to feel close to other Filipina/o/x Americans. This subtheme is defined as participant using Filipino American meals and food items to feel connected to their cultural identity and relationships with other Filipina/o/x Americans.



Figure 4. Jan's image of food and connection to other Filipina/o/x Americans

For one participant in particular, Jan described that food and meals with her family was a physical manifestation of her bicultural experiences as a second-generation Pinay and Filipinx American (Figure 4). Jan spoke of the subtle yet impactful ways in which she drew meaning and significance to the daily experiences in an ordinary way. When asked about

how she chose to visually represent what being a second-generation Pinay in the U.S. meant to her she stated:

It's specifically it's eggs, fried eggs, fried rice, *longanisa* (Filipino sausage) that we got from L.A., and then some fruit, and it's just, and then some muffins- my Mom had baked that morning too. I thought it was interesting because I took a picture of it because it's sort of a pinnacle of I think bringing in the Filipino identity in terms of this Filipino breakfast. But also we have the fruit and blueberry muffins that are also very Americanized and American... So, I think it was interesting how through food even though we have to get a lot of those special Filipino ingredients from L.A whenever we go like bringing that into the household and being able to identify with that even just for like breakfast is interesting because I realize too that it's my daily constant reminder of that cultural identity that is not super big or super big apparent. It's not like a conversation or I'm learning something new about myself, but it's a daily reminder.

Healing through community. This subtheme is defined as the reliance and importance of meaningful connections and interactions with similarly identified Filipina/o/x individuals that ease stressors or support in navigating challenges. Several participants described difficulties of being accepted by other Filipina/o/x Americans and or by other groups of people as being "good enough." When prompted about how they dealt with such challenges, many responded that creating and nourishing relationships with individuals who embraced their authentic selves and those who they felt they could learn from and growth with were positive and impactful. Participants mentioned mentorship and peer interactions as meaningful ways to heal from feelings of inadequacy and feeling lost. For example, Jan

spoke of paying it forward to mentor other Pinays because she was mentored. She stated, “whenever I think of that term strong resilient Pinay I always associate it with my mentors because that is what is most salient to me. I had two mentors that were essentially like my *Ates* (older sisters) because I never really had *Ates*... in college I got a lot of really amazing older mentors that were similar in identity and not necessarily my struggle, but could relate on certain ones. I still contact them about everything and anything whenever I need to.”

Aimee discussed finding community through the Filipina/o/x peers she befriended and eventually saw as a second family away from home. She mentioned, “... you will find people that will know what *sisig* (pork and chicken liver dish) is or when you go, ‘Hmm *doon* (there) (participant gestures by pointing to an object with her lips). You can’t do that with your White friends, they’d be like what are you doing with your mouth! *Laughs*.”



Figure 5. Raisa’s image of healing through community

Raisa shared her experience of healing through community as a way to understand her cultural self and her own history after feeling lost and confused about her identities (Figure 5). She discussed:

It didn't come from an individual perspective. A lot of my healing happened in living rooms, in classrooms, at rehearsals, over coffee. A lot of my healing came through connection and this is you know the first two are very centered around my experience but I think the way I've been able to overcome has always been with the help of other people. Then further than that, I want to help other people with my life you know? That's the end goal I don't know how I'm going to get there but that's where I want to end up. So, this third picture is really, like, yes, it's about another person drew it all and, yes, it's not necessarily about my experience because obviously I haven't lived any of these lives that are drawn on these pages but I can find myself in them in a way. It's a reminder for myself that there is a history of Filipinos that fight. There's a history of Filipino Americans that fight and that I can one day be a part of that history.

Theme Four: Redefining Sense of Self

This theme was defined as participants reexamining their life experiences in a way that shifted their view of themselves to embrace a more complex, authentic, and vulnerable self. Throughout the interviews, participants self-reflect on their life experiences and the types of meaning they have created as they navigated experiencing challenges (e.g. medical conditions, not feeling Filipina or American enough, sexual assault). Most participants described how they came to a sense of acceptance with their situations and also acknowledged that they may still struggle with such experiences in present day. Several discussed their own felt sense of power to reflect, grow, learn, and feel confident about their lives and embrace the uncertainty surrounding ?.

Living authentically. This subtheme is defined as participants integrating family cultural values while embracing their own set of values and beliefs that reflect their true sense of self. Some participants discussed that they do not agree or align with certain family and cultural values and beliefs (e.g. perspective on religion/spirituality, gender roles, staying silent on controversial issues, homophobia). Furthermore, they described their cognitive and emotional processes of learning how to independently make decisions that were reflective of their own perceptions and worldviews. For example, this meant that participants learned how to negotiate what topics to keep to themselves and protect their own sense of emotional safety with family members. Participants also spoke of the importance of being able to switch between and navigate different relationships and spaces in which they felt they could be more genuine and authentic versus others where they felt the need to uphold collective values and beliefs in family or groups. For these participants, living authentically meant a negotiation that honored both their own needs and the needs of their family .

For example, Jan described the meaning of being Pinay for herself as being able to hold the duality of being “motherly yet outspoken” as a leader in her social organizations. In addition, she talked about her multiple identities as a queer Pinay and deciding to not tell her family about her sexual identity or her partner, due to fear of her partner’s family disapproving of the relationship. She stated, “There are certain battles I will fight and certain things I will not because it’s not worth the energy in that moment in time...me and my partner have been dating for five years but we’ve been hiding it from our families for the last five years. My family probably wouldn’t care but I boil it down to survival.”



Figure 6. Raisa's image of living authentically

Raisa illustrated her own emotional journey towards acceptance as a second-generation Pilipina American through a painting she chose for her interview (Figure 6). She spoke of family expectations to be thin and lighter skinned that reflected her family beliefs of gender roles and her understanding of historical impacts on worldview. Raisa described her picture as the following:

I feel like this is how I best see myself. Not that I'm an overtly sexual person but my Filipinoness and womanness are very tied together. My experience as a Filipina woman are very tied together and it centers around me being able to be open, being vulnerable as a woman, accepting my body is a really big one. This for me was a way to reclaim how I feel about my body and how my identity and culture influences my body in ways. This image is really empowering for me... I do think my vagina is a beautiful warm center that I think encapsulates what the Filipino sun represents.

