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Can you be bicultural without being bilingual? The case of Filipino Americans

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Introduction

Little research exists over Filipino Americans, despite them being one of the largest Asian populations in the US and Tagalog being the fourth most-spoken language in the US. Asian American studies tend to focus on Asian Americans of East Asian descent, that is, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans. These studies are disingenuous in describing the experiences and attitudes of Filipino Americans because they assume that these East Asian American perspectives are representative of all Asian Americans, ignoring the ethnic diversity within the broader Pan-Asian identity. Furthermore, most of the literature that does exist specifically about Filipino Americans is limited to Filipino Americans in California. While the majority of Filipinos in the US live in California, their experiences and attitudes may not be wholly representative of the “Filipino American” experience. This study seeks to explore the perspectives of the Filipino Americans in the South of the US. My intention is to investigate the notion of the Filipino and American bicultural identity without being bilingual in Tagalog and English.

Literature Review

Bilingualism and Biculturalism

The terms bilingual and bicultural are often used together in the same context. Language and culture are so greatly intertwined that it is often hard to conceive of one without the other (Fielding & Harbon, 2013; Grosjean, 2015; Heinz, 2001; Luna, Ringberg, & Peracchio, 2008). In terms of bilingualism, it is implied that being bilingual in two different languages means having knowledge of two separate cultures (Ringberg, Luna, Reihlen, & Peracchio, 2010). In terms of biculturalism, the use of two different languages or the lack thereof is often used as a measure of one’s belonging to either culture (Feliciano, 2001).

Bilingualism

The definitions of bilingualism have varied over time. In mainstream society, it is commonly believed that being bilingual means being able to speak two different languages with the same degree of fluency. That is, being able to convey exactly the same things in one language as the other (Ringberg et al., 2010). Some may also add that both languages must have been acquired during childhood or that each language must be spoken with natively like fluency. This natively like fluency can be described as an individual speaking each language with ease and without accent as if they were a monolingual of each as opposed to bilingual in both.

Earlier studies on bilingualism reflected these common beliefs by focusing on fluency in each language. However, most people do not fit these criteria for several reasons, such as learning a second language later on in life, being formally educated in one language and not the other, and using a certain language in specific situations. More contemporary studies now focus more on language use as opposed to fluency because of these concerns. Most people who have extensive knowledge of two different and distinct languages often cannot or do not use them in the same ways or same situations. However, they use each language often enough to be considered bilingual. By making language use the main criterion instead of fluency, the term bilingual can be more realistically applied to a broader range of people (Grosjean, 2015).

Biculturalism

Definitions of biculturalism are similar to bilingualism in that they include the notion of knowledge of two cultures, such as an ethnic minority culture and the majority society culture, allowing an individual to move between each (fluency) and interacting in both (use). As with common concepts of bilingualism, many believe that being bicultural entails being equally knowledgeable about two different cultures. Some define biculturalism as being fluent in two

different cultures by having two distinct and complete sets of knowledge, one for each culture (Luna et al., 2008). Others focus more on the use of two cultures and define biculturalism as an individual capable of living seamlessly in two different cultures, adapting their behaviors, norms, and ways of viewing the world to each culture, and combining elements of the two cultures (Grosjean, 2015; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007). However, there is also an element of biculturalism as it relates to identity and self-identification as bicultural (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Harris Bond, 2008; C.-Y. Cheng & Lee, 2013; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007).

Bicultural Identity

Biculturals may or may not consider themselves bicultural despite the fact that they interact with and have knowledge of two different cultures because they do not feel that both cultures are equally important to them. Sometimes they see their position as being completely part of one culture and interacting with but not being part of the other culture. This idea is shown in other definitions of biculturalism that define biculturals as not only being knowledgeable of two cultures, but having internalized both of them (Grosjean, 2015; Luna et al., 2008). As an example of this distinction, Mexican Americans who grew up with Mexican culture at home and also with all of the influence of mainstream American culture would be considered bicultural, but non-Hispanic beginning students of Spanish would not be seen as bicultural yet (Ringberg et al., 2010).

Filipino Americans

In general, there are few studies researching Filipino Americans even though Filipino Americans are the second largest Asian group in the U.S. (U.S. Census 2010). What few studies exist over them are limited in scope.

Most of the studies about Filipino Americans focus on issues of identity and biculturalism (Ferrera, 2016; Gambol, 2016; A. C. Ocampo, 2013, 2014; Tuason, Taylor, Rollings, Harris, & Martin, 2007) and there are few studies that focus exclusively or extensively on Filipino Americans' and bilingualism. This is remarkable considering that many Filipino Americans speak Tagalog, which is the 4th most spoken language in the U.S. (U.S. Census 2011), and that 92.8% of first generation Filipino Americans are already bilingual or proficient in Filipino or Tagalog and English when arriving in the States (U.S. Census 2011 American Community Survey). Only 22% of Filipino Americans are considered to have limited English proficiency (Center for American Progress 2014), which is markedly low when compared with the 35% of all Asian Americans (Center for American Progress 2014). However, while it is not uncommon that second generation Asian Americans are not bilingual in their parents' native language (J. S. Lee, 2002), only 50% of second generation Filipino are bilingual (A. C. Ocampo, 2014).

Much of the research done over Filipino Americans is done under the category of Asian American Studies. These studies are not accurate in representing Filipino Americans and their attitudes and experiences for two main reasons. Firstly, they tend to ignore the ethnic diversity within the pan-Asian identity by treating all of the Asian American populations as a monolith (C. Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martinez, 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007). Secondly, these studies are still heavily skewed towards East Asian Americans, such as those of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean descent, who have distinct experiences from Southeast Asian Americans and South Asian Americans (Nadal, Pituc, Johnston, & Esparrago, 2010). The studies specifically regarding Filipino Americans are also limited in that the vast majority focus on primarily Filipinos and Filipino Americans in California, even though the Philippine Diaspora in the U.S. is spread all

across the country. While the research over Filipino Americans in California is important, it may not be wholly representative of all Filipino Americans whose experiences may vary depending on the region they live in.

Studies have shown that Filipino Americans living and raised in California are less likely to identify as Asian American and more likely to identify as Pacific Islander or be indifferent towards ethnic identity beyond simply “Filipino” (A. C. Ocampo, 2014). Additionally, they feel closer to Latinos and Hispanic culture than to other Asian Americans and Asian cultures for various reasons (A. Ocampo, 2016; A. C. Ocampo, 2013). Many Filipino Americans in California state that they do not feel “Asian” because the typically Asian cultural stereotypes do not seem to apply to them beyond the importance of education (Museus & Maramba, 2010; Nadal et al., 2010; A. C. Ocampo, 2013). On the other hand, Filipino cultural practices such as food, language, and religion, seem to line up more closely with those of Latinos (A. C. Ocampo, 2014).

Other factors that may affect Filipino American identity are age, acculturation (measured as years in the U.S.), gender, and other social factors. The age at which someone immigrates to another country affects the degree to which they acculturate. Immigrating at an earlier age makes it more likely that an individual will become more ingrained and acculturated to the dominant society (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). The number of years in the U.S. can also affect an individual’s acculturation to mainstream society. More time spent in the U.S. entails a higher degree of americanization (Schwartz et al., 2012). Gender may also influence Filipino American’s sense of identity because of the difference in expectations and roles assigned to each gender (Nadal & Corpus, 2013). Social factors such as exposure to diversity may also impact Filipino Americans’ development of ethnic identity depending on how much interaction they

have with the Filipino community, other ethnic communities, and the mainstream white American community (A. Ocampo, 2016; A. C. Ocampo, 2014; Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007).

The assimilationist ideology of American society and the Philippines' history of being colonized by both Spain and America have especially affected Filipino Americans' sense of identity. The unidimensional concept of assimilation seeks to erase ethnic identity as an individual becomes more americanized, making it more likely for later generations of Filipino Americans to become more American and less Filipino. However, because acculturation in terms of total assimilation historically only works with white immigrants (Boski, 2008; Ryder et al., 2000), Filipino Americans may not be able to assimilate to the same degree as white Americans and will likely retain at least some aspects of their Filipino ethnic identity.

Philippines and History of Colonization

There is a saying in the Philippines that “The Philippines spent 300 years in the convent, and 50 in Hollywood” to describe the Philippines' history of colonization by Spain and the U.S. The Philippines was considered a colony of Spain beginning in 1521 as an extension of Nueva España, modern-day Mexico, in Latin America. Spain's imperial rule in the Philippines ended in 1898 after the Spanish-American war when Spain sold the Philippines to the United States, making the Philippines one of its territories. This began the 3-year Philippine-American war between the United States and Philippine armed forces, which resulted in victory for the United States. The Philippines was not officially granted independence until 1946 after World War II. Spain has left its impact on Filipino culture, but the more recent influence of the U.S. has arguably more strongly americanized the Filipino culture of a Filipino before they have ever even set foot in the U.S. (Baldoz, 2011; David, 2008; Isaac, 2006; Nadal, 2004; Tuason et al., 2007).

The Spanish influence on Filipino culture is evident in many customs and practices. An example of this is with Filipino surnames with Hispanic roots, such as Santos, Reyes, and Cruz, which were assigned to native Filipino families during early colonization by the Spaniards (A. C. Ocampo, 2014). Spain also exerted much religious influence on the Philippines, which is one of only two Asian countries that is predominantly Roman Catholic as opposed to Hindu or Buddhist. Although Spanish is not widely spoken throughout the Philippines and is not one of its official languages (Filipino and English), Spanish influence in the Filipino language is seen through similar words in Spanish and Filipino, such as Spanish *barrio*, *familia*, and *cultura* and Filipino *baryo*, *pamilya*, and *kultura*. However, while Filipinos do acknowledge that Spain has historically influenced their culture and development as a country in some way, they tend to be unable to distinguish specific instances of Spanish influence and currently think of them as distinctly Filipino.

The influence of the United States in the Philippines began in the early 20th century with its military occupation (Isaac, 2006) and continues today with the americanization of Filipino society. As a territory, the Philippines was primed to accommodate the United States in two major ways. First, Filipinos were deemed “U.S. nationals” allowing them to freely migrate between the two countries while policies barring other Asian groups from migrating to the U.S. were put in place (Baldoz, 2011). Secondly, English was imposed as the language of instruction and national language of the Philippines, resulting in high numbers of English-proficient Filipinos. These two factors facilitated the americanization of Filipino society. Even though English is no longer the medium of instruction in Philippine classrooms, many Filipinos still master English as a second language, and, according to a 2012 survey by GlobalEnglish Corporation, the Philippines ranks first for Business English. Although the Philippines is its own

sovereign nation, the United States maintains its militaristic presence with armed forces still stationed there, and the United States actively recruits Filipinos to serve in its military. Although there is much resistance to U.S. military presence in the Philippines (Lutz, 2009), many Filipinos seek to join the United States military for better job opportunities and to obtain U.S. citizenship for themselves and eventually their families.

