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Constructing Bicultural Identity and Shame Resilience in Chinese* Americans

Natalie Wei-Mun Hsieh

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
School of Behavioral Health
in conjunction with the
Department of Counseling and Family Sciences

Constructing Bicultural Identity and Shame Resilience in Chinese* Americans

by

Natalie Wei-Mun Hsieh

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Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this dissertation in his/her opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

_____, Chairperson
Bryan Cafferky, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Family Sciences

_____, Chairperson
Jackie Williams-Reade, Associate Professor of Counseling and Family Sciences

_____
Zephon Lister, Associate Professor of Counseling and Family Sciences

_____
Jessica ChenFeng, Associate Professor of Medical Education, School of Medicine

DEDICATION

To my village, with whom my heart and stories are knit together:

To my husband and best friend Nick, and my treasured children, Nehemiah and Naomi

to my honored mother and father, Leah and Derek, and beloved older sister Esther

and to my resilient mother-in-law Hsiufang

together with valued members of my husband's and my extended families

and to our heart friends, mentors, and Chinese* American Christian church families

who have journeyed together on the way

To the lifting up of Chinese* and Asian American and bicultural individuals and families

and the equipping of those who serve them in clinical, academic, and community settings

To my Lord Jesus, creator of life and purchaser of new life

—my identity home—

You are the reason we can disarm fear of shame and experience the first fruits

of wholeness and home with God, with one another, and within ourselves today

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy, Systems, Families, and Couples in September 2021
Dr. Jackie Williams-Reade, Chairperson
Dr. Bryan Cafferky, Chairperson

Mental health and family therapy professionals must respond to the resurgence of race-based trauma experienced by Asian Americans during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (Cheah et al., 2020). Yet Asian Americans are the lowest help-seeking group for mental health needs (NAMI, n.d.), often due to shame (Masuda & Boone, 2011). Dominant theories of shame resilience (Brown, 2006; Van Vliet, 2008) assume Western norms of an autonomous self, missing important aspects of Asian American collectivist, bicultural, and minority understandings of self, and the salience of interpersonal shame (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Shih et al., 2019; Yeh & Hwang, 2000). Bicultural identity researchers also often describe resilience in terms of individual competence and adaptation (LaFromboise et al., 1993); the impact of racism and social location on bicultural identity and resilience needs to be further explored (Cheng et al., 2014; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012; Toomey et al., 2013).

This qualitative interview study explores themes of shame and resilience from the bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second generation Chinese* Americans, in order

While this study recruited participants who identified as "Chinese American," participants identified more specifically as Taiwanese American, Hong Kong American, and with the integration of Chinese with Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Malaysian cultures. Noted as Chinese from here, to respect participant diversity.

to develop a grounded theory that conceptualizes bicultural identity construction and shame resilience processes. It is guided by conceptual frameworks that make sociocultural context and interactive meaning-making more visible: symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Constructionist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014) also highlights the role of researchers in co-constructing theory with participants (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

Two publishable papers are included: the first paper explores how multiple social location identities influence the experience and meaning of shame for 1.5 and second generation Chinese* Americans; the second paper, building on the first, explores the processes by which participants construct bicultural identity and shame resilience. Findings illuminate how social context and *Face* and *Race* identity constructs frame how participants experience shame, with movement from *Shame-Influenced* to *Whole-Self Identity Resilience* themes facilitated by *Change Processes* that promote the reclaiming of whole self. Bicultural lived experience reframes shame as an essential social witness to group health, and offers resilience insights that are relevant to the polarized social climate in American society today. Conceptual, clinical, and personal implications are discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Anti-Asian racism and xenophobia are surging again in the United States since the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, with nearly 6,603 hate incidents reported to Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center between March 2020-March 2021 (Jeung et al., 2021), and anti-Asian hate crimes increasing 149% in 2020 in 16 US cities (CSUSB Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, 2021). The murder of six Asian American women within three Atlanta massage parlors on March 16, 2021, has put the growing visceral fear and collective trauma for Asian American communities in national spotlight (Vaughan, 2021). These events echo historic anti-Asian undercurrents in the United States. Mental health and family therapy professionals must be ready to respond to race-based trauma experienced by Asian American clients.

Yet Asian American adults are the lowest help-seeking group for mental health needs, with only 23.3% of Asian American adults with mental illness receiving treatment in 2019 (NAMI, n.d.). Shame is frequently cited in Asian American mental and relational challenges (Wong et al., 2014), but can be a barrier for Asian Americans to seek or stay in therapy (Masuda & Boone, 2011). Furthermore, Asian American clients may not feel as understood by clinicians less attuned to the impact of bicultural identity and social location on their view of self (ChenFeng et al., 2016).

Dominant theories of shame and shame resilience, built on Western cultural values of an autonomous self, may not fully resonate with Asian Americans, for three key reasons. First, Asian Americans are socialized into collectivist family and cultural

systems that hold within-group nuances for shame missed by current theories (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Brown, 2006, Van Vliet, 2008). Second, Asian Americans are collectively experiencing resurgences of historic racism, which are social location and intergroup aspects of shame unaddressed by dominant theories. Third, few studies explore how lived experiences of shame influence the bicultural identity construction process for 1.5 and second-generation individuals, who dynamically socialize into multiple identity frameworks that inform their self-concept and way of relating.

As such, much more research must be conducted to build theories of bicultural identity construction and shame resilience that suit Asian American populations. This qualitative study explores themes of shame and resilience from the bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, one group within the larger banner of Asian Americans. Perspectives from three major strands of identity formation (Chinese* cultural socialization, American acculturation and racialization, and bicultural identity negotiation) will be triangulated under a common lens of shame, to better glean insights about how shame and resilience may be best conceptualized to match 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* American lived experience.