Reframing. This subtheme is defined as the participants changing their cognitive and emotional relationship to a situation, person, or event that helped them gain a different perspective of themselves. Throughout the interview participants verbalized how they

challenged old thoughts and perceptions of themselves or the situations they were in that led to a new perspective of themselves. They discussed that in identifying and challenging their past struggles and thoughts allowed for their own growth. For example, Mae reflected that she has reached a point where she has been learning how to embrace being a second-generation Filipina American. She stated, “I was kind of wishing I was born White. Thinking about that now, it’s so crazy I ever thought that that! When I was younger, I thought that things would be easier if I was born White, you know? I wouldn’t feel this divide between not feeling Filipina enough or not being American enough because I’d be full American.”

In another example, Evelyn shared the values and beliefs within her family of taking care of family members before her own needs. She discussed learning how to question her actions and use self-talk as a way to and balance prioritizing her own needs. When talking about making career decisions she stated, “Transforming the mindset is still very hard because it’s this constant battle of who am I doing this for? A lot of my drives have changed where it’s like okay, who am I doing this for? For myself?”

Confidence. This subtheme is defined as having a strong sense of belief or assurance in oneself and one’s own abilities. Some participants shared about how they currently saw themselves in relation to her cultural identities as second-generation Filipina Americans along with their other salient identities. In particular, several participants spoke of internalizing their belief in self and using memories from their own past history to mark their own sense of growth.



Figure 7. Mae’s image of confidence

For example, Mae described moving from a feeling a sense of shame to believing in herself to wear a cultural garment such as the *barong* at school (Figure 7). Mae stated that she was a part of her Catholic campus ministry team that was encouraged to dress in cultural attire for a special Mass. She said, “I was a part of the team that recruited people to dress up and I got to speak on this experience. It was a different experience of walking and having everyone look at me wearing a barong. People said you look so nice doing that. It felt crazy that I went from ‘Oh no, everyone’s looking at me’ to ‘Wow, everyone is looking at me!’ kind of thing. It was different. I don’t know, it was a definitely a whole shift.”



Figure 8. Evelyn’s image of confidence

Evelyn, described her emotional journey of believing in herself and feeling empowered through the lens of reflecting on her shared picture of her *debut* dress (Figure 8).

She illustrated:

...this dress that I'm wearing is actually my *debut* dress from when I turned 18... I picked this picture because if you look at the tree itself there's so many roots. I don't even know how far those roots go, but I'm pretty sure if you-

It's the same thing with my family. There's so much history behind me. This is where I currently stand. So, this is kind of like I don't have my hair put up all prim and nice. My hair is just how I want it to be, just free.

The dress is just a sense of empowerment for myself but at the same time I'm at the base of this tree at the root. This is where we're headed. We're headed upward. Despite everything I've got to keep going with- Even if the dress get tattered I've just got to keep persevering and understanding my value, my worth. That's come with just years of just trying to better understand myself, how I see myself and what does strength look like for me.

Speaking up in a culture of silence. This subtheme is defined as participants' conscious decision to use their voice to state their needs or wants to others. All participants discussed that often times their life experiences meant negotiating and navigating conflicting values of prioritizing self and the needs or wants of family and community. In addition, some participants discussed the psychological impact that developed as a result of prioritizing family and social approval or their own needs and asking for help. Lynne described questioning her sexual identity when she was in middle school and high school as well as experiences of depression. She particularly noted the stigma around mental health and religious cultural values within her family. Lynne discussed the tension and conflict when she decided to bring up her struggles with her parents. Lynne stated:

...just growing up and feeling really fucked up and not having a reason for it. For most of my middle school and high school I had pretty severe depression which was a huge arguing point for my parents and I. They asked me why I was sad and I literally had no idea. Then the closeted stuff was another thing and it meant I was 'unholy'. I don't know maybe it's because I grew up in this Catholic household.



Figure 9. Jess's image of speaking up in a culture of silence

Jess described her experience of being sexually assaulted by her boyfriend at the time and the feelings of isolation and shame after sharing with her family members (Figure 9). Jess said:

... when my boyfriend sexually assaulted me- This is cultural stuff again, right? My family didn't want me to talk about it. I wanted to report to the police and my mom got really angry about it. I did it anyway but you know she kicked me out of the house because she was so upset about it. I was tired of people telling me not to tell anyone because that's enforcing this culture of shame and silence. Just lay your head down and be a good girl and whatever.

Self-empowerment. This subtheme is defined as participants reflecting on their strengths and then taking action to improve their wellness and well-being. Some participants

talked about their struggles as a way to identify and understanding their own strengths. For example, Raisa shared being raised by a single mother and witnessing divorce between her parents at a young age. Furthermore, she mother as independent and strong and learning aspects of a what it means to be a resilient woman. She reflected and said, “I just notice it’s a really common thing with my closest Filipino American friends coming from broken families. I don’t know if that’s a product of the patriarchy or machismo or the way men are brought up. I know that because I’ve seen so many more resilient women. Not that there’s no men who are resilient but I’ve been able to take that kind of strength and apply it to my own life with my mom and other Filipina American woman that I see (*Voice begins to shake and becomes tearful*). Also, getting to see Filipina American queer women in media and in my life has been really transformative for me.”



Figure 10. Jess’s image of self-empowerment

In another example, Jess reflected on the impact of her sexual assault and dealing with responses from family members (Figure 10). She shared a self-portrait painting that depicted the meaning behind her multiple identities as a biracial, second-generation, Filipina Irish American and cultural experiences as a sexual assault survivor.

You know, after I was assaulted and stuff I had to figure out different mantras to tell

myself to empower myself. It's just such a violating thing that happened to somebody that really wrecks you mentally, emotionally, physically you know. So, yeah. I had to find out different positive words to say to myself. That's a self-portrait. I painted myself wearing one of my mom's old dresses and you know the butterfly sleeves with the Filipino sun in the background. I guess I wanted to paint myself a real regal and royal looking and stuff so I got red and purple and kind of like those paintings of the saints with the halos and stuff. I wanted to do the Filipino flag or Filipino sun there. So, yeah, it's just like this was an outfit I actually wore before to a rosary rally with my mom. It was one of the first times that I had worn Filipino formal attire and I wore it with her which was really nice.

