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Kyla Marika Jitsuye Lew
Incarceration, Identity and
Resilience: Understanding the Long-
Term Psychological Impacts of
Racial Trauma on Japanese
Americans Who Were Imprisoned
During World War II

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to deepen the understanding around the impacts of racial trauma and civil rights violations on Japanese Americans' enduring sense of belonging and legitimacy in the United States. The study used semi-structured interviews with 13 Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII to gather qualitative data around their experiences, in order to explore the long-term psychological impact of imprisonment and additionally, how the psychological effects are related to the current social environment. The major findings of this study are that formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans experience long-term psychological consequences as a result of their imprisonment experiences and that these psychological effects shape their perception of modern day political and social contexts.

The major findings from the study fell into five major categories: 1) decreased feelings of safety 2) solidarity across racial lines 3) repetition of history 4) increased activism and community empowerment 5) present-day demagoguery and xenophobia. These findings contribute to the existing literature by expanding on the understanding of how Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response interacts with modern day social and political contexts. This study articulates that Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response is triggered by witnessing prejudice experienced by other minority groups in the United States and also by a xenophobic political and social climate. However, this study formulates that in addition to these negative impacts, Japanese Americans' also experience positive outcomes, including increased empathy between oppressed groups.

**INCARCERATION, IDENTITY AND RESILIENCE: UNDERSTANDING THE LONG-
TERM PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF RACIAL TRAUMA ON JAPANESE
AMERICANS WHO WERE IMPRISONED DURING WORLD WAR II**

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2016

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

On February 19, 1942, ten weeks after Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 (E.O. 9066), which authorized the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Two thirds of imprisoned Japanese Americans were American citizens born in the United States. The unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans devastated the community and was an overt manifestation of xenophobia and racism, which often drive United States policy. This prejudiced action by the United States government also shaped my family's experience, as my grandmother was eleven when her family was imprisoned. They were incarcerated at the Tule Lake camp in California—a prison camp for supposedly disloyal Japanese Americans.

As I grew older, I became more conscious of the oppressive racial history of the United States and learned more about the experience of Japanese Americans during WWII and it affected me deeply. A traumatic and dehumanizing experience had been inflicted on someone I love and a community that I belong to, with lasting individual and intergenerational effects still evident within the community. Cultural trauma “occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a traumatic event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking memories forever and changing their future identity” (Alexander, 2004, p. 1 as cited in Nagata et. al, 2015). While the impact of this cultural trauma on the Japanese

Americans as a collective group is impossible to encapsulate, it is clear that the multifaceted experience of pain and loss permanently changed the community.

Japanese Americans are not the only minority group to experience both discrimination from the populace and either a lack of or violation of civil rights protections by the government. The United States is a country founded on white supremacy, with such sentiments evident in policy and law since it's founding. Recently, nationalistic fervor and xenophobic sentiments have increased in visibility in the United States, with anti-immigration and racist attitudes prevalent in both media and politics. An example of such attitudes is anti-Muslim sentiments related to the attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S.'s wars of choice in the Middle East and the subsequent rise of jihadi groups. More problematic is the concurrent disregard of the United States government for the rights of Muslim Americans, Arab Americans and those perceived to be Muslim or Arab American. After the events of September 11th —in the name of national security—the U.S. government expanded executive and military powers to pursue its “war against terrorists” (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002). This expansion of power included “increased wire- tapping and surveillance, communications intercepts, secret property searches, racial investigative profiling, prolonged detentions and accelerated deportations [via the] curtailing rights of speech, press and association, as well rights to freedom from racial discrimination and incarceration without charges or trial” (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002 p. 53).

As in the cases of Japanese Americans in the 1940s and of Muslim and Arab Americans since September 11th, minority groups are often the scapegoated, their civil liberties disregarded in times of perceived national security crisis. I wondered about how seeing history repeat itself affects those who suffered similar experiences of xenophobia and related civil rights violations. After September 11th, when the panic of the American public disintegrated into the similar

politics of fear that were seen during WWII, I thought about how that might affect the Japanese American community. How would it feel to think a nation has forgotten about the unjust and traumatic experience your entire community endured and continue to enact bigoted rhetoric and policies on other minority groups? It is this question that led to the conception of this research study—how does the past trauma of incarceration and civil liberties violations interact with the current events of today?

Existing literature examines the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II as a race-based, cultural trauma and the numerous and long-lasting consequences for the Japanese American community (Nagata et al., 2015). Literature has revealed that the race-based trauma of mass incarceration led to symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from intentional human design (PTSD-IHD), such as depression, lack of personal control, anger, shame and vulnerability (Loo, 1993). Additionally, existing literature posits that the suppression of civil rights of other minority groups in the name of national security is emotionally triggering for Japanese Americans (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007, Nakinishi, 2009).

Previous literature calls for more study around the relationship of historical traumas with contemporary social forces—racial prejudice and discrimination—and political context (Nagata et al., 2015, Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). Previous literature has also appealed for the incarceration experience to be viewed as a trauma that has developed over time, as opposed to a single historical event (Nagata et al., 2015, Nakinishi, 2009). The interaction of the collective trauma of the Japanese American community with modern-day political contexts—for example, the civil rights violations that occurred post September 11th—and the resulting psychological and emotional impacts for Japanese Americans who experienced incarceration remains to be studied.

Therefore, this study will examine the effects of racial trauma and civil rights violations on Japanese Americans' enduring sense of belonging and legitimacy in the United States. This research will explore the long-term psychological impact of imprisonment on Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII and additionally, how the psychological effects are related to contemporary political and social contexts. This study will investigate Japanese Americans' feelings about civil rights and safety and security in the United States, and how modern-day political and social contexts—including the experiences of exclusion and targeting of other minority groups—impact them. I used a qualitative, exploratory approach to answering this research question. A qualitative approach allowed me to explore individual experiences and the effects of socio-political contexts in depth. Additionally, qualitative research with Asian Americans elders is greatly underrepresented in the literature—a “review of Asian American research literature in the ‘PsycINFO’ database as of March 2010 found that only approximately 2% of listed citations had an identified qualitative methodology” (Nagata et al. 2012).

This research will help to better understand the lasting impact of imprisonment on Japanese Americans, their subsequent feelings of belonging in the United States, and the interaction of their experience during WWII with the ever-changing world around them. Researching the impacts of collective race-based trauma in relation to modern-day political contexts is central to the field of social work and is applicable to other minority and immigrant groups. It is time to deepen our understanding of how state-sanctioned racist policies create long-lasting impacts on those targeted by them. Furthermore, such policies are clearly not limited to national security but are highly visible in our communities and in domestic policies, which continually reinforce a racist and unjust society within the United States. This research echoes

the call for the need for more complex research on the prolonged nature of race and culture based trauma and aspires to address some of the existing deficits.

Terminology

Controversy exists over what terminology is appropriate to use when describing the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. There were “three main types of camps in which Japanese Americans were kept during the war: the assembly centers such as Tanforan or Portland; the relocation centers, such as Topaz and Heart Mountain; and the internment camps, such as Bismarck and Missoula. The first were run by the army, the second by the War Relocation Authority, and the third eventually, by the Immigration and Naturalization Service” (Daniels, 1983, p. 6). Terms such as “relocation” and “internment” are euphemistic—the chosen, sanitized terminology of the U.S. government which are still used broadly today when referring to places and periods of detention. However, Franklin D. Roosevelt referred to the camps as “concentration camps” as they fit the technical definition but this language calls up images of the Holocaust and death camps which is also unfitting. Therefore, in this paper, the terms “incarceration”, “imprisonment” and “prison camps” will be used when referencing the forced confinement of Japanese Americans during WWII.

This paper also refers to the incarceration experience of Japanese Americans and the lasting psychological effects as the “incarceration trauma response.” This term is referenced from the article “Processing Cultural Trauma: Intergenerational Effects of the Japanese American Incarceration” by Nagata, Kim and Nguyen (2015).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and the long lasting psychological consequences of that experience. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section provides historical context of the incarceration of Japanese Americans. The second section presents information around the process of evacuation, incarceration, and eventual resettlement of Japanese Americans. The third section discusses the redress movement, a decades long activist movement calling for the U.S. government to acknowledge its wrongdoing and to provide some financial compensation for Japanese Americans who were incarcerated. The fourth section summarizes existing literature on the effects of incarceration on Japanese Americans. The fifth section discusses concepts and consequences of race-based and cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004, Nagata et al, 2015), and civic ostracism (Kim & Sundstrom, 2014) on the Japanese American community. The sixth section covers the impact of the violation of other minority group's civil rights on Japanese Americans, the psychological effects of the interaction between the race-based trauma experienced by Japanese Americans and modern-day political contexts and implications for further study.

Historical Context of the Incarceration of Japanese Americans

On February 19, 1942, ten weeks after Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 (E.O. 9066). The order provided the Secretary of War and his military commanders the authority to exclude all persons, both citizens

and aliens, from designated areas, in order to provide security against espionage, sabotage and fifth column activity (Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians [CWRIC], 1997, p. 2). Subsequently, “120,000 Japanese Americans, two thirds of whom were U.S. citizens, were ordered into concentration camps” where the length of stay averaged 30 months—with some stays lasting up to four years—without any individual review of internees’ loyalty to the United States (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007, Nagata et al., 2015, Nash, 1985). Incredibly, “All of this was done despite the fact that not a single documented act of espionage, sabotage, or fifth column activity was committed by an American citizen of Japanese ancestry or by a resident Japanese alien on the West Coast” (Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians [CWRIC], 1997, p. 3).

At the time of E.O. 9066, the United States Congress legislatively supported the imprisonment of Japanese immigrants and Japanese American citizens and the Supreme Court held the exclusion “constitutionally permissible in the context of war”, although they struck down the incarceration of admittedly loyal United States citizens (CWRIC, 1997, p. 3). These governing bodies, however, were at odds with intelligence agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navy Department which both concluded that mass imprisonment was not at all essential to military efforts. Nonetheless, “military necessity” was the justification behind Executive Order 9066 (CWRIC, 1997).

Instead of military necessity, racial prejudice and war hysteria were behind the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans. Lieutenant General John L. Dewitt, Commanding General of the Western Defense Command with responsibility for West Coast security, advocated for the incarceration of Japanese Americans to Henry L. Stimson the Secretary of War, whose

recommendations President Roosevelt used to issue E.O. 9066. General Dewitt's justification for the exclusion stated,

In the war in which we are now engaged racial affinities are not severed by migration. The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become "Americanized," the racial strains are undiluted. To conclude otherwise is to expect that children born of white parents on Japanese soil sever all racial affinity and become loyal Japanese subjects, ready to fight and, if necessary, to die for Japan in a war against the nation of their parents. That Japan is allied with Germany and Italy in this struggle is not ground for assuming that any Japanese, barred from assimilation by convention as he is, though born and raised in the United States, will not turn against this nation when the final test of loyalty comes. It, therefore, follows that along the vital Pacific Coast, over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction are at large today (CWRIC, 1997, p. 6).

Dewitt also made the irrational argument that "The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken" (CWRIC, 1997, p. 6). While other military leaders did not agree with Dewitt, they did not insist on determining a clear military justification for the incarceration of Japanese Americans (CWRIC, 1997).

While Dewitt's rationalization for the incarceration of Japanese Americans, lay in his argument that "racial affinities are not severed by migration", United States citizens of Italian or German ancestry did not experience any form of mass imprisonment by the United States government—they were given individual loyalty hearings and thus, some form of due process (Nagata & Takeshita, 2002, Nash, 1985). Three Japanese American citizens—Korematsu,

Hirabayashi and Yasui—challenged order E.O. 9066 based on the fact that it violated their constitutional rights but were unsuccessful (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002).

The prejudiced and untenable rationale for the imprisonment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast is clearly illustrated by the contrast in events that occurred in Hawaii. The socioeconomic context of the lives of Japanese Americans in Hawaii was significantly different that of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Japanese Americans made up more than one third of the population in Hawaii and the population of Hawaii was more diverse and ethnically tolerant than the rest of the United States (Nagata, 1993). When the War Department in Washington ordered the imprisonment of Japanese Americans in Hawaii, General Emmons, the military governor of Hawaii, responded that this act would seriously disrupt both the economy and defense of Hawaii, “for the Japanese represented over 90 percent of the carpenters, nearly all of the transportation workers, and a significant proportion of the agricultural laborers” (Takaki, 1993 p. 379).

General Emmons had the support of Hawaii’s business community, which understood that the imprisonment of Japanese Americans would destroy Hawaii’s economy (Takaki, 1993). Additionally, Hawaii’s politicians, public officials and the press in Hawaii urged the population to use reason and not be swayed by rumors or war hysteria (Takaki, 1993). Two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, General Delos Emmons stated, “While we have been subjected to a serious attack by a ruthless and treacherous enemy, we must remember that this is America and we must do things the American Way. We must distinguish between loyalty and disloyalty among our people” (Takaki, 1993 p. 379). In the end, the military incarcerated less than one percent of Japanese Americans in Hawaii as compared to the more than 90 percent of Japanese

Americans on the West Coast, demonstrating the fallacy of the governments' reasoning of military necessity (Nagata, 1993, Ogawa & Fox, 1991).