Definition of Study Concepts

The following definitions form the foundation for the major concepts explored in this study on bicultural shame resilience in second-generation Chinese* Americans. In defining the target population, *Chinese* American* refers to a person who identifies to varying degrees with Chinese* heritage culture and American home culture. The "*" used throughout the paper acknowledges that while study participants identified as

"Chinese* American" during recruitment, they also identified as Taiwanese American, Hong Kong American, and integration of Chinese* with Cambodian, Vietnamese, Malaysian, and Brazilian cultures. *1.5 generation* refers to individuals who immigrated to the United States between the ages of 6 and 18 (Benyamin, 2018). *Second-generation* refers to individuals who were born and raised primarily in the United States, or who immigrated to the United States before age six. *Bicultural* refers to the dynamic state of being socialized by two distinct cultural systems that inform how one understands oneself, lives, and relates to others. *Shame* is understood as a painful state or feeling that one is (or will be) negatively judged or rejected, due to one's failure to fulfill group role or meet group norms and standards. Whereas other shame definitions may not explicitly frame shame within the context of a specific evaluative group (e.g., family or cultural group), the power of an evaluative group is central to individuals socialized into collectivist Chinese* culture (Liem, 1997). Finally, *resilience* is understood as a process by which a person perseveres and grows in the midst of internal or external distress.

Background

Chinese* and Asian Americans in the United States

While Asian Americans are often misrepresented as a monolithic group, they trace their roots to a diverse array of ancestral origins, ethnic identities, histories, cultures and languages (Shih et al., 2019). Asian Americans currently hold the fastest population growth rate of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, growing 81% between 2000 and 2019, despite an overall slowing annual rate (Pew Research Center, 2021). California remains home to the largest number of Asian Americans, with high-density

populations in established centers such as the Bay Area and Southern California. In 2010, Southern California housed 2.9 million Asian Americans, the largest population in the state, with about 52% living in Los Angeles. Southern California is home of the largest number of Asian ethnic groups outside their home country and California State Assembly District 49, the first Asian American majority legislative district, located in West San Gabriel Valley, and Asian American-owned businesses that employ over 570,000 Americans (Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, 2015).

Among Asian Americans, Chinese* Americans comprise the largest subpopulation (23%), a group which includes those who identify as Taiwanese American (Pew Research Center, 2021). According to Lee and Mock (2005), Chinese* immigration began in the 1840s, when Chinese* male laborers fled the Opiate War to provide cheap labor during the California Gold Rush and construction of the Transcontinental Railroads. Heavy discrimination ensued, including "yellow peril" racial slurs, and the killing of Chinese* workers by union minor riots and massacres. This culminated in the 1882 Chinese* Exclusion Act, which put a full stop to Chinese* immigration (Shih et al., 2019). Almost 40 years later, the Immigration Act of 1924 allowed men to re-enter, followed by wives permitted to reunite with husbands in 1943.

After the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, immigration quotas were repealed, ushering in large numbers of Chinese* students and educated professionals. From 1978 onward, more established US-China relations allowed for the arrival of students, diaspora refugees, and "astronaut" children who enter in order to receive green cards and return home (Lee & Mock, 2005). These contemporary waves of immigration reflect the greater Chinese* Diaspora, which includes Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam,

Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Americas (Lai & Arguelles, 1998). Throughout all of these waves, Chinese* immigrate to the United States in order to find better opportunities for family, to reunite with family members, to find political asylum, and to obtain skills or residency status.

Dominant Theories of Shame

Shame is a universally acknowledged human experience that involves painful feelings regarding oneself that one is subsequently motivated to avoid (Czub, 2013), described as "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging" (Brown, 2012). Dominant concepts of shame and shame resilience highlight shame as an affront to individual autonomy and as a negative internal emotional experience that strikes one's sense of self at the core (Brown, 2006; Van Vliet, 2008). Shame ("I am bad") is often starkly contrasted with guilt ("I did something bad") as a primarily negative and maladaptive emotion about one's global and stable self before others (Wong & Tsai, 2007).

These conceptualizations of shame also inform the small, but growing, literature on shame resilience theories and clinical ideas about how to work with shame. Brown (2006) and Van Vliet (2008) both propose grounded theories of shame resilience, describing shame resilience as a process in which individuals become critically aware of cultural messages informing shame, and use their agency to evaluate those messages, connect with others, and grow from shame. Clinical compendiums reflecting these insights for therapeutic work with client shame have also been published (Dearing & Tangney, 2011; NICABM, 2017).

Whereas the capacity to experience shame may be universally observable and reported (Casimir & Schnegg, 2002; Mauro et al., 1992; Tracy & Robins, 2007a), cultural and intercultural researchers highlight how it is nevertheless a person's *culture* that constructs the "rules" of when and why a person feels shame (Fessler, 2004; Goetz & Keltner, 2007; Sheikh, 2014; Shweder, 2003; Wong & Tsai, 2007). Culture and emotion researchers argue that dominant shame theories, which are built on Western cultural assumptions of an autonomous, independent self, may not be as applicable to collectivist conceptualizations of shame (Furukawa et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014; Wong & Tsai, 2007). Several researchers and clinicians also note the importance of checking one's assumptions about the meaning and experience of shame for persons of diverse cultural backgrounds (Dearing & Tangney, 2011; Shweder, 2003; Wong & Tsai, 2007). As such, sociocultural constructs of self and shame are important to consider when conceptualizing shame and promoting shame resilience with clients.

Chinese* Collectivist Culture and Shame

Currently, there is a scarcity of shame and shame resilience conceptual models that consider broader sociocultural systemic contexts. This gap becomes especially apparent when one works with Chinese* American clients, whose dynamic socialization into Chinese* heritage culture and broader American cultures, may greatly inform their interpretation of shame and self. For example, a Chinese* American client may experience more shame related to feeling disloyal or deviant from family or cultural norms, than shame related to the presenting event of distress (e.g., failing grade, feeling of rejection by friend or significant other). If a clinician misses the impact of

interpersonal and cultural dimensions of shame (e.g., fear of shaming one's family, or burden of carrying the weight of pre-existing family shame), on the clients' sense of family or group identity, clients may not "feel felt" or experience shame resilience in deeper levels of self-understanding (ChenFeng et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2014).

