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# **The Enculturation Experience of Three Chinese American Adolescents: A Multiple Case Study**

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## **Abstract**

The authors designed a qualitative, multiple case study that employed the photovoice method to explore how enculturation is experienced by three Chinese adolescents living with their families in a nonethnically dense cultural community. A total of 18 one-on-one interviews were conducted with three youth and their parents. Photos were also used as elicitation tools to understand the meaning of enculturation for each individual. Case descriptions of each adolescent are presented, followed by five cross-case themes: (a) Self-Identifying as Chinese, (b) Parental Strictness, (c) Multiple Groups of Comparison, (d) (Not) Having a Chinese Community, and (e) Messages to Excel. The findings provide a descriptive understanding of how adolescent enculturation is shaped by the family, community, and their intersections. Implications for research and practice, such as the continued need to understand enculturation as a dynamic phenomenon and process, are presented.

**Keywords:** qualitative methodology, race, ethnicity, adolescents, multiculturalism, prevention

I don't really see the importance of knowing where I come from that much, because I've grown up here. So like, I have a tendency to view myself as an American. American first, not Chinese first. I'm probably not as in touch as [my parents] would like me to be with my Chinese roots or with my relatives or ... family in general.

This quote captures a participant's understanding of his cultural identity within the context of his relationship with his parents and larger community. It exemplifies that, for many adolescents in immigrant families, retaining the native culture is not solely an individual experience, but one that is also negotiated within family and community contexts, particularly within the adolescent–parent relationship (e.g., Chun & Akutsu, 2009; Hughes et al., 2006; Kwak, 2003; Su & Costigan, 2009).

By definition, acculturation is a process of psychological and behavioral adaptation that occurs when two cultures come into contact (Berry, 1994). Research has shown that immigrant parents and youth tend to acculturate at different rates, usually with the adolescents adapting more quickly to norms and values of the host society while their parents strive to retain norms and values of the native society (Birman & Trickett, 2001; Liebkind, 1996; Portes, 1997; Sluzki, 1979; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). As time passes, gaps in acculturation are purported to lead to intergenerational conflict and youth distress, a phenomenon known as the acculturation gap-distress model (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993).

It is important to distinguish the term *enculturation* from *acculturation*. Whereas acculturation has to do with the general process of navigating more than one culture, enculturation refers specifically to the preservation of one's indigenous culture (B. S. K. Kim, 2007). However, in reviewing the literature on studies testing the acculturation gap-distress model, Telzer (2010) noted that the majority of research is primarily focused on mainstream culture adaptation with less known about the enculturation gaps. In the same review, Telzer further noted that when enculturation gaps have been studied, they have been shown to be the most maladaptive. To date, some of the negative implications of enculturation gaps have included adolescent depressive symptoms (Hwang, Wood, & Fujimoto, 2010; Juang, Syed, & Takagi, 2007; S. Y. Kim, Chen, Li, Huang, & Moon, 2009) and conduct problems (Lau et al., 2005).

## Methodological Limitations in the Literature

The assumption that gaps are inevitably associated with distress has been contested. Telzer (2010) argued for the need to better understand the phenomenon of enculturation before examining any subsequent gap, given the many assumptions underlying the operationalization of enculturation. Scholars have shown that when testing the parent–child enculturation gap, some adolescents may perceive themselves as being just as or more “ethnic” than their parents based on their self-report of comparable or higher levels of ethnic identity than their parents (Birman, 2006a; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; J. Ho, 2010; Kester & Marshall, 2003; Lau et al., 2005). Thus, it is plausible that adolescents may perceive themselves as being more enculturated and, furthermore, their experience of enculturation may be different from that of their parents. Capturing the meaning behind enculturation can better inform us of the meaning behind adolescent and parent discrepancies. Yet, despite the need to understand the nuances of enculturation and its meaning, extant research on the enculturation gap has largely been framed from quantitative traditions (see Birman, 2006b; Merali, 2002; Phinney, 2010; for a review, see Telzer, 2010). As a result, we have a limited understanding of “how” adolescents and their parents experience the phenomenon of enculturation. Furthermore, rather than assume that differences between adolescents and their parents exist, and that these differences cause distress, it seems necessary to first understand the complexity, richness, and multidimensionality of enculturation as a lived experience.

Qualitative inquiry is particularly well suited to elucidate the meanings associated with enculturation, as it can allow people to determine what is most relevant in their lives (J. Ho, 2010; Kwak, 2003; Okagaki & Bojczyk, 2002). More specifically, the multiple case study and photovoice methods are two qualitative approaches that can help shed light on the contextualized nature of enculturation. Using a multiple case study, the major focus is on understanding the phenomenon of enculturation as it is experienced during a particular time and place; furthermore, it allows for comparisons across cases to identify similarities as well as differences across participants (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). Moreover, by using photovoice methodology as one of the methods to gather data, participants can capture their enculturation experiences by taking photos and use storytelling to share the subjective meaning behind each image (Wang & Burris, 1997). Both approaches allow individuals to define their understanding and experiences of enculturation using their own words and images, with a unique emphasis placed on their surrounding context and its influence on their lived experiences.

## **Contextual Limitations in the Literature**

To date, much of the research on acculturation in Chinese American populations has been conducted in large, ethnically dense enclaves such as San Francisco (e.g., Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 1999), Los Angeles (e.g., Wu & Chao, 2005), or New York City (e.g., Buki, Ma, Strom, & Strom, 2003). Less is known about the experiences of those living outside of large, metropolitan, ethnically dense cities, and in communities such as those in the Midwest (Schmidley & Deardorff, 2001). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the distribution of Asian Americans is lowest in the Midwest (12%) compared to those living in the West (46%), South (22%), and Northeast (20%; Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2010). To date, research comparing experiences of Asian Americans living within and outside of ethnic enclaves has focused on distinguishing regional differences (e.g., Juang & Nguyen, 2010; Juang, Nguyen, & Lin, 2006; Lui, 2014; Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007); therefore, there is a dearth of information about the in-depth experiences of Asian Americans living in ethnically dispersed communities. The current study aims to address this contextual limitation in the extant literature by exploring the phenomenon of enculturation in a nonethnically dense, Midwestern context. In this way, we aim to provide a more nuanced and complex understanding of enculturation, as it is experienced by those living in an understudied context.

