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Engagement with Ethnic Practices: How Ethnic Communities Contribute to Second-Generation Asian American Assimilation

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

ENGAGEMENT WITH ETHNIC PRACTICES: HOW ETHNIC COMMUNITIES
CONTRIBUTE TO SECOND-GENERATION ASIAN AMERICAN ASSIMILATION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

BY

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I would also like to take this space to acknowledge that the institution I study and research at, Loyola University Chicago, occupies the ancestral homelands of the Council of the Three Fires (the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes). I recognize the descendants of these, and other North American tribes, continue to live and work on this land among us. The legacy of colonialization, genocide, and oppression still affects the lives of Native Americans, and I have a responsibility to understand and respect the past and present realities of local Native Americans and their connection to this land.

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on spatial assimilation has described ethnic enclaves as places with many recently arrived immigrants and fewer socioeconomic resources. As immigrants become more assimilated, they move to more affluent neighborhoods in proximity to Anglos. However, recent studies on resurgent ethnicity challenge the idea of the spatial assimilation by suggesting that Asian immigrants and subsequent generations continue to live near co-ethnics, despite gaining socioeconomic status. The transition from traditional ethnic enclaves to resurgent ethnic communities or ‘ethnoburbs’ indicate shifting understandings of what ethnic communities mean to Asian Americans. Although, Asian Americans are, on average, attaining higher socioeconomic status, the emergent importance of ethnic communities may still offer a social and physical space for engaging with ethnic practices. This indicates that Asian Americans are finding pathways to assimilation that allow them to retain their ethnic practices.

Spatial assimilation theory remains important when considering Asian American residential patterns. However, weakening links between suburbanization and acculturation, weakening native-born advantages, and the growth of suburban Asian communities indicate that Asian Americans may not fit as neatly into the spatial assimilation model as previously thought. As the population of second-generation Asian Americans grows, understanding how they engage with ethnic practices has broader implications for understanding assimilation within an American mainstream which embraces ethnic distinctions. This research addresses the question: **How do**

contemporary ethnic communities contribute to ethnic practices of second-generation Asian Americans?

I interviewed 20 second-generation Asian Americans and found that ethnic communities shaped how they were able to engage and maintain ethnic practices in a way that still allowed them to belong to the American mainstream. Many described that as they found ethnic communities, they felt a renewed sense of desire to reconnect with their ethnic practices and gained confidence in what it means to be Asian. However, moving forward many are looking for more diverse communities and see the importance of racial and cultural diversity in their friend groups and neighborhoods. Future research should expand the study population to include considerations for how Asian Americans, who are unable to assimilate, may engage with ethnic practices given their ethnic communities, or lack thereof. It is especially important to consider how those who are low income and have low socioeconomic status engage with ethnic practices in ways that do or do not lead to upward mobility and assimilation.

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I explore how ethnic communities contribute to engagement in ethnic practices for second-generation Asian Americans. Understanding how second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices has implications for broader contexts of assimilation and changing ideas about what it means to ‘be American.’ Previous studies on immigrant enclaves have defined them as areas with a high concentration of ethnic residents and lower socioeconomic status. Research suggests that immigrants will move to suburbs and areas with higher proximity to middle-whites as they assimilate. However, recent data shows that Asian Americans continue to live in communities where there are other Asians, despite socioeconomic gains. Little research has been done on what these contemporary ethnic communities mean for the maintenance of ethnic practices and Asian American acceptance into the American mainstream.

Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States. According to Pew Research Center (2013) the Asian American population in the United States will triple in size by 2050, growing more rapidly than the overall US population. This population growth will be primarily due to US born Asians and their descendants. By 2050, only 47% of Asians in the United States will be foreign born. Understandably, native born Asian Americans are far more likely than first generation Asian immigrants to see themselves as ‘typical Americans.’ However, with recent trends in co-ethnic habitation, primarily occurring in the suburbs, many native-born Asian Americans may feel that ‘being Asian’ is important again.

A key objective of this study is exploring how second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices, considering new ethnic communities. Given this understanding of ethnic practices, I explore assimilation to understand how second-generation Asian Americans find their place in an increasingly multiethnic American mainstream. In this study, I ask the research question: How do contemporary ethnic communities contribute to ethnic practices of second-generation Asian Americans?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnic Communities

Immigrant enclaves have typically been associated with the early stages of assimilation. They have been known to be less desirable neighborhoods, with many recently arrived immigrants, and fewer socioeconomic resources (Logan, Zhang, and Alba 2002). However, recent studies have shown that immigrant, ethnic, or co-ethnic communities no longer represent poor, unassimilated areas. Instead, ethnic neighborhoods may be based on choice not constraint (Logan et al. 2002; Zhou and Logan 1991). Choosing to live among other co-ethnics could indicate the emergent importance of ethnic practices to immigrant generations.

Spatial assimilation theory has generally been used to explain immigrant residential patterns. According to this theory, differences in socioeconomic status across racial and ethnic groups helps explain patterns of residential segregation (Alba and Logan 1991; Charles 2003; Logan and Alba 1995, Massey and Denton 1985). The spatial assimilation model posits that differences in socioeconomic status are key factors in residential segregation. Gaining education, occupational prestige, and income will result in greater racial residential integration. The relationship between higher socioeconomic status and lower segregation is particularly true for Asians, who have been able to move out of poor immigrant enclaves and into wealthier suburbs (Charles 2003; Iceland and Wilkies 2006; Lee and Kye 2016).

Relatedly, the place stratification model finds the persistence of prejudice and racial discrimination are the main factors which contribute to residential segregation and limit mobility. When controlled for class, Black Americans still have higher levels of segregation, suggesting

that racial prejudice and discrimination play a more prominent role in residential segregation (Charles 2003; Iceland and Wilkies 2006; Lee and Kye 2016). While this model does not necessarily explain outcomes for Asian Americans, it is useful to consider discrimination as a potential barrier to residential mobility, especially among new immigrants with less resources (e.g., see Fong 1996).

Asian immigrants have been perceived to fit into the spatial assimilation model because of their ability to integrate into more affluent suburbs with high proximity to Anglos, in proportion to their socioeconomic attainment. However, residential trends over the last three decades show that Asian Americans continue to live in ethnic communities, despite increasing socioeconomic status (Zhou and Logan 1991; Walton 2016; Vo and Danico 2004; Alba et al. 1999). This suggests that residential patterns may be due more to voluntary choice, rather than socioeconomic constraints (Zhou and Logan 1991). While ethnic communities were previously thought of as disadvantaged neighborhoods, it is apparent that they may offer benefits that continue to attract Asian Americans.

Furthermore, Asian immigrant enclaves are no longer constrained to cities as suburbanization has increased among Asians. These “ethnoburbs” offer the same amenities of a middle-class suburban neighborhood, while maintaining the comfort and resources of an ethnic community (Wen, Lauderdale, and Kandula 2009; Lee and Kye 2016). Spatial assimilation theory remains important when considering Asian American residential patterns. However, due to weakening links between suburbanization and acculturation, weakening native born advantages, and the growth of ethnoburbs, it seems that Asian Americans may not fit as neatly into the spatial assimilation model as previously thought (Lee and Kye 2016).

Instead, increased ethnic concentration in the suburbs indicate “resurgent ethnicity.” (Wen et al. 2009; Walton 2016). Resurgent ethnic communities, such as ethnoburbs, suggest that neighborhood preference for ethnic minorities can be explained by “in-group” preference, rather than “out-group” discrimination or limited resources and opportunities (Zhou and Logan 1991; Wen et al. 2009). In contrast to the discrimination and segregation that limits Black Americans’ residential mobility, research on resurgent ethnicity emphasizes socioeconomic advantages and residential preference, especially for Asians. However, it is also possible that Asian Americans prefer Asian majority neighborhoods because they perceive that they would experience discrimination in predominately white neighborhoods, despite having the ability to move into them (Patraporn and Kim 2022). These resurgent ethnic communities suggest social distinctions between ethnic groups is an important consideration for some Asian Americans. However, little research has been done on the impacts that resurgent ethnicity and new ethnic communities have on the development of ethnic practices for later generation Asian American.

Ethnic communities can offer supplemental educational institutions, Asian retail, and ethnic religious organizations. They allow a space for symbolic representation of culture, as well as social networks with other Asian ethnics (Walton 2016; Patraporn and Kim 2022). Those living in these communities may be able to better define and support their ethnic practices. These resurgent ethnic communities are shaped by the immigrant groups who move into them. They act as social agents, who determine the direction of their communities and affect the economic, cultural, and social landscape. (Vo and Danico 2004). More research must be done on how Asian immigrants and subsequent generations develop connections to ethnic practices and whether that is influenced by living in areas with strong Asian populations.

Assimilation

Previous theories on assimilation assumed that it was a one-sided process whereby immigrants lost their ethnic practices and moved towards an American mainstream exemplified by white middle-class Protestants (Gordon 1964). Instead, assimilation is much more nuanced than a one-sided process. More recent assimilation theories now suggest that assimilation not only changes immigrants to become more American, but in the process, immigrants change what American culture and society is itself. Although assimilation is still driven by the desire for immigrants to advance their socioeconomic position in society, the American mainstream that was previously thought of as static, actually changes in response to the presence and choices of immigrants and subsequent generations (Alba and Nee 2005; Yinger 1985).