A closer examination of the cultural cues informing Chinese* Americans' concept and experience of shame shows that their meaning and experience of shame may be especially multi-faceted. Chinese* culture, one of several world cultures operating from a relational economy of honor and shame (DeSilva, 2000), considers shame to be a central organizational dynamic for community-based identity. In this context, shame serves as an instrumental and adaptive social emotion that motivates individuals' deference to authority and alignment with community norms (Greenberg & Iwakabe, 2011). Shame is primarily understood as loss of "face" in one's family or community; for Chinese* Americans, this highlights interpersonal dimensions (e.g., fear of shaming one's family, or feeling family shame vicariously), more than that of internal negative self-evaluation (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Wong et al., 2014). And because the self is collectively constructed and regulated, rather than separate from one's actions, shame and guilt are not often seen in stark contrast with one another the way they are described in Western shame theories (Wong & Tsai, 2007). As such, current shame theories need to consider the impact of enculturation in Chinese* culture.

Chinese* American Racialization and Shame

Racism and stereotyping have long punctuated the whole of Chinese* and Asian American immigration and history in the United States. Historically and to this day,

Asian Americans find themselves racialized ambiguously on the continuum between Whites and Blacks, and subject to stereotypes as both model minority and forever foreigner (Shih et al., 2019). The "model minority" stereotype in based on the assumption that Asians as a group match the social and economic success of White Americans, despite their diverse array of origins, values, SES, and resettlement patterns. The model minority stereotype has been critiqued for masking within-group diversity, overlooking persistent structural inequities that Asian Americans face, and because it puts down other minorities through false comparison, which in turn distracts from, and hinders, their own cause for justice (Shih et al., 2019).

Another dominant stereotype is that of "forever foreigner" in which Asian Americans are perceived as foreigners based on their phenotypic Asian ethnic appearance, regardless of immigration or generational status (Tuan, 1999). The forceful re-activation of anti-Asian bias and these stereotypes have been made visible in the resurgence of discrimination and racial violence against Asian Americans since the COVID-19 outbreak. In Pew Research Center's June 2020 poll, 31% of Asian Americans surveyed reporting that they were the subject of racial slurs or jokes; in March 2021, 87% of Asian Americans surveyed cited some or a lot of discrimination against them in society. The early use of stigmatizing language such as "China virus", "Wuhan virus" and "kung flu" by news media outlets and prominent politicians in reference to COVID-19, triggers some to remember the "yellow peril" racial slurs of the late 19th-mid 20th century, which perpetuated the idea that Asian immigrants are spreaders of disease (Molina, 2006).

Chinese* American Bicultural Identity Negotiation and Shame

Bicultural Chinese* Americans may also experience shame in response to processes of immigration, acculturation, and racialization, as well as the negotiating of multiple cultural cues from their heritage and home cultures. This underscores the need to consider social location and dynamic intergroup and social adjustment aspects of shame. Within social interactions within broader American society, bicultural Chinese* Americans may experience shame in the form of racism and discrimination described above (Kim, 2012; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). Within their family system, bicultural Chinese* Americans may experience acculturative stress and acculturative gaps among family members, which at times can lead to role-reversal or disruption, intergenerational tension, greater family conflict, and poorer child adjustment (ChenFeng et al., 2015; Glick, 2010; Ho, 2014; Qin, 2008). They may also experience shame as an inner sense of marginalization or ambiguous loss of belonging to either or both their Chinese* heritage or American home cultures as a bicultural individual (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011; Yeh & Hwang, 2000).

In summary, bicultural Chinese* Americans will greatly benefit from a shame resilience theory that extends, critiques, and contextualizes current shame theories and clinical research, grounded in a deeper understanding of their unique journey of identity negotiation and self-construction within multiple identity frameworks and social location identities. Theorists, researchers, and clinicians will also benefit from conceptualizations and thematic insights derived from participant first-hand narratives. This study offers helpful steps in this direction.

Theoretical Framework

This study aims to make visible how sociocultural systems inform the experience and meaning of shame and the process of shame resilience in second-generation Chinese* Americans. As such, guiding theoretical frameworks must account for nuances of sociocultural context in emotional meaning-making and the dynamics of identity construction for these bicultural individuals. Core concepts from Blumer's symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) will govern the overall theory construction approach to explain how participants make meaning of interpersonal shame and interpret their sense of self through social interactions. Concepts from Ting-Toomey's identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015) will serve as a theoretical funnel that sensitizes researchers to the adaptational process of bicultural identity negotiation and self-construction for second-generation Chinese* Americans. These frameworks will be described in greater detail in the following chapters.

Objectives

This project seeks to develop a constructionist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) of how bicultural Chinese* Americans experience and construct meaning of shame in family and societal contexts, and what processes facilitate identity and shame resilience. The theory will be used to help researchers, clinicians, and educators better work with this population and consider sociocultural context when understanding persons' experience and interpretation of shame. The research questions are as follows:

1. When do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?

2. How do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans make meaning of this shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?
3. What processes shape how Chinese* Americans move toward bicultural identity and shame resilience?

Rationale and Significance

Dominant shame and shame resilience theories are based on Western cultural models and ideals of an autonomous self, which highlight clients' internal or individual experience of shame (Wong & Tsai, 2007). However, this misses the need to address *collectivist*, *social location, and bicultural* dimensions of shame in Chinese* Americans. This population is socialized in a collectivist heritage culture, where the higher priority is to avoid bringing shame to the family and cultural group (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Wong et al., 2014). Additionally, Chinese* Americans have faced historic and resurgent contemporary waves of exclusion and racism within their history in the United States. Furthermore, they may also experience bicultural identity-based shame as "cultural homelessness" when negotiating their "Americanness" among Chinese*-oriented family members, and their "Chinese*-ness" within broader American society (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Chen et al., 2008; Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011).

