Filipino Americans and the Rise of Anti-Asian Hate:

Exploring Identity, Resilience, and Responses to the Racism Among Older Filipino Americans

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ABSTRACT

The recent rise in anti-Asian hate amidst the COVID-19 pandemic provides a novel circumstance within which to investigate Filipino American ethnic and racial identity development. Existing literature on this topic highlights the impact of colonization on present-day Filipinos, regarding their ethnic identification, panethnic consciousness, and responses to discrimination. Most of this research focuses on college-aged and second-generation Filipino Americans. However, victims of the rise in anti-Asian hate include older Asian Americans. Therefore, this study explores Filipino American identity and experiences with racism through 10 interviews with first-generation Filipino Americans, aged 65 and above. The study finds that, although Filipino Americans experience racial discrimination, many are resilient. However, their resilience may reflect internalizations of Filipino cultural values, the colonial mentality, and the model minority myth, as well as the search for a positive identity. Additionally, this study has an unexpected finding that Filipino Americans may collectively construct their identities, with many of their ethnic/racial identities reflecting that of their spouse. Ultimately, the lives and identities of Filipino American involve a dynamic process that adapts and reflects shifting political, social, and cultural contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite their roots in Southeast Asia, Filipino Americans do not always identify as 'Asian American.' Centuries of Spanish colonization and decades of American Imperialism have led Filipino Americans to develop complex, heterogeneous ethnic identities. For example, some Filipino Americans identify more closely with Latinos than Asians due to cultural similarities from Spanish colonization (Ocampo, 2013). Others have a colonial mentality—a complex which leads them to value Western (White) cultural standards over Filipino culture—and seek to distance themselves from the Filipino identity (David & Okazaki, 2006). However, recent spikes in anti-Asian hate crimes have included Filipino Americans, suggesting that Filipino American self-identification might not impact how the world perceives them.

In the years since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States has seen an increase in anti-Asian hate crimes and sentiment. While all age groups are falling victim to this wave of anti-Asian violence, media sources have garnered attention particularly around older victims; for example, a National Public Radio article entitled "Anger And Fear As Asian American Seniors Targeted In Bay Area Attacks" describes various—sometimes fatal—attacks against Asian Americans aged 50 and above (Westervelt, 2021). This uptick in anti-Asian hate is unsurprising, perhaps, given that the narratives surrounding the emergence of the COVID-19 virus have been notably xenophobic. For example, during his time in office, President Trump adamantly labeled the coronavirus the "Chinese virus" and the "Kung-flu" (Jun & Wu, 2021). Yet, demonstrating the pervasiveness of the stereotype that Asian Americans are a homogenous group, the spike in anti-Asian hate has extended beyond Chinese Americans to encompass Asian Americans of many backgrounds, including Filipino Americans. Therefore, the rise in anti-Asian

hate offers a unique backdrop for further research on Filipino American ethnic/racial identity development. Specifically, how might increases in anti-Asian racism impact Filipino American ethnic/racial identity and their perceptions of racism?

This study explores this question through 10 interviews with Filipino Americans, aged 65 and above, who have lived in the United States for over three decades. Through these interviews, I investigate how Filipino Americans understand their racial identities against different social contexts, perceive racism, and develop their identities over time within the broader U.S. socio-political environment. Ultimately, this study will expand on existing research regarding Filipino American ethnic/racial identity development by exploring how societal forces that group Filipino Americans into the broader Asian American category might mediate their self-identification, and how Filipino Americans digest or reject racist experiences.

METHODS

Participants

I recruited participants for this study through my personal network and the Boston College community, including the Philippine Society of Boston College (PSBC) and Boston College professors. From these initial participants, I used snowball sampling to generate a more geographically diverse sample. Given that the spike in anti-Asian hate gained media attention around older victims, I restricted the sample to Filipino Americans, aged 65 and above. I also limited the sample to Filipino Americans who have lived in the United States for at least three decades to ensure that participants had multiple generations of ethnic/racial identity development in the U.S. context, with ample opportunity to integrate into U.S. culture. Participants also

needed to be proficient in English and capable of making an informed decision about participation in the study.

I recruited 10 participants, 6 of whom were women and 4 of whom were men. The average age was 74.7 years (SD = 6.23; range = 65–82). All of the participants were first-generation immigrants who moved from the Philippines to the United States between 1960 and the mid-1980s (earliest = 1960, latest =1984). Many came to the United States for educational and economic opportunities, and some remained in the United States because of the unstable political environment in the Philippines under former President Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986). Some participants came through chain migration, following siblings or parents to the United States. Though participants lived in different locations during their lives (California, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia), six participants lived on the West Coast (California, *n=4;* Oregon, *n=2*), three participants lived in the Midwest (Iowa, *n=1,* Illinois, *n=2*), and one participant lived in the Northeast (Pennsylvania, *n=1*) at the time of their interviews. The sample was also highly educated; of 10 participants, all were college-educated, seven obtained a master's degree, one obtained a doctoral degree, and one achieved a graduate fellowship.

This sample provides insights into the experiences of highly educated first-generation Filipino American immigrants, specifically from the wave of Filipino Americans that immigrated to the United States following the Immigration Act of 1965, a legislature that repealed the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924. This wave, often considered the final wave of Filipino immigrants, "consisted mainly of professionals" who were "educated in the Philippines and arrived in the United States with their college diplomas" (Nadal, 2011, p. 15). Consequently, these immigrants were "able to succeed" (p. 15) in the United States, marking a difference between this wave of

immigrants and prior waves. Similar to this study's participants, most of these immigrants moved to the West Coast, but many also chose to live on the East Coast and Midwest, settling "mainly in suburban areas outside of major metropolitan cities" (p. 15). Therefore, this study's sample contributes a look into the experiences and identities of those in the "final wave" of Filipino immigration to the United States.

However, this sample has various limitations. First, the sample does not account for Filipino Americans with lower levels of education. While this study analyzes members of the last official wave of Filipino immigrants, it does not account for the "'nonprofessional' Filipino Americans" that "continue to arrive in the United States on a regular basis," such as undocumented Filipino immigrants who pick up lower-level jobs (Nadal, 2011, p. 15). Moreover, though participants lived all over the United States, none of the participants lived in the Southwest region of the United States, limiting a full picture of the Filipino American experience across the entire country. Finally, the sample lacked gender diversity (i.e., all of the participants were cisgender).

Data and Measures

For this study, I used qualitative data from 10 semi-structured interviews. I structured the interviews to last about one hour and conducted them over password-protected Zoom sessions. Interview questions broadly revolved around early immigrant experiences, encounters with anti-Asian hate and other forms of racism (e.g., anti-Latinx racism), and racial identity development and consciousness. Interviewees were encouraged to reflect on and share their experiences through stories. All research activities received IRB approval from Boston College.

Procedure

To engage a more geographically diverse sample and minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, I conducted all research activities over the internet. I communicated with participants initially through email, where I checked that they met the study's requirements. After ensuring that my participants met the study's requirements—i.e., were Filipino, at least 65 years old, and had been living in the United States for at least three decades—I invited them to a password-protected Zoom meeting to gather their informed consent (if they chose to not complete the form before the meeting) and subsequently begin a semi-structured interview.[1] Then I transcribed interviews and used a thematic analysis to identify patterns in the data. I also provided each participant with a pseudonym and used these names in this manuscript. This study was not deductive, but rather inductive; therefore, I aimed my research process and analysis at learning more about how Filipino Americans experience—or do not experience—racism, beginning with their ethnic/racial identification.

This method was well-suited to my research question because it provided participants with an opportunity to tell their stories through interviews, bringing visibility to a traditionally invisible population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the broader 'Asian American' category, Filipino Americans are a compelling case study because of the cultural impact of Spanish colonization (from 1521 to 1898) and American Imperialism (from 1898 to 1946) in the Philippines. These forces created a transnational

[1] See Appendix A for the semi-structured interview guide.

consciousness that continues to impact Filipinos across the diaspora. Additionally, many Filipinos and Filipino Americans have developed a "colonial mentality," a term which David & Okazaki (2006) define as "a perception of ethnic or cultural inferiority that is believed to be a specific consequence of centuries of colonization under Spain and the United States" (p. 241). Moreover, the "postcolonial relationship" between the United States and the Philippines influences the Filipino American experience particularly as it relates to racial and ethnic identity formation (Chutuape, 2016, p. 204). Specifically, the narrative of American cultural superiority that imperialists used to legitimize their presence in the Philippines resulted in the Americanization of the country and remains relevant for Filipinos in both the United States and the Philippines (Chutuape, 2016). The cultural and economic interconnectedness between the United States and the Philippines "facilitate[s] the blending of Filipinos into American society," creating "discourses with which second generation Filipino Americans must contend" (Chutuape, p. 204, 2016).

Indeed, even though the Philippines gained independence in 1946, the countries remained connected through "political, economic, and military commitments" (Fujita-Rony, 2010, p. 7). For instance, the United States formally united its economy with the Philippines through preferential tariffs in the Bell Trade Act of 1946, secured a "99-year agreement for military facilities in the Philippines" in the 1947 Military Bases Agreement, and created a system in which Americans aided Philippine army training in the 1947 Military Assistance Agreement (Fujita-Rony, 2010). These ties and political arrangements favored the United States, leading the nation to exercise a sustained dominance over the Philippines that remains relevant today. Therefore, the United States and the Philippines continue to be deeply connected through political, economic, and cultural ties, decades beyond the formal end of United States rule.

Consequently, there has been increasing research into how Filipino Americans make sense of their identities given these periods of colonial rule. This research centers around the concepts of the Asian American label, the colonial mentality, and panethnicity. However, most of this research focuses on how college-aged and second-generation Filipino Americans develop and understand their identities. There is less literature addressing this topic among older Filipino Americans, especially first-generation immigrants. The recent spikes in anti-Asian hate and their inclusion of older Asian Americans provide an emerging, unique circumstance in which to examine Filipino American ethnic/racial identity development. Therefore, I investigate how the shifting socio-political environment in the United States might influence Filipino American identity development—for instance, whether anti-Asian hate fosters identification with the Asian American community or greater social distancing—in the context of a traditionally overlooked population: older Filipino American adults.

Before continuing, it is important to note that racial identity and ethnic identity are distinct. Race refers to different classifications of people, such as 'Black,' 'White,' or 'Asian.' Ethnicity refers to membership in a particular ethnic group, such as 'Filipino,' 'Korean,' or 'Chinese.' Therefore, there are a variety of ethnicities within the broader racial category 'Asian.' Regardless of whether or not Filipino Americans identify closely with the 'Asian' label, the U.S. Census Bureau "categorizes Filipinos under the Asian racial umbrella" (Nadal, 2011, p. 66). However, Filipino Americans may choose to identify themselves more closely with their ethnic identity or their racial identity; therefore, when referring to identity, I say "racial/ethnic identity."

Filipino Americans and the Asian American Label: The Model Minority Myth

Filipino Americans have distinct cultural features—such as an emphasis on matriarchy—that influence their racial identities (Nadal 2011; Ocampo, 2014). Due to the influence of Spanish colonization and American Imperialism, some Filipino Americans feel that Filipino culture does not reflect the panethnic category 'Asian American.' Some Filipino Americans even feel reluctant to identify as Asian, noting "few cultural connections between themselves and other Asians" (Ocampo, 2014, p. 435). One explanation for this outcome is that people in the United States tend to categorize all Asian Americans as a monolithic group, ascribing stereotypes typically attributed to a subgroup of East Asians to all Asian ethnic groups. A manifestation of this phenomenon is the model minority myth, a narrative that "defines all Asian Americans as being well-educated, successful, career-driven, and law abiding" (Nadal, 2011, p. 138) U.S. citizens. This narrative has many negative consequences and creates a view of Asian Americans that does not represent the realities of many individuals and groups.

One of the most significant and damaging outcomes of the model minority myth is a narrative that minimizes the discrimination and racism that Asian Americans face. The notion that Asian Americans are not only a monolithic group, but also one that consistently experiences academic, career, and economic success, communicates that Asian Americans do not encounter any significant forms of discrimination. Therefore, the model minority myth makes the Asian American experience invisible, rendering Asian Americans more "prone to structural racism" and preventing collective action against anti-Asian discrimination (Muramatsu & Chin, 2022). Additionally, the model minority myth may have the adverse effect of breeding "social indifference to instances in which Asian Americans are racially victimized or unjustly

discriminated against" (Wong & Halgin, 2006, p. 48). These outcomes are especially problematic given that Asian Americans frequently face discrimination akin to that of other racial and ethnic groups (Alvarez et al., 2006; Wong & Halgin, 2006; Sue et al., 2009). Yet, many Asian Americans continue to experience an invalidation of their lived experiences. Sue et al. (2009) found evidence of this consequence materializing in their study on the Asian American experience. Specifically, they found that Asian Americans of all ethnicities experience a "Denial of Racial Reality," wherein other Americans invalidate their racialized experiences through communications like "Asians are the new Whites" (p. 76). Therefore, the model minority myth dominates the discourse on Asian Americans, obscuring their lived experiences and preventing action against the injustice that they continue to face.