While many Filipinos in the Philippines are unaware of or disregard the degree of Spanish influence on Filipino culture, Filipino Americans who have had extensive interaction with Latinos can often see the similarities and parallels in what is considered Filipino and Latino cultures. An example of this is a traditional dish will exist in both cultures with the same name spelled differently (A. Ocampo, 2016). Other similarities lie in the prevalence of Catholicism in both cultures. Many Filipinos cite linguistic similarities between Filipinos and Latinos because although Filipino languages are syntactically different from Spanish, many individual words are the same. Racial microaggressions may also cause Filipino Americans, who are often mistaken for Hispanic or Latino, to more closely identify with Latinos than other Asian Americans, especially those of East Asian descent (Gambol, 2016; J. S. Lee, 2002; R. M. Lee, Eunju Yoon, & Hsin-Tine Tina Liu-Tom, 2006; Nadal, Escobar, Prado, David, & Haynes, 2012; Stroink & Lalonde, 2009). Additionally, many Filipino Americans do not share the same linguistic experiences as their East Asian American peers. Because many Filipinos immigrating to the United States already speak English proficiently, there is less need for their children to learn their parents' native Filipino languages. Second generation Filipino Americans are much less likely than their East Asian counterparts to be bilingual and do not identify with the East Asian stereotype of language barriers between their parents (Feliciano, 2001; R. M. Lee et al., 2006; A. C. Ocampo, 2013). This serves as one of the distinctions Filipino Americans cite when they

address their differences with what is deemed Asian culture and stereotypes in American society. Because of the disparities with Asian Americans and their cultures, Filipino Americans often feel like a distinct group that should be separate from the pan-ethnic Asian identity.

Research Questions

Because of the dearth in literature regarding Filipino Americans' linguistic identity and the importance of bilingualism on their bicultural identity, and because there are few studies over Filipino Americans not residing in California, this study seeks to answer the following questions.

1) How does (not) being bilingual affect Filipino American identity?; 2) Is it possible to be bicultural without being bilingual?; and 3) Are the attitudes of Filipino Americans outside of California different and distinct from Filipino Americans living in California?

Methodology

Participants

There were 5 participants for this study. Four identified as female, one identified as male. Their ages ranged from 19-60. Participants were either university students or working in the U.S. military. All five participants chose "Asian" on the race question on the questionnaire, but one participant also wrote in "Filipino" next to "Asian." All were U.S. citizens. Two were U.S.-born/second-generation Filipino Americans, and the other 3 were Philippine-born/first-generation Filipino Americans. 2 of the Philippine-born Filipino Americans did not consider themselves immigrants. All but one participant had been to the Philippines at least once. Among all the participants, English, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, and Filipino were listed as languages spoken at home growing up. English was spoken in 3 homes, Tagalog in 4, Cebuano in 1, Ilocano in 1, and Filipino in 1. All of the Philippine-born participants speak Tagalog, and one of the American-born participants received formal lessons but did not consider herself

conversational in Tagalog anymore at the time of the interview. All the Philippine-born participants were bilingual in Tagalog and English (one additionally spoke another Philippine language, Ilocano, and another referred to Tagalog and Filipino interchangeably). On the questionnaire before the interview, three participants answered that they were bicultural, one said she was not, and one answered yes and no.

Participant 1 – Lisa. Female. 43. Asian. Homemaker. Philippine-born and raised. U.S. citizen and first-generation Filipino American but does not consider self an immigrant. Only Tagalog was spoken at home. Bilingual in Tagalog and English, which she learned in school in the Philippines. Considers herself bicultural.

Participant 2 – Nicole. Female. 19. Asian, but with reservations about identifying solely as Asian. Would prefer the term Asian American or more specifically Filipino American. Student. Tennessee-born and raised. Second-generation Filipino American. Mother and grandparents are immigrants from the Philippines. Has never been to the Philippines. English and occasionally Tagalog were spoken at home growing up. Does not speak Tagalog but would like to understand it more. Does not consider herself bicultural, but acknowledges the influence of Filipino culture and American culture on her Filipino American cultural identity.

Participant 3 – Estelle. Female. 22. Asian. Student. Tennessee-born and raised, but spent summers in the Philippines. Second-generation Filipino American. Both parents are immigrants from the Philippines. English, Tagalog and Cebuano were spoken at home growing up, but Tagalog is no longer spoken at home. Used to take formal lessons in Tagalog but is no longer conversational in it. Does not consider herself bilingual. Considers herself bicultural.

Participant 4 – Jay. Male. 47. Asian. U.S. military. Philippine-born and raised. Spent most of adulthood in the U.S. Has U.S. citizenship and considers himself an immigrant from the

Philippines. Ilocano, Tagalog, and English were spoken at home. Ilocano was the regional language, and Tagalog the national Philippine language that everyone had to learn. English was also taught in school. Considers himself trilingual in the three languages. Considers himself bicultural.

Participant 5 – Laura. Female. 58. Asian, but prefers Filipino. U.S. military. Philippine-born and raised. Has U.S. citizenship and does not consider herself an immigrant. Filipino was spoken at home growing up. Considers herself bilingual in English and Filipino. Originally did not consider herself bicultural before the interview. During the interview, asked for the interviewer's definition of being bicultural and amended her answer to indicate that she was bicultural in that she felt Filipino and also a little bit American.

Procedures

Participants were recruited from the Tennessee-based Filipino-American Associations at the researcher's university and at home through emails describing the study and snowball sampling (word-of-mouth).

Chosen participants were given a 12-item questionnaire to complete before taking part in an interview. The questionnaires were structured to be open-ended to allow for participants to freely answer any question however they wanted. The questionnaires asked basic information such as age, gender, race, and background information regarding the participants' birthplace and where they were raised, how much contact with other Filipinos they had growing up, migrant status, and languages spoken at home. Participants were asked specifically if they spoke Tagalog, which is the main regional language of the Philippines and the basis for the official national language, Filipino. The term Tagalog was used because it is often used interchangeably with Filipino as the Philippine language. Additionally, participants were asked whether or not they

considered themselves bilingual or bicultural. The responses from the questionnaires were used in the interviews as entry questions and to ask participants to elaborate on why they answered a certain way. The questionnaire also served to contextualize each participant's interview responses during analysis.

Interviews were conducted on campus and through Skype during the month of October 2016 and each lasted approximately 20 minutes. The purpose of the interviews was to ask participants to share their thoughts, perspectives, and opinions on Filipino American identity. The interview questions were asked in a semi-structured manner to allow for a more natural conversational flow to each interview. They addressed issues of bilingualism, biculturalism, pan-ethnic identity, and perceptions of themselves and by others. In no particular order, participants were asked:

1. Do you consider yourself Filipino American?
2. How do you define being bicultural?
3. Do you feel that (not) being bilingual is important to your identity?
4. What makes you feel American? What makes you feel Filipino? Do you feel more American or more Filipino?
5. How do you think others perceive you?
6. How do you feel about identifying as Asian or Pacific Islander? Do you consider Filipinos Hispanic or similar to Latinos?

I tried to weave these questions into the interview as smoothly as possible, going off what had already been said or mentioned. I asked why participants felt a certain way about a topic and to elaborate as much as possible. I asked participants to define biculturalism in their own terms and what would be considered the Filipino or American aspects of their identity.

Analysis

Each interview was transcribed and analyzed for definitions of what participants thought constituted Filipino culture and American culture, common themes that they brought up, and their opinions regarding certain aspects of Filipino American identity.

Two lists labeled Filipino and American were made for each interview based on what each participant defined as Filipino and American culture and values or how they described certain aspects of themselves as Filipino or American. Isolated examples of Filipino culture and American culture were listed, as well as contrasts drawn between the “Filipino way” and the “American way.” Each interview was analyzed for topics that appeared multiple times in the participant’s speech, such as their thoughts on Filipinos, Americans, Filipino Americans, how they distinguished each group from the other, and how they framed opinions about each group. Each interview was then analyzed for specific descriptions and mentions of biculturalism and bilingualism in terms of their own cultural identity. Finally, all of the interviews were compared with each other and a general list of recurring concepts was compiled.

Results

Biculturalism defined

During the interviews, participants were asked what being bicultural meant to them, and their responses were framed in terms of adapting to a new culture from an old one, sharing experiences of two cultures, and of a different and distinct culture derived from two separate cultures.

Lisa, Nicole, and Laura defined biculturalism in terms of adapting a previous culture to a new one, such as with immigrants from the Philippines having their Filipino culture and adopting American cultural practices as they adapt to American society.

Lisa: It’s just a small part of me that’s American, because I have to adapt to this place. It’s what Americans do.

Nicole: If I was to think of someone who is bicultural, I would think of someone who maybe like immigrated from here, so like my mom will experience having the Filipino culture just because she was born in the Philippines, raised there and then

moving here, experiencing a whole other culture, and then combine those two, I would say that's a person who's experiencing multicultures and is bicultural.

Laura had originally written that she was not bicultural, but in the interview asked for clarification about what the interviewer described as bicultural because she considered herself 100% Filipino culture-wise, but acknowledged the influence of American culture on herself because she was living in America.

Laura: Well, bicultural means I'm half or- I see myself as a full Filipino culture-wise, but if you say I am bicultural now because I'm here in the States, then I would say I am [bicultural].

Estelle and Jay described being bicultural less as a way of adapting, and more as a way of living with elements of two different cultures.

Estelle: To me it means living a lifestyle that meshes both Filipino and American cultures...It's kind of like you have one foot on one side of that state line and the other foot on the other side. You have to understand where the middle ground is and how to see both sides but at the same time disagree with certain aspects from both sides.

Jay: That means I have shared cultural experiences of U.S. and Filipino culture.

Nicole earlier described biculturalism as someone with a previous culture adapting to a new one, which did not apply in her case. She distinguished her specific Filipino American culture as its own cultural identity, a hybrid of a Filipino immigrant culture and the dominant American host culture.

Nicole: The culture I'm experiencing is like a hybrid of Filipino culture and American culture, but I like to think of it that the way that I'm growing up as a Filipino American is my American culture. I consider it a different experience than just a Filipino, what someone who was born in the Philippines might experience, and someone who is maybe a white American or sometimes even a black American

might experience, because there is that cultural aspect to it. So I think it's not really bicultural, I think of it as its own specific cultural identity...My being Filipino American, that's my American culture.

Earlier, we used Grosjean's (2015) three-part definition of biculturalism. 1) Taking part in two different cultures; 2) Adapting, at least in part, one's attitudes, behaviors, and values to these cultures; and 3) Combining and blending aspects of the cultures involved.

Lisa's and Laura's definitions and Nicole's first definition of being bicultural are similar to the first and second parts of Grosjean's definition because they are dependent on the individual being exposed to two different cultures and adapting because of it. Jay's and Estelle's definitions are similar to the third part of Grosjean's definition in that they describe sharing aspects of Filipino and American or U.S. culture in their lifestyles. However, Nicole's definition of her own Filipino American identity is even more similar to the third part of Grosjean's definition because she describes blending aspects of Filipino and American culture to create her own distinct Filipino American culture.

Bilingualism defined

There was no discrepancy in the definitions of bilingualism or of what being bilingual meant among the participants. However, Estelle distinguished being conversational in a language as different from being bilingual in that language.