Overall, participants reflected and shared their experiences as second-generation Filipina Americans along with their other salient identities through verbal and visual modalities. All participants reflected and responded in ways that were centering the context of their situations and identities in addition to the relevance of how they perceived their social locations. Finally, the variety of ways (e.g. verbal interview and visual pictures) in which participants were able to engage in self-reflection allowed for them to express themselves in ways that felt connected to their thoughts and feelings .

Phenomenon

For these second-generation, Filipina American, emerging adults, the essence of their lived experiences is the ongoing search for the self and "being enough." The meaning that participants made of such experiences seemed to be, overall, learning how to embrace their authentic selves without judgment and make decisions that responded to their needs and wants, despite other cultural and familial demands. The participants revealed that

authenticity for them often times comes with still struggling with challenges, making difficult decisions, and still finding the ability to also feel contentment.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Our understanding of the lived experiences of the multiple identities, challenges, and strengths of Filipina American emerging adults are not stationary but evolving. At the core of this qualitative study was a desire to increase that understanding by uncovering the meaning of the challenges and strengths experienced by these Filipina American emerging adults, and how this meaning is shaped and experienced by the context of cultural values, beliefs, and other salient social locations. Exploring the essence of lived experiences as expressed by participant is at the heart of phenomenological studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This unique, person-centered, and experiential knowledge is important and often missing within the landscape of psychology at-large.

This research study, which was intended to fill the gap in the literature, created new data on how the unique intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, and cultural values are expressed in the lived experiences in Filipina American emerging adults. This study contributes to the literature by capturing a snapshot in time of the lived experiences of these participants between January to March 2020. It is important to note that part of this timeframe was within the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, social and political unrest, and amplified racial trauma. The method centered these Filipina Americans as the experts of their own experience. Furthermore, this study also emphasized the emerging adulthood phase for these Filipina American women that bring nuance and detailed accounts of the emotional and mental process of individuation and collectivism in family and community. The interplay between collective histories (e.g., intergenerational) and personal narratives must continue to be incorporated into our understanding of such participants to

foster their emotional and mental well-being . The participants described feeling more attuned to themselves, confident, and self-reflective as well as still actively struggling and attempting to make sense of the same experiences they discussed during the interview. This is an important finding that connects to a cultural way of navigating bicultural experiences and making meaning of past and current challenges (Del-Mundo & Queck, 2017).

These findings reinforce and extend the important literature that highlights the unique psychological experiences of Filipina Americans and Pinays in the U.S. (Nadal,2012). This study further extends understanding of Filipina/o/x American women’s identity development that includes the way in which unique aspects such as emerging adulthood, geography and regional context, LGBTQ+ identity, and second-generation immigrant status (e.g. daughters of immigrants) were salient for the participants and their stories. The findings contribute in a way that builds upon a foundational understanding of Filipina/o/x American women and challenges the Western and Eurocentric conventional ways of thinking about Filipina/o/x American women and Pinays shared by the participants themselves. This is often an area in literature within Filipino American psychology and Asian American psychology that is not discussed or centered.

The study is consistent with the literature that centers on multicultural feminist work for Filipina/o/x American women, Asian American women, and women of color. Feminist scholarly literature on Filipina/o/x American women and Pinays in the U.S. has called for more “Pinay Power” and the need to bring marginalized Filipina/o/x women and Pinay American voices as well as a more feminist and/or queer theory lens to lived experiences. Participants’ act of showing up and participating in this study was a call to action to an

overlooked and underserved area in psychology and academia whether they were self-aware or not.

Participants' descriptions and discussions revolving around the negotiation of identity, race, gender, and colonialism as a constant balancing act are consistent with other works of literature such as Anzaldúa's (1987) book examining the Chicana and Latina "borderland" experiences. The "neither here nor there" sentiment that study participants spoke of as not being Filipina/o/x or American enough is a familiar experience for the minoritized voices of women of color and those who find themselves experiencing various forms of oppression and privilege.

The study's findings also reflected aspects of Filipino and Filipino American cultural values such as *kapwa* (fellow being), *pakikisama* (the value of interpersonal relationship, social acceptance, and conformity), religiosity/spirituality, collectivism, respect for elders and authorities (Enriquez 1982,1997; Nadal, 2011). Cultural values were a foundation for participants to use when making independent decisions of what to keep as important life guidelines or what to let go. These participants clearly communicated that although they have a certain set of cultural values as a roadmap this time in their lives is an opportunity to take a path that fits their changing needs and wants for themselves.

Interestingly, the study revealed how participants consciously chose to push against a cultural value of silence. Participants chose to use their voices by consenting and agreeing to participate in the study. and participants spoke openly about topics that often times go against traditional Asian and Filipino cultural norms (e.g., mental health, sexual identity, role in the family, and family conflict). Participants used their voices through verbal

communication in the interviews, and other ways of self-expression (e.g., art and photography) that illuminated their own meaning-making.

The participants' narratives also reflected the existing literature of emerging adulthood as the age of identity exploration, instability, feeling in between, and of possibilities (Arnett, 2000). They revealed that they in fact address such developmental issues while navigating within their collective families and culture as Filipina Americans. Exploring and clarifying a sense of self and gaining independence are central developmental tasks during emerging adulthood. However, Filipino and Asian cultural values (e.g. saving face and silence to keep harmony) may perhaps make it more challenging to articulate how they have made sense of their lived experiences.

The findings also reinforced a crucial aspect of emerging adulthood as a time of taking responsibility for one's actions and exploring identity. The participants also communicated that although they still struggle with ? they are simultaneously creating opportunities to discover who they are and want they want in life. Emerging adulthood for these participants encourages these participants to grapple with themselves and also to create a pathway in life that is on their own terms.

The ways in which participants psychologically processed and articulated within the interview their own challenges, cultural context, and strengths were distinctive. The down-to-earth approaches in which they described their experiences seemed to demonstrate a comfort with the researcher in sharing the joys and challenges in their stories. This may have been due to my appropriate self-disclosure with my shared identity as a second-generation Filipina American when asked by participants. The sense of familiarity and assumed fondness may have destigmatized the research interview process and put participants at ease.