Assimilation is often understood through dimensions such as language, socioeconomic position, interracial marriage, and residential change (Alba and Nee 2005). The acceptance of certain minorities, more opportunities for upward socioeconomic mobility, and institutional change, have all furthered the assimilation process for specific groups. For immigrants who are largely able to integrate into the American mainstream, ethnic practices do not disappear. Instead, ethnic practices become a meaningful source of social distinction and boundary construction, but they are largely reduced to a symbolic importance (Alba and Nee 2005). As the population of immigrants grows, assimilation theory considers how embracing ethnic practices does not necessarily mean immigrants no longer move towards an American mainstream. Instead, segmented assimilation theory suggests that second-generation immigrants can assimilate in ways which retain ethnic practices. The second-generation are creating new pathways to upward mobility and 'becoming American' within a multiethnic American

mainstream that is shifting to accommodate these ethnic practices (Portes and Zhou 1993; Alba and Nee 2005).

Furthermore, ethnic practices do not lose their significance as social distinctions. Some Asian Americans continue to engage in them despite assimilating in terms of socioeconomic status and rates of interracial marriage. Past research suggests that while Asian Americans may be able to structurally assimilate, they still face social discrimination (Tuan 1998; Park 2008; Lee and Kye 2016). This discrimination can lead to a reconfiguration of ethnic practices to better fit the symbolic distinctions sought by second-generation Asian Americans. The way second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices reaffirm and define ethnic boundaries in a way that allows them to continue being a part of the American mainstream (Tuan 1998; Alba and Nee 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993).

Recent literature indicates that ethnic practices rooted in institutions and communities can strengthen the connection and maintenance of these practices for later generation Asian Americans. The persistence of ethnic practices, despite increasing assimilation, indicates shifting understandings of the American mainstream. Subsequently, within this new American mainstream that allows for ethnic distinction, maintaining ethnic practices does not stop integration into American culture (Telles and Sue 2019; Tuan 1998).

In particular, socioeconomic status is important as marker of assimilation because it indicates increased upward mobility through occupation, income, and class. Asian Americans are a distinctive immigrant group because, as a whole, their socioeconomic circumstances are not substantially lower than whites (Sakamoto, Goyette, and Kim 2006; Tuan 1998). Especially when considering education and income, Asian Americans are perceived to be on par or even surpassing whites (Sakamoto et. al 2006; Tuan 1998). However, it is important to note that

broadly generalizing high Asian American educational achievement, erases distinctions based on country of origin and for those whose assimilation pathway is impacted by being from low socioeconomic status backgrounds (Sakamoto et. al 2006). Nonetheless, assessing ethnic practices for Asian Americans who have higher socioeconomic status, allows for an understanding of the form that ethnic practices take, when considering the assimilation process and what that means for belonging to the American mainstream.

While concentrated ethnic enclaves have typically been categorized by low socioeconomic status, new trends in ethnic co-habitation indicate contact with other Asians provides Asian Americans with better support, resources, and/or social networks that are in line with their priorities and values (Walton 2016; Patraporn and Kim 2022). Past research has indicated that Asian, especially Vietnamese, ethnic communities can act as a form of social capital and social control that supports second-generation immigrants and counters the negative outcomes expected from their parents' low socioeconomic status (Walton 2016; Patraporn and Kim 2022; Zhou and Bankston 1998; Portes and Zhou 1993). However, ethnic communities could also foster an environment that constantly scrutinizes behavior and excludes those who exhibit behavior outside of what is accepted by the community (Zhou and Bankston 1998).

While previous research on resurgent ethnicity and spatial assimilation has primarily focused on identifying trends in neighborhood change for immigrant groups, this study examines how ethnic communities allow second-generation Asian Americans to engage in ethnic practices using qualitative methods. Ethnoburbs may affect the way second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices. Considering the growing population of Asian Americans and the emergent importance of ethnic cohabitation for Asians, I explore how ethnic communities impact ethnic practices for second-generation Asian Americans. I do this through considering

dimensions of assimilation and what it means to be a part of the American mainstream. The loss of native language and rise of interracial marriage, socioeconomic status, and residential integration could indicate weakening individual ethnicity and ethnic social distinctions as immigrants 'become more American.' This research addresses the question: How do contemporary ethnic communities contribute to ethnic practices of second-generation Asian Americans?

METHODOLOGY

To gain access to a population of second-generation Asian Americans, I conducted a snowball sample that leveraged personal networks to recruit 20 participants. I initially reached out to several Asian cultural organizations based out of a Chicago-area university. With the help of outreach from these organizations, I recruited several initial participants, who then each asked 2 personal connections if they would be willing to participate in my study. I conducted 1-hour semi-structured interviews over the Fall of 2022.

I interviewed 20 second-generation Asian Americans between the ages of 18 and 23. Each participant had at least one parent or guardian who was born in an Asian country and emigrated to the United States. The participants represented 8 different countries: The Philippines, China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Korea. 15 grew up in suburban areas, 4 in rural areas, and 2 in urban areas. Of the participants, 18 were currently or previously involved with Asian multicultural organizations. Full participant profiles can be found in Appendix B.

I analyzed my interview data using Nvivo to thematically code. I created attribute codes for 'gender,' 'age,' 'parents' native country,' 'ethnicity,' 'parents' education,' 'participant education,' 'current residence,' 'childhood residence,' 'part of cultural organization,' and 'future community.' I created a coding scheme and open coded to identify patterns in the data, focusing primarily on three larger codes for 'assimilation,' 'community,' and 'ethnic identity.' My full codebook can be found in Appendix C.

FINDINGS

Introduction

Communities, family, and friends shape the way that second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices. Many of the participants grew up in suburbs that were predominantly comprised of white Americans, which influenced how they were able to engage in ethnic practices. Priya, who is Indian American, described how many viewed ‘fitting in’ and engaging with their culture, “I feel like it comes from self hatred. You're trying to fit in so hard that you hate on your own culture.” Participants described how in order to ‘whitewash’ themselves, or ‘become more American,’ so to speak, they distanced themselves from ethnic practices to fit in better with their classmates. Although, some participants who grew up with stronger Asian communities were better connected to certain ethnic practices, they nonetheless felt the same pressure to ‘fit in’ with other Americans. Those who grew up with Asian communities mostly found them through parents or family, religious organizations, and a few described clubs at school focused on Asians. Asian communities offered resources that helped strengthen ethnic practices, such as grocery stores, language schools, and churches. Those who grew up without these kinds of resources would describe them more as a ‘luxury’ that they had to make a conscious effort to seek out.

As second-generation Asian Americans entered transition periods in their lives such as moving to new environments, new schools, and new cities, many described the process of becoming more interested in positively and actively investing in connecting to Asian culture and ethnicity. Almost all participants described this development as a process they underwent when

they were able to find communities of other Asians. These ‘found’ communities were most often multicultural organizations on their college campuses or ethnic neighborhoods in the city. The proximity to Asian communities allowed them easier access to learning and engaging in ethnic practices.

As they entered and exited Asian communities, their relationships to ethnic practices changed over time. I compared second-generation Asian Americans who did and did not grow up in Asian ethnic communities to understand the role that their communities had on the development of Asian ethnic practices. I also compared the communities where they grew up to their current communities, in order to see the process through which second-generation Asian Americans found new Asian communities and maintained or regained ethnic practices. I examined their interaction with ethnic practices such as religion, language, food, physical appearance, media, and interracial marriage. Through analyzing how communities impact these ethnic practices, I seek to explore Asian American assimilation, considering shifting understandings of what it means to be Asian and American.

Community on Education and Upward Mobility

An important factor of assimilation is the ability to gain socioeconomic status and upward mobility. In this sample, all the participants were college students or recent graduates, which already put them at a socioeconomic advantage. For these participants, education is emphasized by parents and Asian communities as a pathway to upward mobility and higher socioeconomic status. However, it was not apparent how predominantly white communities influenced socioeconomic outcomes. The desire for achievement could be true of all immigrants or even middle-class Americans, not just specific to Asian American culture.

For most immigrants, regardless of race or ethnicity, the desire for upward mobility defines the assimilation process. This immigrant value holds true for Asian American families. Participants described how their parents encouraged good grades and getting into a good university as a pathway to upward socioeconomic mobility. Jennifer, a Vietnamese American, said, "Education, out of all the factors, education is the top most factor in my family because, as immigrants, they said the fastest route to gaining prestige and success is through education, and just that it's so valuable." Immigrant parents sometimes enforced a mindset that put education first and everything else second. Nightly, who is Chinese American, said:

There was always a mindset of prepare for the worse, even if that might not happen, it's like prepare for the worst, learn your skills, stay in school, get a degree and you will have more job opportunity provided to you versus if you just fool around, hang out with friends all day and don't work on yourself. So it was a lot of prioritizing of skills and your ability versus social life or going out and stuff. It's always get good grades at school, don't do stuff, don't stay after this, don't do this, yeah the whole list, don't get a boyfriend, don't get a boyfriend until you're working in the workforce.

For her parents, education and working came first and socializing was just a distraction.

Furthermore, there was an element of sacrifice that colored the immigrant story and influenced how the participants understood their position in relation to their parents. Amanda, a Filipino American, described the comparison her parents made between her and Americans who were not from immigrant families.

I guess with my studies, they say we came here to the US so you can have a better education, so you'll have a better foundation than if we had raised you in the Philippines. And sometimes they'll do comparisons like you should be trying to work harder because of the foundation and the education that you have in the US.

Similarly, Kyle, a Sri-Lankan American, described how even without external pressure, knowing that his parents sacrificed so much to come to America inspired him and made him work harder in his studies.

I think it [parents' immigrant experience] inspires me a lot. Like it definitely motivates me to push harder. I think there are nights at like 2 or 3 AM, where I'm grinding for Gen Chem final and I'll just think about if my parents made it out, then I could do it. Because they definitely had a rougher childhood growing up.