This narrative becomes even more problematic as it obscures the specific set of challenges that each ethnic group faces, especially those that do not reflect the myth. Filipino Americans are one such group that does not holistically embody the model minority myth. Nadal (2011) defines six categories in which Filipino Americans do exemplify the model minority myth. First, Filipino American households normally have two parents. Second, the divorce rate for Filipino Americans, though slightly above the average for Asian American families, is below that of the American population. Third, Filipino Americans tend to speak English more fluently than other Asian Americans. Fourth, Filipina American women join the workforce more frequently than other American—and Asian American—women. Fifth, the poverty rate for Filipino Americans is lower than that of all other Asian American groups, and substantially lower than that of the general American population. Finally, the median family income for

Filipino Americans is $84,649, a statistic that is on average higher than that of the American population ($62,982) and Asian American population ($78,513) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).[2]

Even so, Nadal (2011) elaborates that many of these factors are "misleading and have cultural explanations" (p. 141). For instance, the low divorce rate may be more reflective of Catholic values—historically imposed by the Spanish—rather than happy marriages. Likewise, their fluency in English demonstrates the influence of U.S. imperialism and the colonial mentality, a mindset which may lead Filipino Americans to teach their children English rather than traditional Filipino languages, such as Tagalog and Ilocano. Regarding the fourth factor, "matriarchal gender roles and cultural values" (p. 141) likely influence Filipina women to join the workforce. Moreover, even though the median Filipino American household income is above average, there are often more family members—including the fourth factor, women—contributing to the overall income (about 3.41 family members as compared to 2.59 for the general population and 3.08 for Asian American families). Additionally, each family member makes, on average, less money than those in other families. Filipino American men who work full-time, for instance, have an average income of $45,348, which is disproportionately lower than both Asian American and American men, generally, who make $52,635 and $46,478, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This inequality, paired with the fact that many Filipino American men have college degrees and are fluent in English, suggests that "racism and discrimination may influence [their] experiences" (p. 142).

Furthermore, there are many ways in which Filipino Americans contradict the model minority myth. Nadal (2011) describes multiple factors that distinguish Filipino Americans from

[2] Note that the data on Asian American and Filipino American populations include "Asian alone or in combination with one or more other races."

this narrative. For one, Filipino Americans have the "highest contraction rates of HIV/AIDS out of all Asian American and Pacific Islander groups" (p. 146). Moreover, compared to East Asian Americans, second-generation Filipina Americans lead in teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancy rates. There is also significant documentation of Filipino American urban and suburban gangs in Hawaii and California that have been known to engage in violence. Finally, there are a variety of sociocultural factors that counter the model minority myth, including issues with gambling and body image (Nadal, 2011). These factors not only illustrate the many ways in which Filipino Americans do not fit the model minority myth, but also the diversity within the Filipino American population.

Interestingly, the extent to which Filipino Americans identify themselves as 'model minorities' may impact their identities. For instance, Ocampo (2013) found that Filipino American college students who once identified as model minorities in high school felt less comfortable with the Asian American label once they encountered higher-achieving East Asian counterparts in college. Moreover, Rodriguez-Operana et al. (2017) found that school-aged Filipino Americans might choose to identify as Pacific Islanders as a means through which to "distance themselves from the Asian American label that is so closely associated with model minority stereotypes" (p. 68). Additionally, these authors identified a positive link between Filipino American internalization of the model minority stereotype and identification with the Asian American label (Rodriguez-Operana et al., 2017). These findings suggest that Filipino Americans might develop their ethnic/racial identities around how the world perceives them.

The Colonial Mentality

These complex identities reflect years of Spanish colonization and American imperialism and their collective impact on Filipino culture and, by extension, Filipino lives. Through generational transmission and community values, these forces remain relevant for both Filipinos in the Philippines and Filipinos in the United States (Nadal, 2011, p. 96). The centuries of foreign rule impacted Filipino "religion, educational systems, culture, language, values, and standards of beauty" (Nadal, 2011, p. 102). However, perhaps one of the most significant legacies of colonization in the Philippines is the colonial mentality. This perception, which results in "an automatic and uncritical rejection of anything Filipino and an automatic and uncritical preference for anything American" (David & Okazaki, p. 241) is present in the minds of many Filipinos and has led to "psychological distress, depression, and hierarchies in the Filipino American community" (Nadal, 2011, p. 102).

Indeed, the colonial mentality has reaching implications on the Filipino American experience, including ethnic/racial identity development and mental health outcomes (Kiang & Takeuchi, 2009; Felipe, 2016; David & Nadal, 2013; David et al., 2017; Chan & Litam, 2021). For instance, Kiang and Takeuchi (2009) found that Filipino Americans with more Western appearances (i.e., lighter skin, Eurocentric features) have better mental health outcomes than those with more Filipino features, and Filipino Americans who appear more Filipino tend to have stronger Filipino ethnic identities. Accordingly, Nadal (2011) suggests that darker-skinned Filipinos might internalize feelings of inferiority to their lighter-skinned counterparts. Therefore, the colonial mentality leads to a favoring of Western beauty standards that has a notable impact on the mental well-being of Filipino Americans, particularly those who appear more Filipino.

Moreover, the colonial mentality contributes to a loss of Filipino culture and reduced solidarity among Filipinos across the diaspora. David et al. (2017) suggest that the colonial mentality influences some Filipino Americans to shift away from core Filipino values and Filipino culture. For instance, Filipino Americans who manifest the colonial mentality may be less likely to have *kapwa,* an indigenous value that describes "one's unity, connection, or oneness with other people—regardless of "blood" connection, social status, wealth, level of education, place of origin, or other factors typically used to separate or distinguish people" (David et al., 2017, p. 48). The loss of this core value implies the adoption of the American value of individualism. Furthermore, due to feelings of inferiority and a desire to assimilate into the dominant culture, Filipino Americans may be less likely to stand up against any oppression or discrimination that they encounter (David et al., 2017). Others may begin to discriminate against other Filipinos— including family members—who they perceive to be more Filipino than American (e.g., recent immigrants, those with stronger Filipino accents, etc.) (David et. al, 2017; Nadal, 2011). Therefore, the colonial mentality has important consequences for Filipino Americans' positive ethnic/racial identity development and can impact their behavior towards and solidarity with other Filipino Americans.

Panethnicity

"Panethnicity" is an ever-evolving term (Lai, 2021) that broadly refers to the "consolidation of ethnic, tribal, religious, and national groups" to form a "new categorical boundary" (Okamoto & Mora, p. 221, 2014). Though many scholars use the term in a U.S. context—for example, to refer to Asian Americans—panethnicity exists across the globe (Okamoto & Mora, 2014). Within the United States, however, panethnicity has come to represent

the interconnectedness of multiple different ethnicities under one umbrella label, often with overarching political connotations.

Asian American panethnicity began to develop in the late 1960s, with one of the earliest documented efforts towards building solidarity being the "Asian American Experience in America—Yellow Identity" conference at UC Berkeley in January 1969 (Wei, 1993). This conference focused on the necessity of developing Asian American solidarity in the United States. Moreover, it helped stimulate a political movement around the Asian American group by highlighting that "it would take more than a single event to achieve ethnic solidarity" (p. 46). After multiple groups began to organize and connect Asian Americans to one another, many participants realized that they felt stigmatized by—and inferior to—the dominant society. As a result, they began to organize the Asian American Movement, a political movement that focused on social justice and change for Asian Americans (Wei, 1993). This movement involved three main ethnic groups: Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Americans (Lai, 2021).

Some regard the formal movement, which lasted from 1968 to 1975, as the "height of panethnic solidarity" in the Asian American community (Lai, 2021, p. 235). However, since then, the concept of panethnicity has begun to change alongside shifting demographics among Asian Americans. Specifically, the political context, including the Immigration Act of 1965, led to "ethnic, class, and ideological diversity," changes that "shaped and altered the contemporary [Asian American] community and subsequently challenged the original meanings of panethnicity as only a progressive ideology" (Lai, 2021, p. 237).

The 'Asian American' label and panethnic consciousness is thus always shifting. Historically, Asian Americans have been a fairly heterogeneous group; however, following Trump's anti-Asian rhetoric in his 2016 campaign, some Asian Americans began to feel more

closely connected to one another (Le et al., 2020). These findings suggest that the broader political context may mediate panethnic consciousness and identification among Asian Americans (Masuoka, 2006; Le et al., 2020). Similarly, Masuoka (2006) found stronger panethnic identification among Asian Americans who believe that racism is a significant problem. Therefore, political and social factors can impact the extent to which Asian Americans resonate with a panethnic identity.

However, for Filipino Americans—especially those with strong colonial mentalities—panethnicity may be more complicated. Indeed, panethnicity among Filipino Americans is inconsistent; the extent to which Filipino Americans identify themselves with Asian Americans depends on a multitude of factors, from their stage in ethnic development (Nadal, 2004) to their generation and the communities in which they grow up (Strobel, 2000). In a study on Filipino American panethnic identification, for example, Ocampo (2014) found that some Filipino American respondents referred to the "Americanization of Filipino culture as a reason to demarcate themselves from other Asians" (p.435). Other respondents felt more closely connected to Latinx Americans because of their shared history of Spanish colonization (Ocampo, 2014). This wide array of responses illuminates how the cultural context in the Philippines is not only unique but central to Filipino ethnic identity (Ocampo, 2014).

Anti-Asian Racism, Anti-Filipino Racism, and Methods of Coping

Regardless of how Filipino Americans identify themselves, however, many still experience anti-Asian racism and might employ strategies to cope with discrimination. The increase in anti-Asian hate cannot be solely attributed to Donald Trump's use of xenophobic language and the rise of COVID-19. Rather, this trend reveals a history of racism,

discrimination, and violence against Asian Americans in the United States (Muramatsu & Chin, 2022). Since Asian Americans first arrived in the United States centuries ago, they have experienced discrimination and racism in various forms (Gover et al., 2020). Some of this discrimination exists at the state level, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the "first and only US immigration law that targeted all people of a specific ethnic or national origin" (Muramatsu and Chin, 2022, p. 4), the Johnson-Reed Act (Asian Exclusion) of 1924, and the detainment of over 120,000 Japanese people in internment camps during World War II (Hastings, 2010; Okada 2012). Additionally, Asian Americans face violence and discrimination at the societal and interpersonal levels. For example, the Watsonville Riot in 1930 was an anti-Filipino riot where a mob of mostly young White men robbed, attacked, and drove Filipino men from their homes (Showalter, 1989; Okada, 2012). This riot resulted in the murder of a Filipino man, Fermin Tobera. Eight men were charged with Tobera's murder; however, four were released for being underaged and the other four served only one month in a county jail before being released on probation (Okada, 2012). Additionally, of hundreds of rioters, these eight men were the only ones who were arrested (Showalter, 1989). These examples only begin to convey the anti-Asian and anti-Filipino sentiment that has existed in the United States since the arrival of the first Asian immigrants.

Even so, the model minority myth emerged during the mid-1900s and began to make invisible this history of racism and discrimination against Asian Americans. Moreover, it continues to hide the fact that Asian Americans continue to experience significant racism (Alvarez et al., 2006; Wong & Halgin, 2006; Sue et al., 2009). For instance, the model minority myth assumes that Asian Americans have extremely successful careers, but, in reality, many Asian Americans experience occupational discrimination and underrepresentation in leadership

positions (Min & Jang, 2015; Yu, 2020; Lu, 2021). Additionally, Asian Americans often encounter racial microaggressions, a term first coined by Chester M. Pierce in the 1970s, that has come to describe "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). According to Sue et al. (2009, pp. 75-77), microaggressions towards Asian Americans often fall into the following categories: (1) Alien in Own Land (i.e., the "assumption that all Asian Americans are foreigners), (2) Ascription of Intelligence, (3) Denial of Racial Reality, (4) Exoticization of Asian American Women, (5) Invalidation of Interethnic Differences, (6) Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles, (7) Second Class Citizenship, and (8) Invisibility—i.e., "being overlooked without the conscious intention of the aggressor."

In addition, there are several microaggressions that Filipino Americans encounter that go beyond the above categories (Nadal et al., 2012). Two of these categories reflect microaggressions that Black and Latinx Americans experience: the "assumption of criminality or deviance" and the "assumption of inferior status or intellect" (p. 162). Six categories are specific to the Filipino American experience: "(a) use of racist language, (b) assumption of Filipino stereotypes, (c) exclusion from the Asian American community, (d) assumption of universal Filipino experience, and (e) mistaken identity" (p. 162). Thus, Filipino Americans experience a unique set of racial microaggressions, again suggesting that Filipino Americans have a distinctive racial reality in the United States that both incorporates and goes beyond the Asian American experience.