Ambivalence about cultural values, beliefs, and practices can lead to clearer sense of self

Scholars of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology) have often described the basic tenets of the Filipino person that revolve around placing the collective before the individual, interdependence, and where an individual's behaviors and action reflect one's family and community (i.e., *kapwa*, *utang ng loob*, *hiya*, and *pakikisama*). This framework and moral code of Filipino social and cultural behavior gives a way to understand the world, an individual's role within it, and expectations for behavior and response. In addition, those who do not operate within such a preconceived framework can be dismissed, invalidated, or on the wrong side of thinking. In this study, participants often described holding two opposite opinions or ideas that conflict (e.g. love for family and hiding yet hiding secrets from family, love for Filipino Catholic traditions and also critique colonial influences and impacts). This allowed for a certain psychological, gray area that violated their internal sense of how they viewed the world and how it operated at times as they shared developing critical awareness through dialogue with peers or within their college educations and courses.

The psychological tension and ambivalence expressed by participants is interpreted by the researcher as a form of self-preservation and survival in Western Eurocentric male dominant society in the U.S. This may result in the residual effect of U.S. and Spanish colonialism in these Filipina American participants. I think what was being conveyed by participants was a need to resolve mixed feelings about Filipino and U.S. cultural values, beliefs, and practices in order to protect themselves and save face from others. For these

participants, perhaps ambivalence is an aspect of their resilience that allows them to survive and navigate various expectations, demands, and oppressive systems.

I think rather than viewing the participants' ambivalence from a Eurocentric lens as a weakness it perhaps was a way for them to clarify their values and form new meaning of themselves and experiences. This study displays that it is imperative to normalize and validate the process of ambivalence as a healthy and helpful way to take emotional risks, discover one's true self, and make sense of their own internal and external worlds especially as individuals who navigate areas of oppression and privilege in life.

A call to include more nuanced experiences of first-generation students

One particular theme that interestingly emerged from the study were the narratives of several participants who identified as first-generation undergraduate and graduate students. Perhaps participants discussed their experiences as first-generation students as a way to claim identity and space in a narrative where they have felt left out in policy and academic student success support efforts. In fact, U.S. policy does not consider the children of parents or caregivers who have attained a bachelor's degree outside the U.S. as first-generation students (U.S. Higher Education Act of 1965). There is a profound message from participants that just because their parents and/or caregivers have obtained a bachelor's degree does not mean the participants had the privilege of knowing how to navigate the U.S. higher education system.

The "loneliness" that some participants referred to as a first-generation student may reflect the invisibility and acculturation process to the U.S. higher education system as bicultural individuals. Furthermore, this study revealed the invisible challenges of academic success, and emotional/mental well-being that may not be as publicly shared or discussed

with the intersecting identities and experiences of race, gender, immigrant generation status, social class, and acculturation process of second-generation Filipina Americans. The participants possibly were conveying that they as second-generation Filipina Americans need to be included in discussions of federal/state policies, programming, and academic success efforts in higher education institutions. The findings and stories of these women highlight call to action for paying attention and asking crucial questions of expanding who and how we consider first-generation students.

Emphasis on Meaningful Relationships and Resources within Institutions to Build a Sense of Agency

Participants throughout the study discussed their ability to take action, be effective in their decision making, influence their own life, and assume responsibility for their behavior only if they were only able to first recognize their pain and struggles and process them in meaningful ways (e.g., psychotherapy, identify and affinity groups on campus, relationships with. Participants discussed this occurring prior to the study in their personal levels via attending psychotherapy, finding solace in trusted peers and family, as well as engaging in healing activities of art. The acknowledgement and recognition of pain and hurt within formal settings at school or informal with trusted interpersonal relationships appeared to be their pathway towards a more authentic and genuine grasp on their lives. Perhaps the stigma of professional help-seeking or turning to family, friends, and community members is reduced when resources in academic institutions and community groups emphasize relationship building, and integrating cultural values of *kapwa* (fellow-being). It is then that second-generation Filipina Americans may be truly seen as valued.

Researcher Reflection

An important point of reflection is my influence and role as the researcher and shared identity as a second-generation Filipina American and first-generation college and graduate student. I noticed a swift change in the demeanor of the majority of participants who felt at ease after inquiring and learning of my shared identity through the course of the individual interviews and in-person interactions with each of them. For the most part, there was a sense of comfort in their body language and their communication exchanges with me. Perhaps my shared identity, similar phenotypic features, and way of speaking led to an assumed sense of allyship or familiarity that led to topics that were disclosed and provided a sense of emotional safety for participants. I think this translates towards the need for more diverse scholars and mental health professionals that continue to reflect the various identities, experiences, and worldviews of underrepresented populations.

Participants stated that they were quite nervous to do a formal interview and talk about experiences that many have previously never spoke of and appeared to be surprised by the collaborative and open dialogue between them and I. In addition, some described that it was their first interaction with a researcher and psychologist who shared multiple identities of gender, ethnicity, and immigrant generational status. It was also important to share that although I shared some identities and experiences with participants, I also emphasized the unique gifts and talents they brought to study of sharing their own perceived challenges and joys in their lives as Filipina/o/x American and Pinay women. It may be that seeing the representation of a Filipina American psychologist and researcher in power gave them the permission to elevate their own voice and speak their truth when they felt safe to do so.

This study highlighted that Filipina/o/x, American women are not all victims nor are they all visitors- these individuals are real and their lived experiences and ways of knowing

matter. This study demonstrates the application of choice and decisions that highlight how these Filipina American participants exercise agency. The participants revealed the psychological tension between feeling validated and liberated in their experiences as well as feeling quite vulnerable and uncomfortable processing difficult times in their lives. The study displays that in fact the takeaway lies in the processes or the “how” in which they have arrived at the emotional and psychological place they find themselves in. It is in the “what” and “how” that they find a sense of clarity, self-discovery, and curiosity about themselves and the world they navigate.