As such, this study seeks to construct a grounded theory of when and how bicultural Chinese* Americans experience interpersonal shame in family and societal contexts, and what processes facilitate their interpersonal shame resilience. The study aims to help family scientists better conceptualize interpersonal shame and shame resilience experiences of bicultural Chinese* Americans in theory and research, and to

develop culturally contextualized approaches for cultivating interpersonal shame resilience in family therapy and education. It will also illuminate applications of a social constructionist theory of emotion to conceptualize shame and shame resilience, as the bicultural Chinese* American experience provides a window into the complexity of how one's self is constructed and negotiated through dynamic interaction with various cultural symbols of belonging and shame.

Two publishable papers are included from this study: the first paper explores how multiple social groups and social location identities inform the experience and meaning of shame for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans; the second paper, which builds on findings from the first paper, explores how 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans have demonstrated resilience within multiple sources of identity-based shame, and what change processes have helped move them toward resilience that involves reclaiming their whole self. This study is intended to serve as one step in a longer line of research focused on shame and shame resilience in Asian Americans and other bicultural populations. Findings are intended to share conceptual knowledge that will have practical significance for bicultural Chinese* Americans, as well as research, clinical and educational communities, as described below.

Research Impact

First, this research seeks to amplify the voice of Chinese* American lived experience. This study will illuminate how interpersonal shame is experienced with greater nuance in the lives of Chinese* Americans or others with a collectivist and bicultural background. This study seeks to bring visibility and advocacy to this

community in clinical, research, and theoretical work. This may also spur insights into processes for different bicultural populations.

Second, this research will advance scholars' ability to conceptualize shame and shame resilience work within diverse sociocultural contexts. This includes insights for furthering family and social sciences theory and research on shame and shame resilience, and on the dynamic process of bicultural identity negotiation. Participant interview themes may be useful in generating new working definitions of shame that can aid researchers and scholars who desire to apply the concept of shame to Asian-heritage and bicultural populations and contexts. Also, because this study utilizes a constructionist lens to draw insights about subjective emotional/relational experiences, it may provide data and lend credence to psychological and social constructionist theories of emotion.

Third, the research is also aimed at strengthening efforts made by clinicians and educators who seek to promote shame resilience with clients and students, especially those of a bicultural Chinese* American background. By creating data through semi-structured and therapeutically-sensitive interviews, this study may be especially poised to provide clinical and educational insights. Clinicians and educators may find it useful to use narrative assessment processes with clients and students to build cultural self-awareness and self-acceptance, as well as helpful interpersonal dialogue, when promoting shame resilience.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Because this study aims to illuminate how sociocultural systems inform the meaning of shame and processes of shame resilience in second-generation Chinese* Americans, guiding theoretical frameworks must account for nuances of sociocultural context in emotional meaning-making and the dynamics of identity construction for bicultural individuals. Core concepts from Blumer's symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) will govern the overall theory construction approach to explain how participants make meaning of interpersonal shame and interpret their sense of self through social interactions. Concepts from Ting-Toomey's identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015) will serve as a theoretical funnel that sensitizes researchers to the adaptational process of bicultural identity negotiation and self-construction for second-generation Chinese* Americans.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a term coined by Herbert Blumer in 1937, and describes a distinctive approach to the study of human group life and conduct that acknowledges a diversity of scholars and ideas in its theoretical foundations (Blumer, 1969). Blumer describes several theoretical building blocks for symbolic interactionism. These include the belief that human society consists of persons who are *actively* engaged in living and interacting with one another, such that human society is conceptualized in terms of joint action, "an ongoing process of fitting together the activities of its members" (Blumer, 1969, p. 7). Symbolic interactionism also assumes that social

interaction is *formative* of human behavior, rather than being simply a containing space for human expression (Blumer, 1969).

Blumer's term *symbolic interaction* draws heavily on George Mead's analysis of social interaction in terms of "conversation of gestures" and "use of significant symbols" (Mead, 1934). Here, symbolic interaction describes the presentation of gestures by human actors in a social interaction, and the response each party takes to the three-fold meaning of those gestures: the meaning of what the receiver ought to do, the meaning of what the gesturer plans to do, and the meaning of what joint action can be taken by both parties as a result (Blumer, 1969). When two parties understand the same meanings and implications of a gesture, they are effective in symbolic interaction; when there is misunderstanding along any of the three lines of meaning, communication and interaction are ineffective, and joint action is hindered (Blumer, 1969).

Core Assumptions

Symbolic interactionism is established on three core premises within this outlook on human society. The first premise concerns the centrality of meaning in driving behavior, in that humans act toward things (e.g., physical objects, other human beings or groups, institutions, guiding ideas, activities, situations, experiences) on the basis of the *meaning* these things have for them (Blumer, 1969). This consideration of meaning as central in human behavior in its own right, rather than simply as a neutral link between more powerful external forces and intrapsychic motives, is key to the approach of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969).

The second premise further distinguishes the theory, in that symbolic interactionists propose that the meaning of things is socially constructed by human beings through social interaction. This is in contrast to views that assumed meaning to be a static intrinsic and objective property of things, or as arising primarily through intrapsychic perceptions and reflections within a person (Blumer, 1969). In conceptualizing the source of meaning as constructed through a social process, this theory compels a step away from traditional philosophies of realism, and emphasis on intrapsychic dynamics. It instead advocates a more subjective consideration of the social construction process of human experience (Blumer, 1969).

The third premise concerns the place of interpretation in meaning-making. In symbolic interactionism, the meaning of things is negotiated by individuals through an interpretative process consisting of self-communication and self-interaction (Blumer, 1969). Blumer asserts that symbolic interactionism highlights an individual's agency in a dynamic process of self-communication, wherein one identifies, evaluates, and handles meaning encountered in life (Blumer, 1969).

Social constructionist grounded theory, which will be used in this study, dovetails smoothly as a methodological implementation of symbolic interactionism. Kathy Charmaz (2014), a sociologist championing the constructionist form of grounded theory, explicitly comments on the helpfulness of this theory-practice combination in her work, extending Blumer's three premises. Charmaz (2014) proposes that meaning is interpreted through shared language and communication, that meaning in social interaction is discerned through an ongoing emerging process, and that the interpretive process

becomes explicit when people's meanings and/or actions become perceived as problematic, or when their situation changes.