Encounters with racism, including microaggressions, negatively impact Filipino American mental health and leads to higher psychological distress (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). As a

result of these experiences—and in context with an overarching narrative that denies the racial reality of Asian Americans—Filipino Americans employ different strategies to cope with racism. These strategies can vary between men and women and can help mitigate or exacerbate psychological distress (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). In addition, while perceptions of racism do not necessarily impact one's self-esteem, methods of coping with racism can impact self-esteem (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). For instance, suppressive coping, like avoidance and minimization of encounters with racial microaggressions, may have adverse psychological implications for both Filipino American men and women (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). Given that microaggressions are extremely common, attempts to suppress these incidents can be harmful. Among men, Alvarez & Juang (2010) note that seeking support from others can lead to more distress—perhaps because of internalized gender and cultural roles—but active coping (i.e., proactive response to racism) helps reduce distress. However, these authors highlight that strategies for coping are heterogeneous, with within-group differences impacting the strategies that Filipino Americans choose to employ (Alvarez & Juang, 2010).

Moreover, among some Filipino Americans, resilience, or "an individual's current perceptions about his or her ability to adapt to adverse challenges," is associated with lower levels of post-traumatic stress syndrome (Whealin et al., 2015, p. 270). Filipino Americans have also exhibited resilience to cope with racism through creating communities and using activism (Hufana & Consoli, 2020). Some directly attribute their resilience to their cultural identity, crediting Filipino culture and values with bestowing in them a mindset or framework for mitigating adversity (Hufana & Consoli, 2020). In particular, resilience might reflect the secondary Filipino value, *lakas ng loob* (inner strength), which means "being courageous in the midst of problems and uncertainties," where individuals "believe that by being resilient they can

overcome struggle" (Nadal, 2011, p. 40). Accordingly, one of the manifestations of resilience among Filipino Americans is the "mindset to 'push through and move forward'" as they believe they must continue their lives, regardless of the adversity they face (Hufana & Consoli, 2020, p. 9). Among the participants in Hufana & Consoli's (2020) study, resilience did not reflect a Western definition of resilience as a coping style, but rather a distinctly Filipino experience and cultural phenomena. Finally, one study found that Filipino American ethnic identity is a "significant stress buffer in the relationship between lifetime racial/ethnic discrimination and depressive symptoms" (Mossakowski, 2003, p. 325). This finding suggests that a positive self-image and connection with one's culture might have psychological benefits for Filipino Americans that allow them to manage perceived racism and discrimination.

Summary and Research Goals

This study sits at the intersection of multiple existing conversations, including residuals from Spanish and American rule in the Philippines (e.g., the colonial mentality), Asian American panethnicity, Filipino ethnic/racial identity formation, and the mediating role of racism and methods of management. By tracing the stories of 10 individuals, this study seeks to understand how older Filipino Americans navigate a developing political context, as well as the extent to which broader social forces impact their self-identification or vice versa.

THEORY

To address these questions, I use *Social Identity Theory (SIT),* the *Racial Contract,* and *critical consciousness*. Within SIT, I focus primarily on the strategies that individuals use to

negotiate their identities. The Racial Contract provides context through which to explore Filipino American identity, wherein Filipinos are a minority and White Americans are the majority. Finally, theories of critical consciousness offer a framework for understanding where Filipino Americans may be in their understanding of their positionality in the United States.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1974) explores the "processes of social categorization, social comparison, and social identification as ways in which people actively define social reality in their own position relative to others in that reality" (Ellemers & Haslam, p. 4). It aims to understand how people identify themselves at the social level, rather than the personal level. It has three core predictions.

First, it speculates that individuals who "internalize a group membership as a meaningful aspect of their self-concept" will attempt to make comparisons between that group and relevant outgroups "in order to achieve or maintain a positive social identity" (p. 6). Filipino-Americans might internalize membership in the American (i.e., White) group as a meaningful aspect of their identities. As such, they may strive to make comparisons between themselves and other Filipino Americans or Asian American groups to achieve a positive social identity. For example, they might compare themselves to newly-arrived Filipino immigrants, and other Filipinos who have not integrated as well into American society. Finally, Nadal (2011) noted that some Filipino Americans may lean on their Spanish blood and "state that they are mixed in order to feel valued or superior to others" (p. 98).

The second prediction suggests that social categorization can lead to "intergroup discrimination and intergroup conflict (i.e., in the absence of a conflict of interest over the

division of resources or material outcomes)" (p. 6). American society broadly categorizes groups of people based on the social construct of race. As such, intergroup discrimination exists on the basis of race, resulting in the privileging of White Americans over non-White Americans. Therefore, Filipino-Americans and other non-White groups are likely to seek strategies (examples below) to mitigate their negative social identities. Additionally, the colonial mentality might "create a hierarchy between Filipinos and Filipino Americans" based on "education levels, religion, language abilities, and region" (Nadal, 2011, p. 98) leading to intragroup tension.

The final core prediction theorizes that people search for a positive identity through different methods, such as "individual mobility, social creativity, [and] social competition" (which I explain in the following paragraphs), depending on definitions of social reality. These definitions are based on "socially shared justifications (legitimacy of group and individual outcomes)" as well as perceived alternatives to "current status relations (permeability of group boundaries and stability of status relations" (p. 6). Since the concept of Whiteness in the United States goes beyond appearance to encompass cultural norms and values, Filipino Americans might be more likely to negotiate their identities in search of a positive identity. Put another way, Filipino Americans might be more likely to believe that they can achieve a status closer to Whiteness.

Moreover, SIT has two key ideas that pertain to my research; namely, the strategies that people use to create a positive identity and the aspects of social structures that suggest which strategy is most likely in any given case (Ellemers & Haslam, p. 3).

Regarding the first issue, a "core feature of SIT is that it specifies different strategies that members of low-status social groups can adopt in order to address their situation and try to improve the value of their social identity" (p. 4). These strategies are "individual mobility,"

"social creativity," and "social competition." Individual mobility describes when individuals attempt to avoid their belonging with a devalued group by seeking association with—or to "pass" as——a group of a higher status. For Filipino Americans, this strategy might look like an attempt to assimilate into White culture (e.g., only speaking English, using skin-whitening products, etc.). Social creativity defines a process where group members push positive rather than negative attributes as a means to alter intergroup comparisons. Filipino Americans might manifest this strategy by embracing their heritage rather than assimilating into White culture. For example, some Filipino Americans use the term "Pilipino" as a "political identifier, signifying the lack of the letter 'F' in indigenous and non-Spanish-influenced Pilipino languages" (Nadal, 2011, p. 11). Finally, social competition refers to the instances in which group members use conflict (i.e., protest aimed at policy change) to negotiate the status quo. Due to the colonial mentality, Filipino Americans may be less likely to use the latter two strategies.

The second issue—the aspects of social structures that determine which strategy groups use—suggests that "the way in which people respond to their group's circumstances depends on perceived characteristics of the prevailing social structure." While structural characteristics (e.g. laws, policies, etc.) can impact the strategies that people pursue, SIT specifically focuses on socio-structural characteristics that are "subjective belief structures regarding the opportunities ("cognitive alternatives" to the status quo) as valid motives for individual and group status improvement" (p. 5). These characteristics include "permeability of group boundaries," "stability of group status," and "legitimacy of current status relations." The first revolves around the idea that people can act independently within a social system. As Ellemers & Haslam (p. 5) note…

> …the main concern here is not whether it is possible to shed central or defining group characteristics, such as one's gender or ethnic origins. In cases as these, a full change of group membership is clearly not feasible. What matters in this context, is whether people

> feel that *by virtue of these defining group characteristics*, their access to other groups (and the material and psychological outcomes associated with them) is restricted, or whether they believe they can achieve a position in society that reflects their individual merit, regardless of their group membership.

In these instances, individuals who feel that group boundaries are permeable—as compared to those who perceive these boundaries are impermeable—are more likely to use individual mobility as a strategy. Given the permeability of the White label—i.e., the fact that people can adopt White culture, regardless of phenotypic differences—Filipino Americans might be more likely to use individual mobility as a means of forming a more positive identity.

Stability of group status denotes the idea that certain group differences are fluid and others are stagnant. It focuses on the idea that, in certain situations, "people feel that differential group outcomes reflect historical developments...or are the result of chance occurrences...rather than some essential or inherent difference in group value or deservingness" (p. 5). The Filipino-American historical context involves a significant amount of discrimination against Filipinos, both in the United States and in the Philippines. The decades of American colonization led to the forced integration of American culture in the Philippines. The Philippines is now one of the only countries in Asia with English as its second national language (Nadal, 2011, p. 12). Moreover, its educational systems use an American curriculum and American pop culture remains extremely prevalent in the Philippines (Nadal, 2011, p. 12). In the United States, Filipino immigrants have experienced various forms of discrimination throughout history. For instance, Filipinos experienced the anti-Asian discrimination that emerged between the 1920s and 1940s when White Americans felt that Asian immigrants were stealing jobs (Nadal, 2011). In addition, they encountered specific anti-Filipino racial discrimination as Filipino American men began to engage in multi-racial romantic relationships during the decades of antimiscegenation laws

(Nadal, 2011). Therefore, Filipino Americans who are aware of this history of discrimination might be more likely to believe that their position in American society is the outcome of historical developments. Others with a stronger colonial mentality may believe that Filipinos are inferior to Whites by nature, and therefore may be less likely to seek change.

Finally, legitimacy of current status relations describes the moral convictions that influence one's willingness or desire to seek change when permeability and stability offer a "perceived opportunity for change" (p. 6). As the colonial mentality reduces cohesion among Filipino Americans, they might feel more willing—or pushed—to seek change through the rejection of their Filipino identity rather than collective action.

The Racial Contract

Charles Mills' (1997) "Racial Contract" provides context for the system within which Filipino Americans negotiate their social identities. Mills defines the Racial Contract as a "set of formal or informal agreements or meta-agreements" between those who designate themselves as "white" and "the full class of persons [that they categorize] as 'nonwhite.'" Mills clarifies that people achieve the "white" status by "(shifting) 'racial' (phenotypical/genealogical/cultural) criteria" for what determines someone is White. Moreover, Whiteness includes a superior moral status, and thereby superior civil standing. As such…

> the moral and juridical rules normally regulating the behavior of whites in their dealings with one another either do not apply at all in dealings with nonwhites or apply only in a qualified form (depending in part on changing historical circumstances and what particular variety of nonwhite is involved)...the general purpose of the Contract is always the differential privileging of the whites as a group with respect to the nonwhites as a group, the exploitation of their bodies, land, and resources, and the denial of equal socioeconomic opportunities to them (p. 11).

Therefore, the Racial Contract reflects a shifting narrative around "Whiteness" depending on historical context, a reality that demonstrates the fluidity of the White label. However, importantly, the Racial Contract emphasizes that, regardless of the historical time period, Whites as a group maintain the most privilege. Thus, this theory categorizes Filipino Americans as non-White, suggesting that they are members of a contract in which they can not be a "genuinely consenting party" (p. 12).

Moreover, the Racial Contract is grounded in history—that is, the Racial Contract has existed throughout history and even defined the course of the modern world's development. Mills argues that the Racial Contract is "historically locatable in the series of events making the creation of the modern world by European colonialism" (p. 20). The Contract is thus a global system of White dominance that began with Europeans asserting their superiority—and humanity—over all non-European groups. As such, in almost every country, there is evidence of European colonization and domination. In the United States, this dominance manifested first through the genocide of the Native American population and the West African slave trade. In the Philippines, the manifestation of the Racial Contract began with Spanish colonization and continued with American Imperialism. Although these roots date centuries back, the legacy of the Racial Contract remains today, in the "economic, political, and cultural domination of the planet by Europeans and their descendants" (p. 31).

As this system is global, Mills argues that "the Racial Contract creates a transnational White polity, a virtual community of people linked by their citizenship in Europe at home and abroad" (p. 29). This transnational grouping of people means that the colonial legacies—i.e., the Colonial Mentality—that Filipinos may bring with them to America would remain relevant and influential in the American context. Also useful for this analysis is the concept of

"transgenerational transmission," which suggests that "the historical contexts of racism or discrimination toward a group...are passed from generation to generation" (Nadal, 2011, p.17). This concept suggests that Filipinos might carry the discrimination that their parents and ancestors faced in both the U.S. and Philippine contexts.

The most significant legacy of the Racial Contract at the global level is the economic inequality between Whites and non-Whites. Even in states with a substantial non-White presence, Whites remain the most privileged group. Even though formal racial discrimination (de jure exclusion) is less blatant than it was before the Civil Rights Movement, the Racial Contract "is continually being rewritten" (p. 37) to maintain White supremacy. Therefore, Whiteness remains at the center of many nations—including the United States—and continually defines cultural norms, values, and beliefs. Indeed, the Racial Contract creates for White people…

> …a world in their cultural image, political states differentially favoring their interests, an economy structured around the racial exploitation of others, and a moral psychology (not just in whites but sometimes in nonwhites also) skewed consciously or unconsciously towards privileging them, taking the status quo of differential racial entitlement as normatively legitimate, and not to be investigated further (p. 40).