## **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

Among ethnic minority adolescents, ethnic identity encompasses attitudes, feelings, and self-identification in ethnic group membership (Phinney, 2003), which is shaped by contextual factors such as the family (French, Seidman, Allen & Aber, 2006; Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007), neighborhood (Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006), and ethnic community (Juang et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model is a framework that attends to the multiple sociocultural contexts in which adolescents experience and negotiate enculturation. The micro-system includes the adolescent's most immediate context such as the family, the neighborhood, the length of time spent in the dominant culture, and the resources in the host country. The role of the family is critical in adolescent ethnic identity development (e.g., Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993; Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001; Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006) given parents' role in helping their youth retain the native culture by sharing and passing on information about their ethnicity.

The neighborhood, or presence of same-ethnic peers in the local environment, is another aspect of the microsystem and can be better understood by the ethnic density effect. This is defined as the “benefits conferred on those who live in neighborhoods where there is a greater proportion of individuals from the same ethnic background” (Jurcik, Ahmed, Yakobov, Solopieieva-Jurcikova, & Ryder, 2013, p. 664). The interaction between ethnic density and enculturation has received increased attention over the years, particularly for Chinese American adolescents. Juang and Nguyen (2010) found that Chinese American college students with more cultural resources in their everyday environment tended to report higher levels of involvement with their ethnic group and a stronger understanding and commitment to their ethnic identity. Being in a context with greater ethnic density was also associated with students having more positive feelings toward their ethnic group (i.e., ethnic pride). This is in contrast to research that has documented heightened risks for adolescents living in contexts that have lower ethnic density (e.g., Seaton & Yip, 2009).

The mesosystem level refers to the relationship found among elements in the microsystem, such as the intersections between the family and neighborhood contexts. Umaña-Taylor and Fine (2004) found that, for ethnic minority adolescents, the family plays a salient role when there are fewer members of the same ethnic group in the community. Specifically, parents may have to compensate for the lack of ethnic and cultural influences for their children. Vo-jutabha, Dinh, McHale, and Valsiner (2009) came to this conclusion when they documented distinctly different processes in ethnic identity development for adolescents living outside and inside of an ethnic enclave. Their work showed that the process of identity exploration was considerably more passive for those living outside of the enclave (e.g., waiting for their lives to happen) in contrast to their peers living within an enclave (e.g., experiencing pressure from their parents and other Asian adults to live their lives actively), who had readily available opportunities such as exposure to same-ethnic adults and role models to facilitate their ethnic identity exploration. In addition, youth living outside the ethnic enclave experienced greater cultural expectations from their parents to maintain their native language and associate with same-ethnic peers, a pressure that their enclave-dwelling counterparts did not have to face. The authors suggested that for nonenclave adolescents, parents may feel increased responsibility to provide enculturation opportunities for their children because of the absence of an ethnic community (Hughes et al., 2006; Kwak, 2003). These findings underscore the importance of considering the intersection of family and community influences to better understand the phenomenon of adolescent enculturation.

## **Present Study**

There are multiple methodological and contextual limitations in the literature on the acculturation gap-distress hypothesis. Thus, the current investigation uses a novel methodology in this area, a multiple case study, to elicit a rich understanding of adolescent enculturation with specific attention paid to the influence of the family and community contexts. The in-depth descriptions of three adolescents' surrounding environments can also decrease the likelihood of practitioners and other professionals succumbing to stereotypes about enculturation. With the information gained from this study, scholars examining the acculturation gap-distress hypothesis might benefit from understanding enculturation as being more than a quantitative comparison of who is "more" or "less" enculturated. This investigation, instead, conceptualizes enculturation as a phenomenon that may be uniquely influenced by people, families, and environments. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to provide an in-depth exploration of the experience of enculturation for three Chinese American adolescents.

## **Research Questions**

The following research question and subquestions guided our analyses: "How do three Chinese American adolescents experience enculturation within the context of their family and in a nonethnically dense Midwestern community?"

1. What are adolescents' perceptions of their own enculturation?
2. What enculturation differences are perceived between adolescents and their parents?
  - a. What are adolescents' perceptions of their parents' enculturation?
  - b. What are parents' perceptions of their adolescent's enculturation?
3. How does the larger cultural context shape adolescent enculturation?

## **Method**

### ***Researcher Positionality***

Given the interpretive nature of qualitative research, it is important to first acknowledge researcher positionality and role throughout the research process. Researcher positionality refers to the biases and subjective experiences of the researcher (Creswell, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005). For example, we drew from constructivism to guide this research study by assuming that "reality is socially constructed ... there is no single

observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities or interpretations of a single event” (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). Thus, we considered each viewpoint to be subjective, such that there can be multiple and coexisting perceptions and interpretations of an event. We aimed to understand the subjective meanings of the participants’ experiences and to rely on their words and viewpoints throughout the project. We also recognized that, as researchers, our own experiences and subjectivities contributed to our interpretation of the world. Thus, it was also important for us to acknowledge how our backgrounds and intentions influenced this research.

The first author identifies as a 1.5-generation Chinese American who immigrated to the United States at the age of 6. In contrast to the experiences of the participants in the study, she grew up in an ethnically dense Chinese community, which allowed for opportunities to eat, socialize, and be immersed with other Chinese and Asian individuals. The context of her upbringing was especially salient in conducting this study, given its marked difference with that of the participants who were interviewed. In addition, by having bilingual skills to conduct the study in English and/or Mandarin Chinese, the first author was able to facilitate rapport as well as a feeling of connectedness toward the participants. For these reasons, the first author took extra efforts to monitor her feelings and reactions, and to distinguish them from the participants’ experiences, being careful not to impose her own life experiences onto theirs, or alternatively, overidentify with their experiences. The second and third coauthors were both non-Latino White Americans and held expertise in research methodology and family therapy processes and outcomes, respectively. They served in advisor roles throughout the conceptualization and implementation of the project, providing consultation throughout the research process.

### ***Multiple Case Study Approach***

The current study is guided by a multiple case study research design. Creswell (2007) described a case study as

a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents, and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

Multiple case studies help researchers recognize the uniqueness of each case while also being able to contrast similarities and differences (Creswell, 2007). This approach also places emphasis on understanding the



phenomenon and its context by using multiple sources and types of data (Stake, 1995). In the current investigation, we conducted interviews with each participant to understand his or her definitions and perceptions of enculturation. In addition, we used parallel question formats to identify differences and similarities between youths and their parents. We also asked participants to take pictures of their lived experiences to elicit the meanings that they attributed to their enculturation experiences. In this way, we were able to draw from multiple forms of data and from different perspectives to make comparisons within and between each of the cases. Data collection took place over 4 months, beginning in September 2011. To determine how many cases to include, we referred to the methodological recommendation of Creswell (2007), who indicated a maximum of four or five cases. Given the exploratory nature of this study, we employed three cases. Each case included an adolescent and both parents.