The Japanese Americans on the West Coast were in a much more vulnerable position as “they were not needed as laborers in the mainstream economy, and many white farmers viewed Japanese farmers as competitors” and additionally, they represented a much smaller part of the population (Takaki, 1993 p. 381). Farming interests vocalized their desire to remove the Japanese from their positions as farmers so white farmers could replace them (Nagata, 1993, Takaki, 1993). Again, General Dewitt, the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command, was one of the main voices pushing for incarceration of Japanese Americans and therefore, West Coast Japanese did not benefit from the political leadership and reason that was present in Hawaii. Furthermore, the press in California further propagated racist wartime hysteria that supported the incarceration. For example, the Mutual Broadcasting Company stated that the Japanese were engaged in fifth column activity and their “dominance in produce production and their control of the food supply was part of a master war plan” (Takaki, 1993 p. 380). The Los Angeles Times wrote that Japanese Americans' loyalties were linked to Japan based on an inherited racial trait (Takaki, 1993).

Anti-Japanese sentiment on the West Coast, which was a key part of the social, economic and political conditions that led up to the incarceration, began long before WWII. While Japanese were initially welcomed in the 1860's—first in Hawaii and later on the West Coast—as sources of cheap labor, as their numbers on the West Coast increased, so did resentment of their presence (Nagata, 1993, Ng, 2002). In the media, Japanese were depicted as part of a “Yellow Peril”, a fear that masses of Asians (primarily Chinese and Japanese) would attack and conquer the United States (Ng, 2002). Political leaders, in addition to media, commonly propagated anti-

Japanese views and discrimination toward Japanese was evident in legislation (Nagata, 1993, Ng, 2002). Japanese were prohibited from marrying whites, ineligible for citizenship (until 1952), the 1913 Alien Land Law in California prevented aliens from owning property, and the Immigration Act halted all immigration from Japan in 1924 (CWRIC, 1997, Nagata, 1993). Additionally, Japanese and other Asian immigrant groups were often the targets of physical and verbal attacks, vandalism to their homes and businesses, and threats and intimidation (Ng, 2002).

Anti-Japanese sentiment was further driven by economic competition with white farmers. By 1910, Japanese farmers in California owned or leased 458, 056 acres of farmland and produced the majority of California's strawberries (Takaki, 1993). By 1940, they grew 95 percent of the fresh snap beans and celery, 67 percent of the fresh tomatoes, 44 percent of the onions and 40 percent of the fresh green peas (Takaki, 1993, p. 269). The productivity of the Japanese American farmers led to fears that they were taking business from whites and contributed to further prejudice (Nagata, 1993).

In summary, when the attacks on Pearl Harbor occurred, the social, economic and political context in the United States was such that Japanese Americans were particularly vulnerable to the violation of their civil rights that followed.

Evacuation and Incarceration

The Army controlled the government-ordered process of mass evacuation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor (CWRIC, 1997). Families were given numbered identification tags and brought by train or bus to temporary "assembly centers" such as racetracks, fairgrounds and stockyards as permanent camps were still being built (Nagata, 1993, Takaki, 1993). Families were often housed in filthy stables, which were patrolled by military police and surrounded by barbed wire, and conditions were cramped

and noisy (Takaki, 1993). The assembly centers lacked adequate sanitation, food supplies and medical facilities (Nagata, 1993). About 70 percent of people living in the assembly centers were citizens and the average stay was 100 days (CWRIC, 1997).

Many families were only given a few days notice that they were being evacuated to assembly centers and were not told where they were going (Nagata, 1993). Additionally, they were only allowed to bring what they could carry. The process of imprisonment led to incredible financial losses as families sold their homes, businesses, cars, farm equipment, crops and personal possessions for a fraction of what they were worth or were simply forced to leave them behind (Nagata, 1993 p. 7). While there has not been a substantiated numerical figure for how much Japanese Americans lost in a dollar amount through the process of forced incarceration, it is clear that it resulted in tremendous economic hardship and suffering.

After their short imprisonment in assembly centers, families were moved by train to ten internment camps across seven states, mostly in remote desert areas (CWRIC, 1997, Takaki, 1993). The camps were run by a civilian agency called the War Relocation Authority (WRA), which was created specifically to handle the incarceration of Japanese Americans (CWRIC, 1997). The camps were surrounded by barbed wire, armed guards and watchtowers and resembled both prisons and military bases (CWRIC, 1997, Takaki, 1993). Families lived in tiny, poorly constructed barracks that did little to protect them from the harsh seasonal weather of the desert, which was freezing in winter and extremely hot in the summer (CWRIC, 1997, Nagata, 1993). Barracks did not have running water and generally had only cots, a potbellied stove and a light bulb (CWRIC, 1997). Meals were eaten in mess halls and bathrooms were communal, with little to no privacy. Some camps were extremely overcrowded and serious diseases such as polio and tuberculosis were problems (CWRIC, 1997).

Life in the camps was extremely regimented, with much of the day spent waiting in line either for meals or to use facilities (CWRIC, 1997). Children attended schools within the camps whose curriculum emphasized “Americanization” with paternalistic education policies similar to those created for the Navajos in the 1930’s (CWRIC, 1997, Nagata, 1993). There were scarce opportunities for adults to work and an earnings limit was set at nineteen dollars a month, regardless of the type of work performed (Nagata, 1993). Internees spent much of their time occupying themselves with various activities such as sports and arts, while waiting to see what would happen next (CWRIC, 1997).

Many government policies in the camps created friction among internees—one such policy was the loyalty questionnaire, which was given to all internees over the age 16 in 1943 (Nagata, 1993). Because the government had ironically decided that Japanese American citizens were to be allowed to serve in the military, loyalty to the United States needed to be determined (CWRIC, 1997). The government sent teams of Army officers and WRA officials to the camps with questionnaires which asked draft age males: “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?”(CWRIC, 1997, p. 191). The questionnaire also asked Issei (first generation Japanese) and women if they would join the Army Nurse Corp or Women’s Army Corps (CWRIC, 1997). The loyalty question asked: “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of American and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power or organization?”(CWRIC, 1997, p 192).

Unsurprisingly, the loyalty questionnaire raised confusing and negative emotions among incarcerated Japanese Americans. Many were citizens, who had been unfairly imprisoned

regardless of their status and were now being asked to fight for the United States based on that citizenship. They and their families had been living in terrible conditions and had their entire lives taken from them. Furthermore, the loyalty question was particularly unfair for Issei—they were ineligible to become citizens, therefore, if they renounced their Japanese nationality by answering “yes” they would, have no country of citizenship (CWRIC, 1997). However, if they answered “no”, they would be viewed as disloyal and possibly transferred to another camp and separated from their citizen children (Nagata, 1993). In fact, individuals who answered “no” to both questions (and became known as “no-no’s”) were sent to Tule Lake, a special high security camp (Nagata, 1993, Nakinishi, 2009). In the end, 87% of internees answered “yes” to both questions and Nisei (second generation Japanese) men, who answered “yes” twice, were registered for the draft (Nagata, 1993).

Many Japanese American men viewed serving in the armed forces as an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States and in doing so, hoped to create better lives for their families (Takaki, 1993). Some 33,000 Japanese American men decided to serve during WWII. Some worked as interpreters, translating Japanese war documents that contained secret codes and battle plans, and verbal orders given during battle or over tapped phone lines or radios. The chief of intelligence in the Pacific, General Charles Willoughby, estimated that such contributions made by Japanese American soldiers, shortened the war by two years (Takaki, 1993, p. 383). The all-Japanese 100th Battalion and 442nd Regiment were known for their courage and loyalty (Nagata, 1993) and were “probably the most decorated unit in United States military history” (Takaki, 1993 p. 384).

In 1943, internees who answered “yes” to the loyalty oath began receiving clearance to leave the camps and the slow process of resettlement began (CWRIC, 1997, Nagata, 1993).

However, after years of imprisonment, resettlement presented its own problems. Japanese Americans did not know what awaited them outside the camps and older Issei were especially afraid. When the camps finally closed in 1945, after President Roosevelt agreed with military recommendations that it was no longer necessary to imprison Japanese Americans. Each person was given \$25 and put onto trains. Most returned to where they had previously lived and found that their property had been stolen, lost or damaged. Those who did not have houses to return to, found it extremely difficult to find housing based on anti-Japanese discrimination.

Discrimination also made it difficult to find work—once financially stable families had to scramble to make ends meet. Additionally, violence toward Japanese Americans was a significant problem (CWRIC, 1997, Nagata, 1993). Many families lost the entirety of what they built for themselves—homes, businesses and jobs, land and personal possessions. Victims of racist war-hysteria that resulted in unjust imprisonment and the loss of their lives as they knew them, Japanese Americans had to begin again.

Redress

In 1948, Congress passed the Evacuation Claims Act, which allowed “people of Japanese ancestry to seek compensation from the U.S. government for losses they incurred as a result of their incarceration” (Ng, 2002, p. 100). However, although many people filed claims, it was impossible to receive even close to full compensation for what Japanese Americans had lost (Ng, 2002). First, documentation was required for each item lost and secondly, the procedure for filing a claim was extensive and difficult. On average, families received about ten percent of the full numerical amount of claims filed (Ng, 2002).

For years, Japanese Americans lived in silence around their experience of incarceration, stemming largely from feelings of shame and stigmatization (Takaki, 1993). Then, in the

1960's, a combination of factors led to the campaign for redress. Most Sansei (third generation Japanese Americans) were born after the war and were therefore influenced by the social activism of the 1960's, when movements such as women's rights, civil rights and anti-Vietnam war were in full force (Ng, 2002). One of the most influential factors on redress activism was the impact of the Black Power movement, which brought ideas like group identity, social location, and history of oppression—topics that resonated deeply with the Sansei—further into the public's consciousness (Nakinishi, 2009). The Sansei urged the Nisei to break the silence around the injustices of what they had experienced and urged their parents to engage in social action to raise awareness. While many Nisei initially resisted, the Sansei continued with their campaign (Takaki, 1993).

The activism of Japanese Americans eventually led to Congress's establishment of a bipartisan Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in 1980 (CWRIC, 1997). The purpose of the CWRIC was to review the facts surrounding E.O. 9066, the process of how E.O. 9066 was implemented in the Japanese American community, and to recommend appropriate solutions (CWRIC, 1997). Based on the findings of the CWRIC, in 1988 Congress passed a bill that included an apology on the behalf of the U.S. government and payment of \$20,000 to each person who had been incarcerated (Takaki, 1993). President Ronald Reagan, who signed the bill into law, stated that Japanese Americans had been "utterly loyal" during WWII and that the United States had committed a "grave wrong"(Takaki, 1993, p. 401). Issei who died before the law was created were not eligible for redress payments. According to the government, 82,219 former internees received the \$20,000 redress payment, out of approximately 120,000 people who had been incarcerated (Ng, 2002).

Existing Literature on the Effects of the Incarceration Experience

There is a large body of research that discusses the impact of the collective trauma of internment on Japanese American families (Nagata, 1993, Nagata, 2000, Nagata & Tsuru, 2007) and also the resiliency and coping mechanisms of the families (Nagata, 2000, Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). The causes of trauma on the Japanese American people during the incarceration experience are multilayered. Immediately after Pearl Harbor was bombed, anti-Japanese war hysteria began which involved physical assaults, boycotting of Japanese American business and verbal accusations of being traitors (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). Japanese American families felt pressured to destroy any heirlooms that connected them with Japan and priceless family belongings were discarded out of fear of being viewed as disloyal (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998).

Additional stressors of the internment experience include the conditions of the camp, which were in swamplands and deserts (and were therefore, freezing and extremely hot) and generally had brutally inhumane conditions (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). Japanese American families were exposed to the psychological trauma of dehumanization and imprisonment, which included being tagged with numbers, like criminals (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). Furthermore, most families suffered extreme financial losses as they were only allowed to take what they could carry to the camps (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). Additionally, incarceration created family related stressors, as families were often separated without knowing if or when they would be reunited (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). Within the camps, the traditional family unit was disrupted, as camp life did not allow families to engage with each other as they had previously (Nagata, 2000). For example, meals were eaten in mess halls as opposed to the customary family meal and Nisei spent more time with friends than family (Nagata, 2000). Issei fathers and

mothers lost their respective traditional roles as primary providers and homemakers (Nagata, Kim & Nguyen, 2015). Formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans highlighted the absolute lack of privacy in the toilets and shower areas as humiliating (Nagata, 2000).

In a qualitative study, Cheng, Nagata and Nguyen (2012) used individual narratives to explore emotions felt by Japanese Americans across four time periods—“post-Pearl Harbor and immediately before incarceration, during confinement in the temporary assembly centers, during confinement in the more permanent incarceration camps and post-incarceration” (p.105). Pre-incarceration emotions included “shock,” “worried,” “scared” and “confused” while assembly center emotions included “It cannot be helped” and “adventurous” (felt by children whose stable environment had been disrupted). All of the aforementioned emotions continued into the incarceration period. However, the study found that post-camp, primary emotions were “anger, bitterness and a sense of betrayal” with formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans expressing pain resulting from violations of their civil rights (2012).

Japanese Americans have demonstrated incredible resiliency in the face of these degrading and racist events. As Nagata and Takeshita (1998) explain, “Japanese Americans believe that cultural values—many stated in their original Japanese terminology—were the most important influences on their ability to cope with the traumatic effects of the war (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998). Nisei identified traditional Japanese values such as “*oya koko* (filial piety), *gaman* (perseverance), *giri* (a sense of obligation) and *enryo* (self-restraint /reserve)” as key to positive coping and resilience (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998, p. 595). The cultural values of *gaman* and *shikata ga nai* (a Japanese phrase meaning approximately “It cannot be helped”) were identified as most central to positive coping (Nagata & Takeshita, 1998, p. 595). This shows that the trauma that was endured served to strengthen Japanese Americans’ cultural identity, as they

continue to identify Japanese cultural values as essential to their ability to cope with the experience and aftereffects of imprisonment.