Some also identified, not only how their parents' sacrifice pushed them to work harder, but how it also allowed them more freedom to choose their own paths in their education. Emma, who is Pakistani American, said:

I see that they, just being immigrants, they had to sacrifice so much just to come here. And I think about how my life would be different if they never did. Because I know that what I'm majoring in right now is something that I'm passionate about. And I know that my parents never really had that chance, that they kind of just had to go into engineering because it was like a quick way to make money to feed a family and to make sure that I grew up doing what I wanted to.

Furthermore, coming from a low-income family, Nightly described the way she struggled to take care of her own education without help from her parents.

There's the Asian American experience where their parents are immigrants. So the child is the one doing all the translating, they're the one doing the parenting, they're like basically the third parent for their siblings or like a replacement for the parents. And also the fact that they do not get to experience making friends or hanging out with people, they have to go to their family's business and help out every single day and then their life is around family, at work, and school, and that's it. I would say there's a lot of stuff where, you have to find out for yourself like FAFSA, college applications, and working your way up from the very bottom, from 0. Your parents can't help you because they're in a new country, they don't know what's going on in here.

Nightly touched on the role that class can play in defining assimilation trajectories, especially in terms of education. Being low-income, having to help her parents, taking care of siblings, working at her family's business, and taking care of her education was an immense challenge that could have derailed her pathway to upward mobility. She compared her experiences to one she described as an Asian American whose parents came to the US with education and money.

Like the rich, corporate family would have their kids learning about piano, violin all that stuff and then they'll be put into high social circles, where they're attending higher events,

making connections and networking with people of the same or higher status, and then they already have their life goal set out because their parents set them up for success.

Although she drew a compelling comparison between her situation and one of someone of a higher class, it is difficult to know whether her description is fully accurate without further research and data.

Hera, who is Korean, also defined herself as low-income and a first-generation college student. Her parents were not able to provide support to her education. Instead, she found support in her Asian community. She described how her Korean church would provide connections to mentors who helped her with applying to college and her career path.

I found a lot of mentors for how I should handle college, or there is a doctor that is actually my primary care physician that goes to my church, and for me I'm pre-med, so I get a lot of my info, or tips that way. So for me it helps me in the educational aspect. Yeah, just having people to confide in that stuff as well.

As a first-generation college student, Hera relied on her community to guide and support her. Having resources and mentors who helped her with processes like applying for college, likely influenced her ability to make steps toward educational attainment and upward mobility.

The pressure to be high achievers imposed high expectations on Asian Americans, who often felt they could not meet them. Angela, who is Chinese American, described these pressures coming from both white Americans and from within her Asian community.

I grew up having a few Asian friends, from my church and stuff. And they have always been really smart kids. And then, like, when I was applying for colleges, they're like, oh, you should apply to Wash U. I'm like, um, you have an ACT of 34, I have a 22. I don't think I should do that. But they kind of just expect me to be extremely smart because I'm Asian. And there's been so many times that I've had white people tell me you're Asian, aren't you supposed to be smart and stuff? And it's really hard for me to hear that. Because I feel like I'm not living up to people's expectations.

Being compared against other Asians who did better in school and were able to attend more prestigious universities was a common experience for many of the participants. Doing poorly in

school left many struggling to understand how they fit into societal, community, and familial expectations.

The participants described that higher education and career goals were influenced by values from family and Asian communities. For those like Emma, having parents who were able to provide financial support positively impacted the ability to choose her educational and career path. Asian communities also impacted outcomes by offering a place for connection with mentors and resources for educational attainment. However, these communities can create negative comparisons and expectations for those like Angela, who did not fit into the ‘high achiever’ narrative.

Community on Religion

Those who grew up with Asian communities most commonly belonged to religious organizations that specifically catered to their ethnicity. One Indian American woman said, “I’m Catholic, we kind of have our own community of Indian Catholic people so that was kind of my community growing up, even though I still lived in a very white suburb.” Interestingly, religious communities were the only kind of Asian community that the participants described existed in or near predominantly white areas. Other kinds of Asian organizations, like multicultural groups or community centers, existed in areas where there was already an ethnic community with a high population of Asians.

Many of the Filipino-American participants I spoke to told me that the Catholic church was integral to Filipino culture, and thus religious communities were the main space for engaging with ethnic practices. Kay explained to me:

I’m not sure what year but when the Philippines was originally colonized by the Spanish, they brought Catholicism with them, and because of that it became very ingrained in the

culture because obviously colonization. And so it became integral with Filipino culture, it's very integral to what it is like to be Filipino.

However, forming a community around religion and conceptualizing religion as an ethnic practice can lead to more uncomfortable realizations or experiences. Angela described how her religious community was also her Asian community, but some of the difficulties with those being tied together.

It was actually my uncle who brought me to church at an early age. It was nice to see more Asian people around me just because where I live, there was just so many white people, there were barely any Asians, there was only one other Asian girl in my grade. And it was really nice to have that community but at the same time, I found as I got older, my church was kind of toxic in a way, so I stopped going for a while. And when I came back, I tried to come back, it was kind of hard for me to connect with everyone again. It was nice to still be able to see more Asian people around me, but it was also hard because I couldn't connect with them on a religious level, just because of what some of them believed in and what I didn't.

Rose was able to articulate both the acceptance and tension in Kay and Angela's experiences with religion and religious community.

One of the things with Filipino cultures is a lot of it is intertwined with the church, which growing up I loved but as I've gotten older that sentiment has changed. So it's hard coming to terms with my relationship with my culture and my relationship with the church when they're so intertwined.

Although those involved in religious organizations saw the benefits and resources catered to a specific Asian religious community and the potential for connecting more deeply to their ethnic practices, some also described troubles with religion itself. Those like Angela and Rose faced the struggle of leaving their religious community when it is an organization so integral to practicing ethnic customs. Although practicing religion allows for deeper connection to ethnic practices in an Asian community, the participants described how personal values may conflict with their belonging to the church.

Community on Language

An ethnic practice that many participants brought up was their parents' native language and their ability – or inability – to speak it. Only a few were able to maintain language fluency into adulthood, while most never learned or lost the ability to speak fluently. Language as an ethnic practice is unique because it is a skill that proved very difficult to master for those who wished to learn later in life.

Anika, who is Indian American, told me: “Growing up, I feel like I would whitewash myself a lot, and just kind of like dumb it down a little just to kind of fit in.” By “dumb it down” she is referring to ethnic practices. For Anika, practicing and speaking Malayalam was one of the practices that she distanced herself from in an effort to seem ‘more American.’ She said, “Oh, I have to speak English, I have to learn English, you know, I have to speak as much as I can to fit in more. So then I would lose those Malayalam skills.” Almost all the participants described experiences with their parents' native language. The diverse ways these second-generation Asian Americans did or did not learn their parents' language depended not only on the community they grew up in, but also how their parents viewed language as well. While some, like Anika, felt that they wanted to embrace English to fit in better with American classmates, others were not even given the opportunity to learn their parents' language.

Some parents encouraged speaking English and discouraged their children from learning their native language to push them towards assimilation. Beth, who is Filipino American, described her experience trying to learn Tagalog growing up and how her parents influenced her.

I think they had the mindset that since we were in America there was no point. They're like you should learn English. Because I think when I did try learning, I remember specifically, I had a little notebook when I was younger, and I was like, oh, I'm writing these Tagalog words that you guys are saying and then my mom was like there's no point because you have an English accent. They're not going to – like people in the Philippines

– are going to know that you're American anyways. So then from there like, I just stopped learning.

Beth's parents did not feel that learning Tagalog was useful or worth it since she would never be a native speaker, illustrating how her parents not only viewed language as a tool of assimilation, but as an indicator and determinant of Beth's distance from her ancestral roots. Another Filipino American woman, Katie, told me, "I know a lot of Filipinos just choose to not teach Tagalog because they want their kids to assimilate."

Not only were the participants discouraged from speaking their native language by social pressures at school and at home, but there was often no community in which to practice and speak their language conversationally. Sometimes family was the only place that second-generation Asian Americans could learn and practice speaking. This was especially difficult for those like Beth and Katie, whose parents actively discouraged their children from learning their language.

For certain Asian immigrant groups in areas with weak Asian communities, the option of learning or practicing their language was not available because there were no resources or structure in place. Amanda, told me, "[my parents] did not teach [Tagalog] to me and I didn't have any classes. I actually have never heard of any Tagalog classes around here. I've always heard of like Korean and Japanese and Mandarin. But I've never heard of any Tagalog classes." Thus, in Amanda's case it seemed that it was not just the presence of other Asians more broadly that impacted ethnic practices like language, but also the fact that there were no Filipinos specifically, which resulted in a lack of resources to connect with ethnic practices in the first place.

Those who were fluent or could speak some of their parents' language often learned it from family and were able to maintain their language skills into adulthood because of the ability to practice with others. Hera, who grew in a mixed Asian and white community, described how her Korean community at church was one of the ways she was able to maintain her Korean speaking skills, "now at church and everything, I do speak Korean to a lot of elders, or even just people my age. They like to depend on me a lot, people who are exchange students specifically do depend on me a lot to help them get integrated into the community." Those like Hera who were able to speak fluently described feeling proud of maintaining her ethnic practices. She said, "it's respectful for me to speak with [my parents] in Korean, just as a principle, and I think so, too, just as like a preservation of our culture." Similarly, Emma said "[speaking Urdu] makes you feel more Pakistani, I feel like I'm more in touch with my roots."

Being in college and away from family, some participants expressed the value of their ethnic community by how it 'feels like home.' Jennifer described this sentiment through how she is able to practice speaking Vietnamese with other community members.