### ***Photovoice Method***

Photovoice is a participatory action research approach designed to help participants share their expertise and knowledge by conveying the meaning of their everyday realities through photography (Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Wang, 1999). Photovoice was initially developed by Wang and Burris (1997) as a health promotion research tool but has been increasingly recognized for its value in the field of counseling psychology (Smith, Rosenzweig, & Schmidt, 2010). In the current investigation, we used photovoice to help capture adolescents' lived experiences of enculturation and to facilitate the emergence of multiple perspectives. As the photovoice method has been shown to be fluid and adaptable in other qualitative research (Hergenrather, Rhodes, & Bardhoshi, 2009), we made several adaptations to this method to reflect our constructivist framework and multiple case study approach. For example, photovoice traditionally uses group discussion to uncover the meaning of each picture, yet in this study only one-on-one interviews were conducted because the content of the study was specific to the experiences of each individual and his or her respective family and community influences. An additional adaptation was that the photos themselves were not analyzed and presented as final results. Instead, each photo served as an elicitation tool to yield rich information about participants' enculturation experiences. The decision not to directly analyze photos was made to minimize ethical concerns related to the photovoice method, such as taking pictures of others without permission or risking showing oneself or others in a negative light (see Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001, on ethical risks associated with conducting photovoice). Furthermore, maintaining participant confidentiality was

of utmost concern. In a community with low ethnic concentration, participants' photos are likely to be easily linked to them, placing them at a high risk of being identified. A final adaptation to the photovoice method was to ask only one interview question to facilitate discussion about the photos. That is, rather than follow the traditional format that includes six questions (see Wang & Burris, 1997), participants were asked to describe how each photo captured their experience of enculturation. Other scholars have noted the benefits of using a less formally structured research protocol to make the process less prescriptive; to enhance rapport with the researcher; to facilitate participant spontaneity in thoughts, emotions, and self-awareness; and to place greater emphasis on participant rather than researcher voices (e.g., Lassetter, Mandleco, & Roper, 2007).

### **Case Selection**

We selected a Midwestern state with an Asian population of less than 2%, and recruitment took place in two cities with less than 4% Asian representation to serve as the context of our study. The racial compositions of both cities were predominantly non-Latino White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The participants selected for this study were recruited via snowball sampling. This sampling strategy allowed the researchers to "identify cases from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich" (Creswell, 2007, p. 127). We considered a case to be rich if it included families who were willing to share their cultural and family experiences. Other inclusion criteria included having ancestry tracing back to China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong, and having parents who both voluntarily immigrated to the United States and were first-generation immigrants (born in their native countries). In addition, the adolescent had to be of second-generation descent (born in the United States), and each of the parents and the adolescent had to be willing to participate in one-on-one interviews. In terms of age range, the adolescent had to be between 13 and 17 years of age. This age group has been broadly referred to as the middle adolescence stage (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006) and is an important time for ethnic identity exploration (Phinney, 1992). Finally, the gender of the adolescent was considered in the case selection so that across the three families, at least one son and one daughter would be represented.

To gain access and trust from the participants, collaboration with gatekeepers was critical (Hatch, 2002). Families were identified with the help of local leaders and community organizations who had access to Chinese families. All three families in this study were recruited from Chinese Christian churches, although this was not an inclusion criterion.

### **Data Collection**

Prior to collecting data, adolescents signed assent forms and at least one of their parents completed a parent consent form on their behalf; parents provided consent for themselves. None of the participants were compensated for participating in the study, although they were able to keep the digital camera provided.

**Semistructured interviews.** The first author conducted two one-on-one interviews with each participant (i.e., the three adolescents and each of their respective parents), yielding a total of 18 interviews. Interviews were scheduled at a time and place most convenient to the interviewee and ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. A semistructured interview protocol was developed (see the appendix) and pilot-tested with a separate youth outside of the city and state in which the study was conducted. The interview protocol was subsequently used with all of the adolescents, with parallel questions asked of the parents. Depending on the participant's linguistic preference, the interviews were conducted in English, Mandarin, or a mixture of both. All of the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for data analysis. Interviews conducted in Mandarin were transcribed by a Chinese American woman who has a college degree from Taiwan and who teaches at a Chinese school in the United States. The transcriber lived in a city and state away from where the research took place. The first author double-checked the transcripts for accuracy and translated the interviews from Chinese to English to present the study findings.

**Photovoice.** At the end of the first interview, each participant was given a low-cost digital camera and instructed to take photos that captured his or her experience of enculturation. Follow-up interviews were scheduled to review the pictures. Participants received specific instructions (verbally and also a written reminder note) to take photos of their experience of "being Chinese." In keeping with previous research that suggested assigning a specific number of photos to encourage participation (Marquis & Manceau, 2007), the participants were provided the following instructions: "Here is a digital camera. Please take 10 photos that capture your experience of being Chinese. Please take five photos within your home and five photos outside of your home." Participants were asked not to share their photos with their family members, so as to prevent them from influencing each other's interpretation of enculturation. At the second individual interview, participants were invited to share their photos with the interviewer and discuss how each of the images captured their experience of being Chinese. Across the nine participants (i.e., three adolescents and

six parents), a total of 90 pictures were gathered. The photos included food, places, and people that were meaningful to each individual.

**Reflexive journal and field notes.** The first author maintained a reflexive journal throughout the study. Writing in a journal provided a space to monitor internal researcher experiences, including subjective assumptions, reactions, and thoughts. In addition, field notes were written after each interview. These notes included observations of each participant to provide a rich description of each of the cases.

### ***Data Analysis***

Consistent with constructivist qualitative research, the data analysis for this study was inductive and emergent, meaning that the data were analyzed as they were collected (Creswell, 2007). To better understand how adolescents experienced enculturation, the analytic technique used in this study was a cross-case synthesis, which required first examining each case (i.e., the adolescent and the two parents), followed by examining and aggregating the individual findings to identify patterns that would lead to cross-case conclusions (Creswell, 2007). Because the study primarily focused on the adolescents' experiences, data from the adolescents were analyzed first.