Author: There were three languages spoken in your home. Did you ever consider yourself bilingual or trilingual?

Estelle: When I was in high school, I was fluent in Spanish...and that would have been the only other language I would've considered using as identifying myself as bilingual besides English. When I took lessons in Tagalog, my parents never formally taught it, I just understood by them speaking it at home and when I took Tagalog lessons, I could have been conversational in that.

Lisa, Jay, and Laura who all described themselves as bilingual (or trilingual in Jay's case) mentioned having learned their Philippine language at home growing up, and English later on in school. Based on this and Estelle's distinction between having been bilingual in English and Spanish, but not English and Cebuano or Tagalog, it is implied that extensive formal education in a language as well as speaking the language was important to bilingual identity. Simply being conversational in or taking lessons in Cebuano or Tagalog was not sufficient to be considered bilingual or fluent in those languages.

Being bicultural Filipino American or Filipino in America

There is a general difference between the first-generation Filipino Americans' (Lisa, Jay, and Laura) and second-generation Filipino Americans' (Nicole and Estelle) definitions of biculturalism. Jay was unique in that he saw no conflict with both halves of his identity, and even described himself as 50% Filipino and 50% American, but the other participants described their status as Filipino or as American in a more complicated manner. Lisa and Laura were confident in the Filipino aspect of their identity and focused on asserting that they were American (too). Nicole's and Estelle's cases, on the other hand, were somewhat flipped in that there was more of an assertion that they could be both American and also Filipino. This distinction between the first- and second-generations may be because of the difference of immigrating to a new place with a new culture versus growing up with two different cultures. For first-generation Filipino Americans, their ethnic Filipino identity has already been strongly developed before coming to the U.S., and so while they are unquestionably Filipino, their Americanness is challenged. Second-generation Filipino Americans, however, were raised with parts of both Filipino and American cultures as opposed to being raised with completely one culture. Because of the nature of what is considered "authentic" membership in either community, they struggle with the ethnic

Filipino part of their identity while also being cognizant of society's conceptualization of a typical American (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007). For both groups, there is some measure of difficulty in reconciling both the Filipino and American aspects of their identity.

Being Filipino in America

Lisa and Laura's framing of biculturalism as adapting their Filipino culture to American culture when they arrived in the U.S. shows their strong ethnic identification as Filipino rather than Filipino American. This may be a result of both having been born and raised in the Philippines and growing up with a strong Filipino influence before moving to the United States and having to adapt to the American lifestyle. This is also reflected in the ways they describe the Filipino and American aspects of their identity. Both Lisa and Laura stressed the importance of physically being in the United States, being married to an American, and having to adapt their behaviors as ways of defining the American aspects of their identity.

Lisa: I am here now...I'm a U.S. citizen, and I'm Filipino, but a U.S. citizen, and in this place so I have to adapt...I'm married to not a Filipino...I'm an American, because I'm in America!

Laura: I'm married to one for one thing, so I have to change our diet to the American food...I also joined the Navy, so I had to adjust to the American thinking of military, not Filipino military. I drive a car here, I don't drive a car there in the Philippines. Language-wise I speak English more than Filipino unless I'm with a fellow Filipino.

The notion of having to adapt Filipino behaviors to accommodate American practices suggests that they merely take part in American culture out of necessity and have not internalized it. They do not see themselves as American, but Filipino having to live in America. Lisa even described in more detail the ways she has adapted to American society by contrasting what Filipino culture is with what American culture is not.

Lisa: Being Filipino's like... We are a very close relationship that most families don't really practice here... [Filipinos] can just invite anybody over, anybody can just come knock at your door, and then you welcome them... and we don't do that here. That's a no-no, like, if you get to visit somebody, you have to make an appointment, you can't just barge in somebody else's house. And then also sharing of food. That's one thing! When I was teaching... these kids cannot share the food with anybody else, and in the Philippines we were taught to share... Here we cannot do that.

She considered the Filipino values of close family, hospitality, and sharing food as not only not appreciated in the United States, but sometimes taboo. There is an underlying notion that to be Filipino American, you must give up some aspects of Filipino identity to take on an American identity. However, because she constantly phrased it as a way of adapting, as if to a new environment, it suggests that she was still essentially Filipino, but in America, instead of both Filipino and American or Filipino American.

Being Filipino and American

Estelle and Jay, on the other hand, showed that they both had internalized aspects of Filipino culture and American culture in their identities as Filipino American. That is, they were both Filipino and American, but not completely one or the other. Interestingly, they described themselves as Filipino American in different ways. Jay described it as the different aspects of either culture that he embraced or adopted for himself, while Estelle focused on differentiating herself from people who were completely Filipino or completely American.

Jay comfortably referred to himself as 50% Filipino and 50% American because he lived in the Philippines all of his life until he moved to the United States at 18 years old, but frequently visited the Philippines, making a perfect balance of Filipino and American influence.

Jay: [I'm] pretty much half and half. The Filipino in me is growing up in the Philippines and being open to the Filipino culture as the local culture that I grew

up in and embracing all the Filipino norms. And as far as the U.S. side, you know, being in the U.S. now for a while, I have come to embrace a little bit of the American culture as well, celebrating all kinds of American traditions.

Unlike with Lisa and Laura, Jay described his biculturalism as having embraced both Filipino and American cultures. He noted that being in each country and being exposed to the different sets of norms was integral in forming his identity as he grew up. This identity as being Filipino American in terms of being both Filipino and American did not waver, and he did not feel more one way or the other, repeating that his identity was half Filipino and half American.

Jay: It's probably 50/50. Being a U.S. citizen and pledging to the American [flag], there is a decision you have to make. When I took the oath as a U.S. citizen, at that time I denounced my Filipino citizenship.

Author: Do you feel that has affected your identity as a Filipino, does that make you any less Filipino?

Jay: Not really. When I go to the Philippines I still feel that I belong in the Philippines, I still mingle with them and share the same values as when I was growing up.

Estelle, on the other hand, was born and raised in the U.S. instead of the Philippines, but spent summers of her childhood there. Her identity of being Filipino American was more fluid than Jay's, however, and was influenced more based on the situation. For instance, when asked whether she felt more Filipino or more American, she answered that in certain situations she feels more Filipino and in others more American.

Estelle: I don't really care much for football...And I don't really like the idea of being very patriotic in terms of to America, to the United States, because I don't have a fondness for it that other people have, and in those situations, I feel very Filipino because it's implied that if you're American, then you should like this, you should do this, and x, y, and z. But whenever my father's talking with his friends...discussing [Filipino] issues, and I have feedback because I have done my own research into those issues, he would say "Well, yes, but that's because you're an American," and he'll respin what I just said into a more Filipino way. It

really does depend, within my family sometimes I feel like I'm more American, but outside I feel more Filipino.

For Estelle, she felt more Filipino in situations where she had a dissenting opinion from the stereotypical American opinion, such as liking football or being highly patriotic. However, when she discussed issues pertaining to the Philippines with her father, she was made to feel more American.

Both Jay and Estelle demonstrated fluidity in both Filipino and American cultures. Jay felt comfortable in both Filipino culture and American culture because he chose and embraced certain aspects of each. He did not feel like he had to compromise the Filipino part of him as he became more americanized. He could still interact with the Filipino culture while feeling at ease in the American culture. Estelle felt more flexible in her own Filipino American identity in that she felt more one way or the other in certain situations. At times her identity as Filipino or American was challenged because she did not adhere to strictly Filipino or American cultural perspectives and accepted influences from both ways of thinking.

The differences in Jay's and Estelle's attitudes regarding being both Filipino and American can be attributed to being first- and second-generation Filipino Americans, with differing amounts and types of Filipino and American influences in their lives. They both experienced Filipino culture at home: Jay in the Philippines, and Estelle home-schooled in a Filipino household in the U.S. However, while Jay experienced American culture after he immigrated to the U.S. as an adult, Estelle experienced American culture going to high school.

Estelle: When I got to high school, that's when I started to see the disparities between American culture or the United States citizen and the average Filipino immigrant. My friends both from either sphere never interacted with each other.

Estelle described a dichotomy between what was Filipino and what was American in her life. As with many second generation Filipino Americans, she grew up with simultaneous

Filipino influence at home and American influence at school, but neither side interacted with the other. This allowed her to develop the ability to move between both cultures, but also probably attributed to her situationally feeling more Filipino or more American.

Being Filipino American

Nicole's biculturalism is an example of combining elements of two different cultures to synthesize a new one. She emphasized that she was not bicultural in the sense that she was part of two different cultures, but in the sense that her culture had two different cultural influences while remaining its own culture.

Nicole: Considering I was just born here [in America], but I do have the traditions from my mom and American traditions, I would say mine is just one.

Nicole differed from Jay and Estelle in that she did not refer to her Filipino American identity as being part of two different cultures, Filipino and American, but as being part of a unique Filipino American culture. She was not 50% Filipino and 50% American or between both Filipino and American cultures, she was 100% Filipino American.

This unique perspective might be a result of several things. Firstly, Nicole differed from the other participants in that she had never been to the Philippines. Secondly, she grew up with a fairly large Filipino community, but in a city with a large white population as well as a large Mexican population. This proximity to not only her own ethnic Filipino community, but also another minority ethnic Mexican community, as well as the dominant white society allowed for a deeper awareness and understanding of her own identity. This served to strengthen her cultural heritage as Filipino when contrasted with Mexican and American culture. However, her perspective from being born in and growing up in America helped develop a separate Filipino American identity to incorporate both aspects of her identity.

Filipino Values Vs. American Values

Bilingualism and Monolingualism

Lisa: It is important for Filipinos who come from the Philippines, like when you come here you cannot expect the Americans to speak Tagalog to you, they don't know it!

Filipinos were seen as bilingual, whereas Americans were depicted as monolingual. This was an important distinction, especially in terms of being Filipino American because one cannot be both bilingual and monolingual, begging the question of whether one can be Filipino and American.

Each participant made references to people who were undoubtedly Filipino also being able to speak a Filipino language such as Tagalog, Filipino, or Cebuano. However, Lisa specifically described being bilingual in one of these languages and English as something distinctly Filipino. From her perspective, Filipinos could be distinguished from Americans because Americans could only speak English. This would imply that American society values English monolingualism.

Nicole: When I was trying to learn, that was that whole everyone's afraid that if you're bilingual you're not going to be able to do well in other in any other things like math and science.

Nicole mentioned this idea when explaining why she was not raised bilingual. When she was a child, bilingualism was seen as detrimental to children's development and ability to perform well academically. Although she regretted not understanding Tagalog more, she did not feel that it significantly affected her identity as Filipino American. However, she made various references to her mother never being questioned for being Filipino, with one of the criteria being her ability to speak Tagalog (and presumably English), which would support Lisa's statement that Filipinos are bilingual, Americans monolingual.

This is an interesting perspective, given that 50% of second-generation Filipino Americans are not raised to be bilingual (Nadal, 2004; A. Ocampo, 2016). Lisa and Laura both described raising their kids the “Filipino way” but neither explicitly taught their children Tagalog, who learned in the Philippines.