These women have existed and continue to exist as “firsts” within their families, schools, and workplaces to navigate their lives according to their own set of values and find confidence in their decisions. Participants demonstrated that using their voices are not only about verbally communicating such experiences, but that it can be accessed through other important ways of self-expression such as art. Furthermore, the participants took action to show up, become vulnerable, and share their story. This perhaps is an act of giving back to their communities, destigmatizing the shame of unspoken topics (e.g. sexual identity, mental health concerns, sexual assault) and connecting with other Filipina/o/x American and Pinay women who may find similar topics difficult to talk about or make sense of. This act of sharing their lived experiences contribute towards a meaningful role of we understand, advocate for, and support second-generation, Filipina American women.

Limitations

Qualitative studies such as this provide detailed insight into the lived experience of these participants who identified as a second-generation Filipina American/Pinay, but do not aim for generalization. This study’s findings should be interpreted within the context of its

methodological limitations. Hermeneutic studies including IPA are harder to pin down and subject to more debate, due to their highly interpretative nature (Rubin & Babbie, 2007).

This study was based on a purposively selected sample of second-generation, Filipina American, Pinay, emerging adult women living in Southern California within the United States. It is important to consider topics that explore the experiences of Filipina American and Pinay women before the question of generalizability can be tackled. Additionally, combining photographs with in-depth individual interviews facilitated the creation of and meaning behind the experiences, thick description, giving the researcher and readers alike a sense of the cognitive and emotional process of the participant (Burton, Hughes, & Dempsey, 2017; Ponterotto; 2006). The audio and visual aspects of data collection helped me as the researcher to encourage participant self-reflection and sense-making.

One notable limitation of the current study was conducting the semi-structured interviews in English only. I as the lead researcher did ask participants if they spoke any other languages besides English, however only conducted interviews due to my speech and writing fluency in English only. Future studies should highly consider exploring conducting interviews in English and other native Filipino languages that would provide more depth and nuance to the intersection of language, acculturation, and immigrant generational status.

A critique of IPA's methodological limitations is the question of whether this method can accurately capture the experiences and meaning of the experiences rather than the mere opinions of them with the high emphasis on use of language. Phenomenology often relies on the accounts of the participants and the experience of the researchers. In addition, this method also emphasizes how clear communication skills are required of successfully

conveying potential nuances of such experiences. Moreover, this means that this method may be associated with more eloquent and clear speaking individuals. Scholars have called using the extracts and data of clearly articulated participants as elitist favoring eloquent voices and perspectives (Tuffour, 2017). During the study a few participants had more difficulty articulating their experiences and self-reflecting which required more prompting and probing on my end as a researcher. It is important to note this extra attentiveness needed in the role of clear and eloquent communication that may impact rich and exhaustive data from certain participants. Furthermore, from a social justice and multicultural research perspective, this calls for a larger examination of IPA and qualitative studies of whose voices we are centering and gravitating towards because they are more moving, inspiring, and articulate.

Future Directions

I believe this study's findings can serve as a platform for these Filipina/o/x American and Pinay women to not only share their stories, but for psychologists to begin to critically identify specific cognitive and emotional processes that occur when navigating intersecting identities, experiences, and challenges among this understudied group. Future research in examining the experiences of Filipina/o/x American and Pinay women could examine lived experiences from both the individual and systemic levels. For example, incorporating studies that center concepts such as historical and intergenerational trauma and acculturation, generational conflict, family history, immigration history of family will perhaps add contextual value to the ways in which individuals experience their challenges and ways of dealing with them. Although this study focuses on cisgender Filipina/o/x/ American and Pinay women in the U.S., it is important to encourage further studies that continue to center

and explore intersectional and marginalized identities of the Filipino American community (e.g., transwomen and men, gender non-conforming as it intersects with identities of race and ethnicity, sexual identity).

Future research can also expand creative methods of collecting and analyzing data. It is important to highlight ways in which research participants can communicate and express their opinions, beliefs, and perspectives that are not only limiting to in-depth verbal interviews. This study highlighted the benefit of using visual and verbal data collection methods to encourage a sense of empowerment and agency for participants in the research process. Researchers and scholars may find it particularly relevant exploring data within the digital age of various social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) or through creative arts (e.g. paintings, spoken word, singing, dance). This type of data collection can enhance potential in-depth interviews for participants that may reflect other original and innovative ways of self-expression.

The last month of data collection (March 2020) was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders issued by state, regional, and county government and public health officials. I as the researcher pivoted and conducted the last two in-depth interviews via IRB compliant platform Zoom after adjusting and updating the IRB protocol. The timing of the data collection occurred early on during the COVID-19 pandemic that perhaps did not significantly impact the dialogue between researcher and participant yet may be a limitation to the data collection of the study. Future studies should explore the impact of in-person interactions and data collection as well conducting full in-depth interviews via video.

Implications

This work is not only about Filipina/o/x American women, it is produced by and for Filipina/o/x American women. This study aimed to provide realistic language for describing the lived experiences as a second-generation Filipina American emerging adult in the U.S. The insights of these second-generation Filipina American emerging adults can be especially valuable in the prevention and program planning, clinical intervention, and policy making within academic and community mental health systems.

I encourage researchers who are interested in conducting studies of second-generation Filipina American emerging adults and/or Filipina Americans at large to choose methodological approaches that collaborate and work with participants. Involving these individuals within the research method and data collection can only help better tailor the approaches to more authentically capture the findings. In addition, I encourage researchers to actively reflect and be open to their own assumptions, biases, and own lived experiences that impacts how marginalized communities like these second-generation, Filipina American emerging adults are studied or even left out of the academic discourse. Researchers can use the “lived experience” construct as the framework for creating new understanding and knowledge that challenges existing literature.

Clinicians are invited to incorporate more experiential aspects of meaning-making when working with second-generation Filipina American emerging adults. For example, clinician interventions that emphasize self-expression through art (e.g. music, photography, drawing) and non-verbal forms may create new pathways of meaning-making and may led to more clarified steps for change or growth. In addition, clinicians should consider the use of metaphors, and nondirect ways of addressing challenges or struggles with second-generation Filipina American clients whom are finding ways to articulate their experiences. Finally, the

study also revealed moments of longing for deep connection to others. Clinicians may want to time exploring how the “lived experience” for second-generation Filipina American emerging adults impacts their connection and relationships with others. Finally, it is important for clinical efforts may include interventions (e.g., AWARE intervention for Asian American Women) that draw upon actions of psychoeducation about family roles and bicultural identity, community and relational building, and heightened sense of empowerment (Rivera, et al., 2019).