Once I find my community, I can speak in Viet, because I feel like when I speak in Viet it just hits different, I don't know how to describe it, but it hits different when I speak in Viet. And having people who speak the same language as me and we express and we gossip and all that stuff, it just feels like home to me because I do live 5 hours away so I'm missing that sense of home where I can speak with my family. So having a Viet community here, I can speak Viet. It also helps reinforce my identity and I'm home; like this is my second home.

Proximity to communities where second-generation Asian Americans could practice their language also allowed them to begin the process of (re)learning their parents' native language. Anika described how since moving to college she has been able to engage with other Indian people and pick up more Malayalam through her interactions with them.

All of them would speak [Malayalam] colloquially with their parents all the time and I wanted to get better. So randomly there'd be days, so not all the time, but just random days, where I would just say something [in Malayalam], and they'd be like, oh my god and then they would just teach me you know.

However, the ability to relearn their lost languages proved very difficult for many people. They described coming to terms with not being fluent and embracing that being 'American' may mean that they cannot speak their parents' language perfectly, but that this does not make them any less Asian. Beth, who does not speak Tagalog fluently, described her thoughts on language as a factor of her culture:

I mean as an individual myself that doesn't speak the language, I definitely think, I mean it is a factor of culture, but it doesn't mean that you're excluded from culture if you don't know how to speak it. Because I've actually met a lot of Asian Americans in general, not just Filipinos, that don't speak their cultural language and I definitely think it's justifiable, because sometimes parents just don't teach it or sometimes it's just hard to learn, especially if you're not born in that country. I think that it's a component of culture. But at the same time if you don't know it, it doesn't necessarily exclude you from being a part of that culture.

While those who were fluent, like Hera and Emma, described feeling more connected to their ethnicity through the ability to practice their language, many, like Beth, emphasized that speaking their parents' native language is not a requirement to the experience of being Asian or that it makes one less in touch with their culture.

Almost all participants brought up language as a way that they do or do not feel connected to their culture. Those who grew up in areas with no Asian community had difficulty fostering strong language skills because they lacked the physical and social space to practice and learn. Some felt pressured to lose their language skills through socialization with their white classmates, while others had parents who wanted them to integrate more into American society and did not feel the need to teach their children their language. As they found ethnic communities later in life, many participants described trying to relearn their parents' language.

Although they may be putting in the effort to reconnect with language, they still struggle with language fluency and are coming to terms with the realization that their language skills may never be perfect. While those who were fluent emphasized the benefits of being fluent, many also expressed that those who are not fluent are not ‘less Asian’ indicating a more symbolic meaning for language fluency as an ethnic boundary (Alba and Nee 2005).

Community on Outward Displays of Culture

Where the participants grew up also impacted the way they outwardly displayed ethnic practices such as food, popular media, and physical beauty. Almost all participants described similar stories of being bullied or having commentary made to them for bringing Asian food for school lunch. Lauren, who is Vietnamese American, said:

It was crazy because it was my senior year of high school, I had a white girl, who was a friend of mine, say my food smelled like dog shit. They all knew that that was what my grandmother had made me. It was good. It was literally *Xoi Ga* [Vietnamese sticky rice with chicken], she said it smelled like dog shit, and I sat there and I shriveled up.

Although Lauren grew up in an area with a high population of Asians, her most salient experiences of race and ethnicity were formed through negative experiences with white classmates. The idea of a ‘white American’ mainstream influenced even those who grew up in Asian areas. For all participants, regardless of whether they grew up in white or Asian communities, experiences like Lauren’s with school lunch was not an uncommon one. Beth, who grew up in a white-middle class neighborhood, described not wanting to bring her father’s Filipino food to school because it smelled. When she described this experience, she ended by saying, “I just didn’t want to be seen performing these, what is so called Filipino customs, in front of these white Americans, because I want to present myself as them.” To fit in better with American classmates, second-generation Asian Americans would often give up their Asian food,

even if they did like it, for something that better fit what their classmates saw as ‘normal lunch.’

Jennifer said:

I felt like I was super outcasted because they all treated me differently. For example, I would bring *pho* (Vietnamese noodle soup), and *lap xuong* (Chinese style sausage), and *com chien* (fried rice) to school but they're like that's disgusting, that's smelly. So then, I tell my mom, get me lunchables, it was so disgusting like I don't get how people eat the pizza with the sauce with cold cheese, but I had to endure that for 2 years because they were like oh your *lap xuong* tastes so gross.

Giving up Asian food in favor of American food is one way in which many participants described the loss of their ethnic practices. To avoid uncomfortable or even downright racist interactions with white classmates, young Asian Americans chose to change themselves in order to fit in.

Kamilaa, a Pakistani American, described how her father's early experiences with racism influenced the way she engaged in ethnic practices. Because he was discriminated against in his early years in America, he encouraged his children not to outwardly display traits that appeared ‘too Pakistani.’ Living in a white community, her father taught her to be cautious of her actions and appearance.

There was a very specific memory actually, I must have been, maybe like 9 or 10 but we went into a grocery store because we're getting ice cream after dinner, and we accidentally like bumped into this man who, he was white, and he dropped a few things on my dad, who was like, oh, I'm so sorry and tried to get his stuff for him and he just kind of shoved my dad, just kind of pushed his hand away. And he was like you know I don't need your help, you terrorist. And it was just like oh, okay. And then I remember being so, I was so angry and in the car ride home he's like you just have to let it go, like it's just gonna keep happening and you just have to let it go, because you just get used to it. And so to make a point here, is that he had so many experiences like that that he just didn't want us to have that experience.

These experiences defined early on how Kamilaa would learn to hide her ethnic practices, especially out in public. She gave an example of a practice that was influenced by her family's efforts to appear more ‘American’ and less ‘Pakistani.’

A good one is, so at home we would eat with our hands because that's a very like desi thing we just do, how we just eat food. But if we were at a desi restaurant in public we would eat with a fork and a spoon or whatever, even if other desi families were eating with their hands.

Being distanced from American classmates was also based on the cultural knowledge Asian Americans were raised with – or more accurately, the cultural knowledge they were raised without. Although many participants grew up without strong Asian communities, they still felt distanced from the American mainstream because of the way their parents impacted their knowledge of popular culture. Many described feeling left out of pop culture references and that they did not have the same knowledge of American media as their classmates. Priya remarked:

When I'm not around other kids my age who are also children of immigrants, it's not really a cool thing to be Indian in America. I grew up not watching any Marvel movies, or like I didn't really know Twinkle, Twinkle little star, or like I didn't know a lot of things that American kids grew up with. And I still face that now, where people will bring up random American pop culture references and I literally just will not know what it is.

Jennifer said something similar:

Back in St. Louis there weren't that many [Vietnamese people], so I couldn't relate to anyone. For example, like my childhood, I watched a lot of Journey to the West, like the Monkey King that was like my childhood show, but no one in the in my class would know that.

Although Priya and Jennifer grew up in white communities, they were still not as knowledgeable of American pop culture in the same way their white friends and classmates were. In fact, Jennifer described feeling even more distanced from classmates because, in addition to her not having American pop culture knowledge, her classmates did not have knowledge of Vietnamese media. In this way, growing up in a white community did not automatically mean more integration into the American mainstream. Instead, it led to 'othering' and social distance from peers.

On aspects of being Asian that they could not change, such as physical looks, some described feeling a sense of shame or disappointment in themselves. Hera, described this feeling as such:

I think I really wished when I was younger, like in high school, especially freshman and sophomore year, it was a lot like oh, I wish I didn't have these features, I wish I had my friend's eyes, or was built differently, just stuff like that. For a long time I was like oh, why can't I do my makeup the way they do it? It doesn't look like that on me. It made me, I don't want to say ashamed but for lack of a better word, I'm going to say ashamed. But a little disappointed, I guess, that like I was like born looking the way I was.

This sentiment is especially true for women. Angela described the struggle to fit into beauty standards for both Asian and American women. She said:

I think about, how I kind of want to appeal to both beauty standards, because it's hard for me – there was times in my life where I wished I was really pale like Chinese and like the mainland or the people that you see in shows and stuff. And there were times where I wish I was more tan because that's what everyone in America's like, like you're so white blonde, like that. I think I just have more difficulty with that and trying to find a makeup style that suits both. Just because I want to appeal to both.

Physically looking different from white Americans, while simultaneously juggling both American and Asian beauty standards was a common theme for many of the women participants. If being Asian meant sticking out in a group of white classmates, then Asian Americans, and women especially, wanted to do what they could to 'look more American.' But this came with the internal struggle between expectations to uphold both American and Asian beauty standards.

One way that ethnic communities helped build confidence came from physically being surrounded by others who looked like them. Hera described how being around other Asian women allowed her to become more comfortable in her appearance and strengthened her confidence in her ethnic features.

The biggest thing having an Asian community did for me was help me, oh my god this is so cushy, like helped me find my identity. It really did help me like build confidence in specifically the way I looked. For me it was about the way that I looked and constantly

having other people like me and also look similar to me. Because I'd be like oh, that girl is so pretty, but she's not white. So that also did a lot for me and now, I am comfortable in my own skin and I think that is the start of me being comfortable with my personality and my culture as well.

Having an ethnic community allowed her to see that, although she is different from what white American women look like, that does not make her any less pretty or American.