In a qualitative study “World War II Internment and the Relationships of Nisei Women”, Nisei also “noted that their families and the stoic strength of their Issei parents provided critical resources for coping” (Nagata, 2000, p. 61). Nisei women indicated that the development of strong friendships with other girls and women—many who are still close today—as a positive and important aspect of the incarceration experience (Nagata, 2000).

One of the most ubiquitous consequences of the incarceration period is the continued silence of the families who experienced the camps both in inter-family communication and in communication with the outside world. There are many possible contributors to this widespread silence including feelings shame or guilt, and wanting to protect children and other families from the realities of the experience (Nagata, 1993). Silence has also been cited as a common response to trauma (Nagata, 1993). Additionally, cultural style and values may add to the avoidance of the topic of incarceration. Japanese culture emphasizes “indirect, nonverbal communications of emotional topics, an avoidances of disruptive confrontations, and an avoidance of family conflict and embarrassment” (Nagata, 1993, p.101). While the overall silence around the camps has lessened slightly with increased social activism, the campaign for redress, and the difference in generational communication styles in both Sansei and Yonsei (fourth generation Japanese Americans), many families still do not openly discuss the incarceration experience.

Nagata and Takeshita also discuss the important of the redress in the Japanese American community. In 1980, the CWRIC examined the incarceration of Japanese Americans and determined that it was a “grave injustice” and in 1988, the United States government formally declared misconduct around the imprisonment of Japanese Americans and awarded \$20,000 and

a personalized letter from the president to each surviving Japanese American who experienced incarceration during WWII (Nagata & Takeshita, 2002). The article presents the redress effort as a possible method for trauma recovery, as Japanese Americans organized and demanded a response through social action such as community gatherings, testimony and group visits to former camp locations. These actions led to increased social supports from within the Japanese American community. Additionally, Nagata and Takeshita's study identified that overall; the redress movement was received positively but was generally seen as a small gesture of goodwill from the government as compared with the suffering endured during the war. The study revealed that the redress movement resulted in increased faith in the government, but most respondents felt that it occurred much too late, as their parents who had carried much of the suffering, had already died (Nagata & Takeshita, 2002).

The Psychological Effects of Racism, Cultural Trauma and Civic Ostracism

As the incarceration of Japanese Americans involved racism and the violation of civil rights, much of the existing literature explores the effects of this multifaceted experience. In a study focused around self-reported coping among Japanese Americans during World War II, Nagata and Tsuru (2007) identify trends such as a "lingering sense of internment-related tension in the lives of former internees more than 50 years after incarceration" (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). Nagata and Tsuru specify "loss of self-esteem, feelings of undeserved shame, and self-consciousness" as feelings experienced by many (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). Additionally, some Japanese Americans preferred/trusted other Japanese Americans over European Americans, indicating lasting feelings of suspicion and vulnerability (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). Positive self-esteem and financial stability were linked to higher rates of self-reported coping (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). The study also found that Nisei who "reported negative internment-related

communications with others and negative emotions around their incarceration also tended to report lower physical and emotional internment coping” leading the authors to state the importance of considering the ways “in which trauma effects interact with the post trauma social environment” (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007, p. 227). As most former internees still live in the United States, the country that unjustly imprisoned them, general public discussions about or references to the internment may trigger feelings of fear or vulnerability (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). Nagata and Tsuru also mention how the treatment of Arab and Muslim Americans after September 11th was highly triggering for Japanese Americans who had been incarcerated, as the racist war-hysteria was evocative of the treatment Japanese Americans received post Pearl Harbor.

Amy Iwasaki Mass (1991), a survivor of the camps, writes on the psychological effects and defense mechanisms employed by Japanese Americans who were incarcerated and experienced the “destructive and cruel” consequences of racism and forced detention (p. 162). Mass states that the feelings of rage and fear felt by Japanese Americans were turned inward, leading to feelings of depression and shame. Mass continues, “We used psychological defense mechanisms such as repression, denial, rationalization, and identification with the aggressor to defend ourselves against the devastating reality of what was being done to us” (p. 160). Mass makes clear that that the stated defense mechanisms are employed unconsciously to protect against what is too painful to process or understand. For example, identifying with the propaganda of the United States government with statements like “the government was doing it for our own good” is a form of rationalization as a defense mechanism (Mass, 1991, p. 161).

Mass also states that Japanese Americans sought “acceptance by submission” by proving that they were “110% American”(1991, p. 161). This sentiment is echoed throughout the literature. For example, in a qualitative study, Nisei women expressed that the incarceration

experience caused them to raise their children differently, encouraging them to be exemplary “American” citizens and also avoiding traditional Japanese things (Nagata, 2000). Statements such as “We raised them to be White so that they would be accepted into the mainstream” exemplify this point (Nagata, 2000, p. 64). Mass concludes, “Acceptance by submission, however, exacts a high price at the expense of the individual’s true self-worth. Though other’s may see us as model Americans, we have paid a tremendous psychological price for this acceptance” (1991, p.161).

In “Surviving Democracy’s Mistake”, Nakinishi addresses the problematic idea of the “model minority” in relationship to the incarceration of Japanese Americans. Similar to Mass, Nakinishi writes, “this glowing image of postwar Japanese American progress and societal acceptance...provided many Japanese Americans with a self-fulfilling justification for not psychologically departing from their longstanding repression and avoidance of their Internment experience” (2009, p. 71). Additionally, the idea that Japanese Americans are “model minorities” purports the idea that the incarceration was simply a historical event, which Japanese Americans overcame, with no lasting negative effects on those who experienced it (Nakinishi, 2009). He highlights that it not just the incarceration of Japanese Americans that is treated as a single historic event but that the oppression of minority groups in the U.S. is generally treated as a past occurrence that does not have “enduring consequences or significance in the longitudinal development of the group” (2009, p.76). Nakinishi also examines another divisive aspect of “model minority” concept: the idea that because Japanese Americans could “succeed” after extreme racial persecution, other minority groups should be able to as well, “providing an ironic twist to the classic “blaming the victim” perspective in race relations research” (2009, p. 70).

Nakinishi also discusses Japanese American's increased psychological vigilance around issues of race-based prejudice. He cites examples of Japanese American activism around such issues like calls for the mass deportation of Iranian students during the Iranian hostage incident and the FBI interviews of Arab American leaders during the Persian Gulf War (Nakinishi, 2009).

In, "Processing Cultural Trauma: Intergenerational Effects of the Japanese American Incarceration," Nagata, Kim, & Nguyen tie the incarceration of Japanese Americans to the theory of cultural trauma which "occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a traumatic event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking memories forever and changing their future identity" (Alexander, 2004, p. 1 as cited in Nagata et al 2015). The authors state that Japanese Americans clearly fit this definition of cultural trauma as the collective group experienced a traumatic event that drastically changed the course of their future. The article connects the experience of Japanese Americans to the oppression of other minority groups and the lasting psychological effects it may cause: it proposes the "incarceration trauma response be viewed broadly, as a process that emerged over decades through the interaction of personal, intergenerational, and social forces. The process is still relevant to social issues concerning the long-term effects of racial prejudice and discrimination, the interplay between personal experience and political context, and policies around national security" (Nagata et al., 2015 p. 357).

Loo presents a clinical model for recovery that she applies to the incarceration of Japanese Americans in "An Integrative-Sequential Treatment Model for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Case Study of the Japanese American Internment and Redress" (1993). The article focuses on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, which results from Intentional Human Design (PTSD-IHD). Loo's clinical model identifies detachment and isolation, avoidance, self-blame,

depression, lack of personal control, and violation of basic beliefs as symptoms of trauma due to intentional human design and experienced by Japanese Americans who were incarcerated (1993). The model categorizes several culturally appropriate interventions—group support and desensitization, restructuring self-blame and documenting system blame, cognitive reframing and active mastery, and reformulating meaning—as a model for trauma recovery and connects these interventions to the Japanese American community’s experience of fighting for redress (Loo, 1993). This clinical model is an important contribution to treatment approaches for groups who have experienced race-based discrimination. Loo states, “...for persons of color constitutional rights and protections are never free as racism and prejudice remain, but political vigilance and collective action can exert some effect in redress for past violations and prevention of future abuse “(p. 112).

Kim and Sundstrom (2014) introduce the idea of “civic ostracism” as resulting from xenophobia—the fear, envy, resentment felt toward others, particularly foreigners (p. 23). Civic ostracism is primarily about the vulnerability of a collective group. The authors state, “With all its cultural, political, and economic complexity, life within groups and institutions is profoundly formative of the self” and therefore, “...xenophobia matters because group life does, and civic exclusion and subordination establishes an impoverishing, often stable form of group life” (p. 23). Additionally, the authors state that with civic inclusion comes a sense of agency and legitimacy, equality and social acceptance. Furthermore, having “self-respect and meaningful choice” affirmed by social peers is critical “especially during formative stages of an agent’s development” (2014, p. 24). This idea seems particularly applicable to the incarceration of Japanese Americans as civic ostracism played a central role in their identity formation, both in their pre-war and post-war lives. The authors point out that civic ostracism may range in

intensity from a “feeling that a subject does not belong to a nation” to the extreme event of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans (Kim & Sundstrom, 2014 p. 26).

While the idea of civic ostracism is central to understanding the overall experience of Japanese Americans in the United States, it is also important in understanding the context for incarceration—other research has revealed that in times of social crisis and political upheaval, the belonging of minority groups is susceptible to condemnation from other Americans (Li & Brewer, 2004).

Implications and Further Study

The violation of the civil rights and humanity of Japanese Americans during WWII was not an isolated incident. The United States government’s policies towards Muslim and Arab Americans after the events of September 11, 2001 mirror the same processes of dehumanization, target, and violence that Japanese Americans experienced during WWII. After September 11th, the government “expanded executive and military powers to pursue what it described as a “war against terrorists”—increased wiretapping and surveillance, communications intercepts, secret property searches, racial investigative profiling, prolonged detentions and accelerated deportations. The government did this in part by curtailing rights of speech, press and association, as well rights to freedom from racial discrimination and incarceration without charges or trial” (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002, p. 53). Thousands of people were imprisoned indefinitely—without any proof of wrongdoing or charges brought—without access to lawyers (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002). Some remain at the Guantanamo Bay military prison where they have been tortured and force-fed, *still* without ever being charged with a crime, almost 15 years later. The American public continues to target those distantly resembling individuals of Arab descent. There have been countless events of violent and xenophobic attacks—in one event, a

man shot and killed a Sikh business owner because he was upset about the bombings (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002).

The legal groundwork that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans lives on. In fact, the government “has not overruled or formally discredited the *Korematsu* decision or its principle of judicial deference to government claims of military necessity. Nor has the Court announced in principle that the demanding standards of review now normally applicable to government restrictions of constitutionally protected liberties are unaltered by the government’s claim of military necessity or national security” (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002, p. 56). In reality, in many contemporary cases, courts have ignored civil liberties as a result of government proclamations of national security risks (Yamamoto & Serrano, 2002).

It is clear that the suppression of civil rights in the name of national security is emotionally triggering for Japanese Americans (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007, Nakinishi, 2009). The race-based trauma of mass incarceration led to symptoms consistent with PTSD-IHD, such as depression, lack of personal control, anger, shame and vulnerability (Loo, 1993) and has had long-lasting consequences for the Japanese American community (Nagata et al. 2015). This study investigates how the trauma of incarceration impacts Japanese Americans’ perceptions of current day political contexts, including the targeting of and violence towards Muslim and Arab Americans post September 11th. This research into the interplay between collective race-based trauma and modern-day political contexts, may be applicable to other minority groups as civil rights violations in times of perceived national security crisis in the U.S. continue.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This qualitative study is an exploration of the long-term psychological effects of racial trauma on Japanese Americans who were imprisoned during World War II. The purpose of this research project is to specifically examine the effects of racial trauma and civil rights violations on Japanese Americans' sense of belonging and legitimacy in the United States.

Qualitative methods, using semi-structured interviews, were chosen for this study for numerous reasons. This is an exploratory study in an area where there is a lack of research; therefore a qualitative approach is most appropriate (Engel & Schutt, 2013). Additionally, qualitative methods allows nuanced and in depth exploration of participants' individual experiences and their relationships to current political contexts. And, as referenced in the introduction, qualitative research with Asian Americans elders is greatly underrepresented in the literature. This thesis gives voice to the experiences of Japanese American elders who experienced the violence of incarceration.

Sample

A total of 13 of people participated in this study. To be eligible for participation in this study, an individual had to meet several inclusion criteria. Participants had to have been evacuated from the West Coast during the World War II period as a result of Japanese ancestry and incarcerated in a camp in the United States (California, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Hawaii and Arkansas). Additionally, participants had to speak fluent English.