Laura: Culture-wise my children feels like I am raising them the Filipino way, meaning, more respect than usual, a little more strict in upbringing, the way we had in the Philippines than what we do now here.

Author: Did you raise [your children] to be Filipino or Filipino American?

Lisa: To be Filipino, except for the language, of course. But as much as I can, I am training her, raising her in the Filipino way

They stated that they tried to raise their kids the Filipino way, except for the language. They described the Filipino way of upbringing more in terms of valuing family, showing greater respect for elders, and being stricter. This suggests that, despite how much importance they place on speaking Tagalog to be Filipino, it was still not as important as other aspects of Filipino culture. What is especially interesting is the implication that they are not exactly raising their children to be Filipino, but rather Filipino American. That is, they are preparing their children to be able to perform well in American society at the expense of some part of Filipino culture.

Family

Author: So you would say being Filipino is being close to your community?

Lisa: Yes! That’s what we are like. Being Filipino’s like, because I grew up surrounded by [Filipinos], so like everybody in the family, because your *lola* is just living on the other side, aunties there, and we are very close relationship.

Oftentimes, Filipino will say that family is the most important Filipino value. This was reflected in the participants’ speech, both explicitly as with Lisa and Jay, and implicitly as with the way Nicole, Estelle, and Laura mentioned family multiple times.

Lisa and Jay were more apt to state that the most obvious difference between Filipinos and Americans was the way family was more highly valued in Filipino culture than in American culture.

Lisa: Filipinos can live in one house, thirteen people in one house. But here if you're 18, you have to get out of the house and live on your own. We [Filipinos] cling to family. It's not rare to have your parents and your siblings and your grandparents and aunties in one house.

Jay: Filipinos tend to keep the family together until, even when the kids are older. They embrace the family togetherness and that's part of me that also sticks, you know, I want my kids to be with us until whenever. But in the American side, you now there's also part of me that, "Okay, go, go on and be independent," so that's where that's where the split comes in.

Both of them implied that family is more important for Filipinos than for Americans because Filipinos can live in houses with multiple generations of the family, while Americans are more independent in that they leave the house upon reaching adulthood. Not only are Americans physically more distant from their family, they are also figuratively so.

Jay: Once they reach the age of adulthood, or 18, 21, most of the kids are gone. They go their own way after college and the reach back is no longer there once they get married and stuff, so I don't see that closeness once they reach that age anymore.

Filipinos, on the other hand, will keep in touch with their family regardless of where they are. Jay, for example, stated that he often called his mother, father, and siblings, even though they were all in different parts of the world. For him, that "reach back" to your family was essential to the Filipino part of his identity, and something he struggled with for his own children. Because of his Filipino side, he wanted to keep his children at home for as long as he could, which conflicted with his American side that wanted them to be independent and on their own.

This Filipino closeness to the family also extended to the participants' communities. Nicole and Estelle would refer to their Filipino communities as their family. Whether it be the people at church, the different families in the community, everyone was family, everyone was an aunt or cousin. Nicole described how close her community was in that they would hang out all the time and host various events for each other.

Nicole: A lot of the Filipino families that we were friends with, they all came from church and they're all my mom's college colleagues that she spent her life with. So when they came here all together from the same program, they still remain friends. We would do groceries on the weekends, once every month, and we'd just have Filipino parties and Filipino potlucks, and do the rosary. We'd always go to each other's birthday parties and there's so many kids, so we had a birthday party maybe every two weeks or weekend.

The degree to which each individual was a part of everyone's lives was remarkable. The fact that not only did they participate in mundane everyday activities such as grocery shopping, but they also regularly threw parties for each other, showed that the community truly was a large family. This strongly contrasted with the descriptions of American culture that Lisa and Jay gave, where families were essentially kept separate from each other and did not form as close of bonds.

Another aspect of the importance of family and one of the most important things Filipinos valued was food, in terms of preparing it, sharing it, and bonding over it. Estelle described how her own family would cook *lumpia* (Filipino eggrolls) together. Lisa described how Filipinos were taught to share food in general. Nicole emphasized this quality when she told of a time that there was a disagreement between the families because there was not enough *pansit* (Filipino noodles) for everyone.

Estelle: Food is such a very large aspect of like my family's culture being a Filipino family, like whenever we would make eggrolls or *lumpia*, we'd wrap everything together, like me, my mom, and my sister, we'd wrap everything together and then my dad would fry it, it was that simple. It was just a ritual that we did and it brought us closer.

Lisa: Here in the preschool, these kids cannot share the food with anybody else, and in the Philippines, we were taught to share. I know that it's more of medical issues like allergies, but we don't have those issues way back home. If you have something to share, you share it, maybe the person is hungry... Here we cannot do that.

Nicole: The food is always so good. Everybody brings food, like if you don't contribute you get in trouble. I think that's one of the fights that they had between families because someone didn't save enough *pansit* for the other family that came late

Food was important for Filipinos because it was something that everyone could partake in. Even though Estelle described it as a one-dimensional practice, it was extremely significant. Because of the degree of preparation that goes into making the food, and because it is such a lengthy process, everyone gets to spend more time together. Then, when the food is made, it is important to share it because it is a way of showing compassion and companionship. Nicole's story establishes how important both food and family were. Food was an obvious way to contribute, and to show that one was part of the family. Food in itself was so highly valued, but the fact that no one had the foresight to save some was even more offensive because it questioned the even greater importance of family.

Concepts of Time

Jay and Nicole briefly mentioned different concepts of time as conceived by Filipino and American cultures. Essentially, Filipinos are always late, while Americans place a lot of emphasis on timeliness.

They described Filipino time as generally being late. Nicole only mentioned this in the context of Filipino parties, where it is understood that no one shows up at the designated time. It was said in such an offhand way that it conveyed how normalized tardiness was in Filipino culture. Jay, on the other hand, spoke more at length about Filipino time and American time.

Jay: In the Philippines we have a value that I, that we embrace called *mañana* habit, taken from the Spanish, where in, you try to put off things later, later, later, until, you know, almost deadline. Americans, they're pretty strict about that and so I come to embrace that, the timeliness, being an American, timely in meetings, timely in whatever. You've seen it in some Filipino gatherings over here in the States that you know Filipinos are always late, they call it Filipino time, and then there's American times.

Jay saw timeliness as an American value, which was directly opposite to Filipino time. Whereas Nicole described Filipino time at parties with a laugh, Jay referred to it in less of a joking way. He described not only Filipino time in terms of being late to parties, but the whole conceptualization of time as not rigidly important. The *mañana* habit was something Filipinos embraced because they viewed tasks as being able to always be put on hold until the deadline. Jay preferred the American conceptualization of time and the value of timeliness because he viewed it from a professional context. However, it was not just another way of succeeding in American society, it was something in general that he embraced as part of his American side.

Language and Identity

Language Use

The participants, with the exception of Lisa, did not tend to spend much time talking about language as part of their identity unless prompted. Instead they focused on other cultural aspects such as value systems, food, and behaviors. However, even though they did not explicitly

focus on language, what they did say was revealing about their attitudes regarding the importance of language on identity.

The amount and type of Filipino terms the participants used implicitly showed a relationship between their linguistic and cultural identity. Participants who used fewer Filipino words identified less strongly as Filipino than those who used more Filipino words. Coincidentally, this separated the Philippine-born participants from the U.S.-born participants.

Nicole and Estelle were the only ones who did not currently speak Tagalog or any Filipino language, and only used Filipino words for food. Nicole spoke about *pansit*, and Estelle referred to *chicken adobo*, *sotanghon*, and *lumpia*. This suggests that food was a strong cultural tie for them, as opposed to language.

Jay spoke two Philippine languages, Tagalog and Ilocano. He referred to different regional groups in the Philippines with their Filipino names: the Ilocano people and language, the Pampangas who speak pampangueño, and the Visaya people and language. He also described the Filipino “mañana habit” which refers to the idea that you can “put off things later, later, later, until almost deadline,” which, although it was taken from Spanish, was a Filipino term. Otherwise, he did not use any Filipino or Tagalog words.

Laura strongly identified as Filipino and referred to her language as Filipino instead of Tagalog like the other participants. She used the terms *mano po* (a Filipino custom of placing the back of an elder’s hand to your head as a show of respect) and *opo* (equivalent to saying yes sir/ma’am). Both terms are related to respect, which reflects how it is a strong Filipino value. Even though she did not use Filipino terms aside from these two, that can be attributed to her specific profession. Because she must be more diligent and conscious of her word choice in her professional life, she could have also been actively monitoring her speech during the interview to

only speak English. This does not diminish her identification as Filipino, however, and could also be seen as a way of emphasizing it. In her own words, she is always proving that, because she is a Filipino, she is still as good as or better than her American peers.

Lisa's speech, however, was unabashedly peppered with Filipino words. She used the terms *lola* (grandmother), auntie (pronounced UN-tee, which along with the Tagalog word *tita*, is the common Filipino term preferred over other variations in spelling and pronunciation of aunt), and *anak* (equivalent to the terms honey, sweetie, or dear). This is especially important because by using Filipino ways of referring to family, she actively shows how family is such a strong Filipino value. She also used the Filipino filler word *naks*, which shows that even on a subconscious level, she identified strongly as Filipino. Her stance about the importance of being bilingual in English and a Philippine language (specifically Tagalog) was even more overt in the ways she spoke about language.

Language Attitudes

In addition to using more Tagalog words during the interview, Lisa referred to language the most out of all the participants, and often in explicit terms. She viewed it as the most important part in adapting to a new culture.

Author: Would you say that [speaking English] helped you when you came to America to adapt?

Lisa: Yes, it did a lot because first thing, when you are new to a certain country, the first barrier that you should break is the language or else you wouldn't survive...Communication is first thing. Like if you buy food, can you communicate with the one selling the food? If you cannot, you go hungry...If you go to the doctor, you cannot communicate what you are feeling and they cannot diagnose you really well.

Lisa demonstrated a “sink or swim” attitude when it comes to language. She emphasized the importance of learning the dominant language in order to communicate in, survive in, and adapt to a new country. The scenarios she used as examples, buying food and being treated by a doctor, are ones in which an inability to speak the language could result in dire consequences. This almost equates language to life. Essentially, if you cannot speak the dominant language, you will not survive.

Lisa also related the importance of language on identity, referring to speaking Tagalog as synonymous to being Filipino.

Lisa: I don't really speak [English] in the Philippines. We speak Tagalog, it's natural, we're Filipino so we speak Tagalog.

Author: Did you raise [your children] to be Filipino or Filipino American?

Lisa: To be Filipino. Except for the language, but as much as I can, I am raising her in the Filipino way.

Author: Do you still speak Tagalog with [your daughter] at all?

Lisa: Yes, because I don't want her to forget her roots so I don't speak to her in English, because she speaks English to my husband already and to her friends, but when she's with me we talk in Tagalog so she doesn't forget that... In the Philippines, when we went for vacation last Christmas, I instructed her not to speak English when we get to the Philippines so she speaks Tagalog.