Many described how it was not only ethnic communities that opened up space to engage in their ethnic practices, but also a shift in American culture to become more welcoming of Asian practices. Participants found this was especially true for Asian food, physical looks, and Asian media, such as Kpop [Korean popular music]. Regarding food, Emma told me "it's like oh, I'm Pakistani, you like my food, oh that's cool and it makes you want to embrace it more because other people have also embraced it." Emma touched on the reclamation of Asian practices but through the acceptance of these practices into the American mainstream. For Priya, even though ethnic practices like food have become more accepted, she did not feel the need to actively reconnect to that practice. She said:

I think for me, I don't think it makes that big of a difference whether I go to Target or Patel Brothers. I also can't really cook. I don't think that I personally would be able to carry on – like my mom, for us almost every day it's Indian food – I don't think I'm going to be able to carry that on for my own family when I start one just because like I don't know how to make the food. I don't like it that much.

Maintaining the practice of eating and making ethnic food is not too important to Priya. She does not know how to cook Indian foods and does not necessarily like it, thus food as an ethnic practice is not relevant.

Another way Asian Americans have begun to engage with the acceptance of Asian physical appearance is through blending Asian and American styles. Anika described this fusion of different styles as such:

I feel like people wear *jimmiki* earrings, it's this style of earrings that you can wear, it's just like very big, they're fancy and sometimes I'll see Indian women pair like these *jimmiki* earrings. which are obviously very Indian and very traditional, with a crop top and jeans or just something you know I guess not as traditional, and it still works. So I'm seeing a lot more blend.

Nightly also described a shift in the acceptance of ethnic practices.

I think it started happening around middle school, I would say. Like when Kpop became a huge thing and it was like anime, Kpop, like all those Asian culture things started becoming a trend and it was at that moment, it was like all of a sudden everybody's into Kpop, they're liking anime, they're liking all those trendy, cutesy like Asian food, or Asian videos and stuff. Whereas I was hated for doing that exact same thing when I was younger, but now in middle school, instead of being called a weeb [person obsessed with Japanese culture] it shifted to like oh my god, you love it too, who's your favorite band and stuff. Everybody's very open and appreciative and wants to know more about it, whereas before everyone was like no.

However, with this acceptance comes concerns about appropriation, fetishization, and sexualization. Emma saw appropriation in some of the ways that Pakistani culture has been adopted by Americans.

There's like the fact that I think there's a difference between getting henna cause you think it's cool and getting it, because you know and appreciate the culture. If you truly get something because you think it's cool and you appreciate the history and culture behind that, then I think that's appreciation versus if you're just getting it to get it then you're just appropriating it and you're just getting it to look cool. You're not getting it because you 100% understand the significance behind it, and henna specifically is used for celebrations and it's just something that people have been doing for years. Like henna freckles is another example, people did that a lot, I remember that. Just like small little things that people don't think about that could actually be appropriation.

Similarly, Nightly saw the benefits of acceptance into the American mainstream, but she was cautious of how fetishization and sexualization negatively reflect back on Asian Americans and distorted how other Americans may see them.

I know there's fetishization and sexualization of Asian Americans, and I think that's part of what led into the whole surge of Asian American love I guess. Especially with like Kpop being one of the big things. Where now, often people, anybody who's conventionally attractive is thought of to be Korean, or they're [other Americans] like, oh are you, Korean. Or if they like anime, and they're like, oh are you Japanese. But it's like

there's love for Korean stuff, and there's love for Japanese stuff. But it's still, when it came to Chinese stuff, it's about the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] and all the bad stuff within that. All the Asian love is targeted towards East Asian and more specifically, Japanese and Korean stuff.

She touched on something important when she described what kind of 'stuff' is accepted into American culture, opening up a discussion about the way fetishization diversly affects Asian Americans. She argued it is always Korean or Japanese aesthetics which fit into the 'accepted Asian' type. This leads to a narrative which leaves out those who does not match up to American expectations and can contribute to understandings of who is allowed to assimilate. As a Chinese woman, she found that Chinese Americans are unfairly associated with the Chinese Communist Party, and thus takes on negative connotations.

Mainstream acceptance of ethnic practices has allowed second-generation Asian Americans to reconnect with practices that they may forgone in their youth. When reconnecting with these ethnic practices, the second-generation sometimes blends Asian and American distinctions. However, the rise of appropriation, fetishization, and sexualization are important considerations when thinking about which ideal types and narratives are accepted.

Community on Interracial Dating/Marriage

There were mixed responses to the topic of dating within or outside of race and ethnicity. Although most described generally being open to dating whoever, regardless of race, a few dated exclusively Asians, while many dated people of other races. Most described their parents being more concerned about dating within their race or ethnicity. Emma said:

It's matters more to my parents. I honestly do not care as long as I like the person, I'm with that person, and they are a good person. If they are for me, then they are for [my parents]. They're for me, that's just how I see it. My parents would prefer that I marry Pakistani because the cultures would align better. But I feel like I would rather learn about another culture and have my kids experience more than one culture.

It seemed that Emma would even prefer to date outside of her race and ethnicity by saying it would allow her to learn more about other cultures. Priya described how growing up in a white community may have influenced the dating preferences of Indian classmates in her high school. She described how other Indian classmates actively spoke negatively about dating other Indians in order to fit in better with white friends.

I noticed that they [other Indian kids] tried really, really hard to not seem Indian. Even throughout high school, like there were quite a few Indian people and there was a very big division between us, where there was a group of people that were kind of like popular, and they tried too hard to like, they would say things like, oh, I would never marry another Indian person, or I don't know how you can find that Indian person attractive and things like that. Whereas they themselves are Indian! But I feel like it just comes out of people pleasing, and a deeper problem there.

Although there were other Indians at her school, Priya still saw how social pressure by classmates led them to dating non-Indians in an effort to become 'more American.' As someone who dated an Indian person herself, she found that it allowed for better cultural and familial connections.

It's like, the difference in my life, when I was dating my boyfriend in high school, there was a really, really big difference than with any other romantic relationship that I ever had. Just because of the fact that I didn't have to explain to him what I was eating, I didn't have to explain to him the holidays that we celebrated. Actually, we could celebrate them together. And our parents could converse with each other.

Dating within her race and ethnicity, allowed Priya and her partner to engage in ethnic practices together, without the need to explain themselves. Being able to share ethnic practices was an important factor that those who dated Asians emphasized. Tiffany, a Vietnamese American who dated both white and Asian men, described her experience as such:

I will say when I started dating in college, I noticed, the first guy I ever dated was white and there were some things that he would say that were just really off or it's like he didn't understand where I was coming from. I was like oh, yeah so there's this social impact that this school is doing and it contributes to marginalized communities and underrepresented communities as well, including Asian Americans, and I was just telling him to talk to him

about it, and I think it kind of passed his mind, I don't know he really did not care. I don't know if it's because he comes from a very wealthy background, I don't want to judge him on that, but I really I felt like we could not connect in that way, you don't understand the culture, and then, as I started dating Asian guys, they understood it, and I think that gave me some level comfort.

For those who dated outside their race, they still emphasized the importance of sharing ethnic practices, especially when thinking about future children. Rose described how she recognized her parents' concerns, and understood herself, how difficult it may be to carry on ethnic practices if she were to marry someone who is not Filipino. However, she was confident that her interracial relationship choices would not affect maintaining ethnic practices for her or her children.

I'm currently dating a black man and my mom does not have anything against it, or there's no racial criticisms of it but my mom is like the culture so different, how are you going to raise kids with the culture so different? It is to me, not as much, because I think, especially growing up here I just want something that's gonna make me happy and I will fight tooth and nail for the Filipino culture side and the right partner will make sure that happens.

Like many other participants, she emphasized her partner's personality over race. By saying "growing up here," Rose is likely referencing her predominantly white hometown and implied that growing up without a strong Asian community influenced her dating preferences. Her predominantly white neighborhood likely pushed her to more independent understandings and strength in her ethnic practices. She recognized that she holds the power to share her practices with her children. For Rose, carrying on her culture was an important value and thus she was confident that the right partner is one that would support her in the maintenance of her ethnic practices, regardless of their race.

Kamilaa, whose family originally encouraged her to blend in with the white community, described how her father was disapproving of her dating a white man, even though he himself had married a white woman.

It's funny because my dad did marry a white woman, and he was very much chastised by his family, he was the black sheep. And so my partner is white, and my dad did not like that at first, and was like, no, you need to be with a Pakistani guy, or a brown guy of some sort, and I was just like – what is this like, why are you allowed to do this? But again, I think part of it is also that for brown men, it is somewhat more acceptable to marry a white woman because the assumption that she'll take on the cultural values, the last name, the religious beliefs, etc. and that as a woman, if I and date and assumingly marry a white man, that means I will forego all my cultural identity and beliefs and values in that regard to desi culture.

Interestingly, it was Kamilaa's father who originally wanted his family to appear 'less Pakistani.' Because he spent so much of his life trying to conceal his ethnic practices in the white community where they live, it seems that now her father is concerned that their Pakistani culture would be lost if she married outside their race. She also touched on the way her gender interacts with her ethnic practices here and reflected on her position not only as a second-generation Pakistani American, but as a Pakistani American woman. She identified the gendered perception that women specifically will lose their ethnicity and ethnic practice if they are in an interracial relationship.

But sometimes it went the other way, Jennifer described how her family would encourage her to date or marry a white American man. Their view was that Americans, specifically white Americans, was better. Jennifer explained this to me and why she thought her family carried this sentiment.

My grandparents, they're like oh, you should marry *nguai my* [American person] because *nguai my* is better than *nguai viet nam* [Vietnamese person]. But personally, I always fight them because they always put *nguai my* up top and like tear people down, so I try to say don't, because I think it's also rooted in colonization. How they you know, like colorism, and white, fair skin is superior to dark skin. So I see that a lot, and in my household and Vietnamese community, because the whole idea of colorism and colonization, it definitely does impact, because I definitely see it in my parents. They are like, why are you looking at this guy, why are you not marrying a *my trang* [white American] guy.