The transcripts and tentative codes were uploaded into the qualitative software MAXQDA (1989-2012) to facilitate the analytic process. Because case study analysis "consists of making a detailed description of the case and its setting" (Creswell, 2007, p. 163), we created codes to capture the adolescent's environment, such as the family context or setting. For example, when participants talked about the number of family members they had, and they presented demographic information about each of their family members, we coded these sections as "members in the family." When adolescents and parents talked about events related to the parents' immigration to the United States, we coded these under the heading "parents' immigration experiences." Both of these codes were later categorized under a larger code to reflect "family background." In several instances, the exact words and phrases used by participants became the codes themselves; this intention to stay as close as possible to participant wording has been described as *in vivo coding* (King, 2008). For example, in one of the interviews, when an adolescent self-identified as being "American first, not Chinese first," this exact phrase was used to summarize his experience because of how succinctly it captured his self-perception. This quote has since been used to describe him and to convey his perception of himself and his overall enculturation experience.

### **Validation Strategies**

Creswell (2007) defined validation as a way to “assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings” (p. 207). The current study used seven of the most frequently used validation strategies by qualitative researchers and counseling psychologists (see Creswell & Miller, 2000; Morrow, 2005), namely triangulation, researcher reflexivity, using multiple theories to provide corroborating evidence, peer debriefing, expert review, providing rich thick descriptions, and quotes of evidence. That is, we drew from multiple sources of information to corroborate the emergent themes. In addition, we maintained researcher reflexivity throughout the research process by documenting the first author’s experiences, prior knowledge, and subjectivity through journal entries and field notes. The first author also read about multiple theories to provide corroborating evidence. We further sought feedback from two non-Latina White, female doctoral students in a methodology graduate program to review the data analysis and findings. An expert review was also conducted throughout this study, as scholars with related expertise (i.e., the second and third coauthors) provided ongoing review and feedback throughout the research process. Finally, we provided rich, thick descriptions to describe the three cases and enhanced them with participants’ direct quotes.

### **Results**

We begin by providing narratives of each case to provide a descriptive and contextual understanding of the three adolescents. Our aim is to provide the reader with a rich depiction of their lived experiences regarding enculturation. Following the narrative descriptions, we present a cross-case analysis to highlight the themes that emerged across the three cases. Throughout our findings, we use direct quotes from our participants to best capture their experiences. When presenting each case, we incorporate the perspectives of both parents, whenever possible. Some of the participants spoke in English whereas others spoke in Mandarin, or in a combination of both. Due to space limitations, all quotes are provided in English. Readers interested in the exact Chinese language wording can contact the first author for more information.

The adolescents are presented in the order in which they were interviewed, and they are referred to as Tom, Michael, and Anne. They respectively self-identified as “American first, then Chinese,” “being different than everyone else,” and “I have both cultures within me.” Across all three cases, the parents were highly educated (e.g., at least a college degree) and had lived in the United States for approximately 16 to 20 years.

### **Case Descriptions**

**Tom: “I consider myself American first, then Chinese.”** Tom is 17 years old. He was born and grew up in the community context in which the study was conducted. Both of his parents migrated voluntarily to the United States and had him shortly after arriving. In describing his childhood experiences, Tom and his family talked about his younger years when the family lived in an apartment complex in close vicinity to other Chinese families. There, Tom spent afternoons and weekends with Chinese children who were his age. Over time, however, people in the Chinese community moved. Similarly, as Tom grew older, his family attained greater economic mobility and relocated to a house, and since then, the majority of his neighbors have been primarily non-Latino White. Although his parents have remained connected with other Chinese families, Tom has had minimal interactions with Chinese friends. He remarked that the move affected his sense of community with other Chinese children. For example, prior to sharing his photos at the second interview, Tom prefaced that his pictures were based on his memories of the third and fourth grade. He described himself as being “more Chinese” when he was younger. He also added that his Chinese friends tended to be older than he was while growing up, and as such, many have since left the city and state to attend college, whereas he is still in high school.

Tom distinguished himself from his parents and other Chinese peers when describing his feelings of being Chinese. He stated that both groups of people value closeness and spending time with the family; conversely, he prefers spending time with friends and attaining greater independence and autonomy. In one of his photos, Tom captured an image of his “man cave” to highlight his own space as separate from his family members’ personal spaces (i.e., rooms in the house). Some of his pictures also captured events in the past, such as when he would go to the Asian grocery store with his mother when he was younger. Beyond interacting with his immediate family, Tom does not see the purpose of traveling to his parents’ homeland to visit extended family members. He described himself as feeling bored during these trips, a sentiment that was further supported by his parents when they described him as “uninterested” in his ancestral culture. Tom feels indifferent about Chinese history, and given the option, would choose to visit Europe instead. He distinguished himself from his parents by saying,

I don’t really see the importance of knowing where I come from that much, because I’ve grown up here. So like, I have a tendency to view myself as an American. American first, not Chinese first. I’m probably not as in touch as they would like me to be with my Chinese roots or with my relatives or just, I guess, like family in general.

**Michael: “Being different than everyone else.”** Michael is 13 years old. Like Tom’s family, Michael and his family also moved away from a Chinese neighborhood and now reside with neighbors who are primarily non-Latino White. Despite the increased distance, which makes it inconvenient to easily socialize with other Chinese families, Michael’s father has made it a priority that he and his family continue to have social events with fellow Chinese families on the weekends. Michael’s parents will sometimes host dinner parties in their home or attend potlucks at other Chinese families’ homes.

In the interview, Michael reported that he is the only Chinese person in his grade level at his public school. Although he has friends of Asian descent (i.e., Korean and Vietnamese), he distinguished himself from them, saying that they have same ethnic peers to socialize with, whereas Michael does not. In one of his photographs, Michael captured the image of his Saturday Chinese school class to show that, were it not for Chinese school, he would not speak his parents’ native language. Additionally, Michael expressed feeling dissimilar to his Chinese peers despite attending Chinese school on a weekly basis. In a photo that captured one of his Chinese school classmates, Michael expressed that he cannot relate to her or any of the classmates. That is, despite attending Chinese school throughout much of his life, he noted that his peers have always been female or significantly older or younger than him. As such, Michael has never met another Chinese person to whom he felt he could relate, based on a shared age and gender demographic.