Multiple times, she subtly and perhaps subconsciously equated speaking Tagalog with being Filipino, suggesting that it is a central part of Filipino identity. As Filipinos, it is only natural to speak Tagalog. Her daughter was raised to be Filipino, except for the language, implying that although she did not teach Tagalog to her daughter (because her daughter grew up in the Philippines), it was still an integral part of being Filipino. She separated English and Tagalog as having different roles: English was for speaking with Americans in America, while

Tagalog was for speaking with Filipinos in the Philippines. She further distinguished Filipinos from Americans in terms of their language knowledge and capability.

Lisa: It's important for Filipinos who come from the Philippines, because you cannot expect the Americans to speak Tagalog. They don't know it! That's one thing that we have an advantage, our one advantage on them because we can speak both languages or we can understand both languages and they can only speak one... It's hard for them to learn new languages.

From her point of view, Filipinos were different from Americans because they were bilingual in Tagalog and English, whereas Americans were only monolingual English speakers. Again, this emphasizes the importance of speaking Tagalog to being Filipino. For her, Filipinos should not only know Tagalog, but also English, and their bilingualism in Tagalog and English was a defining factor in their identity as Filipino. However, when asked whether or not a Filipino who does not speak Tagalog could still be considered Filipino, she gave a somewhat contradictory answer.

Lisa: A Filipino who doesn't speak Tagalog can still be Filipino, *if* he recognizes that he is a Filipino and practices, because being a Filipino is not only seen through your language, like, you are, right? You would still accept that you are Filipino because you are born to Filipino parents, but, it's just that you are not used to the language, but at least you still understand, and you still eat Filipino food, and you have Filipino values.

It is important to note that Lisa knew the author was a Filipino American who did not speak Tagalog, and that might have influenced her answer. She was directly addressing the author when saying that language was not the defining factor in determining one's Filipino identity, and that recognizing oneself as Filipino was also important. However, the emphasis on the *if* in her statement suggests that it is the responsibility of the person of Filipino descent who does not speak Tagalog to recognize their own Filipino heritage, because otherwise they would

not be considered Filipino. That is, simply being born to Filipino parents or having Filipino heritage would not automatically make someone Filipino if they did not choose to identify that way, but speaking Tagalog would definitely make them Filipino. Lisa also added some qualifiers to her previous statement that “it’s just that you are not used to the language, but at least you still understand” as if to still assert the significance of Tagalog without explicitly saying that one cannot be Filipino and not speak it. For her, it was not that I, the author, completely did not speak the language, just that I did not have enough exposure to it.

Lisa drew certain parallels between Filipinos and Tagalog (or any Filipino language) and Americans and English that the other participants also made.

Nicole: My mom won’t ever be challenged, because she does know Tagalog and everything, and she’s been born there and everything, so no one will ever question her identity as a Filipino.

Author: Would you consider yourself Filipino American?

Estelle: I would say yes, even though I’m no longer conversational in Tagalog or Cebuano, I do consider myself Filipino American

Author: What aspects about you are American?

Laura: Language-wise I speak English more than Filipino unless I’m with fellow Filipino.

Nicole, Estelle, and Laura all subtly linked speaking a Filipino language as being an essential Filipino quality. Laura additionally makes the same connection as Lisa between speaking English and being American. For Nicole, part of what makes her mother undoubtedly Filipino is that she speaks Tagalog. For Estelle, she responds that although she does not speak a Filipino language, she is still Filipino American, implying that to be Filipino one must also speak a Filipino language. For Laura, like with Lisa, speaking English is for Americans, and speaking

Filipino is for Filipinos. Later when asked by the author, Laura affirmed that speaking Filipino was important for her feeling Filipino. Even if they did not specifically say that all Filipinos speak the language (or any language of the Philippines), there is the notion that true Filipinos do, and that it is an important part of the Filipino identity.

Jay did not think that his trilingualism in English and two Filipino languages (Tagalog and Ilocano) particularly affected his identity. However, he defined groups of people by what language they spoke.

Jay: There's not really a distinction between Asian or Pacific Islander per se, but when you say Latinos, that's different because that's likely either a Mexican or Spanish origin.

Jay: There's about maybe 7 or 9 regions and they speak a different dialect, different language, and they also have different festivals and traditions among them, so like they call us Ilocano, the ones that speak Ilocano, and the Pampangas, they speak pampangueño, and also the other Visaya on the other side of Philippines, they speak that language. It's a lot of languages.

It should be noted that Jay might have been intentionally describing people in terms of their language if he felt that was the purpose of study as he was aware that there it had some linguistic focus. However, it supports the idea that what language a person speaks is intrinsic to their ethnic group identification. This is especially evident in names such as Ilocano that can refer to both the specific Ilocano people and language.

Jay: When I run into somebody that speaks Ilocano, it's good to catch up and talk, you know, a little bit, because you share the same dialect and also the same region in the Philippines. Because each region got their own different cultural traditions as well, not just the Filipino tradition, but when you break it down to regions, they also have their own local things that they do differently from other regions in the Philippines.

Jay: It's if you compare US and then the Metro Manila, which is the capital of the Philippines, that's where you meet all these different cultures and regions, because once you attend college or you work in the capital, you run into these different people of all languages

Jay, and earlier Lisa and Laura, spoke of a certain kinship they feel when speaking the same language. For Lisa and Laura, they said they would speak Tagalog or Filipino with fellow Filipinos because it was only natural for them as Filipinos. Jay goes even further in that he would feel even closer to someone who spoke Ilocano as opposed to Tagalog because it meant that not only was that person Filipino, they were also specifically from the same region in the Philippines as he was. This is important in the context of the U.S. and Manila as being diverse, because language was used to measure that diversity. These places were diverse because of all the different kinds of people in them, and those people were different from each other because of the different languages they spoke. Basically, what language you speak defines you in some way. Applying this concept to Filipinos in general would seem to indicate that as Nicole, Estelle, and Laura previously said, speaking a Filipino language is essential to being Filipino. This idea is reinforced with Nicole's perspective that Filipino identity was distinct from Filipino American identity.

Of all the participants, only Nicole did not speak any Filipino language at any point of her life. She was also the only one with a unique definition of her Filipino American culture in that she did not feel as if she were simply Filipino in America, such as with Lisa and Laura, nor was she both Filipino and American, as Jay and Estelle were. Instead, she had a separate identity, Filipino American. Although she had ties to Filipino culture, just as the other participants did, language was not personally as important because she did not consider it as central to her Filipino American identity.

Author: Do you think that not being bilingual in Tagalog affected your identity as Filipino?

Nicole: My stance on it is I'm going to be Filipino American, and my ethnicity comes from the Philippines no matter what language I speak, so I mean, I think it's important. I would have loved to have learned Tagalog, and I think I've missed out a lot since I could have spoken Tagalog. Like in family reunions, a lot of my cousins can speak Tagalog.

Nicole's position is more related to Lisa's framing of language as important because of its role in communication (although arguably, she did consider it an essential part of identity), and less like Laura's opinion that it was important to being Filipino. She viewed learning Tagalog as a way to communicate better with her Tagalog-speaking family as opposed to learning it to become more Filipino. Even without being fluent in Tagalog, she had solid cultural ties to her Filipino heritage through her mother, grandmother, and extended Filipino family and community. In addition, Nicole rejected the author's implication that her Filipino heritage equated to her having a separate Filipino identity, reiterating that she was Filipino American. However, because she often used her mother as an example of someone who was undoubtedly, obviously Filipino, with part of the reasoning being that she was the only "real Tagalog speaker" of the household and Nicole's Filipino cultural tie, it still stands that the participants consider speaking at least one Filipino language a fundamental factor in being Filipino.

Lack of Exposure and Awareness

Each participant referenced the importance of exposure and awareness of diversity in some manner, typically when addressing why there was a debate over whether Filipinos were Asian, Pacific Islander, or Hispanic or Latino. One common reason why they felt people doubted Filipinos' status as Asian, was because of the perception in the U.S. of Asians as only being East Asians, or even more specifically Chinese.

Lisa: Sometimes they don't really know what Filipino is, where is Philippines, where Filipinos came from. Chinese, they know, like it's China, there are a lot of Chinese restaurants, but Filipino, not much here, so far. I don't know in other states.

Estelle: When I was in middle school or even in earlier parts of my high school career, people were not familiar with the Philippines at all. They would say, "What's *that*?" and I'd have to pull out a map and say, "It's this island right here, it's in Asia, I promise."

Nicole: I think a lot of what Asian is, is generalized as kind of like oriental Asian, you know, so I feel like the Philippines is a lot of the times left out of that category. There's still a controversy of whether it's Pacific Islander or Asian and I think that's very specific to the Philippines.

They considered it unfortunately uncommon that people did not know what Filipinos/the Philippines were because they were uneducated and had never been exposed to much diversity.

Nicole and Estelle used these instances to state the importance of diversity and spreading awareness.

Nicole: Back home at least he knew Filipinos, and so I think if you ask someone who is just coming in to college, when you're in college, you learn a lot more, you're exposed to a lot more, but someone who maybe just came to college or something, or someone who's uneducated, I think it comes down to generalizing to what they know and what they understand... This guy feels he can distinguish between other Asians, Filipinos, and Mexicans. I think it's because he's been exposed to Filipinos.

Estelle: I have friends who have been to the Philippines. One, she went there for a study abroad program, and another, she just really likes the culture, and from that she could pick up on my Filipino cultures or the aspects of my Filipino culture without me having to say something. I haven't really gotten any negative feedback except from one student who said that Asians are freaks and should go back to Asia, but that student was just not familiar with the idea of integration.

They cited specific people in their life who were more aware of Filipinos and Filipino culture because they had been exposed to them. These people stood out to them because they were not as ignorant as their peers nor did they question certain aspects of being Filipino. Estelle excused an instance of racism on the part of another student as them simply being ignorant. The idea is that spreading awareness of diverse groups of people and embracing that diversity would alleviate many issues.

While an increase in exposure and awareness for Filipinos might solve a few problems regarding the controversy over their racial categorization, Laura seemed to have a different opinion. In a U.S. context, this lack of awareness contributed to her stronger identification as Filipino over Asian.

Laura: In any questionnaires we do, there's not such thing as Filipino in any survey we do, it's always Asian, so you kind of have to specify yourself, "Hey I'm from Asia but I'm Filipino," but I know the Asians don't think Filipinos are part of Asia because they think that Asians are Chinese, Japanese.

Because there is no option to choose "Filipino," Laura felt she had to put Asian. However, as she did with this study's questionnaire, she also wrote in Filipino to indicate that she was not just Asian, as society conceived of them, she was specifically Filipino. She also said that she felt Filipinos as a whole were globally unrecognized, even in other Asian nations.

Laura: I feel like we're not recognized really. I've come across people that are, one of my friends is homeland security, she's Filipino pure blood, but she's raised in Hawai'i, and she comes across fellow Filipinos also, anywhere, anywhere here, Europe or Asia or anything, the Filipinos are always considered the laborers, and when I went to Hong Kong as a sailor, roaming the streets or something, the first thing they think [because] you're Filipino is you are domestic helper, they have not gone beyond that yet.