Recruitment Methods

After receiving approval from the Human Subjects Review Board (Appendix A), recruitment was carried out through various approaches. Two nonprobability sampling techniques were used: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is sampling based on the purpose of the study, and the researcher's judgment and knowledge of the population (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). Snowball sampling asks participants to recommend other people who fit the inclusion criteria (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). I asked members of the local Japanese community whom I knew personally if they knew of any potential participants. Potential participants were then given my contact information or permission was obtained for me to contact them. Additionally, I used the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program Alumni Association of Northern California's network to locate potential participants and post my recruitment letter (Appendix B and F). I also posted my recruitment letter (Appendix B) on social media and sent it out via email, reaching out to potential participants and to those who possibly knew potential participants.

Once eligibility of participants was verified, arrangements were made to either conduct the interview over the phone or in-person. In order to give participants the opportunity to reflect on the types of questions that would be asked and to ask any questions before the interview process takes place, I mailed or emailed (based on participant preference) participants the interview questions a few days before the interview. For interviews that were to be conducted over the phone, I also either emailed participants an electronic consent form or mailed a hard copy of the consent form along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. For interviews that were conducted in-person, consent forms were signed before the interview took place.

Ethics and Safeguards

Because I interviewed participants for this study, participation was not anonymous. Additionally, because recruitment used snowball sampling techniques and social media, there was some risk that participants would be aware of other's participation in the study. Participants were therefore asked to keep their participation in the study confidential. Participants were given code letters, which were used to quote and reference the interviews in the findings and discussion sections of the research. All identifying information has been redacted from the transcribed interviews and the interview transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix G). All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period.

Prior to beginning interviews, participants were informed about the nature of the interview and given a list of interview questions. Because participants were asked questions about potentially traumatic life experiences and emotional topics, I made clear that they could refuse to answer any questions during the interview or cease participation altogether. Participants were also offered a list of culturally appropriate resources at the end of the interview, to utilize if additional support is needed (Appendix D).

Participants were informed of the potential benefits of taking part in the research study. Such benefits include the opportunity for participants to share their stories and have their experiences included in research and the benefit to society, in gaining a better understanding of the long-term psychological consequences of the Japanese American imprisonment experience.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection was performed using semi-structured interviews that ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. Participants were asked sixteen open-ended questions (Appendix D). The first part of the interview covered questions around the participants' personal incarceration experience, such as how old they were when they were imprisoned, where they were imprisoned and whether they were separated from their families. The second part of the interview explored the connection between the incarceration experience and subsequent feelings of safety, legitimacy and belonging in the United States. The last part of the interview investigated how participants understand and relate to civil rights violations of other minority groups during times of perceived national security crises in the United States.

Interviews were recorded with an audio recording device. After the interviews, participants were given code letters in order to ensure confidentiality. Audio files were corresponded with the code letters before being sent to the transcriber.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using inductive qualitative data analysis, an approach in which “the analyst identifies important categories in the data, as well as patterns and relationships, through a process of discovery” (Engel and Schutt, 2012, p. 577). Themes and patterns were identified via reading transcribed interviews several times and listening to audio files of the interviews. Identified themes were then categorized using a coding system. The coding system includes a codebook, which I created based on the concepts and themes identified in the interviews. The categories and themes will be discussed in both the findings and discussion chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts of racial trauma and civil rights violations on Japanese Americans' sense of belonging and legitimacy in the United States. This research explores long-term psychological impact of imprisonment on Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII and how the psychological effects are related to contemporary political contexts. This chapter documents the findings from thirteen semi-structured interviews with Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII. The first section of the interview consisted of brief questions around demographic data about the participants, which yielded quantitative data. The second section of the interview included questions around the participant's incarceration experience. The third section contained questions around the participants' sense of belonging and legitimacy in the United States and exploration of possible psychological effects of modern political and global milieus in relation to their incarceration experience.

The major findings from the study fell into five categories: 1) decreased feelings of safety 2) solidarity across racial lines 3) repetition of history 4) increased activism and community empowerment 5) present-day demagoguery and xenophobia. The category of decreased feelings of safety includes a sub-theme around heightened awareness of racial injustice. The category of increased activism includes a sub-theme about the positionality of the Japanese American community as it relates to activism.

Demographic Data

Out of 13 participants, 9 were women (69%) and 4 were men (31%). The ages of participants varied: the youngest participant was 71 years old and was born in a prison camp while the oldest participant was 93 years old and was initially incarcerated at the age of 20. The majority of participants were first detained in an assembly center for some months before being transferred again, this time to a permanent prison camp. The average incarceration period for Japanese Americans during WWII lasted 2-4 years; most participants in the study were incarcerated for approximately a three-year period (Nagata et al., 2015). All participants in this study were originally living in California prior to Executive Order 9066. Participants were incarcerated at seven different camps across six states. For detailed information on each participant’s demographic information and incarceration location, please refer to Table 1.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender (F/M)	Current Age	Internment Age	Assembly Center	Incarceration Camp	Originally From
Participant A	F	92	18	Tulare, CA	Gila River, AZ & Crystal City, TX	Santa Maria, CA
Participant B	F	80	7	Pomona, CA	Heart Mountain, WY	Hollywood, CA
Participant C	F	86	13	Tanforan, CA	Topaz, UT	San Francisco, CA
Participant D	F	85	11	N/A	Colorado River (Poston), AR	Delano, CA
Participant E	M	78	4	Tanforan, CA	Topaz, UT	San Francisco, CA
Participant F	F	74	2	Unknown	Rohwer, AR	Stockton, CA
Participant G	F	93	20	Tanforan, CA	Topaz, UT	Berkeley, CA
Participant H	M	78	5	Tanforan, CA	Topaz, UT	Redwood City, CA
Participant I	F	85	11	Turlock, CA	Gila River, AZ	Pleasanton, CA
Participant J	F	85	12	N/A	Colorado River (Poston), AR	San Diego County, CA
Participant K	M	86	12	Tanforan, CA	Topaz, UT	Berkeley, CA
Participant L	M	71	Born in camp	N/A	Topaz, UT	San Mateo County, CA
Participant M	F	80	6	Stockton, CA	Granada (Amache), CO	Richmond, CA

Participants' experience and memories of the camp clearly vary greatly based on their age when incarcerated. Younger participants (such participants who were born in camp or were incarcerated at age two) remember little to nothing about their incarceration experiences and have learned much about their family's experience from relatives. Older participants (participants aged 18-20) can recall the experience in great detail and had lives—school, jobs, and families of their own—that were fully interrupted. 9 participants (69%) in the study were initially incarcerated as children or adolescents (ages 4-13).

Participant's Accounts of Their Incarceration Experiences

In this section, participants were asked to discuss their incarceration experiences, in order to provide context for the rest of the interview. Participants were asked a sequence of questions around their individual camp experiences, including pre-incarceration experiences, information about their life in the camps, and post-incarceration experiences.

On February 19, 1942, ten weeks after Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 (E.O. 9066). Consequently, 120,000 Japanese Americans, two thirds of whom were U.S. citizens, were ordered into prison camps (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007). The Army regulated the government-ordered process of mass removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor (CWRIC, 1997). Participants were asked about their pre-incarceration experiences such as how they were notified of their impending imprisonment, whether their families were kept together or separated, and what happened to their personal or family possessions.

Most participants, regardless of age, could not recall how they were officially notified that they were being forced to leave their homes but the majority recalls a period of extreme fear and uncertainty. Consistent with previous documentation around the incarceration, most families

were only given a few days notice of evacuation, were not told where they were going, and could only bring what they could carry (Nagata, 1993). Some participants reported that their fathers were taken by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and imprisoned months before the rest of the family was incarcerated, heightening the panic felt by families. Participants' whose fathers were taken by the FBI all described how their mothers struggled to make crucial decisions without their husbands. For example, Participant D described her family's experience:

When I got home my mother was crying and there was about two or three agents, FBI agents, combing through everything in our house. They were looking for shortwave radios and things like that. And my father was in handcuffs, and was taken to the city jail, and this wasn't just my father, it was all the fathers, males, in the city of Delano—we had a big Japanese community. So from March until May, we were fatherless and my mother couldn't figure out what to do or anything, the hardest thing to do was make a decision.

Families sold their homes, businesses, cars, farm equipment, crops and personal possessions for well below what they were worth or simply had to leave them behind (Nagata, 1993 p. 7). Many participants talked about the painful process of selling personal belongings in an incredibly predatory atmosphere: the rest of the world knew that the Japanese American community had no choice but to sell and therefore, many took advantage. Participant A stated:

By the time, we were told to evacuate, that was April and we had sold most of our things. We had a new car, it was not even a year old and Papa wasn't around to take care of the negotiation with the people who wanted to buy it, we sold it for really cheap, like \$800 or something. It was a brand new Sudebaker.

Some interviewees explained being cruelly tricked. Participant H describes how his father's new truck was stolen:

Well, I know that one of the big things that really affected my father, was when we were leaving for relocation, a very friendly person came up and [my father] had just bought a new truck [because he worked in the farm industry] and this man said he would take it back to the dealer and get the money and send it to us. And of course, my father didn't realize that that man would just take the truck and we would never hear from him again. Things like that really affected his attitude.

Evident in all participants' responses is tremendous economic hardship and suffering—most families lost an incredible amount of financial capital and some families lost everything. All interviewees who could recall the pre-incarceration spoke of it as a time of bewilderment, fear and dread.

Respondents were then asked a series of questions around the latter portion of the evacuation process, such as how they were transported to camps and assembly centers, and what living conditions were like. Respondents reported being transported to assembly centers and camps by train, bus or both, again without being informed of where they were being taken. Some participants were first taken to assembly centers, such as racetracks or stockyards, as permanent camps were still being built (Nagata, 1993, Takaki, 1993). Respondents who were placed in assembly describe horrible living conditions, such as entire families living in a single, filthy horse stall for periods lasting up to six months. The assembly centers were guarded by military police and had barbed wire fences (Takaki, 1993). Participants were eventually transported to seven permanent prison camps different camps across six states (there were ten prison camps across the United States in total). The camps were surrounded by barbed wire, guards with guns

and watchtowers and looked like prisons (CWRIC, 1997, Takaki, 1993). Respondents described cruel living conditions. Participants explained living in poorly constructed barracks in parts of the U.S. that experience extreme weather conditions—extreme heat, cold, dust storms and more. Families often lived in one room. Participant H depicted the conditions at the camp in Topaz, UT:

Topaz was like living in army barracks, these tar paper barracks, and I guess, the, the biggest hardship in the barracks when we first moved there was that they weren't very airtight, weather tight, and Topaz is in the middle of the desert and it has these real fierce winds, and so all of us suffered from the dust most of the year and then the cold in the winter.

Participants described in detail other inhumane living conditions such as having to use the bathroom or take a shower without any partitions and therefore, no privacy —this was frequently discussed as a significant source of humiliation. There was no running water or heat. Overall, participants described life in camps as a combination of repetitive day-to-day activities and constant feelings of fear and insecurity. While incarcerated, life was routine in many aspects. Respondents explained spending a significant amount of time waiting in line for essentially everything, as the camps were extremely crowded—to eat in the mess hall, to use the washroom facilities, to get clean water, and to participate in any activities. Students of school age continued to go to school and most interviewees felt that their education was adequate. Some adults worked low-paying jobs.

Many respondents highlighted the efforts the adults put into making incarceration as normal and tolerable as possible for the children and adolescents. Interviewees described participating in sports teams, various clubs, student organizations, and movie nights. Participant

C stated, “they tried to make life as normal as possible for us so it was good.” Participant H described how families worked to make homes more livable:

[The men] did all of this scrounging of materials to make the barracks more weather tight, to insulate, and I remember, soon every barrack entrance, you know they just had little wood steps up to your door, was decorated with something individual, people were trying to make it look like they were more like their homes.

Respondents also highlighted substantial changes to traditional family structure on a number of levels. The organization of camp life itself affected family structure. For example, adolescents would often eat in the mess halls with their friends, instead of with their parents. Some participants described more significant disruptions such as older siblings (with families of their own) being incarcerated in different camps or being relocated to other parts of the United States. Some interviewees experienced brothers and fathers being drafted or volunteering to fight for the United States—ironically, as the United States government was imprisoning their families. Additionally, Issei (first-generation) fathers and mothers lost their individual customary roles as primary breadwinners and homemakers (Nagata, Kim & Nguyen, 2015).

Participants were asked how they felt during the incarceration period. Respondents’ feelings during incarceration varied greatly. Some participants reported that because they were young and did not fully understand the situation or have any decision-making responsibility, they were relatively unworried. Participant B, who was incarcerated when she was seven shared, “My main memories are happy ones, I had three friends that I played with every single day, the three of us were in the same grade, in the winter time we played in the snow, I never had [seen snow]

of course, growing up in LA.” Similarly, Participant C, who was incarcerated when she was 13, said:

Well, I think that my view of camp was through these rose colored lenses of a teenager and so we didn’t worry about the future like our parents did, we didn’t worry about finances and we didn’t worry about what’s going to happen in the world outside camp, and we just, lived for the moment, and we enjoyed, you know, all the teenagers got together and it was kind of a carefree time.

However, other participants report feeling unsafe, confused and afraid throughout the experience. Participant E described his feeling around being imprisoned as a young age:

You look up early childhood development from birth to 5 to adolescent and the shit that I went through in a goddamn concentration camp, looking at world through barbed wire fencing, to the angry faces of white fucking guards that had their rifles, they didn’t look kindly upon us, they hated us! And so, Jesus Christ we are in this fucking cage and I go, my god, what they hell did we do?