Growing up in an area that did have a strong Asian community, Jennifer was surrounded by ideas on assimilation from older Vietnamese first-generation immigrants. Jennifer brought up an important consideration for how first and second-generation Asian Americans view assimilation and what it means to be American. Especially given the history of the Vietnam War, Jennifer viewed her family and broader communities' encouragement of interracial marriage, and specifically interracial marriage to a white American, as a path to integration into American culture and 'bettering' her position in society. She identified that this belief is rooted in colorism and colonization, and seemingly understood that her family implicitly condemned other racial and ethnic minorities as 'less than' white Americans and Asians.

Although the participants were not explicit in how their ethnic communities impacted their preferences for interracial marriage, they still alluded to views that were formed based on community influences. For some participants, like Rose and Kamilaa, being in a predominately white community, strengthened their commitment to maintaining ethnic practices, even when in an interracial relationship. There may be a parallel between maintaining ethnic practices in a predominately white community and in an interracial marriage, likely because they had to find more individualistic ways to connect with their ethnic practices. On the other hand, Jennifer, who grew up around other Asians, found that her family imposed views on interracial relationships that emphasized assimilation and upward mobility through marrying a white American.

Although the participants described views on interracial dating and marriage from their family and communities, it seemed that they found many of those views problematic. While a few participants found dating other Asians made it easier to share ethnic practices, many described that they would still be able to carry on their ethnic practices regardless of who they married. The rise and acceptance of interracial marriage for second-generation Asian Americans,

along with their confidence in maintaining ethnic practices in interracial relationships, suggest that marriage is not perceived as a barrier to the maintenance of ethnic practices. However, given the rise of interracial marriage, it is unclear how bi-racial children and future Asian American generations will engage in ethnic practices.

Longing for Diversity and Looking Forward

While almost all participants described how they benefited from finding ethnic communities and friends to share in their ethnic practices, most found themselves thinking about their future communities as diverse ones. When asked about her ideal neighborhood, Beth told me: “I guess when I'm prioritizing, it's just diversity. But like if the Asian population is not as high, I wouldn't be as bothered as long as there's just diversity, because I want my kids to grow up in a diverse community.” Many others described how their newfound ethnic communities helped them to reconnect with ethnic practices, but moving forward they recognized the importance of cultural and racial diversity in their friend groups and communities. Amanda described how she connects not just with Asian Americans, but with other racial and ethnic minorities as well.

But the ethnicities and races, the ratio for that was important for me because getting to know people of different backgrounds is – how do I say it? I don't know I feel like it's – well, obviously with Asian Americans, we have a shared identity, but even with other races. I think it's important to have a community that's a mix of cultures and heritages.

Interestingly, Priya found that her strong Indian community on her college campus resulted in her wanting almost no Indian community, or at least no consideration of the racial and ethnic makeup of her neighborhood in the future. When I asked what kind of community she wants in the future, she told me:

I think I would want to be in the city because I think that's the perfect amount of diversity. One thing is I'm not going to place emphasis on the type of people that I'm

around, I want to fit into a community because I'm myself and not look for the people that I'm going to be surrounded with. I don't know how to explain it, but if I move into an area, it's going to be because I like what's there and I can afford it and I'll be around other people who probably have the same thought. I don't want to just go somewhere because of this community is not that diverse or this community is too diverse – I want to be able to just meet people because they're around me.

Priya emphasized that she would rather her friendships and community building come naturally from the place around her, rather than deliberately choosing a place because of its racial and ethnic makeup. Communities of all one ethnicity or culture left her stagnant and unable to find diverse experiences.

I realized that I'm only around people exactly like me. I just put myself so deep into it, I'm only hanging out with Indian people and I'm struggling to find that balance where I appreciate my own culture, but I also want to go out and meet people who aren't like me, I want to learn about other people's cultures. I want to experience the diversity that my campus has because of the fact that there's like 30, 40 thousand people at this school it is so easy to find that niche of like people, but it's like I'm literally just hanging out with [people like] me.

She came into an uncomfortable realization that sometimes having a community of only Indian Americans means shared experiences and identity, are the same experiences and identity. Surrounding herself with others like herself started to reflect negatively on having an Asian community.

A few participants did say that having other Asians around is something they wanted to consider in their future communities. Rose said:

I definitely need to settle down somewhere where there is an Asian population, there's an Asian supermarket there, if I have kids they're going to see people who look like them. I could never go back to – I can live in the suburbs, but I could never go back to predominantly white semi-rural suburbs.

Having other Asians in the neighborhood could allow for access to resources like Asian community centers, churches, or grocery stores. Beth emphasized how living in an Asian

community would allow her to be more comfortable in her ethnic practices and continue to maintain them, if there were others to do them with.

Having an ethnic community to me means the ability to feel welcome to my culture, and open to be able to express how I identify with my culture and everything in accordance to how everyone is kind of doing it and also it helps motivate me and motivate others to continue doing it. Because I am in a Western world in the US, it is hard to sometimes to continue being in your culture and cultural practices but as long as you keep being surrounded by a similar culture, it does help.

But even then, many described having access to other Asian Americans while also seeking racial and cultural diversity at the same time. Another participant said, “I'd be in a place that's diverse but a place that also values Asian culture, so it supports a lot of Asian businesses as well.”

Amanda also mentioned how diverse or Asian communities would likely have less discrimination, especially when thinking about jobs. She said, “If I was thinking about careers for example, it would probably be less discrimination, or even if it's not outward discrimination, there may be some like internal – like something that isn't consciously thought of but something that might affect how people view others.” Likely drawing on experiences in her youth with white Americans, Amanda described that when surrounded by other co-ethnics she would not have to worry about racial discrimination in her career outcomes.

While their parents may have faced challenges as first-generation immigrants in residential mobility, the second-generation face a new kind of constraint: their family. Almost all participants said that their parents and family would be a concern when deciding where to live. The decision to leave behind one's parents is a difficult one, and shapes not only movement for the children but for the parents as well. Kamilaa explained how her family is thinking about their residential future.

I feel this call to be near my siblings, and my parents are already thinking about moving to New York and getting property in New Jersey, because we all are like – it's that idea

that we all just want to be centered in this one area basically, they don't want to be far away from them [her siblings], and I don't want to be miles away from my family, just because they've always had that sentiment of being close together and that is like what's like right and healthy.

Some wanted to move away from the suburbs they grew up in and received negative reactions from their parents. When I asked Jennifer where she pictures herself in the future, she told me:

I actually want to live in New York. My family is very against it, very against it. They don't want me to move away because I'm an only child, so they're like you're our retirement fund, what if something happens to you. My mom is like I wanted to take care of you and stuff like that but I want to be – I'm more independent. I don't like being dependent. I love being independent.

The discourse with Jennifer's parents illustrates how many immigrant parents may think about their children moving away. Asian families are often proudly multigenerational, and many immigrant parents feel that it is important to keep the family together. Furthermore, family is one of the main outlets through which second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices. By potentially moving to a place without family or an Asian community, they may face more difficulty engaging in their ethnic practices. However, not all will heed their parents' concerns. Although Michael recognized that his parents are keen to keep family close by, when I asked if it was a big factor in his decision to move he said, "Not really. I guess I'll go wherever I want to go."

Almost all participants found themselves looking for more diverse communities in the future. For them, diversity fuels a new American culture, fosters learning, and challenges notions of a white America. However, many participants anticipated tension between themselves and their parents, and also an internal struggle about what it means for their ethnic practices as they move away from their family.

DISCUSSION

Communities, Ethnic Practices, and Assimilation

Considering the question: ‘How do contemporary ethnic communities contribute to ethnic practices of second-generation Asian Americans?’ I compared participants who did and did not grow up with ethnic communities. I also compared participants’ experiences in their past and present communities. While the strength of ethnic communities differed across the participants, growing up areas with other Asians, like ethnoburbs, influenced the way Asians were able to come together and engage in ethnic practices. Contemporary ethnic communities indicate that Asian Americans may be seeking places where they can connect with others who share ethnic practices, but also move along a path of upward mobility.

As suggested by previous literature on segmented assimilation, this sample of second-generation immigrants find pathways to upward mobility and assimilation that still incorporate aspects of ethnic identity (Wen et. al 2009; Portes and Zhou 1993). As second-generation Asian Americans joined multicultural organizations and moved to schools with more Asian students, they were able to engage in ethnic practices as a result of their newfound proximity to other Asians and finding a space for ethnic practices to take shape. These ethnic practices have developed in ways that retain symbolic importance but have mostly transgressed consequential usage, reaffirming what is posited by new assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2005). Based on my findings, a combination of social relationships and physical proximity dictated how second-generation Asian Americans engage in ethnic practices.

The way second-generation Asian Americans engage with and maintain ethnic practices, considering the importance of ethnic communities, indicates how they are finding alternative ways of belonging to a changing and increasingly multiethnic American mainstream. The ethnic practices that distinguish them from non-Asian American counterparts are emphasized and de-emphasized through the communities that the participants grew up in and later choose to surround themselves with. Some participants grew up in majority white areas, while others lived in areas with an Asian community. However, most described similar experiences struggling to incorporate their ethnic practices with what they understood as 'being American.' As they navigated retaining ethnic practices while assimilating to American culture, they described how communities impacted their development.

New assimilation theory posits that the American mainstream incorporates meaningful distinctions in ethnicity, but as individuals assimilate further into American culture, these ethnic distinctions become less consequential and more symbolic (Alba and Nee 2005; Tuan 1998). Ethnic practices such as language, religion, food, media, and physical appearance have been adopted as such symbolic distinctions by second-generation Asian Americans. As previous research has suggested, these practices contribute to the formation of ethnic boundaries to distinguish Asian-Americans from other groups (Alba and Nee 2005; Tuan 1998; Telles and Sue 2019).