As such, Filipino Americans desiring a more positive social identity might look to assimilate into the dominant culture, which is necessarily White culture.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness, a framework based on Freire's (2014) notion of "conscientização" or conscientization, is a process in which "oppressed or marginalized people learn to critically analyze their social conditions and act to change them" (Watts, 2011). Freire (2014) first developed the concept of conscientization from his observations of "laborers (peasant and urban) and…middle class persons" during his "educative work" (p. 37) in Brazil. Since then,

various scholars have developed theories of critical consciousness to investigate different social contexts, such as the development of critical consciousness among youths of color (Mathews et al., 2020). More modern understandings of critical consciousness highlight three key components: critical reflection, critical action, and political efficacy (Watts, 2011).

Critical reflection, or the contemplation of the nature of one's reality (i.e., oppression and inequality), leads one to discover injustice and one's position as oppressed within a broader system (Freire, 2014). It involves an "analysis and rejection of oppressive societal inequalities," relating to a variety of factors, including gender, sexuality, and race (Mathews et al., 2020, p. 367). As such, it can be seen as a precursor to critical action as "people do not act to change their social conditions without some consciousness or awareness that their social conditions are unjust" (Watts, 2011, p.47). Among Filipinos, critical reflection might involve contemplating the systemic marginalization of Filipinos as well as the history of colonization in the Philippines and its legacy, the colonial mentality (Chan & Litam, 2021). Moreover, they may not become involved in movements for Asian American justice without first recognizing the discrimination that they and other Asian Americans face in the United States. As such, critical reflection is one of the first steps within a critical consciousness, allowing individuals of a specific group to recognize their reality and potentially act to change it for the better.

That said, Freire (2014) argues that critical action "occurs simultaneously" (p. 128) with critical reflection. Critical reflection describes behavior that confronts social inequity. More generally, this behavior is activism aimed at fostering positive social change and justice for those with stigmatized identities. Some more action-oriented examples of critical action include "participation in activities such as voting, community organizing, and peaceful protests" (Watts, p. 47). Therefore, critical reflection can also be understood as a form of critical action, as it

creates an awakening to the political and social realities of different groups within a broader, oppressive context (e.g., people of color in the United States). Conceptualized another way, critical action and reflection may have a reciprocal relationship, wherein reflection on one's social conditions could promote action, and action could encourage even deeper thinking about structural and systematic oppression (Freire, 2014).

Finally, political efficacy denotes one's perceived ability to foster change—through individual or collective action—and the drive to take this action (Mathews et al., 2020; Watts, 2011). This aspect of critical consciousness posits that people are more likely to engage in activism if they believe they have the capacity to influence change. Critical action and political efficacy are also interrelated in that people may be more likely to act if they believe that they will have an impact. This aspect is similar to the component of SIT, that social structures can dictate which strategies groups use in response to their circumstances. As such, the colonial mentality and a perceived lack of interethnic solidarity in the Asian American community may dissuade Filipinos from attempting to enact change.

Recent research has identified and sought to bridge the gap between ethnic/racial identity development and critical consciousness. Mathews et al. (2020) noted that for youths of color, "ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness development are highly interrelated phenomena," speculating, for example, that "youths' salient ethnicity and race-based experiences…may lead to critical reflection" (p. 369). Many studies relating to ethnic/racial identity development and critical consciousness center around youths, noting that experiences during adolescence—such as encounters with discrimination—can help youth form their identities. These conversations may be relevant for Filipino immigrants, regardless of age, who move to the United States from the Philippines—a fairly racially homogeneous country. Though

these immigrants are not youths, they may begin a new phase of critical consciousness development as they confront a multiracial environment in which they are no longer the majority. Given the history of the Philippines, a model for youth would not be perfect as Filipino immigrants might "begin their process of acculturation…long before [immigrating] to the United States" (David & Nadal, 2013, p. 305). However, it may still be a useful framework for analyzing the Filipino immigrant experience in the United States as they encounter new challenges in a multiracial country.

Together, this integrated theoretical framework will allow investigation into a nuanced topic. In particular, it allows for analysis of identity development against the backdrop of a broader socio-political context, involving the construct of Whiteness and the extent to which participants recognize their positionality within that framework.

RESULTS

Partner Identity

Partner ethnic/racial identity appeared to be associated with participant self-identification—an unexpected finding. Notably, every participant's ethnic identity seemed to, in some way, reflect their partner's identity. Every Filipino participant with a partner who is at least partially Filipino (*n=4*) identified first and foremost as 'Filipino.' Participants with a non-Filipino Asian partner (*n=1*) identified more closely with the 'Asian American' label. Finally, participants with White American partners (*n=5)* identified first with the 'Filipino American' label. Ultimately, many participants had various identities (e.g., first

Filipino-American, then more broadly Asian American), but the identity to which they felt the most connected always corresponded with that of their partner.

Table 1: Partner Identity vs. Personal Identity	
Partner Race/Ethnicity	*Ethnic/Racial Identity*
Filipino	Filipino
Filipino	Filipino
Filipino	Filipino
Half-White Half-Filipino	Filipino
Chinese	Equally: Asian American and Filipino
First marriage: White American; *Second Marriage:* Filipino	Filipino American
White American	Filipino American
White American	Chinese Filipino-American
White American	Filipino American
White American	Filipino American

Behind the Label: Unease with the American Label, the Broadness of the 'Asian' Category, the Uniqueness of Being Filipino

While self-identification seemed to correlate with partner identity, interviewees had varied reasons for identifying with their label. Generally, three themes emerged with regard to these labels; the unease with the American label, the broadness of the 'Asian' category, and the uniqueness of being Filipino. The latter two themes are interconnected, as many participants believe 'Asian American' is too broad because Filipino identity and culture are unique.

The Unease With the American Label

Even though all participants have lived in the United States for at least three decades, some shared reservations about labeling themselves as 'American' or 'Filipino American.' These

reservations ranged from their perception that others "would never consider them American" to the connotations they assign to those who are 'Filipino American.'

Brian, for instance, who does identify as 'Filipino American,' shared:

> I used to say—and I still mostly do—that I'm a Filipino in America. And this is because I wasn't born and raised here, and I wanted to respect—I had a lot of friends who were actually Filipino-American. For me to claim the same label would be a little insulting to [them]...I mean, I would feel like I wouldn't be respecting [their] experience as much. So, to me, the most accurate way to describe myself was to say, "I'm a Filipino, I happen to be in America, and I happen to be staying." Yeah, cause I really ended up staying. I didn't come here thinking I'd stay for as long as I have…it wasn't really planned so much, it just kind of happened. Boom, before you know it, I've been here 50 years almost…Now, it's too complicated to say what I just went through…it's just easier to say Filipino-American because that is a shorthand for saying that you have as much a stake in this country as anybody. If I say a Filipino in America, I'm a little too removed and [in] that way it's a bit inaccurate, because…like most Americans, I'm fully invested in the well-being of this country…so I'm more comfortable with [the Filipino American label], for sure.

However, even though Brian feels more comfortable with the 'American' label, he quickly elaborated that people still ask him how he "speaks English so well" and where he is from, comments that reinforce the idea that White Americans often perceive Asian Americans as foreigners.

This concept, of feeling foreign despite having lived in the United States for decades, was one that Cara reflected in her comments:

> I would be hesitant to [label myself as American], number one because of the way I look. Number two, you know, you can be a foreigner in a country for a very very very long time and never really be part of that culture. And I just know that I am not American. Even though I don't feel very Filipino anymore.

As a follow-up, I asked her what prevents her from feeling 'American,' referring explicitly to her previous comment about her appearance. Then, I asked if she thinks White immigrants would be quicker to consider themselves 'American' because of their appearance. To that, she responded:

> You know, that's a very good question. I have always said, even to my husband and to other people, that I could live here the rest of my life and never feel really American, because I know I'm a foreigner who enjoyed the best that American life had to offer. And I don't know that anybody would actually consider me American if they met me…First they say, "yeah you speak really really good English, but there's an accent there somewhere." And I said, "yes, definitely." And I don't feel offended when people say that…that's just the way I talk, you know…at the beginning, when I was young, I thought "you know, I'm going to keep my Filipino accent because I wouldn't want to sound very American. But after a while…I figured, oh well…you can't fight them, join them. So I started to try to sound more like them.

Therefore, Cara may have felt that her appearance prevented her full integration into American society. Her comments also convey that she may base her identity on other people's interpretations of her or her perceptions of those interpretations.

Ben's explanation for not identifying as 'American' more closely reflected his view of what it means to be 'Filipino-American' rather than feeling like a foreigner. He stated:

> I would still say Filipino, although…I do consider the U.S. as my home as well, that I'm invested in. So, it's not like I'm just living here with my heart across the ocean. You know, I do consider this my home. But my identity is Filipino, I can't say Filipino-American because the connotation—it's not a negative connotation, for me it's just a neutral connotation—that Filipino American means those who are born here or those who grew up here, from [a] young age, and so have…really adopted the American culture.

Therefore, Brian's identity may respond to the identity of others as well as the connection between culture, birthplace, and identity.

Ultimately, participants ranged in the reasoning behind their discomfort with labeling themselves as 'American.' Importantly, some of the participants who shared unease with the 'American' label continued to identify themselves as 'Filipino American,' demonstrating the complex social dynamics that they consider when forming an identity. However, an underlying theme in their responses may be that the 'American' identity reflects a level of

Whiteness—whether in appearance or culture—that might feel unachievable or with which they do not resonate.

The Broadness of the "Asian" Category/The Uniqueness of Being Filipino

Only one participant identified as 'Asian American' equally to 'Filipino.' Others expressed that they resonate with the label, but only to a certain extent. Often, they cited that their logic for identifying more closely with 'Filipino' or 'Filipino American' than 'Asian American' is that the 'Asian American' label is too vague and encompasses many distinct groups. Therefore, they did not feel like it accurately represented their identities. For example, Helen said:

> [I] have always been Filipino American. Well, actually, probably I think of myself now as [an] American of Filipino ethnicity, but I would say I'm Filipino American, because evidently…I look [like] I'm definitely Asian. But I do identify myself as Filipino-American because [Asians are] a huge group, and they're all different from each other. Really, Indians are different from Southeast Asians, they're all different.

Interestingly, Josephine noted:

> **Josephine:** [I identify most closely as] Filipino American, for sure. Well, you know, I'm in a Filipino body, I was born in the Philippines.
> **Interviewer:** So, you would lean more towards Filipino American than Asian American, is what you're saying.
> **Josephine:** Yes.
> **Interviewer:** Why do you think that is? Is it just because you feel more of an affinity towards the Philippines? Or, is it because the Asian label is so broad?
> **Josephine:** Well, that's a very interesting question for me to reflect on—thank you. But, first of all, if we go generically, I definitely would identify as Asian on a more generic basis…When I'm among my Asian friends, we're Asians. When I'm just by myself, of course, I'm Filipino…I would say that broadly I would just identify myself as Asian, but [more subjectively I'm Filipino].

Therefore, Josephine's identity is conditional, somewhat dependent on the people she is around. Even though she is comfortable with the 'Asian American' label, she still feels more closely

connected to a 'Filipino' identity, because the 'Asian' identity is more generic. Josephine's comments also demonstrate a common finding among participants—that they resonated with multiple identities, but often had one with which they felt the most comfortable.

Leo commented:

Leo: I would say [I'm] Filipino American.
Interviewer: How come? What draws you to that label?
Leo: Asian is such a wide range of nationalities and ethnicities. Again, [my family] has been [around] the Chinese and the Koreans, specifically within the past five [or] six years, and I've had a lot of patients…[who are] Korean, and they think really differently. They look, they think differently from the Chinese, the Japanese, the Laotian, they have their own set of [lives]. I cannot distinguish myself as just Asian, because each Asian has their own…way of thinking, way of their traditions, how things should be, [and] lifestyle. When I say lifestyle, I'm talking about profession or non-profession…the thinking is just different. The Filipinos just think differently.

Therefore, unlike Josephine, Leo's exposure to more Asian Americans led him to distinguish himself, identifying more closely with the 'Filipino American' than 'Asian.'

The only participant who identifies as 'Asian American' as much as 'Filipino American,' Evelyn, indicated that she identifies as 'Asian American' because…

> …I'm westernized in my thinking, I'm more open…than most. I look forward to the future, I don't feel like I've been in a rut…and I'm Filipino because I love the Philippines. I empathize with them, learn from the Filipino people…[it's] equal. You know, I still have my values, my Filipino values of the family, of how they should be treating each other.

Thus, Evelyn believes that some attributes distinguish her from other Filipinos (i.e., her westernized mindset), making her more 'Asian American.' This response perhaps indicates that she believes some qualities inherent to a Filipino identity are incongruent with a western identity, aspects that she may have left in becoming more 'westernized.'

In addition to demonstrating the broadness of the 'Asian American' group, some of the above statements begin to encapsulate an interconnected theme: the uniqueness of the Filipino

identity. They also reveal how participants ascribe different aspects of their lives and personalities to their identities.