I invite administrators, staff, and policy makers at the academic institutions to examine how they are including or excluding the needs of second-generation Filipina Americans. Participants described an acculturation to the U.S. higher education system that perhaps paralleled their parents’ experiences of immigrating to the U.S. that may have led to feelings of loneliness, isolation, and proactively seeking ways to survive. Perhaps the participants’ narratives of their “first-generation” experience was a call to be understood, heard, and illuminate an often forgotten and unknown aspect of their lives as Filipina Americans and Pinays in higher education. This is a notable finding that calls for a critical examination of how first-generation students are defined and how its narrow definition of the term may in fact push individuals such as the participants in this study into the margins and overlooked. In addition, it is important to continue to fund and support mentorship and leadership positions for Filipina American and Pinay women as a way of agency, independence, and academic success for those who may not have accessible resources or relationships to do so.

Conclusion

The participants in this study demonstrated a clear willingness to be open to discuss their ambivalences and take ownership of their identities as second-generation Filipina

American emerging adults including other salient and important identities for them (e.g., queer, first-generation, daughter, friend). They expressed difficulty at times of discussing cultural values, expectations, family history, and how they view themselves due to the lack of conversations in their own relationships and communities about what their identities and experiences mean to them. I am particularly pleased with how vulnerable, authentic, and passionate they spoke about their challenges, their triumphs, and the important ways they personally and professionally grew.

One thing that is evident is that the role of actively acknowledging their pain and finding helpful ways to deal with various challenges are crucial for their own self-concept and healthy identity development. In addition, as these Filipina American women journey towards accepting who they are, they are able to wield their power of self-confidence as an act of resistance against a dominant Western, Eurocentric, and male dominant narrative of existing. I posit, that developing a strong self-concept for these second-generation Filipina American women and the ability to navigate intersecting identities and multiple challenges means reminding themselves to accept that they are exactly good enough as they are and they have the power within to live a purposeful and meaningful life by sharing their authentic selves with others.

Filipina/o/x American women/Pinay artists like Ibarra, Klassy, Santilla, & Rivera (2017) have pulled back the mask and mystery of lived experiences as Pinays within the creative arts, music, or spoken word. It is in the same spirit they share unfiltered and genuine thoughts on Pinay women empowerment:

So let it be known, if you don't already
Pinays have always been part, and parcel, if not, imperative and critical to the struggle.
Filipinas are no strangers to wielding our own power.
Of all the privileges that exist in this world, none of which you may be a benefactor of

There is at least one you bear
And that is the privilege of having been born a Filipina
Your DNA contains building blocks made from the mud of over 500 years of resistance
and survival.
And when you are ready, sis, we'll be right here.
(Ibarra, 2017, 3:16)

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Table 1

Participant Pseudonyms and Demographics

| Pseudonym | Age | Gender Identity | Racial/Ethnic Identity | Sexual Identity | Education | Description of Discussed Experiences & Challenges |
|------------------|------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| Jan | 22 | cisgender female | Filipinx American/Pinay | queer/bisexual | B.A. in Asian American Studies | Queer and Pinay identity, family, finding Pinay mentorship |
| Lynne | 24 | cisgender female | Filipina/Swedish | bisexual | 1 st year graduate, master's in education | disconnection to American culture, mixed and bisexual identities, mental health concerns, self-acceptance |
| Mae | 18 | cisgender female | Filipina American | heterosexual | 1 st year undergraduate, economic and accounting | not feeling Filipina or American enough, cultural messages of gender, embracing authenticity |
| Julie | 20 | cisgender female | Filipino American | heterosexual | 3 rd year undergraduate, economic and accounting | integrating Filipino and American cultural values, questioning Filipino cultural values |
| Raisa | 21 | cisgender female | Pilipina American | heterosexual | 4 th year undergraduate, sociology | Feeling exoticized, not feeling Filipino enough, healing through community |
| Aimee | 20 | cisgender female | Filipina American/Pinay | heterosexual | 2 nd year undergraduate, communications | navigating predominantly White spaces, finding voice |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|----|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---|---|
| Evelyn | 24 | cisgender female | Filipina American | heterosexual | 2 nd year graduate, master's in education | navigating medical condition and balancing own needs and needs of family |
| Jess | 25 | cisgender female | Filipino/Irish American | heterosexual | 1 st year graduate, master's in counseling | feeling othered by White and People of Color, healing from sexual assault, and connecting with Pinays |

Table 2

Superordinate Themes and Subordinate Themes

| Superordinate Themes | Subordinate Themes |
|---|---|
| Who Am I? | <i>Identity ambivalence</i> <i>Not feeling Filipina/x or American enough</i> <i>The complex self</i> <i>Loneliness as a first-generation student</i> |
| Internalizing Gender Roles and Expectations | <i>“Being a good woman”</i> <i>Feeling shame about emotional and mental needs</i> <i>Self-sacrifice for family</i> <i>“Always be successful”</i> |
| Connection to other Filipina/o/x Americans | <i>Belonging</i> <i>Food as a way to feel close</i> <i>Healing through community</i> |
| Redefining sense of self | <i>Living authentically</i> <i>Reframing</i> <i>Confidence</i> <i>Self-empowerment</i> |

CALLING ALL FILIPINA AMERICAN AND PINAY WOMEN

- Identify as a cisgender Filipina American/Pinay woman?
- Identify as second-generation/child of Filipino immigrant(s)?
- Between the ages of 18 and 25?
- Willing to speak on your experiences of identity, gender, and cultural values?

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY!

Participation involves an initial 30- minute briefing session, taking pictures using your camera or phone, and one 60-90 minute in-person interview.