In particular, education, language, displays of cultural customs, and interracial marriage were most discussed as influenced by place and community. The contribution that ethnic communities had on ethnic practices was through the ability to learn from others, engage in distinctive Asian activities or norms, and share similar experiences with one another. Having a community where one can connect with others that look, talk, act, and live like them allows these

participants to gain confidence in engaging with ethnic practices, fuels the desire to connect with their culture, and allows for a space where engaging with Asian practices is encouraged and taught.

New assimilation and segmented assimilation theory identify that ethnic practices can be a part of the American mainstream and the engagement with these practices does not necessarily indicate downward mobility or inability to assimilation. The active reconnection to ethnic practices, through the ability to find ethnic communities, indicates a kind of belonging that embraces ethnic distinctions as a feature of the American mainstream (Alba and Nee 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993; Telles and Sue 2019). Second-generation Asian Americans no longer feel that they need to hide their ethnic practices in order to appear more American. Instead, they make a conscious effort to relearn their parents' native language, eat more Asian food, and embrace their Asian features.

At the same time, many described that they dated outside their race, which indicates blurring of ethnic distinction, especially for future generations. However, those who were in interracial relationships described the importance of maintaining ethnic practices for themselves and their children. This sample in particular is also highly educated, indicating higher socioeconomic status (Alba and Nee 2005). While family and community did show positive impacts on upward mobility and education attainment, the push towards educational attainment could also be due less to ethnic distinctions, and more to being immigrants or being middle-class. Importantly, families and ethnic communities also reinforced negative expectations. Those who were not able to fit into the 'high achieving Asian' category often felt excluded and scrutinized from both Asian and white peers (Zhou and Bankston 1998).

Although second-generation Asian Americans may be actively reconnecting with these ethnic practices, the practices are no longer perfect imitations of what their parents practice or what is practiced in their ancestral country. Participants described their parents' native language as a practice which they are open to reconnecting with, but struggling to become fluent in. This indicates that second-generation Asian Americans cannot fully engage in ethnic practices that their parents or ancestors did. Furthermore, for the second-generation, interracial marriage is no longer about 'becoming more American,' but the participants actively consider how they would maintain their ethnic practices in an interracial relationship. They recreate these kinds of ethnic practices with an "Asian twist," bringing a fusion to ethnic practices that define being Asian and American (Tuan 1998). The ability to choose which ethnic practices and how to practice them underscores the symbolic nature of these ethnic practices in defining ethnic boundaries. These new forms of ethnic practices reaffirm previous research and theory that later generations use ethnic practices to define ethnic boundaries in a way that is accepted by the American mainstream (Tuan 1998; Alba and Nee 2005). Nonetheless, the incorporation of ethnic practices into the lives of these second-generation Asian Americans, who already have higher socioeconomic status in terms of educational attainment, emphasizes the importance of ethnic boundary construction within the assimilation process.

Interestingly, the symbolic nature of ethnic practices reflects the role that ethnoburbs play as a new form of ethnic community. Ethnoburbs allow Asian immigrants and later generations to maintain benefits of ethnic enclaves, without the need for consequential necessities like an ethnic economy (Logan et. al 2002; Wen et. al 2009).

It is also important to consider the ways in which the American mainstream has changed in response to the growth of Asian Americans. Gained confidence in ethnic practices is due in

part to the way the American mainstream has become more accepting of Asian Americans. Many participants found that non-Asian Americans have begun to appreciate Asian ethnic practices, such as the rise in Asian popular music and food. This newfound space for Asian culture in the American mainstream has contributed to the confidence to reconnect with Asian culture for second-generation Asian Americans. However, it is unclear whether the adoption of ethnic practices primarily from certain Asian countries, like Korea and Japan, negatively affects other Asian Americans who do not fit into the perceived 'accepted Asian' narrative. Although the American mainstream has allowed space for second-generation Asian Americans to engage in ethnic practices as a form of social distinction and ethnic boundary making, it is important to further consider the implications of only accepting a specific Asian American type tolerated by white Americans.

The Future of Ethnic Communities

The desire to live in white, middle-class American suburbs no longer appears true for assimilated second-generation Asian Americans, marking a departure from spatial assimilation theory (Massey and Denton 1995). They are now more enticed by diverse neighborhoods and city living. Asian ethnic communities have produced a second-generation with a desire to reconnect to their culture. As they become more confident in engaging in their ethnic practices, they may now be moving on and embracing diverse communities. They not only want diversity, but many emphasized that they could never go back to living in predominately white areas because they often felt that they did not belong. Although previous research on resurgent ethnicity suggests that Asian Americans want to live near other Asians, most of the participants did not desire to live in a fully Asian community. The fact that they are seeking communities with racial and ethnic diversity, may still indicate forms of resurgent ethnicity. Emphasizing an

‘in-group preference’ for diverse communities, second-generation Asian Americans display a kind of resurgent ethnicity as they choose to live with other diverse groups who align with their values and lifestyle. The residential choices they make become more defined as they begin to understand more about themselves, the ethnic practices that they deem important, and their place in the American mainstream. (Wen et. al 2009; Walton 2016; Patraporn and Kim 2022).

Many identified their biggest constraints to residential mobility are obligations to parents and family, likely stemming from immigrant values around the importance of family. Many participants were divided on this topic, while some embraced multigenerational living as an important factor in their choice, others feel that they would rather not consider it. This complicates the future of ethnic communities and understanding whether it will be possible for Asian Americans to form their desired communities.

Another complication may be the persistence of place stratification. I argue that place stratification does not affect Asian Americans, and especially second-generation Asian Americans, to the degree that it does other racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants. However, it does have an application in thinking about what diverse communities may look like moving forward. As younger generations, not just Asian Americans, become more open to diversity there will likely be changes to residential mobility in pursuit of these kinds of communities. Working to create diverse, equitable, and valued spaces is a challenge that will face the second-generation and beyond.

Limitations and Future Areas of Research

My study is limited by my sample of participants who were all current or recent college graduates. The opportunity of education and earning a degree already puts them at a socioeconomic advantage and impacts their considerations of residential mobility. Because this

study samples those who have high educational attainment and are likely on a pathway to upward mobility, considering career and income, conclusions are not able to be drawn on how second-generation Asian Americans who have lower socioeconomic status engage in ethnic practices. For those whom assimilation is still unattainable, it is possible that ethnic practices contribute to downward mobility and further distance from the American mainstream, despite a greater incorporation of ethnic distinction in the mainstream. Further research should explore ethnic practices and ethnicity as a meaningful social distinction and the way it impacts assimilation trajectories when considering Asian Americans who are not already in advantaged socioeconomic positions. Increasing participant variability across a range of factors such as country of origin, age, class, and income would allow for a more complete understanding of assimilation trajectories and socioeconomic stratification.

Furthermore, this study was conducted in the Chicago area, with most participants growing up in and around the city. This may have impacted their desires for living in the city and more diverse environments. Future research is necessary to expand the physical scope of this line of research. Moving forward researchers should sample Asian Americans from different communities across the country to gain insight into areas with more racial diversity, stronger ethnoburbs, and/or more white rural areas. This would allow for a more robust understanding of how different communities contribute to ethnicity and the maintenance of ethnic practices.

Moving forward, it will also be important to understand how second and subsequent generations form diverse communities while continuing to practice ethnic customs. As understandings of place stratification changes within a multiethnic America, it is important to see how mobility and assimilation interact to produce diverse outcomes in engaging with ethnic practices. As second-generation Asian Americans look to form more diverse communities, an

important consideration will be the way places with strong racial and cultural diversity influence how Asian Americans maintain their ethnic practices.

Especially considering increasing rates of interracial marriage and the rise of a multiethnic American mainstream, ethnic practices may retain their original form, become fusions of multiple cultures, or disappear completely. Where subsequent generations of Asian Americans want to live, work, eat, and play ripples far beyond themselves. It necessitates a better understanding of how multiethnic communities and ethnic practices play a role in shaping the American mainstream, and how the mainstream changes in response. As the younger generations look to actively embrace diverse communities and multiethnic neighborhoods, researchers should look to how spatial assimilation and place stratification influences these movements.

CONCLUSION

This study examines how second-generation Asian American engage with ethnic practices in different types of communities. Through practices like language, religion, food, media, appearance, and interracial marriage, the participants described how they reckoned with shifting understandings of what it means to be Asian and American. By comparing those who grew up in Asian communities to those who did not, I explore how ethnic communities allow spaces for a connection to ethnic practices, and how they may impose expectations on certain behaviors. I also explore how the communities that the participants grew up in and the communities they find themselves in now, affect the desire to reconnect with ethnic practices. Furthermore, I find that moving forward, many of whom I spoke to are eager to find new and diverse spaces to continue to grow.