Further exemplifying the uniqueness of the Filipino identity, Emma and Steve, who I interviewed simultaneously, responded:

> **Steve:** I always feel Filipino…
> **Emma:** Yeah, never, never will I say I'm not Filipino…we used to know someone in the Filipino community where we live who said, she's not Filipino, she's Spanish. Because she's mestiza…
> **Steve:** But anyway, I never take myself as American or anything, we live here for 50/60 years, and I'm still a Filipino.
> **Emma:** Yeah, we still eat Filipino adobo, pancit…
> **Steve:** They cannot take that away from us.

Ultimately, many participants lean towards the Filipino identity for a variety of reasons, spanning from a reluctance to identify themselves as 'American' to a deep sense of pride and belonging with the Philippines and Filipino culture.

Other Findings (Identity)

Interestingly, physical appearance did not seem to have a strong connection to identity. I categorized each participant into one of three categories (Filipino-leaning, Asian Ambiguous, Ethnically Ambiguous) based on how they described their appearance (e.g., "I have an all-time generic Asian face") and how other people interpret their appearance (e.g., "they ask me, 'are you Spanish or are you Chinese?'"). See Table 2 below for the results.

Table 2: Appearance vs. Identity	
Appearance	*Ethnic/Racial Identity*
Ethnically Ambiguous	Filipino American
Ethnically Ambiguous	Filipino American
Asian Ambiguous	Filipino
Asian Ambiguous	Filipino
Asian Ambiguous	Chinese Filipino-American
Asian Ambiguous	Filipino American
Asian Ambiguous	Filipino
Filipino	Filipino
Filipino	Asian American & Filipino
Filipino	Filipino American

However, geography may have had an impact on their racial/ethnic identification. Many participants moved around during their time in the United States. Therefore, I categorized participants based on the location in which they lived the longest, rather than their current location. Every participant (*n = 3)* who lived on the East Coast (including the Mid-Atlantic) the longest identified as 'Filipino.' On the West Coast *(n=4),* three participants identified as Filipino American (note that one was 'Chinese Filipino-American' because of her Chinese heritage), and one identified as 'Filipino'. Finally, in the Midwest *(n=3),* two participants identified as 'Filipino American,' and one identified equally as 'Asian American' and 'Filipino.' Further research is needed to explore more deeply if geographic location and physical appearance impact ethnic/racial identity. See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Location vs. Identity	
Location	*ethnic/racial Identity*
West Coast	Chinese-Filipino American
West Coast	Filipino-American
West Coast	Filipino-American
West Coast	Filipino
Midwest	Asian American and Filipino
Midwest	Filipino American
Midwest	Filipino American
East Coast	Filipino
East Coast	Filipino
East Coast	Filipino

Resilience and Humor as Survival

Resilience is a "dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma" (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858). In this definition, adversity refers to "negative life circumstances that are known to be statistically associated with adjustment difficulties," and positive adaptation is "usually defined in terms of behaviorally manifested social competence, or success at meeting stage-salient developmental tasks" (p. 858). Problematically, the term "resilience" in the context of this study can have the unintended consequence of reifying the model minority myth by suggesting that the participants possessed some quality that enabled them, unlike other groups of color, to overcome adversity, and that it is the responsibility of people of color to overcome racism. However, resilience in this analysis describes a method, or mindset, of survival that participants utilized to overcome

adversity. The findings below also reflect previous literature on Filipino resilience emerging from—or being based in—Filipino culture.

Almost every research participant (*n=9*) exhibited resilience in response to adversity. This theme often manifested as participants describing their reactions to microaggressions and other racist encounters with humor, self-confidence/pride, forbearance, and dismissiveness. Many participants led our conversation by claiming that they had never experienced discrimination. Even so, most participants revealed multiple encounters with discrimination throughout their interviews. However, these admissions often came with qualifiers, including statements like the instances were "not bad," or the person responsible for the encounter was simply "ignorant." Understanding how participants receive and digest stigmatizing interactions with other—often White—Americans can offer insight into how Filipino Americans form or maintain a strong, positive sense of self within a stigmatizing cultural context.

Steve, for example, described various difficult encounters in his workplace that he attributed to his Filipino immigrant identity. In recounting his experience as an accountant, he summarized:

> I dealt with very nice people when I first came here. Actually I had a problem after two years, [when] I was the head of so many employees, and when I [reached the] administrative level—that's the hardest. Because you'll talk to them, [tell them] that they should do this or that, and sometimes, they don't follow you at all. Or, they'll follow you but in a sarcastic way of telling, "oh I know better than you," or something like that. But when I started here, just like I told you, I came from the Philippines, I didn't have any big problems….[like] discrimination…[but] even though you can prove better than they are, it's so hard for them to accept that you are the supervisor and you're trying to teach them to do the right thing.

Moreover, Steve recounted a situation in which his direct supervisor—despite having less accounting experience than him—continuously undermined his work and questioned his merit. This supervisor often scolded him for presenting her with incorrect work when, in reality, his

work was always correct. Notably, even when her superiors validated that his work was accurate, she continuously doubted him. He also noted that this supervisor would never allow him to take vacation or time off. Significantly, years later, when the same supervisor apologized to him for treating him poorly, he mentioned to her, "I think you are prejudiced [since] [I am] a Filipino." However, in his retelling of this story, Steve made sure to note that he did not "know what [was] wrong, but apparently that [was] discrimination," and that it was ultimately a "funny experience [he] had." Therefore, Steve used humor in response to adversity in his career.

Along similar lines, Emma described the challenges she faced as one of the only teachers of color in a predominantly White community. Specifically, she described a variety of microaggressions that she received from White students, including comments that students made about her ethnicity (i.e., assuming she is Chinese or Japanese), and other derogatory behavior. One student, for instance, would bow to her in a suggestive manner while giggling. However, rather than letting this behavior discourage her, Emma often confronted the students and used their encounters as an educational opportunity. She described the following story:

> [The students] were really very naughty. They looked at each other, at first they were not saying anything, they would just giggle. And then, later on, they started [saying] "Aso" "Aso" "aso" and bowing in front of me, and then they would leave laughing. Of course I can't stop them because they're changing classes and not doing anything anymore. And this went on a few times, and the other teachers were just looking at me and were smiling… But, one day, I decided to call them. And [the conversation went as follows]
> **Emma:** *"what are you trying to say?"* and one of them got scared, and said,
> **Student:** *"oh, I don't know."*
> **Emma:** *"Why do you say aso, aso?"*
> **Students:** *"Well because you're Chinese."* That's what they told me, *"you're Chinese."*
> **Emma:** *"No, I'm not Chinese. Guess. Another guess."*
> **Students:** *"You're Japanese."*
> **Emma:** *"No I'm not Japanese either."*
> **Students:** *"So, what are you then?"* And one of them really said, *"you're Hawaiin. You're from Hawaii."*
> **Emma:** *"Wrong again."*
> **Emma:** *"You want to know what I am really? You come after school."*

> So they came to my room after school and I had the big world map in front of them, and I said,
> **Emma:** *"Okay, first of all…give me your continents,"* and they gave me all the continents, and I said, *"look at this place, the Asian continent...I come from a place known as the,"* and I pointed. One of them couldn't even read.
> **Student:** *"Philiscenes?"*
> **Emma:** *"No, it's the Philippines."* And that was their first time to ever hear of the country the Philippines. So I taught them basic things, and they listened—they're basically good kids. But they try you. They will try you.

Moreover, after describing another incident where a student repetitively poked fun at her for eating rice, she said:

> …once again, it's ignorance. And he just wanted to make fun of me, of looks, because I look so different from the other teachers. 1970, in that school, I was the only one that wasn't a White teacher. All the teachers were White. So, they were not used to it. "Why are you here, why are you teaching me, why—do you know what you're doing?"

Demonstrating resilience and the use of humor, Emma mentioned that after these experiences, she would "go home [and] tell [her] experiences to [her] family and they all laugh[ed]."

Moreover, even after describing a traumatic event in which a man accosted her on public transportation, she made sure to qualify that it was a standout incident:

> When I was teaching in [school name], I didn't have any transportation so I used to take a bus… [and] one early morning, I had a really bad experience…I was just sitting down waiting for my turn to get off…this one guy came to me and sat in front of me and started pointing his finger and said, "you are Japanese. The Japanese are so bad." [He] started saying all these bad words against the Japanese. I got so frightened, the driver had to come—to stop the bus—and had to come and stop him. And said, "sir you have to get off," and he went back to his seat. But then, I don't know, maybe I look…Japanese…maybe I reminded him of something that happened to him at home, or during the war. He was not really an old man, but he was older than me. Yeah that is the only bad experience I had that is close to what we call now as the "hate crimes,"... during my teaching years. But overall, they're all very nice.

Brian exemplified resilience through employing humor as well as pride or self-assurance. Brian's appearance is ethnically ambiguous. He mentioned that many people would confuse him for other ethnic and racial identities, including half-Asian, Latinx, and Native American; yet,

rather than frustrating, he found these instances "amusing." His ethnic ambiguity also receives attention from White Americans who want to categorize him, often asking, "what are you?" or "where are you from?" While he was open about the fact that he believes the underlying message in this question is that "you [cannot] be from here and not be White, you have to be from somewhere else," he emphasized that this question ultimately does not make him feel different:

> I don't feel unwelcome, I feel like I want to tell people in so many ways, "just get over it." I'm not asking you where you're from, I mean I could, but I just—cause everybody is from somewhere else unless you're Native American...I think as an American, one of the things I really love about this country is that everybody seems to get a fresh start, and I think that is something that non-White people should be able to claim….This is a new country, we're new here or we're all new and we're all helping each other out. So I think, for me as an American, I need to claim that because I think it's part of our national identity. Right, [these questions do not] make me feel unwelcome, [they make] me feel like, "I wish these people would just grow up." And I try to be kind about it, I don't want to insult people, so I tell them where I'm from. But I try to say it in a way that [implies] that it doesn't really matter. I try to be matter of fact about it.

These comments illustrate that Brian's resilience through self-assurance and claiming his American identity, as well as through humor. Furthermore, he revealed that microaggressions "happen so much, [and are] just kind of in the air, so [he] just kind of sublimate[s] it," but that he finds solidarity when he is with Filipinos and other people of color. In these instances, though Brian and his friends do not explicitly "share microaggression stories…[they] understand each other [and] might crack jokes, because [the encounters are] always funny."

However, interestingly, Brian did admit that microaggressions do not "feel good because…[he] want[s] to be seen for what [he is]," offering insight into the invisibility Filipino Americans may experience. At other points, he described his "disappointment" with the way that people treat him and other people of color that he knows. Still, even when remarking on some of the psychological implications of experiencing racism, Brian often provided caveats, such as, "A lot of people have it worse."

Amelia conceded more stories about encountering racism and experiencing discrimination, yet exhibited resilience through dismissiveness, self-assurance, and at times a willingness to demand equal treatment. After recounting discriminatory experiences—such as difficulty achieving promotions and an inability to secure housing—she noted that her stories are "very limited," but "real," and that she keeps these experiences "at the back of [her] mind." However, she commented:

> I have a bad habit in the sense that I forget about it, and I mean I just go about because…this is what I was trained to do. I mean it comes with your…self assurance. [We] were brought up by our parents. We are educated, we may not be wealthy, but we're comfortable with the things we like to do, and we go about until we're kind of hit by something [like], "Oh my God, she doesn't like me," or something like that…I have learned in my old age to still be careful that I don't just trample on people's rights. People are very sensitive [and think] "how could she afford to live here?" for example…But the people here…are good as long as you bring empanadas to the happy hour!...I mean those little contacts are helpful because it kind of opens the way for friendliness and tolerance especially.

In other instances, she demonstrated resilience through confidence and a willingness to demand justice. During her professional life, she noted that, often, others would receive promotions instead of her, despite the fact that they were not necessarily more qualified than her—i.e., she was college-educated, while people with just a high school degree were receiving promotions over her. Yet, exemplifying resilience, Amelia eventually confronted her employer and asked, "Why [are you not promoting me]? Is it because I am a woman? Is it because I am non—I am Filipino?" Therefore, even when she encountered discrimination, she remained self-confident.

Evelyn also uses humor, self-assurance, and righteousness. Her ultimate philosophy regarding racist experiences and ignorance is: "[there is] nothing more I can do except be kind to whoever I meet." Her immediate reaction to these instances is to "laugh at [them]." For example, she described an instance in which a mailman called her brother—who is a doctor—"boy" as

"funny." Moreover, she noted that her reaction to an encounter she had with a man who told her "go back to where you belong" was simply to laugh it off. She also communicated that she is always comfortable asserting herself when she finds it necessary. Similar to Amelia, she credited her upbringing in the Philippines to explain the ease with which she handles discrimination:

> I had [discriminatory] experiences in [the Philippines] because in [my neighborhood] there was a recreation facility of the United States. There were times when they would have parties. Both my parents were [professionals]...And he was invited to those places. One of the times—I was 10 or nine years old at the time—there was an American who was…[ensuring] that the event ran smoothly. And he would bypass my mother in the buffet table, not give her food. My father saw that, and he took the American on the side, and must have given him…what he deserved. And, all of a sudden, the American was so red-faced, and went to my mother, and gave her the food. When I saw that, I said, I will be like that, like my father. Because my father, who was a lawyer, was able to deal with the highest people…he would deal with them nicely…and that's the kind of attitude I always had.