Identity Negotiation Theory

Whereas symbolic interactionism focuses on meaning-making in terms of joint action and individual interpretive processes, Stella Ting-Toomey's identity negotiation theory (2015) illuminates the role of identity and culture in shaping the frame from which individuals interpret social interactions and generate meaningful social responses. Identity negotiation theory is a middle-range theory that considers an individual's multifaceted identity to be negotiated dynamically through self-reflection and social construction processes that influence intergroup and interpersonal relationships (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Here, *identity* is defined as a composite of cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family or social role, personal image. *Negotiation* refers to verbal and nonverbal messages between two or more communicators that maintain, threaten, or uplift various sociocultural group or personal-identity-based identity images (Ting-Toomey, 2015).

Ting-Toomey first developed identity negotiation theory in 1986 to emphasize the importance of considering issues related to *sociocultural group membership* in addition to personal identity when describing the process of developing intergroup and interpersonal relationships (Ting-Toomey, 2015). She notes that collectivist group-oriented societies may emphasize social-based identity, whereas more individual-oriented societies may highlight individuated identity (Ting-Toomey, 2015). In 1993, Ting-Toomey added consideration of the dynamic dialectics of identity security-vulnerability

and inclusion-exclusion[1] for immigrant and refugee populations, whose identity is largely forged through dynamic adaptational experiences. Ting-Toomey (2015) posits that identity negotiation processes ought to consider socio-cultural identity and role, aspects of personal identity and individual lived experiences, and ongoing intergroup and interpersonal interactions. The ultimate goal of this theory is to facilitate individuals learning mindfulness in intercultural communication and identity attunement (Ting-Toomey, 2015).

Core Assumptions

Identity negotiation theory rests on the foundational assumption that human beings of all cultures desire positive identity affirmations in various contexts, but that cultures vary in how they affirm identity (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Ten core assumptions composed of antecedent, process, and outcome aspects undergird this theory. These assumptions and how they will relate to the study are described below.

Antecedent assumptions consider how (1) a person's group membership identities (e.g., cultural and ethnic membership) and personal identities (e.g., individual attributes) are formed through symbolic communication with others and how (2) all individuals are motivated to move toward an optimal range of identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection, and consistency at both group- and person-based identity levels. While these assumptions will not be explicitly tested in this research, they inform the framing of the interview guide sections (Appendix C) to emphasize sociocultural group identity as well

[1] Original word-pairing is inclusion-differentiation, where differentiation refers to marginalization or exclusion. Because *differentiation* holds a more positive meaning with this paper's primary audience of family science scholars (c.f. differentiation of self in Murray Bowen's family systems theory), the term *exclusion* is being used instead. This word usage also applies to the core assumptions section.

as personal bicultural identity, and the research emphasis on unpacking participants' key relationships and social interactions within cultural groups as a window into their identity negotiation.

Process assumptions consider how individuals experience the following: (3) identity security in culturally familiar environments, and identity vulnerability in unfamiliar environments, (4) inclusion when desired group membership identities are positively endorsed, and exclusion when desired group membership identities are stigmatized, (5) interaction predictability and trust when communicating with culturally familiar others and interaction unpredictability and mistrust when communicating with culturally unfamiliar others, (6) interpersonal connection through supportive relationships, and *identity autonomy* during relationship separation, and (7) identity consistency in repeated cultural routines in a familiar cultural environment, and identity change and transformation (or identity chaos and turmoil in extreme cases) in new and unfamiliar environments. It is also assumed that (8) cultural-ethnic, personal, and situational variability influence meaning, interpretation, and evaluation of identity. The language of these assumptions will not be explicitly incorporated into this study, but they are compatible with our questions in the interview guide about how participants experience honor and shame during their process of identity negotiation. We plan to discuss how the results of this study compare to these theoretical assumptions.

Finally, *outcome assumptions* consider how (9) identity negotiation is successful when one integrates intercultural identity-based knowledge, mindfulness, and interaction skills for appropriate, effective, and adaptive communication with culturally dissimilar others, and (10) results in feeling understood, respected, and affirmatively valued.

Outcome assumptions inform interview guide questions about how participants coped or dealt with experiences of shame, as well as how they coped or thrived in the process of learning how to navigate multiple cultures.

Application of Theoretical Framework to Current Study

Principles from symbolic interactionism and identity negotiation theories will shape the organizational structure of the review of literature, as well as the interview guide used during data creation and analysis. Blumer and Charmaz both highlight the usefulness of symbolic interactionism as a theory to shape appropriate empirical study of human behavior and processes (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2014). Blumer (1969) emphasizes that the researcher, rather than "standing above" human participants and imposing a pre-existing theory from a distance, comes near to their study population's context as a down-to-earth direct observer of human behavior and social process. Charmaz (2014) sees symbolic interactionism as particularly complementary to grounded theory as a theory-methods package, in that symbolic interaction informs an analysis of everyday social experiences, and grounded theory provides opportunity to make theoretical sense of these practices.

In this study, symbolic interactionism will highlight how second-generation Chinese* Americans interpret the meaning of shame experiences and construct a sense of self within their interpersonal interactions within Chinese*-heritage family and cultural groups, and within the dominant Western cultural groups in the United States. Study interviews will focus on illuminating participant subjective experiences and meaning-making through interpersonal interactions and self-reflection. The study will explore

what shared language best describes the meaning of shame and shame resilience for this population, and whether shame serves as a kind of problematic experience that illuminates a person's interpretive process of self-construction. This perspective will be reflected in the interview guide and in the study's conceptualization of shame as related to the self as understood in social context and interaction with others.