The camps were closed in 1945, after President Roosevelt agreed with military recommendations that it was no longer necessary to imprison Japanese Americans. After being imprisoned for years, each person was given \$25 and put onto trains. Participants were then asked questions around what they did after being released from camp, how they felt individually and how they think the Japanese American people felt as a whole. Emotionally, participants expressed feeling anxious and afraid to re-enter society. Participant C summarized:

I think there was fear of the unknown, because we were away from the outside world for, some of us for about three years, and we didn’t know what was out there and especially in California, you know, there was such hostile feelings and a

lot of people said they never wanted us to come back, and so, there was just this anxiety about going back.

Practically, participants overwhelmingly responded that they and their families simply tried to begin rebuilding their lives. Some participants had homes to return to—which made reintegration easier in some ways—and others had no home to return to. Many had their possessions looted from homes or storage during their imprisonment. Most adults, many who had previously owned business or been successfully employed, had to find new employment, which was often low-paying work. Racism made it incredibly difficult to find both housing and employment. Some younger participants returned to the same schools they had attended before the war. Several participants worked as schoolgirls and schoolboys, which meant living in white families' homes as hired help in return for room and board, often in different cities than where their own families were living. Participants described experiencing racism to differing degrees: some (primarily those returning to diverse areas) reported that they did not experience a great deal of racism, while others report being targeted daily and suffering deeply.

While participants had varying post-incarceration experiences, the overall experience was the similar. Many families lost everything they had built for themselves including homes, businesses and jobs, land and personal possessions. Japanese Americans had been unjustly incarcerated based on racist war-hysteria and had lost their lives, as they knew them. All participants discussed sadness for their parent's generation and the losses they suffered.

Participant K stated:

Well, I think it was really hard on the Issei (first generation Japanese Americans) because they really lost everything. When they came back, they couldn't do

anything, had to work as house cleaners, doing menial work and I don't think they ever recovered from that.

Similarly, Participant F expressed:

I know it was a hardship for my parents, because it took them a long time to get back on their feet. You get everything taken away from you and you start from scratch and it's just hard. And then you have a bigger family and it's hard for them to get back on their feet, and my parents never actually bought a house in their lifetime, that's how bad it was. But they were never bitter, never taunted, or told us anything about it, or regretted anything that I know of.

While all participants talked about their grief for their parents, many also discussed the pride they felt in the way the Japanese American community worked to recover from being imprisoned. Most felt proud that the community was able to rebuild itself through hard work and saw evidence of this in their own families. When speaking about his parents, Participant H said:

“Oh I am sure that they had scars from internment, but had lived through the Great Depression before that, and gone through internment, the war, and I think they were just determined to use the time to develop a real life for themselves. And I don't know if you have ever heard the comment that many of the Japanese said they wanted to be more American than Americans, and I think they were like that, they were just, determined, they would build a life with a home, you know, settled and secure, within the time that they had.

Others related the determination of the Japanese American community to feeling pressure to prove their worth to the outside world, after being viewed as lesser than white Americans.

Participant I stated, “I think we still needed to kind of prove ourselves to feel equal to the other.”

While participants described incarceration experiences that varied in a multitude of ways, it is clear that each interviewee's life and the lives of their families were permanently changed as a result of the experience. All participants—who are American citizens—spent years of their lives incarcerated behind barbed wire and guarded by soldiers with guns, because they are of Japanese ancestry. The third section will explore some of the long-term psychological impacts this racially based trauma has had on participants.

Psychological Effects of Incarceration

This section examines some of the long-term psychological impacts of imprisonment on Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII. This research additionally focuses on how psychological effects relate to modern-day political and social contexts. This section is divided into five categories.

Decreased Feelings of Safety.

Participants were asked a series of questions around feelings of safety and security post incarceration. Interview questions focused on whether respondents believed being incarcerated again was a possibility, how confident respondents felt in their civil rights post incarceration and questions around feelings of equality and safety. While the majority of participants did not feel that Japanese Americans would be incarcerated again, most expressed a lack of confidence in civil rights in the United States. Additionally, many described lasting feelings of inequality and vulnerability.

Participant E stated that it was clear to him after being incarcerated that he did not have the same rights as white Americans and continued by expressing his lack of trust in the United States government:

You know, I use the example for people who can't understand what the hell I am talking about is when you trust a boyfriend or girlfriend that you are intimate with and you find out that motherfucker is cheating on you or telling shit about you and violates your trust in them that you told in confidence whatever, you say goddamn, how chicken shit can you be? You knew I told this is a sensitive thing, I told you in confidence and you go and blab it to all the other people, you son of a bitch, get the fuck away from me, don't ever call. You think you are going to forgive that fucker? Hell no! You are going to always remember, that son of a bitch, I want nothing to do with that fucker, and he really hurt me by violating my trust and confidence. Well I feel the same damn way!

During the interview, I followed up with a question to clarify that he was speaking about the United States government and he answered, "You are fucking right!" It is clear that Participant E is expressing an enduring lack of trust in the United States government based on his experience of civil rights violations. The inability to trust the government or feel secure in his civil rights has lasted throughout his life and affected his sense of legitimacy in the United States.

Many participants spoke of everyday occurrences that reminded them of the fragility of civil rights. Participant B described a post incarceration experience where she ran for secretary of her sixth grade class and her teacher Mrs. Smith, openly voted against her in favor of a white classmate:

I still won as secretary, which meant nothing, I did nothing, as officers we did nothing, but that was another experience like the camp about what America and democracy is about, it's about individual people who can make decisions and

impact people and I think the fact that I won, made me feel good, but it certainly did tell me that Mrs. Smith was a racist...[With regards to] civil rights and living in the United States, I felt that under the law I had equal protection, but whether it be FDR or Mrs. Smith, these laws are not necessarily upheld, it's an imperfect world.

Here, Participant B is stating her lack of trust in people in positions of power, from her sixth grade teacher to Franklin D. Roosevelt, the president who signed the Executive Order to incarcerate Japanese Americans. Similar to Participant E, based on her experience of race-based civil rights violations, Participant B has an understanding that those in authoritarian positions are not necessarily trustworthy or non-discriminatory.

Participant D expressed a similar skepticism in the protectiveness of civil rights in the United States. In describing her inability to access her civil rights during WWII, she stated, "I say we didn't have such thing as civil rights, you know, I mean, we might have but we never heard about it." When discussing the current state of civil rights in the United States, Participant D emphasized, "What is civil rights? It's got to the point, what are civil rights now? I would say, there is no civil rights." Like Participants B and E, Participant D is expressing lingering emotional effects resulting from her incarceration experience, evidenced in her perpetual distrust of the government and her belief that civil rights essentially do not exist in the United States for certain people.

Many participants expressed lasting feelings of insecurity and anger related to their incarceration experiences. Participant I described experiences of racism after returning from the prison camp:

Well they hadn't seen any Japanese for all those years right and here we are going to school there and some were nice but they are always people who called you "Jap" and things like that. They would pass by and say Jap and it made you want to crawl into a hole.... I felt safe, I think it just gave me a real complex though, you just felt like you weren't equal.

Participant I added that there would always be a part of her that has an "inferiority complex" and lasting feelings of inequality based on these experiences. Similarly, Participant E stated, "Psychologically, you know you are lesser than, you are a second class citizen. You don't have full rights." He later elaborated by highlighting the continual struggle of putting the pain of imprisonment behind him:

And when you are treated like less than a fucking snake, I mean goddamn what does that do for you as human being with feelings, you are red blooded human being like anybody else, you have your feelings, your pride, your intellect etc. you know? So you want to be left as a whole person but then like my friend said [about Japanese Americans who were incarcerated], we are all damaged goods.

Participant K discussed both lasting emotional consequences of the incarceration experience and concern for the state of civil rights. He recalled feeling emotionally triggered when the architecture firm that he worked for accepted a project working on state prisons in California. He said "Gee state prisons? That is kind of strange because I was like in a prison" and explained "It was strange because I was like a prisoner, [and later I had] to design and write the specs for these [prisons]." He later expressed that when he visited the prisons, he felt "really sorry for the people" and brought up this experience in relation to civil rights. Participant K expressed concern that the majority of inmates were black and Latino and his belief that this is

indicative that civil rights are “not too good today.” Here, Participant K is taking a step back from his own experience of civil rights violations and looking at how others are experiencing similar unjust treatment by the government.

While the majority of participants did not feel that Japanese Americans would be incarcerated again after WWII, they expressed a lack of confidence in civil rights based on racial discrimination and lasting feelings of insecurity, inequality and anger. Many participants emphasized that the incarceration experience has lessened their feelings of legitimacy as United States citizens.

Heightened Awareness of Racial Injustice. Participants were also asked whether they believed that the Japanese American community has a heightened awareness around instances of racial injustice. Many participants answered that they did believe Japanese Americans are more watchful based on their experiences during WWII. When discussing feelings of watchfulness, Participant H brought up a humanitarian issue that is currently going on in the United States—the imprisonment of Central American women and children in Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention Centers and the inhumane conditions and abuse they have faced. Participant H stated:

There is another example, of all these Latin American mothers and children that have been coming up [from Latin America]. They are kept in facilities for often months or years, waiting for a trial and the guards have abused some of them and it is like being in a prison, or relocation environment and who is speaking out against this?

Here, Participant H is explaining that innocent people are currently being imprisoned in the United States (in conditions similar to the prisons camps where Japanese Americans were

incarcerated) but that the general public is not aware or has not protested against it. He is identifying that such issues are issues that the he and others in the Japanese American community are more aware of as a result of their own experiences of incarceration. Similar to Participant H, Participant K also clarified that he felt his imprisonment experience heightened both his awareness and the general awareness of the Japanese American community around civil rights issues. When asked what he believed the lasting effects of camp have been on him, Participant K answered:

Well I think that mainly, it really helped me become aware of things and [to pay] attention to things. Things that happen to people, you know...I think most people really don't think about [civil rights violations] as much as we (Japanese Americans) do because we know how it is, having our civil rights taken away.

Participant K is articulating that because he had has his civil liberties violated previously, he is more cognizant of the fact that it could happen again. Participant L concurred with Participants K and H: when he was asked whether he believed the community had a heightened awareness, he answered, "I think so, I think people are more aware of it and more concerned about it and maybe internally react differently to it."

Overall, almost all of the respondents indicated that as a result of their incarceration, they experience continuing feelings of inequality, insecurity, a lack of trust in the United States government and the civil liberties it supposedly affords, anger, and heightened awareness of civil rights violations occurring in the United States.

Solidarity Across Racial Lines.

Participants were then asked whether they saw a connection between the experience of the Japanese American community during WWII and the experience of other minority groups

that experience civil rights violations and persecution in the public arena during times of perceived national security crises, such as Muslim and Arab Americans after September 11th. The majority of participants answered that they saw connection between the experience of Japanese Americans and other minority groups and that this connection led them to feel emotions such as empathy and sadness. Additionally, interviewees brought up feeling empathy and connection to several different minority groups including Muslim and Arab Americans in the U.S., Latinos in the U.S., Latina women and their children being held at U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention centers, Syrian refugees, and the black community in the United States. Generally, respondents felt their racial oppression helped them identify with current racial injustices.

Participant C summarized her connection to the Muslim community and her emotional reaction:

Well, I think that at the time of Pearl Harbor, you know, we looked like the enemy, so they treated us like the enemy, and that's the same thing that is happening with Muslims, they look like the "enemy" so they are treated like the enemy, and so, it makes it hard.... It makes me, sad that, you know, that, we still have such, hatred and we judge people based on such standards or whatever, and I don't know if it will ever end.

Similarly, Participant A expressed:

I am very sympathetic towards all those other people that are being treated so awfully and I am always praying for people like the Syrian people that are trying to leave and find peace and a safe place to live and nobody wants them. I don't know. It's hard you know? Nobody wanted us.

Evident in both Participant C and Participant A's statements is their identification with the experiences of U.S. Muslims and Syrian refugees being unfairly racially targeted, and the sadness this incurs.

A similar hopelessness around ubiquitous racism in the US is seen in Participant J's response when she was asked if she saw a connection between the Japanese American community's experience and the experience of other minority groups:

Oh yea, definitely! Actually, I think things have happened within the Muslim communities that we are just not aware of, but there have been lots of arrests and deportations, you know, not on the massive scale that they did it against us, but they have been under surveillance, I am pretty sure, but the thing is, the whole American experience, it started out as a racist society after all, from the very beginning when they came and decimated the Native Americans, and then when they brought Africans over as slaves, so white supremacy is built into the culture, and its been so woven into our culture that people are unconscious of it, but gee, the way it persists, how can it continue this way?

Participant J is also connecting the experiences of Muslim and Japanese Americans to the greater experience of minority groups living in United States: a society which was founded on white supremacy and struggles with addressing continuing racist systems of oppression. Participant F brought up the experience of the black community in the United States:

Oh yea, I feel sympathy towards [other minority groups]. It's bad when you, when you can't assimilate into the mainstream, because we stand out because we look different or we dress different or something. You know, I feel badly, I feel like

black people, they really get discriminated against, they get stopped by the police for no reason, just because of their color, I mean it's really terrible.

Overall, the majority of respondents felt a connection with other minority groups in the United States who have experienced a violation of their civil liberties, partially because they recognize the unjustness of their own experiences in others' stories. The interviewees independently identified numerous groups that they felt an experiential relationship to. Interviewees described feeling an empathetic connection to Muslim Americans, Latino/a Americans, Syrian refugees and the black community based on the racism or nationalism experienced by each group. These connections bring up feelings of sadness, hopelessness and empathy, indicating ongoing emotional effects of incarceration. In addition to demonstrating lasting psychological consequences, these findings indicate that modern day political contexts continue to interact with past traumas experienced by Japanese Americans who were incarcerated, constantly evoking reminders of the experience and subsequently, painful emotional reactions.