Cara could not even recall any "bad situations" that she had with racism in the United States. In fact, one of the only stories that she recounted during our interview involved bias from other Filipinos. Though Cara grew up in the Philippines and identifies closely with Filipino culture, she has a more Eastern Asian appearance because she is ethnically 85% Chinese and 15% Filipino. Therefore, she described a situation in which two Filipinos—who mistook her for a non-Filipino Asian—spoke about her in a Filipino dialect. She recounted:

> One time I was at the gas station, and [there were] these two people [who] must have been mother and son…Older people were ahead of me, but they were dilly dallying to get to pay for the gas. And, I went ahead and paid, and [the mother and son] looked at me very condescendingly and remarked in Filipino, "well just because you're old, you can do this." That stands out in my memory. Yeah, because I wanted to say something in Filipino, but I thought 'you know, why even bother…but most of the incidents…where something like this happens involves my looking Chinese and Filipinos thinking I don't speak Filipino, really…And sometimes when the mood strikes I'll answer back in Filipino.

Other than this instance, Cara did not share stories about any encounters with bias or discrimination. While she did note that people tell her that she speaks "really good English, but

[there is] an accent there somewhere," she said that she does not "feel offended when people say that." She then followed up by noting that while she originally tried to retain her accent, after countless people misunderstood her, she decided to try to "sound more like them." Even so, she expressed no negative feelings about having to change the way that she spoke. For instance, when I asked if this transition was difficult or a burden, she responded, "no, not at all." Therefore, Cara demonstrated resilience through perseverance and, to some extent, forbearance and dismissiveness.

Reflecting previous participants, Helen showed resilience through self-assurance. During our conversation, she shared a story in which she was denied housing because of her race:

> Very rarely did I feel out of place. The only negative experience I had was when we were getting married in [Midwestern City]. My husband is American [and] we had to find a place…to live. So he was the one making calls, rental places where we might consider renting, and so he talked to the woman and the place was still available, so we both went there, and as soon as she saw that it was a mixed couple—Asian and American—she said, "Oh, the place is taken," and she closed the door. That would be, for me, the obvious discriminatory experience I can recall from my time working.

Though she described this experience as negative, Helen later mentioned that she "[did not] care, it was [the landlord's] loss."

Josephine told stories about how she dealt with discrimination and prejudice in a manner that demonstrated her forbearance. One of the stories she told occurred when she moved into a new home. She recounted, after moving into a predominantly White neighborhood, one of her neighbors approached her and said, "I just want you to know that when people saw you moving in, they thought the neighborhood was being depreciated." At first, Josephine was surprised and shocked; however, she mentioned that she did not "take [the encounter] seriously," because the prejudice was "their perception, not [hers]." She continued…

> …interestingly enough, one particular neighbor was very—I guess I would say—prejudiced, and [the earlier neighbor] told me that he…expressed it very strongly, and when I walked to [work], I'd see him. I'd just greet him every morning. He was very solemn, but I would greet him every morning. I asked him what his name was, I greeted him by name, I just waved at him—whether or not he ignored me, I couldn't care less, I greeted him every morning. That was probably my first experience of prejudice.

Thus, Josephine found resilience in forbearance and accepting that she could only control her behavior and perceptions.

Like former participants, she qualified that her experiences of discrimination were "more subtle," and that she "simply attributed it to people's ignorance." She made sure to clarify that she would not categorize any of the "prejudice" she experienced as "ugly," defining "ugly prejudice" as instances in which people "physically attack" or "shout at" others. Furthermore, she indicated that she handles discrimination with humor, noting that she only discusses her experiences with others if they are "relevant to what [the] conversation is, and most of the time [it is] because [it is] humorous." For instance, similar to Brian, she described how she and some of her Asian American friends (Chinese and Japanese) would go on walks together and "laugh about [their] experiences [living in their] White neighborhood."

Finally, Leo showed resilience through self-assurance and pride. From early on, he claimed that he "never felt…any discrimination because [he] knew who [he] was," and that seemed to provide him with comfort and confidence. When I asked if he ever felt uncomfortable or out of place, he noted:

> I would imagine only maybe—in my whole life time—maybe four or five times I felt uncomfortable. Again, I knew who I was, I'm very proud. Nobody—again, this is my upbringing—nobody can really put me down because, I think I'm fairly educated, I did my best, I worked very hard going to school, *very* hard.

His comments about his upbringing reflect that of various participants who attribute their resilience and self-confidence to their familial background. According to Leo, when he

encounters discrimination, he does not "really process it" or "get emotional." Instead, he brushes off the encounters; his mindset is, "he's got a problem, but that's his problem. I don't have to interact with his problem…it's not my problem, it's his problem. I know who I am…We [his wife and him] know who we are, and we're proud of who we are." Therefore, Leo—and multiple other participants—demonstrated a level of self-assurance that allowed them to interpret discrimination as a reflection of the other person, rather than themselves.

Ultimately, participants exhibited resilience in many different ways, using methods such as humor, self-assurance, and forbearance—or tolerance—to respond to and digest experiences with discrimination. Notably, the resilience they exhibited seemed to emerge from—and some participants directly attributed it to—Filipino culture and their upbringing. Others drew on aspects of their identity—for example, their degree or personality—to build resilience. Therefore, resilience appears to be grounded in their identities and histories.

Experiences with Racism and Discrimination

As I began to describe in the section above, most participants shared experiences with adversity—almost all of which had racial undertones. Yet, while participants offered stories involving experiences with discrimination, many hesitated to use terms like "racism." In the field of sociology, "racism" is a term that scholars continue to adapt to encompass new meanings. As such, there is not necessarily a clear and consistent definition of the term. However, broadly, sociologists note that it "has come to encompass a wide array of social phenomena, such as systemic inequality, institutional discrimination, internalized stereotypes, and racial attitudes" (Shiao & Woody, 2021, p. 495). Working from this broad definition, I argue that many of the experiences that my participants shared can be labeled as—or explained by—racism.

It is important to note that since most of the participants were highly educated, their positionality may have impacted the extent to which they experienced racism, especially violent forms of racism. In fact, multiple participants attributed their lack of experiences with racism to their positionality. For instance, Helen argued that she rarely encountered racism because she worked in higher education, and therefore was mostly around "well-educated people…who are exposed to [a] variety of other people who are open-minded." Likewise, Amelia—despite living in a predominantly White area—believes that she "was protected by the fact that [she worked] for the UN [and the] U.S. Government." She noted that, because of this positionality, she knew she was "entitled" to "whatever rights [she] had." Finally, Ben commented that, because "the places that [he] frequents" are "trendy" and "upscale" places "where hopefully [he would not] get physically assaulted," he does not ever fear for his safety, despite rises in anti-Asian hate crimes. He also noted that he believes his experiences of feeling excluded were likely "tempered" by the fact that his "English education" in the Philippines allowed him to assimilate "somewhat quickly," an experience that many participants shared, as all of them came to the United States with at least a proficient level of English speaking.

Within the broader theme of "Racism," I identified 4 subthemes: *Microaggressions, Career Limitations, Housing Limitations, and Violent Encounters.*[3]

Microaggressions

The most common form of racism that participants shared was microaggressions. Microaggressions tend to be a more covert form of racism. Participants shared stories involving a

[3] Note that many of the experiences that participants shared could fit in multiple categories (e.g., incidents can be both a "housing limitation" and a "microaggression"). In these cases, I chose the most relevant category.

range of types of microaggression discussed in previous literature, including: Assumption of Intelligence, Assumption of Criminality or Deviance, Invalidation of Interethnic Differences, Use of Racist Language, Exclusion from the Asian American Community, Mistaken Identity, Alien in Own Land, Invisibility, Assumption of Inferior Status or Intellect, and Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles (Sue et al., 2009; Nadal et al., 2012). Sue et al. (2007) describe three different types of microaggressions that will help broadly categorize participants' experiences: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation.

Microassault refers to "an explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions." For example, using terms like "colored" and "Oriental," or "deliberately serving a White patron before someone of color" can constitute a microassault (p. 274). Unlike some of the other forms of microaggressions, microassault is often deliberate. Brian named various, often non-verbal, microassaults that he experienced. For instance:

> There were a couple of times, and I'm pretty sure it's because I was a dark-skinned person…In [West Coast City], I was in an army surplus store that I always used to go to…it was the only thing you could really afford by way of clothing when you're a student. And I bought this liner for my army jacket to help me keep warmer…so I bought this liner, I already had the jacket, the shell…I took the liner out of the bag…at the store, and I put it on because I wanted to get warmer. And this guy followed me around, he thought I was shoplifting [the jacket], and he confronted me. Or he asked me, where did I get the jacket, and it was clear to me that he thought that I was trying to steal it. And I said, "I bought it right here." So I just ignored him, and he continued to follow me around, like skeptical, and then I walked out…I was a little disappointed.

Beyond this story, Brian noted that in his day-to-day life—especially when he was younger—people, including White men, often "lock their doors" and cross the street while he is nearby. This microaggression, the "assumption of criminality or deviance" is more common for Black and Latinx Americans (Nadal et al., 2012). As such, Brian ascribes these incidents to the

fact that he is racially ambiguous and, therefore, people sometimes perceive him as a non-Asian person of color. On the other hand, he noted that when…

> …they think I'm Asian—and this happened a few years ago—I was volunteering at a community college here, and it just so happened that my career is in high tech. I've been working in high tech for a long time, so I know a little bit about computers. But it's not, you know, I'm not a big math whiz or anything, I just know computers because I work in them. And there were two ladies in that volunteer group, they thought I could do anything that had to do with computers. And I'm sure it was because there were only two of us who were not White, one [who] was Vietnamese—and he actually knew computers, he was an actual tech guy, he knew security protocols and stuff like that. And I'm more in user-interface, I'm on the software side, [and] software design. But these two ladies always come to either [the Vietnamese man], or me, and if [he] couldn't answer, they would ask me. And I would always [say], "I don't know security," you know, or like, "I understand how IT works but I don't know how to fill in this address right here"…that kind of thing…[they thought] that because I might be Chinese or something, that I can help them.

This story is consistent with the "assumption of intelligence" microaggression that Sue et al. (2009) describe in regard to the Asian American experience. Therefore, Brian encounters multiple forms of microaggressions and microassault based on how people perceive him, whether that be as Asian, Latino, or simply as a person of color, demonstrating the unique set of challenges that people of Filipino descent can encounter (Nadal et al., 2012).

Evelyn told a story about a microassault—one that reflected the theme of being an alien in one's own land—involving a man in a parking lot who told her, "Go back to where you belong, you don't have the right to be driving a Toyota because you're not an American." Likewise, while Ben was visiting Los Angeles, someone looked at him and proclaimed, "I hate Koreans," exhibiting both invalidation of interethnic differences and a mistaken identity.

One microassault of note that three participants named was a "look" that people give them. While this "look" is subtle, it seems to be a shared experience—a non-verbal communication that is familiar to participants. Brian described this look, saying:

> I don't know if you're familiar with the "look" *[hand gestures quotation marks]*...there's a look that I get from mostly White people, when they look at you in a way, like "Who are you, where do you come from, and what are you doing in my town?"...And I get it—if I go out three times in a week—I might get it [at least] once on average. Mostly I try to ignore it, but I'm watchful. When I catch the "look" from someone, I make sure that they stay away from me, and I stay away from them, because [the risk of] something worse than a look happening.

Amelia and Leo offered similar sentiments. Amelia commented that she can tell when people are prejudiced against her because "you [can] see in the way they look, they kind of have that sideways look, [where they singal] 'what is she doing here?'" Likewise, Leo expressed that when he is in "certain areas, like Florida…[and] little towns, [the people] are more apprehensive looking at [him because he is] a minority." Further, he noted that a "pressure" accompanies these looks, with which "any minorities" are likely familiar. Much like Brian, when Leo receives the look, he smiles and remains quiet.

Microinsults are "communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity." These more subtle comments and behaviors are often unintended but "convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color" (p. 274). For example, the statement "I believe that colleges should accept people based on merit, not race" conveys the idea that colleges only accept students of color because of their race rather than their accomplishments. Microinsults can also be non-verbal, such as "when a White teacher fails to acknowledge students of color in the classroom" (p. 274). A common microinsult that participants experienced occurred in the workplace when White coworkers with less merit received a raise over them (see "Career Limitations" for a more in-depth discussion). One interesting microinsult that Ben shared involved an all-White discussion group he joined. In this group, he noted:

> I feel like I'm not being seen because most of the [group] is White. And, then it's also in Zoom, so I feel like I'm getting lost in the, you know, they give each other [comments like], "Oh, I like what you said," but nobody ever says [anything to me]. And I don't think I'm just being vain, so yeah. That one is interesting, it led me to want to join…another group [that has more people of color].