In terms of Michael’s self-identification, he defined being Chinese as “being different than everyone else.” He compared himself to classmates at school and noted differences in physical characteristics such as “skin tones.” He also described feeling pressured to have to constantly challenge people’s expectations of what it means to be Chinese. He explained,

They think you should act a specific way if you’re Asian ... and that’s how I define being Chinese: As being different ... you always have to have really good grades if you’re Asian or Chinese ... you don’t always have to live up to those, but you could always act a little different so you know that you are different. You’re not just an American ... being different is not acting the same way as everyone else does, as every American does.

**Anne: “I have both cultures within me.”** Anne is 17 years old and lives in a city that is within driving distance from where Tom and Michael live. Like them, Anne also has very few Chinese peers. In her grade level at school, she has six classmates who are from Chinese-speaking countries. However, none of them are from the same country of origin as her



parents. In referring to her Chinese classmates and herself, she lumped them all into the category of being “internationals” despite the fact that the majority of them (including herself) are U.S.-born. Anne shared that if it were not for the Chinese Christian church that she attends, she would feel lonely because of how culturally and racially discrepant her school environment is from her home. Upon meeting Anne and her family, she stated that she responds to two names: her English name, which is what she goes by in the Chinese community, such as at church, and her Chinese name, which is her legal name and the name that she goes by when she is at school with teachers and friends. Anne emphasized that she maintains her Chinese name in the U.S. community because her parents do not want her to lose her original name.

Anne described being Chinese as inheriting a culture and language. She indicated feeling like she belongs to both cultures and adopting them simultaneously. She contrasted that, unlike immigrants such as her parents, she grew up being exposed to the traditions, customs, and cultures associated with both cultures at the same time. Thus, Anne viewed herself as being equally immersed in Chinese and U.S. cultures. She also viewed being Chinese as something she cannot change and something that is part of her identity. In our interview, she frequently referred to her mother’s motto, which is, “You are Chinese, so be Chinese, so speak Chinese.” She also added that she endorses her mother’s definition and lives by it. She explained how she arrived at her understanding of being Chinese by saying,

I feel like I’ve inherited Chinese culture and so I’m adapted to it. ... I was comparing it to how Chinese immigrants, when they came to the States they had to adapt to the culture. ... I was born and raised in America, so I have that American culture with me, but I also grew up in a Chinese environment, so that culture is already established in the environment that I was living ... it’s more like they both came to me at the same time. I can relate to both. I mean I have both cultures within me.

The photos taken by Anne also reflected her desire to further cultivate her understanding of Chinese history and culture. Two of her pictures were of Chinese movies and books that she believed were comparable to American classics. Anne later commented that in the process of taking photos, she became more reflective of what it means to be Chinese and realized there is a “history” and “reason” for Chinese movies and books, beyond entertainment purposes. She specifically noted that she wanted to address aspects of Chinese culture that are generally not given as much attention, so that, “instead of going based on stereotypes, [I] went on, more, the traditional side of Chinese culture.”



### **Cross-Case Analysis**

The following section details the themes that were salient and/or distinct across all three cases. A total of five cross-case themes emerged to highlight the adolescents' experiences of enculturation: (a) Self-identifying as Chinese, (b) Parental Strictness, (c) Multiple Groups of Comparison, (d) (Not) Having a Chinese Community, and (e) Messages to Excel.

**Identifying as Chinese.** Across all three cases, the adolescents (and their parents) referred to each youth as having a Chinese identity. They simultaneously juxtaposed this identity with that of being American. In line with Tom's self-identification, both of his parents regarded him as being more American than Chinese. They added that he is "not very Chinese" and that he has demonstrated little interest or desire to know more about the history, country, or culture. In turn, Michael characterized his Chinese identity as feeling out of place among others. Michael stated that being Chinese meant feeling "different than everybody else" in terms of both physical features and the pressure to overachieve and excel. He and both of his parents talked about differences in work ethic between people living in the United States and those living in China. Across family members, there was a unanimous perception that being an immigrant placed Michael at a disadvantage, and for that reason he would need to work harder than others to succeed. Meanwhile, Anne described herself as being simultaneously influenced by the two cultures. Mandarin proficiency was a central aspect of her Chinese identity and was intricately tied to her Christian faith, given that she and her siblings learned Chinese by reading the Bible in Mandarin. For Anne, being Christian was part of her Chinese American identity, whereas for the other two adolescents, neither referred to Christianity as an important facet of their identities, but rather as a social context for interacting with other Chinese families. With regard to Anne and her family, she and both of her parents emphasized the importance of maintaining Mandarin-speaking language skills. All three family members underscored that being Chinese was something that a person cannot change, and therefore they shared a collective value toward the "iron fist" approach, in which Mandarin is the only language that can be spoken at home.

Across the three families, adolescents and their respective parents expressed similar perceptions about adolescent enculturation. All participants described adolescent enculturation based on day-to-day lifestyle and behaviors such as celebrating Chinese holidays, visiting parents' native countries, and striving to speak Mandarin Chinese. The families also talked about eating Chinese food, and several of the photos from the adolescents and their parents depicted images of Chinese dishes or cooking.

Unexpectedly, even though all of the interviews were conducted individually, the adolescents and at least one of their parents recounted identical scenarios to describe how “Chinese” the adolescents were. In Tom’s family, both he and his mother talked at length about his lack of identification with being Chinese. In Michael’s family, the theme of excellence emerged in all of the interviews. With regard to Anne and her family, both mother and daughter recounted examples of Anne’s active use of Mandarin language to retain ties to their native ancestry.

**Parental Strictness.** For adolescents and their parents, Parental Strictness was a salient theme across all interviews. All of the participants collectively elaborated on the ways in which parental strictness was part of the enculturation experience. Parental strictness entailed control over adolescent activities such as when to go out, with whom, and what activities to engage in. The adolescents reported having little independence from their parents and feeling frustrated with these circumstances. They further delineated strictness into two categories: social and academic. The former refers to not having as much freedom as they wanted, such as not being able to “hang out whenever [we] wanted to,” and the latter refers to parents “checking in” about schoolwork to ensure progress. In contrast, parental strictness was regarded with positive intentions from the parents’ perspectives. Parents used phrases emphasizing their responsibility to attend to the adolescent’s well-being. For example, Tom’s mother talked about the “need to supervise [my children]” because she believed Tom would benefit from having greater structure in his schedule to succeed. Michael’s father also used similar language regarding a need to “provide as much opportunity and support [to give my child] a better future.” Related to this, Anne’s father noted the need to “rule over [my children] ... for the benefit of them.” Thus, across parent interviews, mothers and fathers alike referred to their strictness as stemming from a desire to maximize their child’s success and well-being. They reported feeling responsible for and wanting their children to “grow up properly, develop well, [and to have] a decent occupation and life.”