IF INTERESTED OR HAVE QUESTIONS CONTACT:

ALYSSA HUFANA, M.A.
ahufana@ucsb.edu

Department of Counseling, Clinical, &
School Psychology
UC Santa Barbara



Appendix B: Email/Recruitment Script

I am a researcher at the University of California, Santa Barbara, under the supervision of Melissa L. Morgan, Ph.D. and am currently conducting my dissertation study that is exploring your experiences of challenges with identity, gender, and cultural values as a second-generation Filipina American/Pinay woman. If you identify as a second-generation Filipina American/Pinay/Filipino American woman, are between the ages of 18 and 25, and would like to participate in an initial briefing, the opportunity to engage in photography and taking pictures, and one interview (approximately 60-90 minutes) to discuss the photographs and your experiences, please contact the researcher below.

Your participation in this study would be completely voluntary. There are no anticipated risks for participating other than possible emotional discomfort as a result of talking through and reflection of difficult experiences. However, you may decide what to share and a benefit of participation may be increased awareness of our own life experiences and provide a better understanding of yourself.

Thank you for considering participation. We anticipate that results will help us better understand the resilience processes of Filipina Americans and potentially add to the existing information and understanding of challenges with navigating intersecting identities and experiences as well as fostering resilience for Filipina American women and other marginalized communities.

Alyssa Hufana, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology
University of California, Santa Barbara
ahufana@ucsb.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CONSENT FORM

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA**

Title of the Study:

**Exploring the Lived Experiences of Second-Generation Filipina American Women
Emerging Adults: Navigating Challenges and Meaning-Making of Intersecting
Identities and Cultural Values**

Lead Investigator's Name, Department, Telephone Numbers, and E-Mail:

Alyssa Hufana, Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology Department,
(562)552-4551, ahufana@ucsb.edu

PURPOSE

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of second-generation, Filipina American women of identity, gender, and cultural values as well as how participant navigate any challenges associated with this.

PROCEDURES

You will participate in one initial participant briefing and engage in a photo elicitation interview. You will be briefed and interviewed by the lead investigator of the research team. The initial participant briefing session will take approximately 20-30 minutes, and semi-structured interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded to capture the accuracy of the information you provide, given your permission and consent for data analysis purposes. The participation will be in the following phases:

1. ***Initial Participant Briefing.*** During this initial meeting the, purpose, plan, and method of the study are explained along with thoroughly going over informed consent. This session will take approximately 20-30 minutes. This session with the participant will serve as an introductory meeting and intend for you to ask any questions you have regarding the study. You will then be instructed to take or choose 3 pictures that reflect the guided prompt questions prior the interview. You are allowed to ask questions about ethical issues and any questions pertaining to the study throughout the entire research process.
2. ***Individual in-depth interviews.*** The lead researcher will then conduct an interview with you where you will be asked about any challenges associated with being a second-generation Filipina American woman, how you have dealt with that, and

perceptions about that experience. In addition, during this time you will be asked to discuss your photos related to the guided prompt questions and your experiences. The interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and conducted in-person with your choosing of time and location. After the interview, the leader researcher will contact the you at a later time to clarify any interview data for accuracy. The lead researcher will notify you ahead of time when she will contact you.

During informed consent you will be informed about ethical and legal issues (i.e., privacy, confidentiality) pertaining to use of photographs for research purposes. *Please see attached Photograph Consent Form for further details.* Please be aware that you do not have to participate in this research, and you may stop your participation at any time without penalty. You may skip participation in parts of the research study and you may also skip any question in the interview that you prefer not to answer.

RISKS

The possible risks associated with participation in this study are minimal. They include possibly remembering some difficult life experiences and feeling some slight emotional discomfort if you choose to discuss very personal topics with the interviewer. You have the right to disclose topics at your discretion. If you experience any uncomfortable feelings, we can provide you with referral resources.

BENEFITS

There is no direct benefit to you as a result of your participation in this study. Potential benefits associated with the study include gaining more knowledge about yourself and contributing to knowledge about experiences of dealing with challenges among second-generation Filipina American women, a topic that has been understudied with the Filipino American population and in the field of psychology.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data we collect will not be linked to your identity in any way. Your responses will be made confidential. The only exception would be if you were to report child or elder abuse or intent to harm yourself or other. Should this occur, appropriate actions will be taken. Your confidentiality will be protected by not having you write your name on the written materials (only on the consent form which will be kept separate from study data). The information you provide will be looked at as group data only and will not be traceable to you as an individual.

COSTS/PAYMENT

There will be no direct payment to you as a participant in the study. However, we appreciate your participation.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may change your mind about being in the study and discontinue participation at any time without any negative consequences.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR’S PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS IN THE RESEARCH AND STUDY SPONSOR

The investigators in this study have no financial interest in this research and will not benefit monetarily from this study.

QUESTIONS

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of California, Santa Barbara (Protocol #43-20-0225).

If you have any questions about this research project or if you think you may have been injured as a result of your participation, please contact Alyssa Hufana, ahufana@ucsb.edu 562-552-4551 or Dr. Melissa Morgan at mmorgan@education.ucsb.edu or 805-893-4018.

If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Committee at (805) 893-3807 or hsc@research.ucsb.edu. Or write to the University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050

CONSENT

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW WILL INDICATE THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT IN THE STUDY DESCRIBED ABOVE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A SIGNED AND DATED COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

Signature of

Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Time: _____

Witness: _____

PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT FORM

You have opted to participate in research in the Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology at UC Santa Barbara for a dissertation study led by Alyssa Hufana under the supervision of Dr. Melissa Morgan. A part of the research involves the taking of photographs and showing them during an in-person interview as participation in the project. The lead researcher will use the photographs to deepen the understanding of your experience as a second-generation Filipina American woman. Please note that the taking, selection, and discussion of photographs related to the research project and data collection purposes is a condition of participation in our program. If you are not comfortable with taking photographs or showing them during the interview, please talk to the researcher about alternative options.

USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

1. The photographs can be used by the lead researcher for data analysis related to the project. _____
Initial
2. The data from the photographs can be used for scientific research & publications. _____
Initial

OWNERSHIP OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. The photographs are intellectual property and owned by the participant. The participant understands and is aware that the lead researcher will NOT use and sell the photographs for any monetary or commercial profit. _____
Initial

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TAKING AND SELECTING PHOTOGRAPHS

4. I will not take any pictures and show them to the researcher that involve nudity or illegal activity (e.g., engaging in illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia, criminal behavior, or harm to others). _____
Initial
5. I must obtain assent (agreement or approval) from a minor and the written consent of the child's parent/guardian if I decide to take a photograph of them for the research project. _____
Initial
6. I must obtain consent in writing of photograph subjects who are ages 18 or older for the research project. _____
Initial
7. I understand that if I choose to take a photograph of myself (selfie) for the research study, I am waiving the confidentiality of my identity and data I provide. _____
Initial
8. I am aware and understand that taking photographs of certain locations, inanimate objects, pets, animals, and personal items may be identifiable and jeopardize my confidentiality. _____
Initial
9. The lead researcher will blur the faces of human photograph subjects for data analysis, scientific publications, academic conferences, and educational presentations. _____
Initial

USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS OUTSIDE DATA ANALYSIS

The use of photographs or for other purposes outside of data analysis is **completely voluntary** and up to you. You do not need to initial the following options to participate in the research project. In any use of the photographs as indicated below, your name will not be used but your images will be. You can revoke this permission at any time by emailing Alyssa Hufana at ahufana@ucsb.edu.

10. The photographs can be shown during scientific presentations. _____
Initial
11. The photographs can be shown in a classroom to undergraduate and graduate students _____
Initial
12. The photographs can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups. _____
Initial

Photographs will be uploaded to UCSB Box, a secure cloud-based platform service for data analysis and storage. Please select the following preference as to how you would like the photographs to be disposed of after data analysis:

- _____ Photographs may be kept indefinitely
- _____ Photographs should be destroyed after all data for the research project is collected
- _____ Photographs should be destroyed on this date: _____

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1. How would you identify (circle all that apply)?
 - a. Filipina/o
 - b. Filipina/o American
 - c. Filipinx
 - d. Pinay
 - e. Multiple Ethnicities (Please specify): _____
 - f. Other: _____

2. How old are you?

3. With which gender do you most identify?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Non-binary
 - e. Prefer Not to Answer

4. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single (never married)
 - b. Married, or in a domestic partnership
 - c. Widowed
 - d. Divorced
 - e. Separated

5. What is your generational status in the United States?
 - a. 1st generation (not born in the United States)
 - b. 2nd generation (born in the United States, parents born in another country)
 - c. 3rd generation (you and your parents were born in the United States)

- d. 4th generation (you and your parents were born in the United States, one of your grandparents was born in another country)
 - e. 5th generation (you, your parents, and your grandparents were born in the United States)
6. What was your first language?
- a. English
 - b. Tagalog
 - c. Other Filipino Dialect: (Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon (Ilonggo), Ilocano, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, or Waray)
 - d. Other: _____
7. If English was not your first language, when did you learn it?
- _____
8. Please circle your annual household income bracket:
- a. \$20,000 or below
 - b. \$21,000 to \$50,000
 - c. \$51,000 to \$99,000
 - d. \$100,000 or above
9. What is your occupation/student status?
- _____
10. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (If you're currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest degree you have received).
- a. Less than a high school diploma
 - b. High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)
 - c. Some college, no degree
 - d. Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)
 - e. Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
 - f. Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)
 - g. Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM)
 - h. Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)
11. What geographical/regional part of the U.S. do you currently reside in?
- a. Northeast (Example: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania)
 - b. Midwest (Example: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Nebraska, North Dakota)
 - c. South (Example: Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina)
 - d. West (Example: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Utah)

Appendix E : Photo Elicitation Instructions

You will choose three existing or take three photographs that represent the following questions below. You are highly encouraged to be creative and also keep in mind the ethical considerations discussed in the initial briefing session. There is no right or wrong answer. Once you have selected your photos, please bring them to the in-person interview. If you have any further questions, please contact Alyssa Hufana at ahufana@ucsb.edu.

1. Select a photo that represents how you see yourself as a second-generation Filipina American woman.
2. Select a photo that represents any challenges you have encountered as a second-generation Filipina American.
3. Select a photo that represents ways in which you have felt you dealt with this challenge.

Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Second-Generation Filipina American Women Emerging Adults: Navigating and Meaning-Making of Intersecting Identities and Cultural Values

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. We will be spending approximately 60-90 minutes together for this interview in two parts. For the first part, I will ask you about some questions about specific adversities in which you felt you overcame, ways of overcoming the adversity, gains from the adversity, your identity(ities), and experiences of culture. In the second part of the interview I am going to ask you to show me the pictures you have chosen prior to the interview that best represents your responses to the guided prompt interviews I gave to you in our initial briefing together. I am wondering if it would be okay to audio record this interview for purposes of data analysis? (Describe, if any questions). Do you have any questions for me? Okay, let's begin.

1. Tell me about your family's immigration history to the U.S.

Prompt: When did family members immigrate to the U.S.?

2. Tell me about what it means to be Filipina American woman.

Prompt: As second-generation? As someone in their late teens or early 20s?

3. Can you tell me about a recent time when you experienced a challenge or hardship that involved being Filipina American woman?

4. Can you describe how you have dealt with that situation or event?

5. What are the cultural influences that impact your ability to face such challenges in life?

Prompts: Ethnic Culture? Being a woman? Family? Friends? School? Work? Religion/Spirituality?

Okay, now we will move onto the next part of the interview that involves your photos. I will now ask you a series of questions related to your photos that are guided by the questions you received in the initial briefing. Do you have questions for me before we start? Okay, let begin. I'd like you to arrange your selected photographs in how you would like to discuss them. Tell me about the first photograph you chose.

6. Tell me about the image you chose that represents being a second-generation Filipina American woman.

Prompt: What were the reasons for choosing this image? *Probe:* What stood out to you?

7. Tell me about the image you chose representing the challenges you have felt you encountered ?

Prompt: What is happening in this photo?

8. How does this image represent the ways in which you have dealt with or are dealing with this situation/event?

Prompt: What is happening? How did you decide on choosing this image?

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that you think I should know that we did not cover or you would like to expand on?

10. What was participation in this project for you like?

Thank you very much for your participation. As a reminder, I will be re-contacting you to check in about your responses to make sure I have it correct. If you would like to know the results of the study once it is complete please let me know and I can provide you the information via email.