Repetition of History.

Many participants expressed the opinion that an event similar to the incarceration of Japanese Americans could happen again in the United States—not to Japanese Americans but to a current vulnerable minority group, such as Muslims Americans. In discussing this belief, several participants related the wartime hysteria and political opportunism that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans to the current political climate and rhetoric in the United States. Several participants discussed the role of fear of the general public as a primary factor in persecution of others and consequent mistreatment by the public and the government. In this statement, Participant B discusses the role of fear in the persecution of others:

I think when people are afraid, I think when people feel threatened it brings out the worst in us. I think with ISIS (Islamic State militant group) and terrorists and 9/11, the Paris bombings¹, the San Bernardino² thing, I think ordinary people feel scared, and I think people who would not under peaceful conditions, they wouldn't be so anti-immigration. But I think in times like this and in times like WWII, that the feeling of persecution, the desire of people who are not minorities to persecute, I think that becomes strong.... I think when people are really scared, when people feel truly threatened, and they felt threatened during WWII, I mean, Pearl Harbor got bombed, they thought California would get bombed, San Francisco had blackouts where they had to put dark stuff over their windows and such. I think when that kind of fear and threat is imminent, people act scared, people act defensive, people act mean. They don't act wisely.... I think the situation is very similar now to how it was during WWII.

Here, Participant B is connecting the experience of Japanese Americans during WWII to the experience of Muslim Americans in the United States today, with regards to fear and the impact it can have on rational decision-making. She offers her opinion that an event such as the incarceration of Japanese Americans could happen again in the United States.

I can certainly see now how something like that could happen. But I guess I don't really feel like Japanese Americans would be the victims, because we've made

¹ On November 11, 2015, Paris, France was struck by a series of coordinated attacks targeting a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars. The attacks left 130 dead and hundreds more wounded. The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for the attacks ("Paris Attacks", 2015).

² On December 2, 2015, a couple attacked a holiday party at the San Bernadino County Health Department and shot and killed 14 people and injured 22 more (Winton, 2016). It is believed that the couple acted alone but was inspired by the Islamic State militant group (Winton, 2016).

ourselves the model minority and we have people in Congress and we have people with some clout, but it's just a matter of chance who is going to get picked for it.

While Participant B is not concerned with the potential re-incarceration of Japanese Americans, she believes that based on the political climate of the time, incarceration or a similar event could happen to another minority group. In her previous statement, she identifies Muslim Americans as a potentially vulnerable group. Participant J also recognized Muslim Americans as a potentially vulnerable group based on the current national security fears of the nation:

I'm also aware that it very easily could happen again, so I feel like we should be vigilant about it, the politics of thing kind of thing. You're going to get crazies like those people in San Bernardino doing things like that and then you're going to get backlash, and it's a scary thing when people are willing to kill themselves, commit suicide to accomplish that sort of thing.

Both Participants B and J are connecting the increased willingness of the general public to scapegoat a visible "other" in times of perceived national security crisis. Participant C also highlights the increased willingness of the government to disregard the civil rights violations of citizens during times of perceived national security crisis:

When they rounded us up and put us into the camps, the main justification was military necessity, and so that military necessity trumped the Constitution. But, I don't really know what the people in Washington thought about the Constitution; they were just in panic mode. It is kind of scary, and people can find any justification.

In this statement, Participant C is identifying a feeling of fear based on the fact that the United States government blatantly disregarded its own citizens' civil rights instead of protecting them. Additionally, she is pointing out that it is frightening that the government can find justification to target a minority group at any time, without having to be accountable for their actions.

A few participants discussed their belief that not only is it possible that Muslim Americans could experience something similar to the incarceration of Japanese Americans but that it has already taken place in a different forms. When discussing constitutional and civil liberties issues with regards to the Muslim American community, Participant L stated "I think [the United States government] already [has] camps, I think they already have secret camps that they are not telling anybody about."

Many participants expressed that they think an event similar to the incarceration of Japanese Americans could happen again in the United States to different vulnerable minority group. A few participants opined that the government has already created secret prisons for Muslims Americans. While it is unclear whether such secret prisons do exist in the U.S., it is noteworthy that respondents believed it to be true—this opinion demonstrates that interviewees have lasting mistrust of the U.S. government, as they believe the government is capable of and willing to secretly imprison Muslim Americans. Participants also discussed the role of fear in the willingness of both the general public and the government to violate citizens' civil rights in times of perceived nation security crisis.

It should be noted that a few participants felt that it was unlikely that an event similar to the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans could happen in today's society. Participants gave a few reasons for this opinion including their feelings that civil rights are better protected today

and that because more civil rights organizers and advocates exist, people would stand up against any mass imprisonment. A few participants also felt it would be logistically impossible because of an increasing diverse society and the inability to distinguish different races, ethnicities and religions between people, whereas people tended to be mono-racial and lived in segregated communities during WWII.

Increased Activism and Community Empowerment.

Over half of participants discussed increased participation in activism related to their incarceration experience. There were multiple forms of activism mentioned by participants. Some examples include addressing instances of racism in an interviewees' personal life, creating a documentary on the incarceration experience of Japanese Americans, going to schools and giving educational talks, giving weekly talks at a museum, serving on the board of a museum at the Topaz camp, and contributing to books on the topic. Many respondents connected their dedication to differing forms of activism to their feeling that an event similar to imprisonment of Japanese Americans could happen again, especially as the American people remain largely ignorant around this part of history. Participant H discussed the importance of his practice of going into schools and talking about the incarceration of Japanese Americans:

My cousins and I go to the schools and try to talk on the Day of Remembrance, February 19th³ or on Fred Korematsu⁴ Day, to just talk about relocation because

³ On February 19th, 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which authorized the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Now, on February 19th the Japanese American community commemorates this event through a Day of Remembrance “as a reminder of the impact the incarceration experience has had on our families, our community, and our country. It is an opportunity to educate others on the fragility of civil liberties in times of crisis, and the importance of remaining vigilant in protecting the rights and freedoms of all” (“Day of Remembrance, 2016).

⁴ January 30th is Fred Korematsu Day. Fred T. Korematsu was a Japanese American citizen who at age 23, refused to go to the incarceration camps. He was arrested and convicted of disobeying the order, and appealed his case all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled against him, “arguing that incarceration was justified due to military necessity” (Fred T. Korematsu, 2016). The 1944 ruling of *Korematsu v. United States* still stands.

the school kids are just completely taken aback by that, they have never heard anything about it, and some of the schools have been nice enough to let us teach a one day lesson in that, and we always tell them that “Don’t think that this couldn’t happen again because just think of after 9/11 when there was several hundred incidents the next day of Muslim shop keepers or people who weren’t Muslim at all, who were just dark skinned like East Indians were beaten and robbed and treated badly, and how the Republicans, or I guess just Donald Trump, are talking about banning all Muslims from this country, and so we try to teach the kids, you know, this is still possible. You have to guard against it.

Here, Participant H articulates that as a result of his experience of imprisonment, he is committed to raising awareness around the history behind it and the potential for a similar event occurring again. He also comments on the American education system and the fact that the students he teaches are often completely unaware of such a significant historical event. Participant M also goes to schools to teach children. She explains her reason for doing this:

I think that it’s going to be a better learning experience for the students as we try to go to the schools and try to let them know [about what happened to Japanese Americans during WWII]. And also to try to make the students in the school realize that this could still happen again because there are people who are saying we should put certain groups of people in prison camps when we have these problems, that are worldwide, like an instance is 9/11. At that time, there were people who said “You know, we should put Arabs in prison camps” or “We shouldn’t allow people to come to the United States,” so we have to go to the schools to teach this.

In discussing her activism, Participant M acknowledged the difficulty in speaking out about her experiences based on cultural expectations to “not speak out like that...and not draw attention to yourself.” She then reiterated why she chooses to do it—“It’s the realization that it could happen again in the United States.” Similar to Participant H, Participant M relates her experience in a prison camp to her activism around educating the public about what happened and the potential of a similar event happening again to another minority group.

Participant L serves on the board of a museum at the former Topaz camp and describes his reason for participating in the museum and the goal behind the exhibits:

I think the intent is really to get people to think about what it means in terms of constitutional issues and civil liberties issues and civil rights issues and how the internment took all that away from a certain ethnic group. The [persecution of] Muslims is pretty important right now with Japanese Americans and we are fully committed to seeing this not happen again, despite whatever rhetoric is coming across from the politicians. ... And so I think that the intent of the museum is that when visitors get through looking through the exhibits and reading and seeing everything, that they have some better understanding of the constitutional issues that surrounded the whole question of incarceration. And that they come away thinking that this was wrong, and that, it shouldn’t—I keep using that term, because that is what everybody always says, “It shouldn’t happen again”—but if you don’t learn from this, it is going to happen again.

Like Participants H and M, Participant L expresses a desire to educate the public around the fragility of constitutional and civil liberties, especially for ethnic groups, which are more susceptible to persecution and vulnerable to the politics of fear. Participant L echoes the

sentiment expressed by Participants H and M—that if the general public consciousness is not raised, civil rights abuses will continue.

Several participants (Participants B, G, K) described occasions or regular practice of going to organized events in solidarity with the Muslim American community, demonstrating feelings of empathy and a commitment to activism and consciousness raising about what has transpired in the past when a minority group is persecuted in a times of war. Participant B explained going to a University of California Berkeley event over the years, which included both Muslim and Japanese Americans, and the feelings it evoked:

Well I feel a lot of empathy for [Muslim Americans in the United States].... UC Berkeley has a Nikkei student union, they just had their Day of Remembrance thing on Friday, and they have been inviting the Muslim student union to join them for the last few years. I wasn't able to go this year; my friends who went said that there were more Muslims than Nikkei there! But, yea, I can identify for them I can feel for them, I can sympathize for them.

It is noteworthy that the Nikkei student union invites the Muslim student union to an event that focuses on Japanese American incarceration during WWII—it suggests that there is trans-generational agreement that the experience of Muslim Americans today echoes in some way that of Japanese Americans from 70 years ago. For Japanese Americans who were imprisoned, it exemplifies their dedication to activism around this issue.

A few participants talked about the importance of addressing instances of racism in their personal lives as a form of activism that related to their incarceration experiences. These respondents connected everyday occurrences of racism to the larger systems of oppression that

allowed their civil liberties to be violated. Participant E described regularly challenging discourse that equates American with whiteness:

I mean it is so offensive when somebody says, “Well you know, my American friends [and they are referring to white people].” In fact, there was a hakujin (white) intern at our clinic, she said to me “I have an American friend and he loves sushi” and I said “I know what you are trying to say but be careful that you don’t make being Caucasian synonymous with being American and vice versa because I don’t have a goddamn drop of white blood in me but I am pureblooded American.” But to them, psychologically, no you are Chinese, you are Japanese, you are black, you are Mexican and the rest of us we are American, we are white.

Participant E expressed his anger and frustration that even decades after his experience of being imprisoned as an American citizen because of his race, it is still common to equate “white” and “American” and thereby simultaneously, identify minorities as “other” in the United States.

Participant E highlighted that such interactions impacted his sense of belonging. Comparably, Participant B explained the significance of being able to speak up about racism:

At a certain point in my life, I decided that if anybody said anything that was racist, I would stay up, and it was hard, and I think the first time I did it, I was getting a manicure, and some woman next to me was talking about the Japs and how they were, and I spoke up and I remember that my hands were shaking and I was so glad that my manicurist was holding my hands, so maybe the first half dozen times I spoke up it was scary, but that gave me kind of the courage to speak up for civil rights, to recognize my rights.

Like Participant E, Participant B made a conscious choice to engage in activism post-incarceration through confronting experiences of racism in her daily interactions with others.

Overall, participants articulated commitments to activism and education of the public with a strong mission to prevent an event like the incarceration of Japanese Americans from happening again. Many respondents highlighted the importance of raising consciousness around the civil rights violations that occurred during WWII and the continuing fragility of civil liberties today.

The Positionality of Japanese Americans. Several respondents discussed their feeling that as a group, Japanese Americans are in unique position to raise awareness around the potential for government-sanctioned persecution of a specific minority group. Participant M articulated:

I hear rhetoric on the news or when I read it in the paper, I think that it just reinforces the idea that the President of the United States is so able to sign an executive order so we need to make people realize how unfair our being sent to a prison camp was and we have to keep reinforcing and telling people that we can't allow this to happen again. So I think it's important for especially Japanese Americans, because we are such a special group to have had this experience that we really can be the ones that can speak out.

Participant M identifies that when she engages in activism it is from an exceptional position as an American who has had the experience of having her civil liberties stripped based on racist war-hysteria. She therefore hopes others may learn about her experience and become increasingly vigilant against such acts in the future. Participant H echoes her sentiments. When discussing why he goes to schools and talks to students about the Japanese American experience,

he stated, “I think that, we are trying to be the people who warn you that this could happen and that it’s really bad and shouldn’t happen and it is like being the canary in the coalmine, trying to warn people that this hasn’t gone away.”