Identity negotiation theory assumes that identity is multi-faceted and constructed through a process of identity negotiation that attends to membership in sociocultural group(s) as well as to personal identity, and has particular understanding of the adaptation dynamics for persons integrating multiple cultural influences. As such, this theory is able to inform some of the process dynamics of identity negotiation and how this may pertain to how second-generation Chinese* Americans make meaning of shame and coordinate acts of shame resilience. The interview guide will probe for participants to share about their bicultural identity negotiation and will assume that experiences of shame and the self are dynamically experienced with respect to multiple sociocultural groups (e.g., broader American society and more specific heritage cultural groups).

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Symbolic interactionism highlights the social interaction context for how people perceive, make meaning, and respond to cultural symbols and markers of shame (Blumer, 1969). Identity negotiation theory illuminates how bicultural persons negotiate and construct their sense of identity dynamically with respect to sociocultural group, personal role, and ongoing social interactions (Ting-Toomey, 2015). As such, research literature on shame and shame resilience will be reviewed according to how the meaning of shame is socially constructed and interpreted in cultural contexts relevant to this study: (a) Shame as a Culturally Constructed Symbol of Self (b) Shame in Bicultural Identity Negotiation, and (c) Promoting Shame Resilience in Cultural Context.

Shame as a Culturally Constructed Symbol of Self

The phenomenology of shame in the literature is described as a universally acknowledged human experience that involves a painful and aversive feeling pertaining to oneself, one that motivates people to try to avoid experiencing it in the future (Czub, 2013). Evolutionary theorists describe shame as a universal and basic emotion that is inborn and activated automatically by the first year of life, functioning to help individuals inhibit positive feelings in times of disturbance, or to become sensitized to one's need for social acceptance (Barrett, 1995; Gilbert, 2007; Tomkins, 1963). Cultural researchers also indicate that shame experiences are observed and reported across human cultures (Casimir & Schnegg, 2002; Mauro et al., 1992; Tracy & Robins, 2007a). Casimir and

Schnegg (2002) report language data from 135 cultures that suggests that the biological phenomenon of blushing in shameful situations may be universal.

At the same time, many researchers propose that the interpretation, meaning, and salience of shame is profoundly constructed by culture (Fessler, 2004; Goetz & Keltner, 2007; Sheikh, 2014; Shweder, 2003; Wong & Tsai, 2007). In contrast to evolutionary shame theorists, cognitive-attribution shame theorists consider shame among the class of "self-conscious emotions" (shame, guilt, pride, and hubris) that can only be activated after one can evaluate oneself according to internalized cultural standards, rules, and goals—around the age of three (M. Lewis, 2003; M. Lewis, 2007). Casimir and Schnegg (2002), noted above as reporting the universal phenomenon of blushing, emphasize that it is the epigenetics of *culture* that prescribe and construct the "rules" of when and why shame should be experienced, exhibited, or suppressed.

Cultural constructions of shame also become apparent when studying shame as a regulatory framework in societies (Benedict, 1946). American cultural anthropologist Ruth Benedict popularized the notion of distinguishing between "guilt cultures" and "shame cultures" with her watershed 1946 study on Japanese society post-World War II (Benedict, 1946). Benedict observes that shame through public sanction more strongly motivates and regulates Japanese life and relationships, whereas guilt through private conscience more strongly motivates and regulates Western societies (Benedict, 1946).

Benedict's work has since been critiqued by many who perceive her assessment as an oversimplification, or as an outsider's negative judgment of another culture against normative White standards (Creighton, 1990). However, Benedict's consideration that shame and guilt relate to a deeper fabric of how self, culture, and societies are organized

and regulated, has spurred many anthropologists to explore these cultural constructs more intentionally (Creighton, 1990). Cultural anthropologists and religious scholars have since coined the concept of "honor-shame culture" when researching Mediterranean societies and social dynamics observable in sacred religious texts (DeSilva, 2000; Péristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers & Péristiany, 1992). Honor-shame culture has also been applied to deepen contemporary explorations of Chinese* culture and society (Shin & Silzer, 2016; Wu, 2013).

Similarly, some psychology theorists of culture and emotion have begun to deconstruct dominant shame theories to reveal how conceptualizations of shame in individuals depend largely on how one's culture constructs the self (Furukawa et al., 2012; Goetz & Keltner, 2007; Sheikh, 2014; Wong & Tsai, 2007). This follows from the idea that shame is experienced in reference to self-concept and self-evaluation (M. Lewis, 2003; M. Lewis, 2007). As such, how one experiences and interprets the cultural symbol of shame relies heavily on one's sociocultural context. Next, we deconstruct shame theories to illuminate key differences between Western cultures and Asian cultures, the cultural frames most relevant to identity negotiation in second-generation Chinese* Americans.

Shame as a Symbol in Western Cultures

Western shame theories are dominant in the field of psychology and reflect Western ideas of independent self-construal, in which individuals are socialized to be autonomous and separate from others (Cross et al., 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Shame is described as an individual's internal experience in

Tomkins' affect theory (1963), where shame is an auxiliary negative affect related to fear and disgust that inhibits enjoyment, interest, and creativity (Kaufman, 2004). Shame is also conceptualized as the negative counterpart of an individual's development of personal autonomy between 18 months and three years (Erikson, 1980). Erikson reflects Western ideals of autonomy when advising parents to build their children's confidence with increased independence, lest their children feel a sense of shame about their abilities and overly depend on others (Erikson, 1980).

With some exception, Western theories also emphasize stark contrasts between shame and guilt (Lewis, 1971), where "I am bad" denotes shame, and "I did something bad" denotes guilt (Brown, 2007). Dominant Western models portray shame as negative evaluation of one's *global* and *stable* self, associated with maladaptive psychological and social outcomes; guilt is portrayed as negative evaluation of *specific* and *temporary* actions, and is associated with adaptive and reparative outcomes (Wong & Tsai, 2007). Wong and Tsai (2007) assert that these distinctions made between shame and guilt reflect cultural constructs of an independent self, where a stable self is distinguishable from temporary actions, and where the internal-oriented personal self (which corresponds to guilt and conscience) can be easily distinguished from the externally-oriented social self (which corresponds to shame and social sanctions).