The three adolescents differed from their parents’ use of terminologies and attitudes when referring to parental strictness. All of them described their parents as restrictive, controlling, and having high expectations for them to do well. Adolescents used terms such as being “peevied” when referring to parents’ attempts to “restrict,” “push,” and even “control” them. Thus, adolescents and their parents differed in their perceptions of the parenting practices, yet all participants unanimously believed that parental strictness was a salient aspect of enculturation. Although the parents were perceived by the adolescents as strict and as allowing

less autonomy than they desired, there was an appreciation and respect for this type of parenting approach from Anne. She specifically recommended that other Chinese parents also “rule with an iron fist” because of its success in maintaining her Mandarin language proficiency. Thus, even across adolescents, parental strictness was not consistently viewed in a negative light.

**(Not) Having a Chinese Community.** Across the three families, adolescents and their parents emphasized that being Chinese included socializing with other Chinese people. Having access to a Chinese social and cultural community was emphasized by all of the participants in the study, and its absence was profound for the adolescents, especially when they compared it to their parents’ experiences. Adolescents described their parents as being “attached to” and “at home” with their Chinese community. Conversely, the adolescents remarked on the distinct absence of having a Chinese community for themselves and the associated feelings of isolation. When commenting on the fact that he is the only Chinese person in his grade level at school, Michael shared,

It’s lonely, but you get used to it ... you can’t speak your native language to anybody else ... you can’t share your family culture with anybody else. ... I’m the only Chinese person ... [in] my grade ... when people, like the Koreans and Vietnamese talk in their native language to each other, I have no one to talk to.

Similarly, Anne underscored her home life as the only environment that provides her with Chinese culture and language:

It’s almost like you live two lives. ... Whereas at school publicly, you’re pretty much in a White majority community, so the culture is different. But then at home, you still have some Chinese Asian traditional customs that you also follow. It’s completely different ... your culture at home is completely different than your culture in American society.

As the adolescents experienced a profound lack of Chinese community, their parents’ experiences were almost the opposite, such that they primarily interacted with the Chinese community and had minimal interactions beyond. For example, Tom’s father recounted discomfort in interacting with people outside of the Chinese community and culture:

As a Chinese [person], I think we still have some hard time [engaging] with people from other races. From White, from Black, from other, Hispanic. And so we’re not so comfortable, at least I’m not so comfortable to interact with them. So, sometimes I tell my colleagues ... I don’t know much about the American culture ... if I behave strangely

or oddly just tell me and I probably just don't know what's the right way to do it in your eyes.

The photos taken by parents also captured occasions in which parents celebrated with Chinese friends at parties and social gatherings hosted in their homes as well as outside of their homes. In contrast to the adolescents, who had no pictures of Chinese peers, it was clear that the parents had significantly more access and opportunities to interact with Chinese counterparts, whereas the adolescents had almost no exposure or opportunity to meet people who shared the same ethnic background as them.

**Multiple Groups of Comparison.** Across all three adolescents and their parents, participants referenced multiple peer groups when comparing the extent to which the adolescents were enculturated. The comparison groups ranged from non-Chinese American adolescents in the United States to cousins and same-aged adolescents living in their ancestral countries, such as in China or other Chinese-speaking countries. All three adolescents referred to multiple reference points to evaluate their own enculturation. Feelings of inadequacy arose from these comparisons, with adolescents feeling deficient in comparison. Michael described feeling like he was “lazy” in contrast to other teenagers in China. He added that his parents likely perceived him to be less academically focused and having poorer work ethic than his counterparts living in their native homeland. This perception was confirmed through interviews with his mother:

When most Chinese people study, they typically want to get the top score, be in first or second place. But ... sometimes when [my child] comes back from school, he says, “mom” and he tells me how he scored and I tell him he should do better. He tells me, “but there are other people who did worse than me!” So he does not compare himself to the people who score perfectly. Most Chinese kids usually study after-school or learn new things, but here, when the kids get out of school, they play with their classmates, watch some TV, and are much more relaxed in comparison. ... I just feel like a lot of [his] beliefs are mixed with how American people think ... sometimes, he will say, “Mom, no, Americans would not do that.”

Similarly, despite efforts to retain the native language, Anne expressed feeling deficient when speaking Mandarin outside of the United States, particularly when she compared herself to counterparts living in Chinese countries.

My language proficiency is pretty good [here] ... I really don't want to say I'm the best, I feel like, I'm decent. [But] whenever I go back

to China or Asia I really feel like an idiot. In that context, sometimes it's really hard to try to converse with my cousins even though they speak Chinese.

Thus, from adolescent and parent perspectives, several comparison groups served as reference points to determine the extent to which an adolescent was enculturated. Whereas youths would contrast themselves positively against their non-Chinese American classmates, they and their parents simultaneously engaged in upward comparison to contrast them with Chinese peers living in the United States and in other Asian countries. As a result, the adolescents generally felt that they were striving to be adequate, yet consistently fell short of the standards that were being attributed to their Chinese peers living in the United States and also abroad. Feelings of insufficiency were reflected in Michael's work ethic and Anne's Mandarin fluency when compared to their non-American, Chinese counterparts.

**Messages to Excel.** Adolescents and their parents highlighted the importance of achievement as part of adolescent enculturation. Based on the adolescents' accounts, being Chinese meant scholastic excellence and this message came from parents as well as from classmates and even teachers. The adolescents described several situations in which they felt pressured to excel. Anne recounted an instance when a fellow Asian American gave her an unsolicited reminder after taking a school test, saying, "you are supposed to do well [on the exam]" due to the expectation that Anne should be high achieving because of her broader Asian American identity. In another instance, Anne gave an example of a time when a teacher assumed that by virtue of being Chinese, Anne would know enough about Chinese culture to teach the class about it:

One time the teacher mentioned Chinese or something and ... he would ask me what [something Chinese] was like and sometimes I can answer, but sometimes I can't because even though I look Chinese, I am still an American. I grew up here. ... So sometimes it's kind of frustrating that people assume that you know this culture because you look like you're from that culture.