Notably, he commented that this experience "of not being seen" had the "direct result" of encouraging him to "[make] some excuse" to miss a meeting. These experiences—which signal to Ben his invisibility—are not rare to him. On another occasion, he shared, "I was in a [group] and…these two White guys were to my left and to my right, and instead of talking to me or including me in the conversation, they were talking to each other across me like I didn't exist for a long time." Therefore, microinsults are present in the lives of multiple participants and can have both social and psychological ramifications.

Finally, microinvalidations are "communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (p. 274). A common microinvalidation for Asian Americans is when those who are "born and raised in the United States" are "complimented for speaking good English or repeatedly asked where they are born." These communications "negate their U.S. heritage and…convey that they are perpetual foreigners" (p. 274). Many participants shared experiences with microinvalidations, though they varied on the extent to which they took offense from these communications. For example, both Brian and Cara noted that people often tell them they "speak really good English." In another example, Helen, though stating that she does not believe this circumstance happened because of her race, shared the following story:

> One experience I had, which I don't think has anything to do with ethnicity, it was just the kind of person I was…Anyway, I forget what the class was, [but] the teacher assigned us a paper to write, and then, of course…I wrote the paper, and then I turned it in. And then, he called me back and asked me, "did you write this?" Well I said, "of course I wrote it, I wouldn't even think of having someone else write something that I—of course

> I wrote that." And he was so surprised because it was so well-written, whereas in class I would be so quiet. Well anyway, I don't…know if that had anything to do with being ethnic, maybe so.

Earlier, I included Steve's story (pp. 42-43) about a supervisor who consistently questioned the validity of his work regardless of whether or not it was correct. This interaction was a microinvalidation that falls into the "assumption of inferior status or intellect" category of microaggressions; she communicated that his work could not be correct—even though it was—likely because of her perceptions of him due to his race. Years later, after Steve confronted the same supervisor for being prejudiced against Filipinos, she responded with another microinvalidation, saying, "Oh! I'm not. In fact, my boyfriend [at that time] was Vietnamese." This statement invalidated Steve's experience by suggesting that, because she had a relationship with an Asian man, her behavior towards him was not—and could not be—related to his identity.

Interestingly, two participants experienced microinvalidations from other Asian Americans—a finding consistent with Nadal et al.'s (2012) Filipino-specific microaggression, "exclusion from the Asian American community." One woman, who Ben recalls as being either Chinese or Korean, told Ben that he is "not Asian" because, in her mind, "Filipinos are not Asian." In recalling this story, he commented that "intuitively, [he] felt it was [a] put down." Uniquely, Cara often experiences incidents with Filipinos who assume that she does not speak Filipino dialects because of her Eastern Asian appearance and negatively talk about her in Filipino dialects. Cara was likely the only participant who shared this experience because she was the only one with a distinctly Eastern Asian appearance.

Career Limitations

As mentioned in the section on resilience, multiple participants experienced career limitations that they sometimes attributed to their ethnic/racial identity. These limitations manifested in multiple ways, including difficulty obtaining promotions, resistance from lower-level employees, mistreatment from coworkers, and an unspoken pressure—as articulated by participants—that non-White employees have to work twice as hard to prove their merit.

Steve and Amelia directly noted the difficulty they faced in achieving promotions, despite the fact that they outperformed other employees. Tied to this difficulty was a perception that they had to work twice as hard as the average White employee to be recognized as equivalent. Amelia vocalized this expectation, saying, "You have to be so accomplished to make it to where the average American was…you can only meet them on those terms of actually, at least, having on paper a much better resume than them." Likewise, Emma commented, "you have to prove that you are as good as [your White coworkers] are, even better than they are." These statements reflect Steve's previous comment (p. 42) that, even once he reached a position of authority, lower-level employees questioned his merit and were disrespectful: "even though you can prove [you are] better than they are, it's so hard for them to accept that you are the supervisor."

In a similar vein, Helen told a story in which one of her co-workers—who was formerly in the military and stationed in the Philippines—told her to "go get some beer for him" at a work party at which they were both guests. She described that this incident made her feel "terrible," and that it was "hurtful because [they] worked for the same company."

Ben discussed the unease he felt as he watched his workplace become increasingly White. While he acknowledged that he faced other issues at work that he does not believe were directly related to his racial identity, he mentioned that "the people who promoted [him]

and…saw [his] potential…were all minorities," and as they retired, White people continued to replace them. Even though he believes his struggles at work were not completely racial, the lack of minority representation in his area seemed to factor into his discontentment at work.

Finally, Leo, who achieved his dentistry degree in the Philippines, noted that many professionals with foreign graduate degrees faced discrimination when attempting to get a license for practice in the states.

Housing Limitations

Multiple participants faced racial discrimination related to housing, either being denied housing due to their race or encountering racism from neighbors. Beyond Helen, whose story I recounted earlier (p. 48), two participants faced discrimination when securing housing. Much like Helen, Amelia narrated:

> I remember one time when my husband and I…were engaged, we were making arrangements, we were looking for a place to stay. There was a house that had a "for sale" sign; it was a duplex and the owner lived on one side. The other side was available, so we merrily knocked on the door. I said, "Hi, we're looking for a house, and we'd like to be considered!" And she looked at us and said, "I'm sorry it's no longer available for us." And I added, "oh we'll go somewhere else." My husband, who was much more serious about these things [said], "don't you see she didn't like us?" Then of course, as time went on, you become aware of this thing about redlining right…and that was a very subtle, and a very isolated incident. But it affected me.

Josephine, while able to secure housing, had an experience of a similar nature in which a real estate agent told her that if she had "applied for the house 5 years…earlier, [she] would not have been granted [it] because of [her] race."

Beyond incidents while acquiring a house, similar to Josephine's story above (p. 49), multiple participants expressed difficulty finding acceptance from their neighbors. Notably, many participants were one of the only—if not the only—people of color in their neighborhoods.

Therefore, many of their stories likely reflected their neighbor's internalized racism and discomfort at sharing a neighborhood with non-White residents.

For instance, though Leo, who grew up in an all-White neighborhood, did not offer many stories from his childhood, he noted that once, while only "two blocks from [his] house [a] lady yelled out, 'Hey, go back to your own neighborhood!'" Amelia shared similar sentiments, indicating that her neighbors would sometimes question how she could afford her home. Helen expressed a frightening experience that happened in her neighborhood more recently, narrating:

> The night before [the] election, a whole bunch of…pickup trucks…were having a parade, and they came down the street tooting their horns. They were all flying the Trump flag—they were so noisy. It kind of scared me!...Tangentially, it had something to do with racism because it was getting dark and, just the noise they were making, I was kind of scared. In fact, we were watching them, and I told my husband, "we better get in, because you never know…" But it was harmless in the sense that they were just trying to show their support.

Therefore, despite the progress that Filipino Americans and other groups of color have made towards integrating into historically White neighborhoods, they still face challenges with racism.

Violent Encounters

Only one participant, Emma, shared a more violent encounter, as I described above in the "resilience" section (p. 44). While multiple participants offered stories where White Americans told them to go back to their homes and countries, only Emma described this encounter as distinctly aggressive and violent.

The Perception that Racism Has Gotten Worse

Every participant believes that racism has gotten worse in recent years with the rise of Donald Trump and the emergence of COVID-19. While many participants referenced the

political climate, half of them (*n=5*) explicitly named Donald Trump as instigating a new era of increased racism. Notably, every participant claimed that they have not yet experienced any direct encounters with this increased racism. However, it is important to note that recent conversations around anti-Asian racism emphasize violent hate crimes. Therefore, participants may have experienced an increase in less violent racism (i.e., microaggressions); however, since our conversations focused on the recent rise of the more hostile forms anti-Asian hate, participants may have only focused on these hate crimes in their responses. The following are excerpts from each interview:

> **Emma:** It's worse now…based on my experiences, and we also followed the news during [our time in the United States], and I never never heard any experience…like the woman that happened in New York that was pushed and dragged from her car, I never heard of anything like that. Violence is too much, and she wasn't doing anything wrong. Why? Just because of their looks probably and maybe once again what they knew about Chinese and misinformed knowledge about Chinese, or Japanese [people], and they don't want them to be better than they are…My one conclusion is that there [were] fewer of us during that time. There [were] not too many immigrants, now there are so many immigrants. And these people look around and say, "they're taking over my country," because there are many successful immigrants and they don't want them to do anything…My husband was having difficulty having promotions, but no physical or verbal abuse…we never encountered anything like that.
>
> **Steve:** Maybe [racism has gotten worse] because of Trump's Kung-Flu, I don't know…We never encountered anything [beyond microaggressions]...I think it's also jealousy too, doctors or Chinese are the ones who excel in computers, [and] Indians [and] Filipinos…I'm not sure about it.
>
> **Brian:** I do [believe racism has gotten worse]. Actually, because of the pandemic…I think I tend to stay home more than I would even if I were just being careful because of the pandemic just because you hear so many stories and…nobody, no matter what age you are—or race—goes looking for that kind of discomfort—being confronted for who you are—because there's nothing you can do about it. Or worse, people thinking you're something else, but they hate you anyways. So I actually don't go out much—in the last two years, I haven't gone out much, and it was mostly due to the pandemic, but it was partly due to all the anti-immigrant bigotry/anti-Asian bigotry that you hear about around COVID. It's really too bad…To hear about these instances in the [Bay Area] kind of shocked me, and then here where we [live], which is a small rural county that's very conservative, and kind of reactionary, and mostly White, there have been instances here

too. I don't think many because there are not many Asians here, but *[names instances of people he knows who have encountered anti-Asian hate in his town]*.

Amelia: I have not seen an incident here, but I'm shocked when it happens in places like San Francisco, and New York, where you feel that of all places, those people there should have already been accepting of the history and the presence of Asian Americans. Why? I mean, if you went to Idaho, I can understand that. But, San Francisco? I've seen that and, it's very sad I think, that we have not—I don't know, is it a resentment at all?...Many Filipinos are very successful, if I may say so. And there will always be that resentment that, "how come they're doing so well?" I have not talked to many people, but I've seen the news…and there are some non-Asian Americans who feel entitled…That was the time when they said that COVID came from China…I guess there's enough [incidents] to make us concerned that there could be a pattern…
Interviewer: …What was your reaction?
Amelia: I felt very sad, and I [couldn't] believe that it's happening. I think it made me more sad…and to a certain extent, fearful.

Evelyn: [Racism has] gotten worse. I know this is systemic, you know, racism in the United States…there was an undercurrent of racism even before. But with Trumpism, with the rise of Trumpism, it just was all out. Nobody was safe with that…With the kind of politics we have. As an individual, it doesn't really affect me, because there's nothing more that I can do except be kind to whoever I meet with.

Cara: [Back when I first arrived] I don't think there was the feeling of a foreigner taking [the] place of a White person in terms of advantages…like in school. Everybody enrolled in school was paying the tuition and nobody was usurping anybody's right to be somewhere…
Interviewer: Earlier when you mentioned that you don't go out because you're afraid to meet a crazy person, what do you think prompted you to feel this way?
Cara: It was the news—mainly the news and how crazy people are attacking Asian-looking people…It's not very comforting.

Helen: It's definitely gotten worse because it's more overt now, and it's given permission to people to be violent. Although, I would say, some of [that] violence might have been perpetrated by people who are also mentally ill. But, in my estimation it's gotten worse…because it's overt. Although, I would say, certainly, racism has always been there…I think racism has always been part of the American life from its founding…but now, it seems to just have become front and center.
Interviewer: Well what do you think has made it worse? Besides [the fact that] it's gotten more overt, what do you think has caused that?
Helen: More immediately, I believe that the election of Barack Obama was sort of a turning point in the American history…and that event, although it was welcome, it broke a barrier…it woke up some White Americans that things are changing, and White Americans are no longer on top of the world.