Laura did not consider awareness the be-all-end-all because even in Asia, in Hong Kong, where people knew who Filipinos were, the issue was not necessarily with not being known as Asian, but instead known as a Filipino stereotype. This enforces the notion that awareness of Filipinos' existence is not enough if Filipinos are unfortunately only known for being domestic workers. This suggests that sometimes, it is not a lack of exposure, but ignorance.

The theme of a lack of awareness or exposure was not spoken of only in terms of how others had little knowledge of Filipinos, because it also manifested itself in Lisa's and Jay's non-identification as Hispanic or similar to Latinos.

Lisa: We had Spanish ancestors, they colonized us for 300 years, so the Spanish blood is running in our veins, but still the culture is different. I don't really know much about the Latin, but I know that it's different.

Jay: There's not really a distinction between Asian or Pacific Islander per se, but when you say Latinos, that's different because that's likely either a Mexican or Spanish origin.

Neither Lisa or Jay had really been exposed to Latinos or any Latin American cultures, but they insisted that they were different from Filipinos. Lisa acknowledged that many Filipinos had Spanish heritage because of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, but she could not discern its influence on Filipino culture. Jay had mentioned earlier in his interview that one Filipino value was the "mañana habit" in which Filipinos tend to keep putting things off till tomorrow until the deadline, and he did recognize that it was something taken from the Spanish. However, and despite their shared histories of Spanish colonization, he did not identify with Latinos because they were of Spanish origin, but Filipinos were not really. Because they had been raised in the Philippines, and then moved to the South, with essentially no interaction with Latinos, they were less aware of the similarities between Latino cultures and Filipino cultures, and less likely to identify with them. Then, moving to the South, where there are fewer Latino

populations, they did not get the chance for much interaction. On the other hand, they had a significant amount of exposure to other Asian cultures, and thus were more able to identify with other Asians.

Supposedly, exposure to Latinos would facilitate Filipinos' acceptance of their similarities. This is reflected in Nicole's attitude regarding Latinos. While she differed from the other participants in that she was the only one to not have been to the Philippines, she also differed in that she grew up near a significantly large Mexican community. She recognized that her features could be similar to the Hispanic features of Mexicans, and she did not particularly mind being mistaken for one.

Regional Differences

Regional differences come into play in several ways: Growing up in the Philippines versus growing up in the United States, whether or not having been to the Philippines influences identity, Filipino regional differences, and regional differences in the U.S.

Growing up in the Philippines seems to have resulted in a stronger identification as Asian and with other Asians for Lisa and Jay. However, while Laura identified as Asian, she did not particularly identify with other Asians. This may be attributed to her experiences being a Filipina woman in the U.S. military stationed in different posts around the world, as shown with her disdain for the "Filipino domestic worker" stereotype. Although Jay also was in the U.S. military and traveled the globe, the stereotype would not apply to Filipino men as it did for Filipina women. He may have been more unaware or unaffected enough by it, allowing him to form a closer identification with other Asians.

Growing up in the United States could also have affected this type of identification with other Asians. Estelle grew up in the United States, but spent her childhood summers in the

Philippines. She identified as Asian, but she did not seem to identify as closely as Lisa or Jay did with other Asians. Nicole, on the other hand, was completely raised in the United States, and identified less as Asian, and more Asian American. She also seemed not to particularly identify with other Asians, but that could be attributed to her embracing of diversity. While the others focus on similarities as a way of feeling close, Nicole's perspective was more that being Asian could mean any of several diverse ethnic groups, but that did not take away from them being Asian. Her concern was more with the tendency of American society to only consider those of East Asian descent the real Asians, at the expense of Southeast and South Asians and Asian Americans.

Not having been to the Philippines and her greater degree exposure to American ways of thinking may have also influenced Nicole's identity in a distinct way from the others, as seen with the novel way she conceptualizes her Filipino American identity. While she and Estelle had both been raised in the United States, their exposure to Filipino culture was different. Estelle was able to spend several summers in the Philippines and was also homeschooled in a Filipino household. Upon entering public high school, she was then able to see the differences between the Filipino and American culture. She described her Filipino American identity as having one foot on one side of a line, and the other foot on the other side, with both sides being Filipino and American separately. Nicole, however, had never set foot in the Philippines and had more interaction with Americans growing up. It is possible that seeing the differences between the two different cultures at an earlier, more formative stage, and also for a longer period of time, allowed her to view her culture as derived from the other two, but distinct.

I began this study with the assumption that I would only interview Tagalog-speaking Filipino Americans who were either themselves or their parents from the Manila area of the

Philippines. This way, I would have been able to more easily discern a “Filipino” culture from “American” culture. However, Estelle’s parents and Jay hailed from two different regions in the Philippines (Cebu and Ilocos), complicating the concept of a monolithic Filipino culture. Despite this, Estelle and Jay were able to provide information about a national Filipino culture. This is probably due to the nature of the education system in the Philippines, which sought to unify all of the diverse Philippine peoples by teaching Filipino/Tagalog in every school. Estelle’s and Jay’s exact attitudes about their languages and Filipino identity may have been influenced by their Cebuano and Ilocano heritage, but I do not have information on either specific language or culture to determine how or to what degree.

One of the purposes of this research study was to determine if there were regional differences among Filipino Americans based in different areas of the United States, more specifically between Filipino Americans living in the West Coast (California) and Filipino Americans living in the South (Tennessee). The interview question pertained to Filipino American attitudes regarding Latinos, which resulted in Lisa and Jay asserting that the two groups were definitely distinct and Nicole reflecting a similar attitude as Filipino Americans in California. Estelle and Laura did not really address the question of Filipinos as Hispanic or similar to Latinos, instead focusing on them in terms of being Asian. It was revealing that everyone was secure in their opinion that Filipinos were Asian, because they had all lived in the South of the U.S. for an extended period. Nicole’s ambivalence towards being called similar to Latino was directly affected by the fact that she grew up in close proximity to a Mexican community. It further serves to support, to an extent, the notion that there are regional differences among Filipino Americans in the United States because, typically, Filipino Americans would not have as much interaction with Latinos, and so would not develop the same

attitude towards them that Californian Filipino Americans have. However, Nicole's case suggests that it is not simply a matter of living in a different region, but rather actual exposure. The regional factor lies in the fact that higher percentages of Latino communities live in California and the West Coast than in other areas of the United States.

Nicole also independently brought up the question of U.S. regional differences regarding language. She speculated that a main reason why she was not taught Tagalog as a child was because she grew up in the South.

Nicole: A lot of my cousins can speak Tagalog, it's just my family is that one family, and I think a lot of it has to do with us being in the South. Those other relatives, even if their kids were born here, they understand Tagalog more than we do because it's probably more liberal up north in California areas.

It is possible that the generally more liberal attitudes in California would also lead to a greater tolerance or acceptance for the teaching of home languages other than English. However, as Nicole followed up, another important factor in her younger cousins' bilingualism was their age. When she was growing up, there was more widespread fear that bilingualism would hinder a child's growth and ability to perform well academically, whereas now the general attitude is improving to become more accepting of bilingualism. It is unclear how significant of a role their regional differences played in the acceptance or suppression of bilingualism.

Definitely Asian, Maybe Pacific Islander, Absolutely Not Latino/Hispanic

When given the choice on the questionnaire regarding their race, all participants picked "Asian" out of all the options: White, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Other (Please specify). Laura also wrote in "Filipino" beside the Asian option.

When asked their opinion about how they racially identified, and their thoughts about the debate over whether Filipinos should be categorized as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Latino or Hispanic, each participant stated that they personally identified as Asian, albeit to varying degrees.

Lisa strongly identified as Asian. She attributed this to her experience growing up in the Philippines around other Southeast Asian nations. Even when confronted the information that some Filipino Americans, especially in California, did not feel so sure about identifying as Asian because they felt more similar to Latinos, she stressed that she was still Asian.

Lisa: I always say I'm Asian because we are Asian, but there's a debate now about considering Filipinos as Pacific Islanders.

Author: Because in California, there's a lot of Filipinos there who don't feel Asian, they think they're Pacific Islander or they identify with Latinos. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Lisa: Oh yes, I mean, I'm still Asian. It's because, I have thought this before, like, yes, we had Spanish ancestors, they colonized us for 300 years, so the Spanish blood is running in our veins, but still the culture is different. I don't really know much about the Latin, but I know that it's different. I could identify more with the Malaysians, the Indonesians, the Thailanders, which are Asians. I could identify with them but with the Latinos, so I consider myself Asian.

She was unwavering in her self-identification as Asian. The reason there was even a debate about Filipinos' racial categorization stemmed from the fact that other people, non-Filipinos, were ignorant of Asians in general and Filipinos specifically. Compared to her, they had "untrained eyes" when it came to being able to identify Asians. She placed much emphasis on the fact that she not only did she identify as Asian, but could identify other Asian ethnicities based on their features. She did not specifically address Pacific Islanders as an option, but that

could also be related to her stark acceptance of Filipinos as Asian, which was also reflected in the fact that she denied any profound similarities to Latinos.

Jay, on the other hand, felt that there was not really a distinction between Asians and Pacific Islanders. He also grew up in the Philippines, but because of his experiences in Hawai'i, he felt that the location and people there were similar enough to Filipinos in Asia. He recognized that Asians and Pacific Islanders could also be alike in the sense that Southeast Asian nations were also islands in the Pacific Ocean. If there were no "Asian" option, he would pick "Pacific Islander" next. However, he would absolutely not pick "Hispanic" or "Latino."

Jay: There's not really a distinction between Asian or Pacific Islander per se, but when you say Latinos, that's different because that's likely either a Mexican or Spanish origin. But for the Filipinos, I think that we are closer in relation to an Asian, being in the Pacific with most of the Southeast Asian nations.

He did not consider Filipinos of Spanish origin, even though he had earlier recognized that there was some Spanish influence on Filipino culture. This shows his personal distinction that while Filipinos did receive some degree of Spanish influence, they were not of Spanish origin, unlike Latinos, who were. The geographical location of the Philippines in Asia further solidified his position that not only was he personally Asian, or sometimes Pacific Islander, Filipinos as a whole were the same way.

Estelle's position resembled Jay's in that she considered the Philippines' geographical location in Asia as important to its identification as an Asian country. Her personal identification as Asian, however, seemed to have been shaped more by certain racial microaggressions.

Estelle: I did have one classmate who said, "You look Chinese, you must be Chinese," and I'm only part Chinese so I don't count myself as Chinese, like, I didn't grow up in the culture and I don't, my parents don't identify as Chinese, there's no one

in my family who identifies as Chinese, so that was a little frustrating trying to explain China as not the only Asian country.

She somewhat frequently received comments relating to her being Asian in the form of her peers conflating China with all of Asia when she would tell them she was from the Philippines, which was in Asia. This probably helped secure her identification as Asian because more effort was put into first clarifying that China did not represent all of Asia, and secondly that she was a separate Asian ethnicity. Essentially, she did not have to personally extensively deal with the Asian versus Pacific Islander debate.