Although these messages can be described as being consistent with stereotypes, similar messages emphasizing excellence and achievement were also perpetuated at home. For example, parents talked about the struggle of being immigrants in the United States and needing to outperform others to compensate for being an ethnic minority:

As a minority, you are disadvantaged in a lot of ways so, well, that's why we Chinese emphasize our education. ... You have [to do] better

than the average. Otherwise, you don't have a chance ... basically you have to put in additional, extra resources to make that happen because you are at a disadvantage.

In another parent interview, a similar emphasis was placed on the need to work harder than others to succeed in U.S. society. The assumption was that success is attributed to hard work, and consequently, an adolescent's failure could be attributed to the absence of work ethic:

American people, they don't face that kind of discrimination. ... I told my child that you are not supposed to think that you are not as good as other people. [If you fail], it's because you don't work hard enough; everything they do is normal, so it's because you didn't work harder.

Altogether, the adolescents experienced expectations to overachieve, and they received this consistent message from their school environment, such as from classmates and teachers, as well as from their family context. The pressure to do well was further heightened by their parents' interpretation that failing to excel meant that their children were not working hard enough to be competitive in the United States.

## Discussion

This qualitative study makes five important contributions to the research on adolescent enculturation. First, the findings highlight the contextualized nature of each adolescent's experience based on what was most salient to each respective youth. By exploring each adolescent's enculturation experience as a contextualized phenomenon, data emerged to illustrate how their respective familial and community environments influenced their enculturation processes. Loneliness was a major aspect of their lived experiences and their shared sentiments of feeling isolated were reflected in how they were each ethnically, culturally, and linguistically different from everyone else around them, including parents, peers in the United States, and peers in Chinese-speaking countries.

Second, this study provided support for the direction of the enculturation gap between adolescents and their respective parents and shed light on the content of those gaps in each family. All of the participants (i.e., adolescents and their parents) unanimously described parents as "more Chinese" than the adolescents. This pattern of enculturation supports the majority of research on acculturation gaps that has quantitatively documented adolescents as less enculturated than their immigrant parents (Telzer, 2010). In this study, youth and parents differed in their perceptions of parental strictness, and also in their opportunities (or lack

thereof) to socialize with Chinese peers. In general, the adolescents perceived their parental strictness as excessive and negative, whereas their parents used vocabulary that conveyed Chinese culture-specific concepts of *guan* and *chiao shun*, which can be translated as efforts to “govern/love” and “train” (Chao, 1994, p. 1112). By using indigenous concepts to refer to their strictness, the parents were parenting in a Chinese-specific manner. However, viewed from the perspective in which Western families are the norm, the adolescents in this study perceived their parents’ strictness as problematic and culturally incongruent in the United States. In previous qualitative work conducted with Korean and Vietnamese immigrants, Asian adolescents who compared their parents to a “normal American family” described their own families as “overly strict, emotionally distant, and deficient,” whereas others were perceived as “normal” (Pyke, 2004, p. 240).

It is important to recognize that adolescents and parents had very different social circles in this study, and their respective peer contexts played a role in shaping their understanding of the norms and expectations of themselves and of one another. Because adolescents and parents may use different frames of reference to make meaning of their experiences (Qin, 2006), evidence-based treatment might be adapted with immigrant families to help them recognize the different frameworks from which parents and adolescents may operate. In turn, by gaining an appreciation of the context in which intergenerational differences occur, family members can increase their perspective taking and empathy for one another.

Third, the study findings help to broaden our current ways of understanding enculturation, by acknowledging similarities between adolescent and parent perceptions of enculturation. Despite being interviewed separately, the adolescents and at least one of their parents provided similar examples when asked to describe what it means to “be Chinese.” The consistency within each family suggests that there are shared indicators of adolescent enculturation in each family context. In Tom’s family, all family members discussed the value of family relationships, whereas in Michael’s family, emphasis was placed on the value of working hard as a minority to establish an equal playing field with those who hold majority status. In Anne’s family, all of the family members underscored the importance of native language retention. The commonality between adolescents and their parents suggests that similarities should also be included when studying enculturation in family contexts (e.g., Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Kester & Marshall, 2003), such as when youths and parents identify similar values and behaviors in their definitions of enculturation (e.g., parental strictness). At present, there is an overemphasis on studying dissonance so that “high level[s] of consonance between parents’ and



children's level of acculturation ... is often overlooked" (Telzer, 2010, p. 337). Thus, researchers might devote greater attention to areas of synchrony in family enculturation. Similarly, in clinical settings, practitioners can pay greater attention to identifying similarities in adolescent and parent perceptions about enculturation.

Fourth, the findings illustrate adolescent enculturation as a context-sensitive phenomenon that is influenced by messages perpetuated by the family and the larger community cultural context. Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) have suggested that for "adolescents attending schools in which they are significant minorities, they may rely more heavily on messages from all socialization agents to make meaning of their experiences pertaining to ethnicity" (p. 189). The adolescents in this study received messages at school and at home that emphasized academic achievement. At school, they faced the model minority myth, which is a stereotype that characterizes Asian Americans as the U.S. success story and assumes their achievement in educational, occupational, and economic statuses (C. Ho & Jackson, 2001; Sue, Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995). Simultaneously, they experienced a similar message at home regarding academic excellence. The parents' efforts to prepare their children for society, albeit well intentioned, seemingly intersected with the model minority stereotype, such that the adolescents felt constantly pressured to excel. Future research might, therefore, examine the intersections of the model minority stereotype with ethnic socialization in Chinese immigrant families.

Finally, the methodological strengths of this study are noteworthy, as we utilized two approaches that have not been traditionally used in the field of psychology (Alise & Teddlie, 2010; Bhati, Hoyt, & Huffman, 2014) or counseling psychology (Woo & Heo, 2013). Multiple case study was used to highlight the value of attending to contextual influences in enculturation, and this approach can broaden our clinical conceptualizations of youth enculturation. For example, in circumstances where adolescents may have difficulties with enculturation, it is important to consider external factors outside of the individual (e.g., absence of ethnic-specific resources) and its contribution to the presenting concern. The social justice and advocacy approach in counseling psychology underscores that "the target of intervention ... is the social context in addition to or instead of the individual" (Goodman et al., 2004, p. 797). As such, utilizing a research approach that recognizes the role of the context can help researchers attend to environmental considerations without attributing cultural adaptation to intrapsychic issues. A multiple case approach further allowed us to identify similarities and differences in salient aspects of enculturation for both youth and parents so that comparisons could be made across each of the individuals and families.