Asian American assimilation is diverse and complicated, but this sample of second-generation Asian Americans have provided a snapshot of how they understand and make sense of it. They demonstrated the role that ethnic communities play in the ability and desire to engage in ethnic practices, as well as what these practices look like for the second-generation. Navigating ethnicity and belonging in a changing American mainstream is a challenge that Asian Americans, and other racial and ethnic immigrant minorities, still face. Understanding assimilation and how ethnic practices contribute to what it means to be Asian American is a task that sociologists continue to pursue and necessitates further investigation.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction and Demographics

- Tell me about yourself:
 - Self-identified race/ethnicity
 - Age
 - Education
 - College/major if applicable
 - Where you grew up
- Tell me about your family:
 - Family structure
 - Parent's brief immigration overview (year of immigration, country of origin, age)
 - Parent's education
 - Parent's income and occupation
 - Primary language spoken at home (language fluency)
- Can you describe what your neighborhood/area/environment was like growing up?
 - Name of town/city/county
 - Suburban/urban/rural
 - Racial/ethnic makeup
 - What kind of 'afterschool activities or recreational activities'
 - Did you school offer multicultural organizations? Were you a part of any? Why or why not?
 - Family nearby
 - How did you spend your weekends

Asian American Ethnic Identity

- How would you describe your own racial/ethnic identity?
 - Do you consider yourself Asian American? Why or why not?
- When you hear 'Asian-American' what do you think of?
- Can you tell me about an experience that made you realize you are 'Asian American'?
- How did your family talk about 'being American' or 'being Asian' growing up?
 - Can you tell me about a time that you remember you or your family talking about being 'Asian'-'American'
- Why (or why not) did your parents teach you their native language?
 - How did they teach it to you? How did you learn it?
 - Tell me about what it was like to speak your native language growing up.
 - Where were you encouraged to speak your native language? Where were you encouraged to speak English?
 - How often do you speak it now?
- Tell me about a time when speaking your native language connected you to other co-ethnics.
- Tell me about a time when speaking another language has made you feel like an outsider.
- If you don't speak your native language, tell me about a time when that has impacted your relationship with family or co-ethnic friends?
- If an Asian American does not speak their native language, does that make them less 'Asian'? Does it mean they are less connected to their culture?
- What kind of [ethnicity specific] customs, values, or traditions did you practice growing up?

- Do you still practice those? Why did you decide to change or stop practicing?
- What is your favorite comfort food? Why is it your favorite? Do you eat it often or only sometimes? Is it difficult to find in the American grocery store? Tell me about a good memory you associate with eating it?
- Do you date prefer to date other Asians? Is it important to you or your family to marry/date within your culture/race/ethnicity?
- Tell me about a family custom, value, or tradition that has influenced your identity.
- What kind of customs, values, or traditions would you like to pass onto your children?
- Can you tell me about ways (if any) that you represent your Asian American identity in your everyday life?
 - Clothes, stickers, accessories, home décor etc.
 - How/Why is it important to you to physically express your ethnic identity?
- Can you tell me about any media (music, TV shows, newspapers) that you like which are from or about being Asian or your native country specifically?
- Can you recall a time when you felt very proud or very ashamed to be Asian-American?
- Is there such a thing as being a ‘typical Asian-American’?
 - If yes: how would you describe this? If no: why not?
- What do you think is meant when people talk about the ‘Asian American Experience’?
- What do you think are the differences between first generation and second-generation Asian Americans?
 - Can you tell me about a time when you face difficulty interacting with people of older generations or older family members?
- What do you think is the most important thing younger Asian American generations should remember about their heritage?

Co-ethnic Relationships and Personal Networks

- Tell me about the last time you saw your extended family.
 - How close are you to your extended family?
 - Do they live nearby?
- Tell me about the last time (if at all) you went to your parents’ home country.
 - Are you still in contact with any family in your parent’s home country?
 - How close are you with them?
- Can you describe what your friends were like growing up? What are they like now?
 - Majority Asian and/or [ethnicity specific]
 - What did/do you do together
- Are you part of any Asian social network groups (ex. Subtle Asian traits on Facebook)?
- How well do you get along with non-Asians? Can you tell me about a time when you felt you didn’t get along with someone on the basis of race or ethnicity?
- Tell me about your friends. What do you value about their friendship?
- How important is it to you that your children (or younger generations generally) have strong friendships/relationships with other Asians/co-ethnics?
- What kind of differences do you see between Asian Americans who are friends with majority Asians and Asian Americans who are friends with majority non-Asians?
- Can you tell me about any organizations, groups, or activities that focus on Asians that you are a part of?

- How long have you been a member?
- Why did you decide to join?
- Tell me about any events or activities you have done within your organization that has taught you more about your culture.
- In what ways has your organization changed your understanding of your ethnicity? Can you provide a specific example of an event or activity that fostered this change?
- Ask if they are in a cultural org: Do you know anyone who choose not to join an Asian cultural organization? Why do you think they chose not to join?

Understanding the Role of Ethnic Communities

- Tell me about what your community was like growing up.
 - Was it multiethnic? Or predominantly one race/ethnicity?
 - Was it very tight knit?
 - What sort of community events happened?
- Were you involved in any community activities growing up? Tell me about them.
 - Are you still interested in those activities? Why or why not?
- Did your community offer any resources specific to Asians? Tell me about a time (if any) that you used or benefited from such resources?
 - Afterschool programming, language schools, ethnic grocery stores, etc.
- Tell me about your favorite childhood memory that involves your neighborhood or community.
- If possible, tell me about why your parents chose (or ended up) living and settling down where you grew up?
 - If they weren't given a choice, where do you think they would have chosen to live?
- Did you stay in the same neighborhood/area growing up?
 - If you moved around, what kind of neighborhoods did your parents move to?
 - Did they ever say why you moved?
- Can you give me an example of a time growing up when you felt like you belonged in your community?
- Can you give me an example of a time growing up when you felt like an outsider in your community?
- If not living in the same place they grew up: Tell me about why you decided to move away from where you grew up?
 - What attracted you to where you live now?
- What are some of the differences and similarities between your community now and your community where you grew up?
- Can you give me an example in recent years (since/if you moved away from where you grew up) when you felt you belonged in your community?
- Can you give me an example of a time in recent years (since/if you moved away from where you grew up) when you felt like an outsider in your community?
- How important is it to you that there are other people of the same ethnicity around where you live? What about Asians generally – not nationality specific?

- Have you ever been to a city or area where there was a strong Asian population? If yes, Tell me about a time when you have been to an area/neighborhood with a strong Asian population.
 - What kind of businesses/activities/events did they have that is not typical of other areas?
 - How often would you go to Asian ethnic neighborhoods growing up?
- How often do you go to areas with that have Asian business or activities now? What do you do there?
- If you lived in a place where there was nobody of the same ethnicity, what would your daily life/activities/friendships look like?
- If you lived in a place where there were many people of the same ethnicity, what would your daily life/activities/friendships look like?
- Would you describe any benefits of living in a place with a strong Asian population?
 - Any negatives?
- Where do you envision yourself living in 5 years? 10 years?
- What does having an ethnic community mean to you?

Wrap Up

- Is there anything else you would like to say regarding the topics we covered today? Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Name	Gender	Age	Parent's Native Country	Self-Identified Ethnic Label	Hometown	Current Location
Amanda	Woman	19	Philippines	Filipino-American	Suburban	Urban
Angela	Woman	19	China	Chinese-American	Suburban	Urban
Anika	Woman	22	India	Indian-American	Suburban	Urban
Beth	Woman	19	Philippines	Filipino-American	Suburban	Urban
Emma	Woman	19	Pakistan	Pakistani-American	Suburban	Urban
Hera	Woman	20	Korea	Korean	Suburban	Urban
Jennifer	Woman	19	Vietnam	Vietnamese-American	Urban	Urban
Kamilaa	Woman	20	Pakistan	Pakistani-American	Suburban	Urban
Katie	Woman	19	Philippines	Filipino	Suburban	Suburban
Kay	Woman	18	Philippines	Filipino	Suburban	Urban
Kyle	Man	18	Sri Lanka	Asian	Suburban	Urban
Lauren	Woman	20	Vietnam	Vietnamese-American	Suburban	Urban
Lily	Woman	18	Vietnam	Asian-American	Suburban	Suburban
Michael	Man	23	Philippines	Filipino-American	Suburban	Suburban
Nightly	Woman	19	China	Chinese-American	Urban	Urban
Priya	Woman	18	India	Indian	Suburban	Suburban
Rose	Woman	18	Philippines	Filipino-American	Rural	Urban
Sarah	Woman	23	India	Indian-American	Suburban	Urban
Tiffany	Woman	21	Vietnam Laos	Vietnamese-American	Urban	Urban
Tigger	Woman	21	Vietnam	Vietnamese-American	Urban	Urban

APPENDIX C
CODEBOOK

Assimilation

- Adaptation
- American acceptance
- English language fluency
- Interracial marriage (parents)
- Interracial marriage (self)
- Language difficulty
- Native language fluency
- Passing customs
- SES
- Spatial assimilation

Community

- Asian business
- Asian resources
- Belonging
- Current community
- Diverse community
- Family location
- Future community
- Home community
 - White
 - Diverse
 - Asian
- Native community
- Physical community
- Religious community
- Social community
- Strong Asian community
- Support
- Weak Asian community

Connections

- Shared experiences

Disconnected

Ethnic identity

- American
- Asian
- Culture
- Customs
- Diversity among Asians
- Education
- Expectations
 - Cultural appropriation
 - Discrimination
 - Raised different

Family

- Culture clash
- Family pressure
- Food
- Gained confidence
- Genetic
- Hard working
- Individualism
- Language
- Location
- Media
- Model minority myth
- Nationality
- Other's perception
- Parent's sacrifice
- Physical looks
- Religion
- Shared identity
- Values
- Whitewashing
- Friendships
 - Asian friends
 - Diverse friends
 - Don't care about race
 - White friends
- Gender
 - American beauty standards
 - Asian beauty standards
- Important
- Memorable quotes
- Native country
 - Visit family
- Outcomes
- Parent's immigration
 - Better opportunity
 - Education
 - Family
 - Marriage
 - Refugee
 - Survival
 - Work
- Sentiment
 - Mixed sentiment
 - Negative sentiment
 - Positive sentiment

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