In sum, Western culture construes the self as independent, such that shame is understood primarily as an internal, individual experience (Kaufman, 2004). The primary threat of shame, then, is that it diminishes individuals' ability to fulfill cultural ideals of personal autonomy (Erikson, 1980). Because shame is associated with problematic psychological and social outcomes, it is also cast as a much more undesirable emotion,

when compared to the more adaptive emotion of guilt, which is thought to potentially motivate individual and relational repair (Wong & Tsai, 2007).

Shame as a Symbol in Chinese* Culture

In contrast to Western constructions of an independent self, Asian cultures construe the self as interdependent, where individual identity is derived from right relating and affiliation within a collective group (Shin & Silzer, 2016; Wu, 2013). Asian cultures abide by a collectivist relational economy of honor and shame as described earlier, where honor is ascribed by a group to indicate respect and value of that member to the group, and shame is felt when a member behaves in ways that counter the group's values (DeSilva, 2000; Shin & Silzer, 2016; Wu, 2013). The Chinese* concept of "face" makes the ideas of honor and shame more concrete, and has been defined by scholars as one's claim to identity and social standing within a group, based on conformity to group standards (Wu, 2013). Group members are expected to preserve group "face" by upholding group honor and minimizing group shame (Shin & Silzer, 2016; Wu, 2013). Whereas there exists a Chinese* concept of face for one's individual self, the "greater self" includes other family and group members, and is considered one's more ultimate source of identity (Zou & Wang, 2009).

Whereas Western culture considers shame experiences as a hindrance to societal ideals of autonomy that one ought to avoid, shame serves a central, public, and instrumental as a social motivator and regulator of collective norms in Asian cultures (Green & Iwakabe, 2011). In a collectivist context, shame is primarily understood in interpersonal terms, as a loss of "face," or social standing, in one's family or community

(Wong & Tsai, 2007). As such, shame is experienced as social isolation or exclusion, a threat to the cultural ideals of group identity, togetherness, and harmony (Wu, 2013). When one fails to demonstrate conformity to group norms, one's identity and place in the group may be questioned (Wu, 2013).

Research on shame experiences in Chinese* and Asian cultural contexts highlight these interpersonal nuances. Li et al. (2004) used hierarchical cluster analysis to map shame concepts from surveys of native Chinese*, and noted that shame is considered both an individual's state (fear of losing face, or as face already lost), and one's reaction to others' shameful acts. Wong et al. (2014) developed and validated a shame inventory for Asian Americans that explicitly measures participants' endorsement of *interpersonal* shame items: external shame (concerns about others' negative evaluation), family shame (concern that one has shamed one's family), and vicarious shame (shame felt due to affiliates' shame), elsewhere labeled as transferred shame (Tang et al., 2008).

Studies with Asian or Asian American participants do not always find the stark difference between shame and guilt as cited in Western cultural models. The hierarchical cluster analysis conducted by Li et al. (2004) found Chinese* shame terms often translated to English as guilt, or as a combination of shame and guilt. Bedford (2004) found through interviewing Taiwanese Chinese* participants that three subtypes of "guilt" and four subtypes of "shame" in Chinese* could not be distinguished in English. Bedford and Hwang (2003) argue that guilt is a more salient regulator in individualistic cultures because of an assumed general code of ethics, but shame is more effective for collectivist cultures, where ethics are contextualized to specific relationships and situations.

Liem (1997) provides qualitative data that supports these assertions. Liem interviewed Euro-Americans, first-generation Asian Americans, and second-generation Asian Americans, asking participants to describe a shame experience and a guilt experience. Whereas first-generation Asian Americans frequently associated guilt and shame terms, Euro-Americans and second-generation Asian Americans did not. Liem reasons that first-generation Asian Americans have more capacity to feel guilt when they shame another in their group, because their conscience is shaped by a sense of duty and obligation to their hierarchically ordered group. In contrast, Euro-Americans and second-generation Asian Americans, whose conscience is more shaped by a generalizable set of ethical values, more readily differentiate shame from guilt (Liem, 1997).

Shame in Bicultural Identity Construction

Shame theorists note that shame can serve as formative role in identity formation, because of its connection to self-evaluation and motivation (Czub, 2013). Whereas Western culture and Chinese* culture may be contrasted as distinct systems, bicultural Chinese* Americans must negotiate their identity *dynamically* through a dialectic between sociocultural group membership and personal identity within both Western culture and Asian cultural frames (Ting-Toomey, 2015). In this section, the terms *sociocultural group membership* and *personal identity construction*, will organize our discussion of second-generation Chinese* American identity construction processes, with attention to how shame may incorporated as a useful lens.

Sociocultural Group Membership

Bicultural identity negotiation involves Chinese* Americans' *enculturation* in traditional Chinese* heritage cultural norms (Kim et al., 2005), where shame serves a central organizing and regulatory role of community norms (Greenberg & Iwakabe, 2011; Wong & Tsai, 2007). Chinese* cultural models of shame and self may be enculturated through the use of shame in parenting and socialization (Fung, 1999), and through the abundance of distinct terms to describe shame in the Chinese* language (Li et al., 2004). Shame may also be experienced as part of *acculturation*, which refers to the process of adjusting to a different culture's behaviors, knowledge, values, and identity (Tsai et al., 2002; Zane & Mak, 2003).

John Berry (2003) conceptualized acculturation and enculturation as mutual processes by which cultural groups engage larger society. See *Figure 1* (Appendix F). The left diagram depicts four acculturation strategies of a cultural group: *assimilation* (sacrifices heritage culture in order to engage with other cultural groups), *separation* (preserves heritage culture at the cost of engaging other cultural groups), *marginalization* (disengages from both its heritage culture and other cultural groups), and *integration* (maintains aspects of its heritage culture while engaging with other cultural groups) (Berry, 2003). Research suggests that adolescents who are encouraged to establish an integrated bicultural ethnic identity experience greater psychological well-being than those who are marginalized or assimilated (Chae and Foley, 2010; Lieber et al., 2001).