Moving beyond the traditional methods of data collection, the use of the photovoice method allowed participants to describe their realities without having to rely exclusively on language as their only means of conveying their lived experiences. Other scholars have noted the value of the photovoice method for working with culturally and linguistically diverse populations (Schwartz, Sable, Dannerbeck, & Campbell, 2007), and in this investigation, we were able to help participants engage in a meaning-making process using language as well as images that they themselves captured and interpreted. Strack, Magill, and McDonagh (2004) have further noted that a photovoice process can provide adolescents with the opportunity to “develop their personal and social identities” (p. 49). Particularly for Anne, the photovoice method helped to facilitate her enculturation process, by providing her with an opportunity to explore the “traditional side of Chinese culture” and subsequently develop a greater appreciation of her ancestral history and culture.

### **Limitations**

As in all studies, there are limitations to this study that should be noted. In terms of sampling, although unintentional, all of the participants were recruited from Christian churches. Non-church-attending Chinese families may have a different experience of enculturation, given that the church often plays an important role in helping immigrants acculturate (Ecklund & Park, 2005). In addition, the parents in this study reflected a particular demographic, having lived in the United States for similar lengths of time and attaining higher education. This background information is relevant, as it is likely that parents with different immigration histories and generational statuses would have different influences on their adolescents' enculturation. Researchers have underscored the importance of considering socioeconomic status in cultural research (Mistry & Wu, 2010) because of the added struggles associated with financial difficulties and their toll on the parent-adolescent relationship (Qin, 2006). In addition, the current study was not designed to include siblings, and therefore issues regarding birth order, gender differences, and other family-specific complexities were not included. In terms of the research process, it is also noteworthy to consider demand characteristics in the photovoice methodology because participants were asked to produce meaningful photos of enculturation. By being prompted with instructions, participants may have paid greater attention to their enculturation experiences to make it more meaningful than they generally would. Last, it is important to highlight the interpretive nature of this qualitative inquiry. The first author's personal life experiences as a Chinese American played a critical role throughout the research process, and it is possible that another researcher conducting this

project would have had a different recruitment process, data collection experience, and interpretations of the data.

### ***Implications for Future Research and Practice***

The current investigation sought to unpack some of the assumptions underlying enculturation gaps and distress by taking a step back to explore how enculturation is experienced by three Chinese American adolescents living within their family context and in a nonethnically dense Midwestern community. Future research might continue to study enculturation as a fluid and dynamic process (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Phinney, 2010) that is malleable and context specific. For example, Tardif-Williams and Fisher (2009) have advocated for the continued use of narrative and qualitative approaches to yield culture-specific findings to generate “knowledge that is not based on dominant, Western conceptions” (p. 157). In addition, given that developmental considerations are critical during the adolescent years, longitudinal qualitative studies can provide a more in-depth understanding of the distinctions and interactions between culture-specific and developmental, universal processes (Kwak, 2003; Syed & Azmitia, 2010; Telzer, 2010). Aside from focusing solely on adolescent experiences, a more thorough understanding of parents’ enculturation can help enhance our understanding parenting practices (G. W. K. Ho, 2014) and its influence on adolescent enculturation. For example, a grounded theory approach (Creswell, 2007) could allow researchers to generate a theory that can help us better understand how parent enculturation influences adolescent enculturation, as well as identify the facilitators, barriers, and consequences associated with the process. As evidenced in our study, adolescents and their parents had contrasting opportunities to socialize with same-ethnic peers, despite living in the community. Thus, even though the literature supports parents’ efforts to expose their youth to same-ethnic socialization activities (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), none may be available, and the challenges faced by these immigrant families are in need of further study.

Related to this, in clinical settings, practitioners are encouraged to obtain information not only from adolescents about their enculturation experiences, but to also gather information about their parents’ experiences and perceptions (Chun & Akutsu, 2009). By understanding enculturation as a phenomenon that manifests within a family system as well as in parent–youth subsystems, clinicians can better assess the complexity of youths’ experiences in their ecological contexts. In addition, even though there are a number of quantitative instruments designed to assess cultural adaptation, it should not be assumed that enculturation holds the same meaning across communities with varying levels of ethnic density

and cultural resources. For adolescents such as those in this study, what does it mean for them to “explore” or feel “belonging” toward a same-ethnic group when none are available in their communities? Issues pertaining to internal validity are therefore warranted, even for established instruments when administered to those sampled from different cultural contexts than the normed group. In short, researchers and practitioners should continue to be attentive to the ways in which family- and community-level contexts influence youth enculturation. As our societies continue to diversify, there will be increased need to understand enculturation as a general phenomenon as well as one that is unique across individuals, families, and communities.

## Conclusion

Our goal was to provide an in-depth understanding of the experience of enculturation for three adolescents within the context of their families and in a nonethnically dense, cultural community. In doing so, we identified differences as well as similarities between two generations and highlighted the role of ecological factors in adolescent enculturation. Guided by constructivist assumptions, the use of a multiple case study approach and photovoice method contributed significantly to the richness of this study, as they allowed for descriptive details to emerge based on participants’ in-depth and lived experiences. We encourage scholars and practitioners to continue to use research methods that help us better understand the intersections of contextual, cultural, and developmental factors in adolescent enculturation.

## Appendix

### *Semistructured Interview Protocol*

Icebreaker question: Tell me about your family (follow-up with who they are and their relevant demographic information).

1. What is it like for your family to live in [this city]?
2. What is like for your family to be Chinese in [this city]?
3. In terms of what it means to be Chinese, how do you think your parents define it? Your answer can be broad. (Follow-up questions distinguish mother and father separately)\*
4. In terms of being Chinese how do you think your parents would describe you? (Follow-up questions distinguish mother and father separately)\*

5. In your own words, how would you define being Chinese? Your answers can be broad.
6. How Chinese do you think your parents are? (Follow-up questions distinguish mother and father separately)\*
7. What are your parents' expectations of you in terms of being Chinese? (Follow-up questions ask for specific examples from each parent)\*
8. How Chinese do you think you are?

Closing question: What else can you tell me about your experience of being Chinese?

\* Parallel questions were asked of each parent to respond about their perceptions of their children.

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