Participant H also highlighted the commitment of the Japanese American community to civil rights organizations. He explained that his parents and many other Issei donated portions of their redress money to such organizations, “When President Reagan sent his apologies and gave every person \$20,000, I think [my parents] and many others contributed that money to [civil rights organizations]...I know my aunt contributed most of hers to the Japanese American Citizens League.”

In addition to expressing dedication to activism aimed at fighting injustice and bigotry, several respondents spoke about their feeling that Japanese Americans have a distinctive standing as an ethnic group that was scapegoated as a result of war hysteria and political opportunism. Some participants shared their hope that if they continue to speak out about their experiences, others will realize the tenuous position of some ethnic groups in the United States today.

Present-day Demagoguery and Xenophobia.

The salience of the 2016 presidential election—specifically the prevalence of racist, nationalist, and supremacist language used by Republican candidates—was an unexpected finding. The presidential primaries and caucuses coincided with the timeline of interviews conducted by this author. Some later interviews were conducted when Donald Trump had become the presumptive presidential nominee for the Republican Party. Many respondents discussed how rhetoric and policy ideas brought up by right-wing candidates affected them and

led to feelings of concern, fear and disbelief. Participant M emphasized the negative implications of Donald Trump's success when discussing the importance of a fair and effective government:

Right, so [because civil rights can be easily taken away by an Executive Order] we have to really understand what our government is doing, and we have to really be aware of what the president is thinking and what he's saying. It's important that we all carefully consider this next election that's coming up, because it's getting very bad, very contentious. And I never thought, that Donald Trump would be in the place that he would be today... I just thought of him more as a clown, but, he is resonating with a lot of people, and the people that support him are really out to, to win...[You don't know how many people will vote for Donald Trump in the presidential election], you just don't know that, and that's scary. I think there are a lot of very insecure people that are thinking only of themselves. It's very strange and it really bothers me. I'm getting really worried now, because I never thought we would be in this position today.

Participant M expressed fear, worry and disbelief several times throughout the interview around the idea that the presidential election had taken on such an ignorant and racist tone. Many other respondents expressed similar sentiments. When discussing the tone of the Republican primary and the use of politics of fear, Participant L stated "I think it is really dangerous, the kind of direction, at least a portion of American seems to be voicing...for this country to take that [anti-immigration] attitude is really bad." Similar to Participants M and L, Participant C brought up feelings of distress around current political events:

[Donald Trump] could become president. That's a really scary thought. With so many Republican nominees, you would think there would be a strong answer to

Trump. No one has stepped up and challenged him, I guess that's what happens, you get someone strong like that, they sort of manipulate people and get their way, and a lot of awful things can happen. Trump, is so open about [hateful rhetoric towards immigrants and minority groups] before, people may not have agreed with him, they would not come out and say these things, but now, he comes out and says all these hateful things, and it's become the norm now. Our country needs to really step up.

Both Participants C and M voice fear based on the possibility that someone who legitimizes hateful racist nationalist, anti-immigrant rhetoric may be elected to lead the country. As American citizens who have been wrongfully imprisoned as a result of such attitudes, they feel concerned about presidential candidates who so blatantly justify racist ideologies and policy proposals.

Participant E elaborated on similar feelings that he experienced during the 2016 presidential campaign:

Hell yes, I am very sensitive to [the racist rhetoric], all the shit that Donald Trump's been saying about the Mexicans, about China and Japan destroying us and all this shit. I take that personally, it is just the same old redneck shit you know. The Mexicans are fucking us and the Japanese and Chinese are screwing us. I don't know if you ever listened to him, I heard him say, you know the Chinese, they come over and they say, "WE WANT DEAL", he's talking like the old Indians supposedly did, "ME WANT DEAL" I mean how insensitive, how dumb, how stupid, he's talking about people who are ten times brighter than he is

and he is going to make them sound like they can't even speak the English language.

Like previous respondents, Participant E expresses that the prejudiced rhetoric being used on the national stage affects him deeply and personally offends him. He identifies that he is sensitive to such language as a result of his experiences of racism in the U.S.

About half of participants discussed the state of American politics and the prejudiced and bigoted tone of the 2016 presidential race. Respondents had visceral emotional responses to statements made by right-wing candidates about immigrants and minority groups. Overall, participants experienced the contemporary political rhetoric as frightening and frustrating. Respondents felt that their own experiences of racial oppression and civil rights violations were connected to xenophobic politics and were therefore, triggered by hearing similar statements made in contemporary politics.

Summary

Major findings from thirteen interviews with Japanese Americans who were imprisoned during WWII have been presented in this chapter. Results from the findings substantiate that formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans continue to experience long-term psychological consequences as a result of their imprisonment. Additionally, results demonstrate that Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response is triggered by witnessing prejudice experienced by other minority groups in the United States and also by a xenophobic political and social climate. However, results also indicate that in addition to these negative impacts, Japanese Americans' experience positive outcomes, including increased empathy between oppressed groups. Key findings from this chapter include decreased feelings of safety, solidarity across racial lines, repetition of history, increased activism and community empowerment and present-day

demagoguery and xenophobia. These findings provide data that supports existing literature and contributes to a deepening understanding of cultural trauma and the impacts of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. The following chapter will explore interpretations of the findings, present the strengths and limitations of the study, make suggestions for future research and discuss implications for the field of social work.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of racial trauma and civil rights violations on Japanese Americans' enduring sense of belonging and legitimacy in the United States. This study explored the long-term psychological impact of imprisonment on Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII and additionally, how the psychological effects are related to contemporary political and social contexts. The findings discussed in this chapter resulted from analysis of thirteen semi-structured qualitative interviews with Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII. This chapter will explore interpretations of the findings, present the strengths and limitations of the study, make suggestions for future research and discuss implications for the field of social work.

The major findings of this study are that formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans experience long-term psychological consequences as a result of their imprisonment experiences and that these psychological effects shape their perception of modern day political and social contexts. The major findings from the study fell into five major categories: 1) decreased feelings of safety 2) solidarity across racial lines 3) repetition of history 4) increased activism and community empowerment 5) present-day demagoguery and xenophobia. These major findings are generally supported in the existing literature. These findings contribute to the existing literature by expanding on the understanding of how Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response interacts with modern day social and political contexts. This study articulates that

Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response is triggered by witnessing prejudice experienced by other minority groups in the United States and also by a xenophobic political and social climate. However, this study also formulates that in addition to these negative impacts, Japanese Americans' experience positive outcomes, including increased empathy between oppressed groups. The following section will highlight how the five main categories compare with existing literature.

Key Findings and Relationship to Existing Literature

Decreased Sense of Safety. A key finding in this study was the decrease in Japanese Americans' feelings of safety and security post-incarceration, leading to decreased feelings of belonging and legitimacy in the United States. This finding manifested two primary ways: lasting feelings of inequality and vulnerability and an express lack of confidence in civil rights in the United States.

Participants in this study expressed lasting feelings of inequality and vulnerability and some emphasized that the incarceration experience has lessened their feelings of legitimacy as United States citizens. Participants discussed various ways in which such feelings have continued throughout their post-incarceration lives. Existing literature emphasizes these long-term psychological impacts of imprisonment. Previous qualitative research shows that Japanese Americans experienced increasing feelings of anger, bitterness and a sense of betrayal post-incarceration. (Nagata, Cheng, & Nguyen, 2012). Loo (1993) writes that Japanese Americans experience symptoms resulting from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, which results from Intentional Human Design (PTSD-IHD) and ascertains detachment and isolation, avoidance, self-blame, depression, lack of personal control, vulnerability and violation of basic beliefs as manifestations of PTSD-IHD and experienced by Japanese Americans who were incarcerated

(1993). A previous quantitative study found a “lingering sense of internment- related tension in the lives of former internees more than 50 years after incarceration” including that some Japanese Americans preferred/trusted other Japanese Americans over European Americans, indicating lasting feelings of suspicion and vulnerability (Nagata & Tsuru, 2007).

Participants additionally articulated a lack confidence in civil rights and trust in the U.S. government as a result of the incarceration experience. This finding is reflected in Loo’s identification of a violation of basic beliefs as manifestation of PTSD-IHD, elaborating that testimonials from formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans indicate feelings of anger, betrayal and “violation in basic belief in democratic principles” (1993, p.104). Not surprisingly, research also exposes a trans-generational impact in this area. A quantitative study of third generation Japanese Americans revealed that “Sansei who had parents who were interned felt less confident that their rights as Americans citizens would not be violated, thought it more likely that Japanese Americans could be interned again in this country if war were declared against Japan, and felt more uneasy singing the “Star Spangled Banner”” (Nagata 1990 as cited in Loo, 1993).

Existing literature supports my finding that Japanese Americans experienced decreased feelings of safety and security post-incarceration. Feelings of vulnerability, betrayal, lack of belief in the principles of democracy and anger have all been documented in previous literature (Loo, 1993, Mass, 1991, Nagata & Tsuru, 2007, Nagata, Cheng, & Nguyen, 2012). Participants’ responses highlighted a lack of confidence in civil rights based on racial discrimination and lasting feelings of insecurity and inequality.

Repetition of History & Present-day Demagoguery and Xenophobia. Two primary findings in this study—repetition of history and present-day demagoguery and xenophobia—

address the interaction of Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma experience with the contemporary social environment. Therefore, these findings will be discussed together.

A significant finding was the opinion that an event similar to the incarceration of Japanese Americans could happen again in the United States—not to Japanese Americans but to a current vulnerable minority group, such as Muslims Americans. Respondents related the xenophobia and political opportunism that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans to the current political climate and rhetoric in the United States. The impact of present-day demagoguery and xenophobia was an unexpected finding. Participants discussed the dominance of xenophobic and nationalist language used by Republican candidates during the 2016 presidential election and how such language led to feelings of anxiety, fear and disbelief.

Existing literature does not directly address these findings and therefore, neither supports nor refutes them. However, there are important themes in the literature, which relate directly to these findings. Existing literature has called for examination of the interaction of political and social contexts with formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans experiences of trauma. Nagata, Kim & Nguyen (2015) proposed that the “incarceration trauma response be viewed broadly, as a process that emerged over decades through the interaction of personal, intergenerational, and social forces. The process is relevant to social issues concerning the long-term effects of racial prejudice and discrimination, the interplay between personal experience and political context, and policies around national security” (p. 357). Nagata and Tsuru similarly elucidate the import of considering the ways that trauma continues to interact with the post trauma societal milieu (2007). Additionally, Nagata and Tsuru (2007) hypothesize that the resemblances between the experience of Japanese Americans during WWII and the current experience of Muslims Americans may be triggering for formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans.

As existing literature calls for an expansion of such research, this study contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of how Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response interacts continuously with modern day social and political contexts. This study articulates that Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response is impacted by witnessing negative experiences of other minority groups in the United States and also by a xenophobic political and social climate.

Solidarity Across Racial Lines & Increased Activism and Community

Empowerment. Lastly, because of the inherent relationship between the two, the findings of solidarity across racial lines and increased activism and community empowerment will be discussed together.

A central finding from this study is solidarity across racial lines: formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans identify a connection between their experiences and the experience of other targeted minority groups. Broadly, respondents felt their racial oppression helped them identify with current racial injustices. A related finding was that many formerly imprisoned Japanese Americans have deep commitments to activism and education of the public. Over half of participants discussed increased instances of activism related to their incarceration experience. Respondents highlighted the importance of raising consciousness around the civil rights violations that occurred during WWII and the continuing fragility of civil liberties. Several participants shared their hope that if they continue to speak out about their experiences, others will realize the tenuous position of some ethnic groups in the United States today.

I could not find literature, which specifically explored of increased feelings of racial solidarity. However, increased activism of the Japanese American community is well documented and exemplifies the implicit relationship to racial solidarity. The redress movement,

the movement to repeal Title II of McCarthy era's Internal Security Act of 1950⁵, activism around the treatment of both Iranians and Iranian Americans during the Iranian hostage period and similarly, the treatment of Arab American leaders during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf war are all examples of the commitment of the Japanese American community to activism (CWRIC, 1997, Nakinishi, 2009). All (except the movement for redress) were activist movements in solidarity with other minority groups. Today, Japanese American civil rights groups continue to organize against xenophobia, including anti-Muslim hate crimes and discrimination by the United States government, indicating a strong trans-generational impact of the experience of Japanese Americans during WWII ("JACL Stands With", 2015). This dedication to activism and across racial lines is echoed in my findings.

A meaningful conclusion from this research is that outcomes such as increased activism and empathy for other targeted minority groups have emerged from participants' experiences with incarceration and trauma. Some existing literature considers the ways that Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response interacts with the social environment—much of the literature focuses on how Japanese Americans may be negatively emotionally triggered by similar displays of racial injustice and targeting (Nagata and Tsuru, 2007). However, my research offers an additional perspective: Japanese Americans' response to their incarceration experience indicates positive outcomes including the extraordinary possibility of solidarity and empathy between oppressed groups. While participants did cite the triggering of their own traumatic experiences when witnessing the oppression of other groups, more importantly, this

⁵ Title II of McCarthy era's Internal Security Act of 1950 legalized the placement of American citizens into "concentration camps" by executive order justified by the previous incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII (Nakinishi, 2009). Civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Stokeley Carmichael, and H. Rap Brown were concerned about the possible use of such concentration camps in the United States during the late 1960's (Nakinishi, 2009, p. 64). In a show of solidarity with the black civil rights movement, Japanese Americans organized against considerable grassroots support within the community to begin a significant four-year battle to repeal Title II (Nakinishi, 2009, p. 64).

triggering led them to action, activism and solidarity. Overwhelmingly, participants felt that Japanese Americans as a group are no longer at risk for an event like mass incarceration; however, respondents indicated that they cared deeply about the social and political scene and its' impacts on other groups. This finding of dedication to activism, community empowerment, and empathy between minority groups is therefore a contribution to the literature.