> **Josephine:** Well, because of the media—and it's so highly publicized—it feels to me like it's gotten worse. Personally, it has never really affected me adversely. I think that the racism is more directed to Black people, which I feel very sad about, and I think that the racism here is more—like I said—directed to Black people. Because again the physical impact, the visibility, is so immediate. Whereas an Asian is kinda like "yeah, we're blending to the background."
> **Interviewer:** Do you think that that has changed at all with the rise of COVID and the anti-Asian hate because of COVID? That Asians are perhaps blending less?
> **Josephine:** It depends on where you are geographically. I was told by my friends who live in [West Coast City] that it was not very safe, especially not for myself as an older woman, to be in that area by myself. Or even to be in the area. And much of it, I feel, is not so much racist as people…economically disadvantaged people taking advantage of people who they feel have money. Or are carrying purses with money to go shopping. And, just the appearance of helplessness and age—the appearance of weakness, is what appeals to these guys who carry out physical, robbing…I was robbed twice![4] Once in [West Coast City] in front of my daughter's house. And once here, in this supposedly safe town…in front of our drug store…I would say that these were more perception-based atrocities, or perception-based robberies, rather than racial-based. I was old, my purse was strung over my shoulder—an easy target.
>
> **Ben:** It's gotten worse. It's gotten worse with the climate of the country, [which] got punctuated with the rise of Donald Trump. It just basically gave permission for everybody to be able to express underlying sentiments, and I also have Filipinos in my life who are republicans, former high school classmates—and, significantly, relatives—so, you wouldn't believe the stuff that's coming out against Black Lives Matter…so, yeah, it's become worse. The anti-immigrant sentiments also. I can't believe that Filipinos don't realize that it's also directed against them, not just Latinxs…and also the assaults in the streets, the numbers are there.
>
> **Leo:** …not for me…but I think, because I have some Chinese friends also, and they perceive it a lot. They're actually scared of going to certain areas in [Midwestern City]—I don't go to those areas because I'm more in the suburb area. But, I think that the Asians are more apprehensive more than before, they tell me. And I just listen to them. And these are Asians that were born here…I know that towards [Midwestern City], there [is] more discrimination. I have not seen it, but I've heard about it…especially COVID, a couple years ago. They were just scared, they were scared going to [Midwestern City].

Of note, various participants distanced themselves from the rise in anti-Asian hate, discussing it through the lens of others, such as Black Americans and other Asian Americans. However,

[4] Note: these events occurred 10 and four years ago, prior to the emergence of COVID-19.

despite not all participants believing that racism has become worse for them personally, there is still a general perception that racism has become worse over time for people of color, broadly.

Themes to Develop: Interethnic Solidarity, Increase in Political Activism, Hope

Three other themes began to emerge during my interviews that might be worth developing further in future research. These themes are Interethnic Solidarity, Increase in Political Activism, and Hope. Five participants noted the value of finding solidarity with other groups of color, from other Asian American ethnic groups to Black Americans. During these moments, they share stories, connect, and build solidarity. Two participants noted that the rise in anti-Asian hate led them to become more politically active, particularly to ensure that Donald Trump did not win the presidential race in 2020. Finally, two participants shared hope for the future—despite their dismay at the worsening state of racism in the United States, they found solace in the idea that the younger generations are becoming more progressive.

DISCUSSION

The 10 participants I interviewed offered insight into the lives of Filipino immigrants in the United States relating to ethnic/racial identity development, encounters with discrimination, and perceptions of racism. For this study, I used multiple theories—on identity, critical consciousness, and the U.S. racial context (Tajfel, 1974; Mills, 1997; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Freire, 2014; Mathews et al., 2020)—that will aid the analysis of the above findings, and help explain their contributions to the existing literature on the Filipino American experience.

Resilience among participants seemed to be a method for managing and responding to discrimination that may have provided a level of protection for participants. This finding reflects previous literature on Filipino American resilience: that resilience is associated with reduced post-traumatic stress syndrome among some Filipino Americans (Whealin et al., 2015) and forbearance among Southeast Asians in Canada—i.e., "behavioral responses that may be characterized as passive acceptance and avoidance"—reduced the relationship between discrimination and depression (Noh et al., 1999 p. 201). Some participants also directly attributed their resilience to their families and Filipino culture, a finding which is consistent with previous literature (Hufana & Consoli, 2020). Specifically, the attitudes that participants expressed reflect two Filipino values: *bahala na* (optimistic fatalism) and *pakikisama* (social acceptance). *Bahala na* manifests in Filipino culture as an expectation to endure, deny, and minimize emotional problems (Sanchez & Gaw, 2007; Chan and Litam, 2021, p. 77). *Pakikisama* leads Filipinos to desire social acceptance "without standing up for themselves or being different," leading many to prefer to "remain in harmony with their peers than vocalize any disagreements or dissensions in a group" (Nadal, 2011, p. 40). Participants indicated these values in statements like, "I didn't have any big problems…[like] discrimination," "I try to be kind about it, I don't want to insult people, so I tell them where I'm from," and "[racism] doesn't really affect me because there's nothing more I can do except be kind to whoever I meet." In sum, resilience may be a mechanism based on Filipino culture and values that guides how Filipino Americans respond to racism, leading to forbearance and sometimes even avoidance.

While this study did not measure psychological well-being, it is worth noting that previous studies have discussed the negative psychological implications of using avoidance as a strategy for dealing with racism (Alvarez & Juang, 2010). Future research should continue to

investigate the complexities of resilience, avoidance, and psychological implications associated with perceived racism.

Moreover, when evaluating manifestations of resilience and interpretations of racism, it is necessary to consider the overarching U.S. cultural context that often conceals the reality of racism against Asian Americans (Yoo et al., 2021). While their resilience may be a defensive strategy, their dismissiveness or forbearance towards their experiences with racism might also reflect pressure from a broader society that invalidates discrimination against Asian Americans (Wong & Halgin, 2006; Sue et al., 2009). In their responses, some participants appeared to directly exhibit an internalization of this narrative, with comments like:

> [when people] lock their doors—I mean, I'm not Black, but when Black people talk about that, I know exactly what they mean. You hear a lot of these stories from Black people, but it's also happened to me. But, you know, I try not to talk about it much, especially when [I'm around] Black people.

The same participant later noted, "I'm sure a lot of people have gone through worse." This participant felt reservations about discussing these incidents with others, presumably because he did not want to equate them with that of other people of color in the United States, even though he has similar experiences. Therefore, some participants may have internalized the model minority myth, and consequently felt uneasy discussing their experiences with racism.

Similarly, many participants commented on their perceived increase in racism, but quickly qualified that the racism does not affect them—often framing it as an increase against "Asians" rather than themselves personally or against Black and Latinx individuals— suggesting a disconnect between their identities and their perception of racism. For example, in discussing the rise of racism, one participant commented, "I think that the racism is more direct to Black people, which I feel very sad about." An interpretation of this disconnect from a critical

consciousness perspective might suggest that these participants have not yet achieved a critical understanding of their position in U.S. society. However, interestingly, many participants do appear to recognize racism more broadly in the United States—some even analyze it as systemic—implying that they have developed a critical consciousness around racism, more broadly, in the United States. Therefore, for some Filipino Americans, there may be a block between their recognition of themselves as potentially impacted by this increase in anti-Asian hate. Future research should continue to develop the connection between ethnic/racial identity development and critical consciousness (Mathews et al., 2020). Ben—who appears to exhibit both critical reflection (he commented on educating himself on racism once he moved to the United States) and critical action (he is actively involved in multiple Filipino American political groups)—observed this phenomenon among fellow Filipino Americans, stating: "Filipinos don't realize [anti-immigration sentiment is] also against them."

Beyond an internalization of narratives surrounding anti-Asian discrimination, various factors contribute to this denial and impede the development of critical consciousness, including the search for a positive identity and the colonial mentality. In describing their resilience to discrimination, some participants explicitly named their professional and academic accomplishments as aiding their self-assurance. For example, one participant stated, "Nobody can really put me down because I think [I am] fairly educated, I did my best, I worked very hard going to school." Another commented, "I forget about it and…I just go about because…this is what I was trained to do. I mean it comes with your… self-assurance. [We] were brought up by our parents. We are educated." The choice to draw on these identities and personal backgrounds in response to discrimination may reflect either the "individual mobility" or the "social creativity" strategies of SIT (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). From an individual mobility

perspective, emphasizing one's educational and professional achievements might reflect an attempt to avoid membership with one's stigmatized identity by highlighting one's membership in a valued group (i.e., professionals). Regarding social creativity, pride in one's Filipino identity and resilience might allow one to build a positive identity by altering ingroup comparisons (i.e., people are racist towards us, but we are proud of who we are). Therefore, using these strategies may reveal an attempt to build a positive social identity amidst a stigmatizing context.

Moreover, given the global context of Whiteness and the constant reproduction of White supremacy in the United States and abroad that Mills (1997) describes in the Racial Contract, it follows that Filipino Americans might feel compelled to base their positive identities around White social norms. With an inability to achieve a White appearance and the discrimination that often accompanies a non-White appearance, Filipino Americans may reconcile their encounters with discrimination by distinguishing themselves as professionals or academics and the perpetrators of racist behavior as "ignorant."

This context also connects to literature on the colonial mentality (David & Okazaki, 2006; Nadal, 2011; David et al., 2017). According to David et al. (2017), Filipino Americans who internalize the colonial mentality—the preference for American culture and values—may be less likely to stand up against discrimination. This phenomenon is less relevant for some participants who, on multiple occasions, expressed their willingness to fight back against ignorance. However, for those who demonstrate their resilience through forbearance, this strategy may be a manifestation of the colonial mentality.

Finally, unlike previous studies around panethnicity (Masuoka, 2006; Le et al., 2020), this study found Filipino Americans did not necessarily experience increased panethnic identification following the rise in anti-Asian hate. Instead, participants were spread in their

responses to the trend, with some demarcating themselves from other Asian groups and others recognizing themselves as potential victims of this rise in crime. In terms of ethnic/racial identification, however, the qualitative data from the interviews offered an unexpected finding: Filipino Americans may align their ethnic/racial identity with that of their spouses, suggesting that their identities are collectively constructed. This finding supports previous literature that Filipino Americans pull on different aspects of their identities (e.g., their Spanish history) to align themselves more closely with those in their immediate lives and neighborhoods (Ocampo, 2014). Since Filipinos have connections to the United States, Asia, and Spain, they have a level of cultural hybridity that might allow them to find identification with a variety of subgroups and different groups of people.

Limitations

This study has a few limitations beyond those stated under the participants section. For one, it should be noted that I am half-Filipino half-White, so there is a potential that I introduced bias into the research and analysis. Additionally, my identity may have led some participants to feel hesitant about labeling themselves 'Filipino American' because they feel that my identity—being half-White—more closely reflects that label. One participant explicitly noted that he is sometimes uncomfortable labeling himself 'Filipino American' in the presence of those with my identity. Furthermore, due to the use of snowball sampling, a few participants know members of my family—such as my grandparents, great aunts, and great uncles—a factor which could have made them uncomfortable sharing certain aspects of their lives with me. On the other hand, both of these factors could have made some participants more comfortable with sharing their stories.

Conclusion

Despite limitations, this study expands upon existing literature on the Filipino American experience by investigating ethnic/racial identity development and experiences with racism among older Filipino American immigrants. Specifically, it offers insight into the lives of 'final wave' Filipino immigrants decades after their arrival in the United States. The findings suggest that Filipino Americans are often resilient, developing methods of managing discrimination—based on Filipino culture—that might allow them to form or maintain a more positive self-image and identity. They also contribute to existing conversations about the invisibility of racism against Asian Americans and the psychological outcomes of the narrative that Asian Americans are model minorities. More research is needed to unpack the nuances between how and why Filipino Americans respond to racial discrimination and how that might connect to their ethnic/racial identities, colonial mentalities, and perceptions of their positionality in the United States (i.e., their critical consciousness).

Finally, while these participants demonstrated resilience and often seemingly strong ethnic/racial identities, these factors are not consistent nor constant for Filipino American immigrants—or immigrants in the United States broadly. Instead, their resilience, methods of coping, and self-identification consider and respond to the evolving nature of the host country. In this study, the rise of xenophobia and anti-Asian hate—spurred by Donald Trump's rhetoric around immigration and the emergence of COVID-19—provided a new set of challenges with which Filipino Americans must contend.

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APPENDIX A

1. Start with some background, tell me about yourself, when you/your family came to the United States, how old you were/if you were born here, etc.

2. What was that area like, was it predominantly White? Were there a lot of other Filipinos? Asians? Other racial/ethnic groups?

3. Did you ever feel out of place or different? Do you remember attributing this to your race/ethnicity?

4. Did you ever have any experiences that you felt happened to you because of your race?
    4a. *(if yes):* could you give me some examples?

5. Do you/have you ever experienced racism? What kind? (Anti-Asian? Anti-Latino? Anti-Filipino?)

6. When these incidents happen, who do you talk to about them (if anyone)?

7. Do you think that the amount of racism you have experienced has shifted throughout your life? (Has it gotten better? Worse?)
    7a. Are you familiar with the rise in anti-Asian hate due to the coronavirus? How did you feel when you heard about these incidents? Did you change your lifestyle at all? Did you personally experience any racism related to COVID-19?
    7b. After these events occurred, did you feel more connected to other Asian American groups?

8. Today, with which label do you identify most closely: Filipino American, Asian American, American, or another *(ask them to specify)*?
    8a. (if Filipino or Asian) Today, do you feel that you are at greater risk because you are (Filipino) Asian-American? Why or why not?
    8b. (if other) Is there any instance in which you feel marginalized because of your racial or ethnic identity?

9. Can you tell me about the worst experience you have had as a Filipino American?

10. Is there anything else you would like to share that I did not ask about?