Estelle: I'm not really sure where the debate stemmed from. I haven't been giving it too much thought as of late, but I mean people would classically consider Japan as an Asian country, and they're an island as well...I think it's really interesting because the idea of an island not being Asian, I don't know if that's influenced by America having Hawai'i as a state, or if it's influenced by other ideas of just an island paradise.

She pointed out how ludicrous it was that there was even a debate, because no such debate existed for Japan, which was also an island in the Pacific Ocean, but was always considered Asian. She hinted at the idea that maybe the disconnect could be related to the U.S. having Hawai'i as a state. Hawai'i is often considered a group of islands in the Pacific, as the Philippines is. Moreover, it is currently under U.S. jurisdiction, as the Philippines once was. It is possible that one of the factors that contributed to this confusion was Americans applying their limited knowledge of Hawai'i as Pacific islands to the Philippines, of which there is generally even less knowledge. She did not explicitly address the issue of whether or not Filipinos are Hispanic, probably because her focus was more on their status as Asian.

Nicole's stance on Filipinos was that they were Asian because the Philippines is in Asia. However, for her personal identification, as she had never been to Asia and had been raised in

the United States, she considered it more appropriate to say she was Asian American. She felt that her experiences were distinct from those of Asians, who would more accurately be immigrants from Asia as opposed to those of Asian descent, a distinction she made earlier between her mother and herself. While she would object to being called a Pacific Islander, because she firmly believed that the Philippines were in Asia and should be considered Asian, she was somewhat indifferent to the Hispanic portion of the question. This was probably related to Jay's ambivalence about identifying as Pacific Islander. Because she had grown up around a sizeable Mexican community, she did not mind if she were mistaken for Hispanic.

Laura, although she believed Filipinos were Asian, stated that Filipinos were different from what was considered stereotypically Asian. As with Estelle, this perspective seems to have been shaped by racial microaggressions. However, her experiences differed in that she dealt with other people questioning whether or not Filipinos were real Asians, a topic that will be discussed more in depth in the next section.

Asian But Not Asian-Asian

Each participant mentions how Filipinos differ from other Asians in some way, but Nicole and Laura especially address the differences between what is generally accepted as Asian and what it should be.

Lisa and Estelle noted how many people who did not know what the Philippines was or who Filipinos were tended to conflate China with all of Asia.

Lisa: Sometimes they don't really know what Filipino is, where is Philippines. where Filipinos came from. Chinese they know, like it's China, there are a lot of Chinese restaurants. But Filipino, not much.

Estelle: I did have one classmate who said, "You look Chinese, you must be Chinese," and I'm only part Chinese so I don't count myself as Chinese, like, I didn't grow up in the culture and I don't, my parents don't identify as Chinese, there's no one

in my family who identifies as Chinese, so that was a little frustrating trying to explain China as not the only Asian country.

So although they considered the Philippines and Filipinos as Asian, they had to clarify that China was not representative of the entire continent of Asia. This is an especially common misconception in the U.S. where the term “Asian” is generalized to refer to specifically East Asians. This is one reason why Laura and Nicole preferred the terms Filipino and Filipino American over Asian and Asian American.

When asked about the differences between Filipino culture and Asian culture, Nicole clarified that she did not think of the two as mutually exclusive.

Nicole: The Philippines is in Asia, but from the generalized rule the Filipino culture is not like Asian culture to what its generalized...Asia is the general and even though there's a general idea of what Asia is, I think it's not what it should be...I think Filipino culture is Asian culture, and it's just a specific type of Asian culture.

She recognized that, despite the idea that Filipinos did not fit the “Asian” mold as American society defined it, they should still rightfully be considered Asian. The problem was not in whether or not Filipinos should be considered Asian because they did not fit society's image of Asians, but in that image being limited and not inclusive of Asia's diversity. To solve this problem, she felt more inspired to raise awareness of Filipino culture specifically in an effort to broaden the common definition of Asian as including Southeast and South Asians as well.

Laura's point of view pertained more specifically to Filipinos themselves as opposed to Asians as a whole.

Laura: Because I'm Filipino, I have my experience with my superiors, because I'm a different nationality, maybe I don't know how to do math or maybe I don't know how to do spelling or they feel like they're compelled to correct my grammar when I write sentences in my evaluations, so before I submit paperwork I have to

double my effort to say everything is correct, no, there is no room for them to criticize my work.

Just for being Filipino, she was considered different and subjected to assumptions that she was not as good as others. Although she did not offer any examples comparing the experiences of people of other Asian ethnicities in her workplace to her own, it is evident that she felt her experiences as related to her specifically being Filipino. For her, the main issue was not that American society had a limited view of Asians, but that Filipinos were globally mistreated, regardless of their categorization as Asian.

Laura: In any questionnaires we do, there's not such thing as Filipino in any survey we do, it's always Asian, so you kind of have to specify yourself, "Hey I'm from Asia but I'm Filipino," but I know the Asians don't think Filipinos are part of Asia because they think that Asians are Chinese, Japanese. But the Malaysians, Filipinos, they think that they're not part of Asia... The first thing they think [because] you're Filipino is you are domestic helper, they have not gone beyond that yet.

Even from other Asian groups, she felt that Filipinos were marginalized. Beyond that, they were stereotyped as domestic workers, supposedly inferior to other Asians. Because of this, even though she identified as Asian, she felt that her identification as Filipino should be recognized as different. Instead of Nicole's goal of raising awareness to ultimately expand the definition of Asian to also include Asian, Laura's goal was to distinguish Filipinos from other Asians in order to establish a stronger Filipino identity.

Adapting/Assimilating

The concept of adapting and assimilating came up multiple time in the interviews, especially with the first generation Filipino Americans, Lisa, Laura, and Jay. Lisa spoke about her language use in terms of adapting to American society. Laura also mentioned language as a way of adapting to American culture, but she also described compromising as opposed to

completely changing her behaviors. Jay, on the other hand, talked about how he completely changed his professional behaviors regarding timeliness as a way of embracing American norms.

As often and explicitly that Lisa spoke about language, she also spoke of adapting in the same terms. For her, language and adapting were inexplicably interrelated.

Lisa: I'm in this place so I have to adapt...The first barrier that you should break is the language.

Because of this mindset, she emphasized learning the dominant language of society. For her coming from the Philippines, she had to speak more English than Tagalog, because that was the American way. She viewed this as necessary because, in her opinion, Americans were generally monolingual in English and either would not or could not learn other languages like Tagalog. This attitude is reflective of America's historical position of Americans speaking English, as seen with the lack of priority given to language learning when compared to other developed nations and the fact that immigrants generally feel that they must learn English in order to succeed in American society (Ryder et al., 2000). However, while Lisa did express some challenge in having to constantly speak English when she still generally thought first in Tagalog, her Filipino background facilitated her adaptation. Because English is widely taught as a second language in the Philippines, many Filipinos are more prepared language-wise upon entering the United States. With this first barrier broken, as Lisa so aptly described it, language-wise, she could more easily adapt to the American lifestyle.

Laura spoke of her adapting to the change in lifestyles more in terms of behavioral changes. She considered her upbringing in the Philippines as distinct from upbringing in the United States.

Laura: Culture-wise my children feels like I am raising them the Filipino way, meaning, more respect than usual, a little more strict in upbringing, the way we had in the

Philippines than what we do now here. They have their dad to confer with, and I am the Filipino side to confer with, but mostly American way at home.

She would prefer a stricter approach in raising her kids, but because she was in America and married to an American, they had to use a mostly American way of upbringing. For her this meant that they could not use corporal punishment as much as they could have in the Philippines, because it was less accepted in American society. Instead, in her household they used other, less physical punishments, such as time outs.

Laura: When it comes to discipline, my husband would, when they were growing up, would say we don't spank the children that much because they might call the cops on us, but me, on the other hand, Filipino-wise, it's okay to spank their children with your slippers. So we have to compromise by putting the child in a corner on a chair, that's how they grew up.

She appeared to show some resentment at having to change her style of parenting, but also accepted that there were different American norms. She was open to the idea of compromise, which is also seen as an American value. For her, spanking was not seen as appropriate punishment, but she would accept it if some alternative act of punishment was used to ensure that the child would learn. However, her opinion suggests that life is harsher in the Philippines, or that life is made easier in the United States, which is reflected in her description of a teenager in the Philippines versus a teenager in the United States.

Laura: In the Philippines, a 16-year-old will know what life is all about. They already know at 16 what they want to be, they already know what kind of college they're going to be doing. You ask my son, a 16-year-old here, he'll say, "I don't know yet," but what I'm saying is, my parents have to pretty much sell something so I can go to college there. Over here, college is easy to obtain.

She was still trying to adjust to the idea that young people here are less likely to be certain of their futures at the same ages that young people in the Philippines would. She felt that

the opportunities provided in the United States were not fully appreciated by those born here, because in her situation, she knew her parents had to make great sacrifices to send her to college. This could explain the immigrant mentality that life is substantially better here than in their home country, and why they place so much emphasis on taking advantage of educational and professional opportunities as much as possible (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Jay also addressed professional issues when talking of his assimilation. He embraced fully some of the behavioral changes he had to adopt, such as timeliness. Timeliness was an important American value that was the opposite of the Filipino attitude regarding tardiness. In the Philippines, being late is so normalized that there are specific phrases describing it, such as “mañana habit” (putting off tasks till almost the due date) and “Filipino time” (in which Filipinos are always late—to meetings, to parties, to anything). He cited job opportunities as one of the main reasons he was so accepting of these American norms, because he knew that it was more competitive in the Philippines.

Jay: The quality of life is definitely different, and so that’s why I choose to stay, probably, in the States, because of the opportunity. Because if compare it in the Philippines, if I don’t have a good paying job in the Philippines, I probably won’t be able to get my kids to college, or get them a good education. The competition is too tight over there.

What is especially remarkable about this statement is that Jay cited a better quality of life in terms of job opportunities in the United States as his reason for staying. However, he elaborated and said that this higher pay and quality of life was especially important for him to provide for his family, which is a strong Filipino ideal. Essentially, he chose a more American option for very Filipino reasons. Although he did not compromise to adapt as Laura did, and instead completely changed certain Filipino behaviors for American ones, he was able to do so in such a way as to maintain his Filipino values.

However, assimilation was not limited to only an immigrant or first-generation Filipino American perspective. Nicole also addressed the issue of assimilation as it related to everyone having to assimilate to specifically white American standards.

Nicole: What is deemed as American culture, is people who have lost pretty much all their cultural background. So that's why white people are distinguished as white people and not by their country of origin, just like we are. We're Filipino American, but they're not Norwegian American. Most people don't identify as Irish American, yet they are assumed to have assimilated, yet I am not, but I think it's because I still have that cultural tie. So in order to be successful, I think I've had to assimilate towards these standards that are American standards... You're only considered a model minority once you've achieved those standards and you're coming as close to white culture as possible.