Implications for Social Work Practice

This study highlights the importance of awareness around how modern day social and political contexts interact with Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response. The findings of this research support previous calls for the Japanese Americans incarceration trauma response to be viewed as an ever-changing progression that interacts continuously with the social environment (Nagata et al., 2015, Nagata & Tsuru, 2007, Nakinishi, 2009). This study therefore, emphasizes the importance for clinical social workers to view Japanese American's trauma response as fluid and as existing in relationship to the complex and multidimensional milieu around them. Increased education and training for clinical social workers is vital in this area.

The study also highlights that in addition to the negative impacts of the interaction of Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response and the social environment, positive impacts—such as solidarity and activism across racial lines—also result. These findings are central to the field of clinical social work as they offer implications for individual treatment with clients but also for macro-level social justice work, using a strengths-based perspective.

Deepening our understanding of collective race-based trauma in relation to modern-day political contexts is vital to the field of clinical social work and is applicable to other minority and immigrant groups. The United States is continuously at war and civil rights violations and war crimes continue against both American citizens and non-citizens in times of perceived

national security crisis. There are many populations that may seek treatment to address symptoms of race-based trauma resulting from persecution by the government and the public. Clients who have suffered as a result of both state-sanctioned racist policies and discrimination in their everyday lives must be offered treatment approaches that take the incredible complexity of these experiences into consideration.

This recommendation underscores the importance for clinical social workers to have sound knowledge of the history of those groups targeted by United States and their relationship to modern day political and social contexts. When practicing clinical social work it is fundamental to not only use a clinical, psychodynamic approach but also an understanding of the past and present marginalization of minority groups in the United States. A false dichotomy often exists between clinical social work practice and critique of larger social and economic systems (often which function as systems of oppression for minority groups).

Study Strengths and Limitations

This study had various strengths and limitations. Primarily, the limitations of the study are related to sample bias, including small sample size. While the sample size of thirteen participants meets qualitative research regulations, generalizability cannot be assumed. It should be noted that many more people reached out to me to be interviewed, however, due to time constraints and the requirements of this study, I was unable to interview them.

Despite limitations, this study highlights important narratives of formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans. Previous research has shown that one of the most pervasive consequences of the incarceration period is avoidance of speaking about the incarceration experience, both in inter-family communication and in communication with the outside world. There are many possible contributors to this widespread silence including echoing a common response to trauma,

shame or guilt, cultural style and values, and wanting to protect children and other families from the realities of the experience (Nagata, 1993). Because participants in this study were willing to discuss their experience to varying degrees, an increased level of self-reflection or processing of trauma may be suggested.

The study was successful in bringing forth narratives of formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans and their thoughts around how their experiences during WWII have continued to impact them throughout their lives. The structure of the interviews allowed participants the flexibility to share the parts of their rich stories that they found powerful and important. These interviews generated vivid, profound data, which allowed me to discern nuanced themes and findings. Additionally, many participants expressed their opinion in the value of this research. This author had the privilege of bearing witness to each participant's story of resilience, determination and courage.

Recommendations for Future Research

As previously noted, time and resources were a limiting factor in this research study. Research with Japanese Americans on this topic should be reproduced on a larger scale. It is significant that Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII are elderly now—the chance to hear their stories and learn from their experiences is fading.

Although this research adds to the literature on the relationship between race-based trauma and the modern day political and social climate, there is a significant need for continued research in this area. In addition to further research within the Japanese American community, the experience of other minority groups in the United States must be studied—collective group experiences with civil rights violations and the subsequent to relationship feelings of belonging and legitimacy must be examined to add to this research. Groups such as undocumented

immigrants and refugees all have unique experiences of trauma, which must be examined to shed further light on the interaction between race-based trauma and the social environment and the impact on the self.

The study emphasized that both negative and positive outcomes can result from an event like the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII: formerly imprisoned participants indicated effects such as decreased feelings of safety but also increased feelings of empathy, activism and community empowerment. The nuances between these experiences—including the possible reparative nature of activism work and racial solidarity —demands further study.

Conclusion

This study offers important insight into how Japanese Americans' incarceration trauma response interacts with modern-day political and social contexts and deepens the understanding around the long-term psychological impacts of imprisonment. Qualitative interviews revealed that Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII experienced decreased feelings of safety and security in the United States, believed that an event similar to the incarceration of Japanese Americans could happen again to another vulnerable minority group and were negatively impacted by the prevalence of xenophobia and nationalism in American politics. Additionally, the results indicated that formerly incarcerated Japanese Americans experienced increased dedication to activism and community empowerment and feelings of solidarity across racial lines. This study highlights how the systems designed to protect us—government, legislature and judicial—are often the systems that perpetrate violence, which has lasting individual, psychological and communal impacts.

Lastly, it's imperative that social workers grapple with our own history of responsibility in the incarceration of Japanese Americans. When the Japanese American community was forcibly incarcerated, social workers were involved in every aspect of the process (Park, 2008). Social workers "testified at congressional hearings held on the impending mass removal [Japanese Americans]" and "vetted, registered, counseled, and tagged all [Japanese American] families, along with their accompanying luggage" (Park, 2008, p. 448). Additionally, social workers helped process the intake of Japanese American families into incarceration camps, and also staffed administrative offices within the camps and resettlement centers after the incarceration period (Park, 2008, p. 448). As Park (2008) writes, "The history reminds the social work profession of the need for continued examination of the abiding tension between social control and social service inherent in the profession" (p. 449). Park offers a powerful conclusion: "Knowledge of social work's past, however discomfiting such knowledge may be, and critical analysis of its past actions and inactions are necessary preconditions to the formulation of present stances and future goals that seek, at least, to avoid past mistakes" p, 477).

As participants in this study identified, there are many groups in the United States currently being marginalized, oppressed and traumatized by our government's social and economic policies. Where is social work's voice in this? Are we pushing back on such policies and fighting for social justice? Or, as in the case of the incarceration of Japanese Americans, are we complicit or even participants in enacting such violence on communities? Social workers must remain vigilant and self-examining to understand our role in functioning systems of oppression, in order to resist and fight back against them.

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Appendix A- HSR Approval Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

January 21, 2016

Kyla Lew

Dear Kyla,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Andrew Jilani, Research Advisor

Appendix B- Recruitment Letter

Hello,

My name is Kyla Lew and I am a MSW student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am looking for participants in my Master's of Social Work research project, which explores the long-term psychological effects of race-based trauma on Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. If you are of Japanese ancestry and spent time in an internment camp, I would love to include your experience in my study. Participation would require one interview about 45 minutes to one hour in length and would be conducted in person or over the phone, depending on your preference. This study offers the chance for your story to be heard and included in research.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact via email at klew@smith.edu or call me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and I will provide you with additional information. Or, if you know of anyone who might be interested in participating in this study, please give that person my contact information.
Thank you very much for your time!

Best,
Kyla Lew

This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC).

Appendix C- Informed Consent Form

2015-2016

Consent to Participate in a Research Study Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA

.....
Title of Study: Understanding the long-term psychological effects of racial trauma on Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II

Investigator(s): Kyla Lew, Smith College School for Social Work
.....

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of the long-term psychological effects of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Japanese American who was interned during World War II.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is examine the psychological effects of racial trauma and civil rights violations on Japanese Americans who were interned during the World War II period
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my master's in social work degree
- Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: participate in one interview lasting from 45 minutes to one hour. The interview will be audio recorded

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study has the following risks: I will ask you about your experience before, during and after internment, which may raise emotional or difficult memories. You may choose to decline to answer any question or end the interview at any time if you are feeling distressed. I will provide you with a list of referral sources should you wish to seek support after the interview.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The benefits of participation are having an opportunity to share your story and have your experiences included in research.
- The benefits to social work/society are gaining a better understanding of the long-term psychological consequences of the Japanese American internment experience.

Confidentiality

- Your participation will be kept confidential. We will meet in a place of your choosing or speak over the phone if you prefer. I will not share your participation in the study with others. In addition, the records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. I will be the only person who has access to the recorded audio files, with the exception of a potential transcriber, who will sign a confidentiality agreement. Per federal regulations, the recordings will be deleted after three years
- All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments/gift

- You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* (up to the date noted below) without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely up to the point noted below. If you choose to withdraw, I will not use any of your information collected for this study. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by March 1, 2016. After that date, your information will be part of the thesis, dissertation or final report.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Kyla Lew at klew@smith.edu or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep. You will also be given a list of referrals and access information if you experience emotional issues related to your participation in this study.

.....
 Name of Participant (print): _____
 Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
 Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

1. I agree to be audio taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____
 Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
 Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____
 Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____
 Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC).

Appendix D- Sample Resource List

Mental Health Services In the Bay Area

Asian Community Mental Health Services: Provides comprehensive mental health services including individual and family therapy, support groups and more. Provides bi-cultural/bi-lingual services at some locations.

Alameda County: 310 8th Street, Suite 201, Oakland, CA 94607

P: 510.869.6000 | F: 510.268.0202

Non-local calls only: 888.878.0822

Contra Costa County 12240 San Pablo Avenue, Richmond, CA 94805

P: 510.970.9750 | F: 510.970.9751

Central County: 13847 E. 14th St. Ste. 116, San Leandro, CA 94578

P: 510.343.6211 | F: 510.268.0202

Richmond Area Multi Services (RAMS) Inc: Provides comprehensive mental health services including individual and family therapy, support groups and more. Provides bi-cultural/bi-lingual services.

3626 Balboa Street, San Francisco, CA 94121 T: 415-668-5955

Kimochi, Inc.: Provides culturally sensitive, Japanese language-based programs and services to seniors, including referral information

1715 Buchanan Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 T: 415-931-2294

* If you have any questions or need services that are not on this list contact klew@smith.edu or xxx-xxx-xxxx. I would be happy to assist you in finding further services.

Appendix E- Interview Guide

1. How old are you now?
2. How old were you at the time of internment?
3. Where was your family interned? Were you interned together or were you separated?
4. If you were separated how did you feel about it?
5. How were you informed that you would be moving to camps?
6. Do you remember personal or family possessions that you left behind?
7. Please tell me about the internment process —did the military come to your home, did you take trains or buses to assembly centers?
8. How did you feel during the initial days at the interment camps?
9. What was life in the camps like for you?
10. After internment ended, what did you do? How did you feel?
11. What strategies did you use to cope both during your experience in the camps and after? Did you use any spiritual or cultural practices? Did you talk with others about your experience or feelings surrounding internment?
12. Overall, how do you think people felt after internment?
13. Did you ever feel that being interned again was a possibility?
14. After internment, how confident did you feel in your civil rights living in the United States?
 - a. Follow up: Did you feel that as a Japanese American you had equal protection under the law or that you were safe from further persecution?
 - b. Follow up: Did this change over time?
15. Other minority groups have experienced civil rights violations and persecution in the public arena during times of perceived national security crises such as after the 9/11 attack.
 - a. Follow up: Do you see any connection between the experience of the Japanese American community during World War II and the experience of other immigrant groups?
 - b. Follow up: If so, how has this connection affected you emotionally? What has this brought up for you?
16. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

**Appendix F- Permission Note From Japan Exchange and Teaching Program Alumni
Association President Mark Frey**

1/16/2016

Smith College Mail - Permission note



Kyla Lew <klew@smith.edu>

Permission note

1 message

Mark Frey, JETAANC <mark.frey@jetaanc.org>
To: klew@smith.edu

Mon, Jan 11, 2016 at 6:29 PM

This note is to indicate that I have given Kyla Lew permission to recruit using the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association of Northern California for her Smith thesis.

Sincerely,
Mark Frey

Appendix G- Signed Transcriber Confidentiality Form

2015-2016

Volunteer or Professional Transcriber’s Assurance of Research Confidentiality Form

This thesis project is firmly committed to the principle that research confidentiality must be protected and to all of the ethics, values, and practical requirements for participant protection laid down by federal guidelines and by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee. In the service of this commitment:

- All volunteer and professional transcribers for this project shall sign this assurance of confidentiality.
- A volunteer or professional transcriber should be aware that the identity of participants in research studies is confidential information, as are identifying information about participants and individual responses to questions. The organizations participating in the study, the geographical location of the study, the method of participant recruitment, the subject matter of the study, and the hypotheses being tested are also be confidential information. Specific research findings and conclusions are also usually confidential until they have been published or presented in public.
- The researcher for this project, - Kyla Lew - shall be responsible for ensuring that all volunteer or professional transcribers handling data are instructed on procedures for keeping the data secure and maintaining all of the information in and about the study in confidence, and that that they have signed this pledge. At the end of the project, all materials shall be returned to the investigator for secure storage in accordance with federal guidelines.

PLEDGE

I hereby certify that I will maintain the confidentiality of all of the information from all studies with which I have involvement. I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to such information, except directly to the researcher, - Kyla Lew - for this project. I understand that violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, including termination of professional or volunteer services with the project, and may make me subject to criminal or civil penalties. I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

_____ Lexi Klupchak _____ Signature

_____ January 20, 2016 _____ Date

_____ Kyla Lew _____ *Name of researcher*

_____ January 20, 2016 _____ Date