This is especially relevant when considering the recent history of immigration into the United States. For generations, the majority of immigrants had come from white European countries, but over time, they became known simply as Americans (“Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups over Time, 1960-Present,” 2013). They had apparently erased their ethnic heritage, be it Irish, Italian, etc, in order to assume the standard American ideal of whiteness. However, the majority of immigrants now come from primarily Asian or Latin American countries, and as Nicole stated, they are assumed not to have assimilated because they still have that cultural tie to their home country. Nicole, who had never been to the Philippines and who had been raised in the United States, still felt this tie to her cultural heritage in a way that other descendants of immigrants from European countries did not. She recognized that the double standard in place was rooted in America valuing whiteness as the standard to strive for, and even though that was not possible for people of color, they still had to try. For Filipino Americans, the road to adapting and assimilating did not begin with the first-generation, nor did it end with their descendants.

Being Challenged

One of the themes related to adapting and assimilating was the idea of being challenged. For first-generation Filipino Americans, there was the idea that because they were from the Philippines they could not also be American. There was also the notion that Filipinos were looked down upon by others because of negative stereotypes. For second-generation Filipino Americans, they were often challenged on whether they were Filipino or American “enough.”

For Being Filipino

Lisa: I’m an American, because I’m in America!

One of the questions that participants were asked was, “What about you is American?” to which the Lisa, Jay, and Laura readily answered “I am a U.S. citizen.” However, Nicole and Estelle did not use this as one of the reasons they were American. This is probably related to the fact that the path to gaining citizenship is something not taken lightly by first-generation Americans of any kind, whereas for those born here, it is almost taken for granted. Jay even specified that for him to become a U.S. citizen, he had to renounce his Philippine citizenship. Because they had earned their citizenship, because they had been made to work for it, Lisa, Jay, and Laura easily considered their status as U.S. citizens as proof of being American. This would tie into their attitudes about being American and American culture.

Lisa and Laura identified strongly as Filipino, but rejected the idea that they could not also be American. They had both lived in the United States for years, and from their perspective, that should also have been accepted as proof of them being American. They cited taking on more American behaviors, such as speaking English, driving cars, and adopting American attitudes that conflicted with their Filipino attitudes. They viewed their successful adapting to American society as a measure of being American.

This would appear to contradict their strong identification as Filipino, but only if being Filipino and American were seen as mutually exclusive. From their point of view, questioning whether or not they were truly American was interpreted as a question of their abilities in conforming to American standards. It was more of a matter of pride because they had put in tremendous effort into becoming more American, earning their U.S. citizenship, changing their behaviors and attitudes, and yet people would still question them because of their Filipino pride. However, this theme of being challenged based on their Filipino ethnicity was ubiquitous.

Laura especially felt the pressure of being Filipino and having negative stereotypes attributed to her. Even in her professional life, she was constantly having to prove herself.

Laura: The Filipinos are always considered the laborers, and when I went to Hong Kong as a sailor, roaming the streets or something, the first thing they think [because] you're Filipino is you are domestic helper.

Coming here in the states, I had to prove to the American boss that I can do mathematics better, I can spell better, I can do things grammatically better when I do sentences, because it's like you have to prove to them that you can live here.

The challenges are more, every time more, it's like there's two of us the same rank but I have to show that I'm exceptional, like, I do maintenance better, I work better, my work ethics are better.

Not only was there an issue of proving that Filipinos could be American or succeed in American society, there was also the issue that they had to prove their objective merit. Because of the stereotype that Filipinas were only domestic workers (i.e., housekeepers, housemaids, cleaners), Laura felt that she had even more to prove. Jay, who was also in the military, did not feel as acutely, or at least did not express, the stresses of being a Filipino in the U.S. workforce. However, because the Filipino domestic worker stereotype was tied almost exclusively to

Filipina women, Laura was more directly affected. Because of her status as both Filipino and a woman, it would never be enough to be just as good as one of her coworkers; she would have to be better than them to be accepted. Even after having achieved a high rank in the military, she still felt the need to excel.

Even as a military, and I'm a chief petty officer, among your peers you still have to prove something. You're more accepted when you know your stuff, you don't want to be put on the side, but I think until the day I die I would be proving that I'm always still better.

For Not Being Filipino Enough or American Enough

Both Nicole and Estelle expressed the idea that as second-generation Filipino Americans, they were questioned about their authentic membership as being Filipino and American from both communities. Just as the first-generation Filipino Americans would be asked if they are American, so too were the second-generation Filipino Americans. However, they would also be asked by other Filipinos if they were really Filipino.

Nicole: It's just you're never American enough or never Filipino enough. On both communities, you kind of get that, you just get questioned about it or something like "are you really Filipino?" or like you still get the questions like "Where are you actually from?" even if you're an American.

This situation is common among second-generation children of Americans who often have to deal with balancing their heritage culture and the mainstream culture (Giguère, Lalonde, & Lou, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2012; Stroink & Lalonde, 2009). For Nicole and Estelle, from their Filipino side, they are seen as too americanized to be seen as fully Filipino. From the American side, that is, their peers and other (typically white) Americans, they are seen as foreign and inherently non-American. Regardless of how they identify, this is a problem because they are never seen as 100% part of one group.

Estelle: I keep up with Filipino politics, I've done many papers regarding the Philippines so that I can stay updated on it and informed, and even though I don't identify myself as 100% Filipino, something about my father saying, "You're not 100% Filipino," just strikes a chord.

Estelle did not consider herself to be 100% Filipino, but she did not feel it was appropriate to be told so by someone else. Even though she had done her own research into her heritage and took pains to keep up with current events in her parents' home country, she was still not considered Filipino "enough." She mentioned looking no different from the rest of her family, but was the only one who was born in the States. Sometimes she would have a dissenting opinion from her father, who would attribute it simply to her having been influenced by American ways of thinking, making her an American as well. This suggests that there is some intrinsic, pure Filipino quality that she, and other second-generation Filipino Americans, lack.

This is especially problematic when the perspective of other Americans is taken into consideration, which represents the opposite point of view: Second-generation Americans are not real Americans because they differ from the standard that society tries to uphold that inherently excludes. They are seen only in terms of their ethnic heritage. Nicole recognized that although she did differ from other white or black Americans in terms of still having a cultural tie, she was still definitely American.

Nicole: The way that I'm growing up as a Filipino American is my American culture, so I consider it a different experience than just a Filipino, what someone who was born in the Philippines might experience, and someone who is maybe a white American or sometimes even a black American might experience, because there is that cultural aspect to it.

Trying to define the two as mutually exclusive ignores the reality that identity is a complex construct with multiple levels to it. Forcing Filipino Americans to choose between Filipino or American identity would be to grossly reduce the significant influences of both

aspects of a whole person. In any case, as the participants described it, regardless of what anyone else thinks, Filipino Americans will keep identifying with both the Filipino and American aspects of their identity, whether it be more one way or the other, equally for both sides, situationally determined, or as its own separate identity.

Conclusion

Many attitudes regarding race were reflected in the participants' interviews, especially those distinguishing Filipinos from other Asian groups or the generalization of Asians in American society. They felt that Filipinos did not fit this generalization because it was typically restricted to East Asians and those of East Asian descent (Isaac, 2006; A. Ocampo, 2016; Tuason et al., 2007). However, each of the participants also definitively categorized Filipinos and themselves as Asian, with most of them denying similarities with Latinos. This contradicts findings from Filipino Americans based in California, which tend to focus on the notion that most Filipino Americans are identifying more with Latinos and less as Asian (A. C. Ocampo, 2014). However, one participant seemed to have an attitude more in line with the findings from California-based studies, because she had been more exposed to Mexican culture, which suggests that exposure as opposed to region is more influential in shaping identity. That said, more studies should be done over Filipino Americans in other regions of the U.S. such as the South, because although this study suggests that there are differences in their attitudes and opinions compared with their California counterparts, it was limited in the amount of participants and depth of interviews.

Regarding the question of bilingualism's effect on Filipino American identity, it would seem that speaking, and, to a lesser extent, understanding, a Filipino language strengthens

Filipino identity. Depending on how biculturalism is defined, this effect also extends to the specifically Filipino aspect of Filipino American identity.

Bilingual participants viewed their ability to speak both English and a Filipino language as important to their identity for two reasons. 1) Speaking a Filipino language was one of the more obvious ways in which they could actively express the Filipino aspect of their identity; and 2) Being bilingual in English and a Filipino language was something distinctly Filipino that separated them from Americans because, as one participant put it “We can speak two languages, and they can only speak one.”

On the other hand, the participants who did not identify as bilingual did not see that as a shortcoming regarding their identity. Of these two participants, the first stated that she was Filipino American even though she was no longer conversational in Tagalog or Cebuano, which would support the notion that bilingualism would strengthen the Filipino cultural aspect. The other participant noted that she would have loved to understand Tagalog, which is different in that for her, the focus was not on being fluent or producing Tagalog, but in being able to understand those who did speak it. This leads to the final question regarding whether or not it is possible to be bicultural without being bilingual.

Ostensibly, it is possible to be a bicultural Filipino American without also being bilingual in presumably English and another Filipino language. However, this does not mean that not being bilingual has no consequence or effect on Filipino American identity. The participants would describe speaking Tagalog or Filipino as a measure of one’s “Filipinoness.”

Unsurprisingly, participants said upfront that speaking Tagalog or Filipino was important to them feeling Filipino. However, what was surprising was the way that this attitude manifested itself in subtler ways. Speaking Tagalog or Filipino was seen as something that Filipinos

naturally did, relayed a kinship between Filipinos, definitively classified someone as Filipino, and separated Filipinos from Americans. It was difficult not to equate being Filipino with speaking Tagalog, which carries the implication that one cannot be Filipino and not speak Tagalog. However, this is also dependent on how biculturalism is defined.

The participants preferred to describe their biculturalism or reasons for being Filipino American in terms of their ways of thinking, attitudes, and practicing certain Filipino customs. They listed certain values from both cultures that they appreciated and conveyed the importance of food as something culturally significant. However, one participant was wary of calling herself bicultural because she interpreted that to mean having two cultural identities. She considered her Filipino American identity as separate from a Filipino identity or an American identity. While she made the same implications about being Filipino and speaking Tagalog, it was not as important for her being Filipino American.

In general, more studies specifically regarding Filipino Americans should be conducted. This study was limited in that there were few participants and relatively short interviews. Additionally, there may have been some bias in the choice of participants due to recruitment methods considering participants either knew the researcher herself or her family. The diversity of the participants was appreciated, but made it difficult not to make an individual's personal experiences representative of a group they were in. Topics that were briefly touched on but not discussed at length as they could have been in longer interviews were stereotypes, the idea of a lack of knowledge or exposure for both Filipinos and Americans, and the difference among different Filipino languages. Studies specifically on Filipino American bilingualism or the lack thereof should be conducted as another way of examining Filipino American culture. More comparative studies between first- and second-generation (and beyond) Filipino Americans and

between Filipino immigrants and their children should be conducted. Future studies should have a larger number of participants, especially in regions where there are smaller populations of Filipino Americans, in order to create a more holistic understanding of all Filipino Americans and their experiences.

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