Relevant to the consideration of shame, Berry (2003) recognized that cultural groups can freely choose an acculturation strategy only to the extent that a larger society welcomes their contact and engagement. The right diagram depicts four different

acculturation expectations of larger society: *melting pot* (invitation to a non-dominant group to assimilate; *pressure cooker* (assimilation is demanded), *segregation* (forcing separation among cultural groups), *ethnocide* (exclusion of non-dominant cultural group), and *multiculturalism* (accepting cultural diversity as a feature of their societal identity) (Berry, 2003). Whereas multiculturalism is the favored outcome, regular experiences of structural barriers and racism will negatively impact identity negotiation (Kim, 2012; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). As such, bicultural Chinese* Americans may experience *acculturation-based shame* as their family or cultural group engages broader society.

It is also noteworthy that the dynamics of acculturation are not only negotiated between adjusting individuals and mainstream society, but also within their family systems. Acculturative gaps between spouses or among parents and children in immigrant and bicultural households are common and can affect family dynamics and self-understanding of family members. Couples may sustain major role changes that disrupt traditional gender and economic patterns (Chun & Akutsu, 2013). Parents and children may pick up aspects of mainstream American language and culture at different rates, leading at times to role-reversal, intergenerational tension and misunderstanding, greater family conflict and poorer child adjustment (ChenFeng et al., 2015; Glick, 2010; Ho, 2014; Qin, 2008). It follows, then, that bicultural Chinese* Americans may also experience acculturation-based shame within their families.

Personal Identity Construction

Bicultural identity construction also involves negotiating a sense of personal identity (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Phinney (2003) conceptualizes three types of ethnic

identity for Asian Americans: traditionalists (strongly internalized Asian values), marginal (between two cultures or denying Asian culture) and Asian American (group pride and esteem in a third group). Adolescents who are encouraged to establish an integrated or bicultural ethnic identity have been shown to experience greater household harmony, positive self-esteem, and psychological well-being than those who are marginalized or assimilated in their ethnic identity (Chae & Foley, 2010; Lieber et. al., 2001; Lo, 2010). Phinney (2001) argues that the development of a bicultural identity is an *essential task* for individuals interacting with multiple cultures (Phinney, 2001).

While the term "shame" may not always be used explicitly in this literature, it may serve as a valuable lens from which to deepen current conceptualizations of bicultural identity negotiation. In Chinese* American *racial identity development*, shame may be triggered by overt racism or discrimination, through indirect messages that privilege different group norms for feeling included or valued (Kim, 2012; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997), or through reinforced racialized stereotypes about Asian Americans being the model minority or forever foreigners (Petersen, 1966; Tuan, 1999). Shame may also be inferred as part of *ethnic identity development* when Chinese* Americans labeled by Phinney (2003) as "marginal" reject American and Asian cultures or feel alienated by both cultures (Yeh & Hwang, 2000). Similarly, shame may be experienced in *bicultural identity development* as "cultural homelessness" by individuals who have pervasive feelings of "being different" or "not belonging" (Navarrete & Jenkins, 2011), or view their cultures as oppositional rather than compatible (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002).

Promoting Shame Resilience in Cultural Context

Finally, what does the literature describe as adaptive responses to the experience of shame? Clinicians and researchers do well to use grounded conceptualizations of shame to facilitate creative and helpful responses that promote shame resilience. This section summarizes literature regarding current shame resilience theories and their clinical and educational applications. While these theories draw primarily from Western cultural concepts of self and shame, they form an important conceptual framework that this study can build on when highlighting interpersonal and bicultural nuances of shame related to bicultural identity negotiation in second-generation Chinese* Americans.

Defining Shame Resilience

Shame resilience is a fairly recent term in the literature, made most prominent by Brené Brown's shame resilience theory (2006), a grounded theory based on extensive interviews with United States women about their experiences with shame (research with men was conducted later). Brown defines shame resilience as "that ability to recognize shame when we experience it, and move through it in a constructive way that allows us to maintain our authenticity and grow from our experiences" (Brown, 2007, p. 31).

K. Jessica Van Vliet, who conducted a grounded theory study on shame and emotional resilience in Canadian adults, notes that resilience researchers have shifted from concepts of resilience as a static characteristic within an individual, to that of resilience as a "dynamic and multifaceted family of processes that evolve over time" (Van Vliet, 2008, p. 234). Van Vliet (2008) distinguishes resilience from recovery (which assumes

successful adaption after a period of challenge or maladaptation), and coping, which refers to one's more general response to stressors.

Shame Resilience Theories

Brown's shame resilience theory targets dynamics of fear, blame, and disconnection participants cited as key to their shame experience, and is captured by four key themes: recognizing shame and its triggers, practicing critical awareness of cultural messages informing shame experiences, reaching out and developing empathy and connection, and speaking shame through insightful conversation about shame and resilience (Brown, 2006; Brown et al., 2011). *Figure 2* (Appendix G) depicts movement along a continuum between shame and shame resilience along these four themes.

Van Vliet's grounded theory (2008) conceptualizes shame as an assault on the self—one's self-concept and identity, and sense of social connection, power and control. Shame resilience is a rebuilding and reconstructing of self, with five thematic processes: connecting (finding allies and supportive others), refocusing (shifting priorities toward active self-empowerment), accepting (one's situation, feelings and their expression), understanding (external factors and internal self-awareness, creating meaning separate from shame), and resisting (rejecting negative judgment and asserting oneself). *Figure 3* (Appendix H) features change from a sense of shame as core to self, to a self where shame is separate from one's core self.

Van Vliet (2009) also highlighted the role of attributions in overcoming shame when re-examining her data in a second manuscript. Most participants associated shame initially with internal and global attributions of self-blame. Those that developed shame

resilience experienced recovery in the form of three attributional shifts: identifying external causes and influences of shame (to offset self-blame), shrinking in global negative self-evaluation (likened to a shift from shame to guilt), and believing in the potential for change (to increase one's agency for the future) (Van Vliet, 2009).

These two grounded theories on shame resilience will serve as background knowledge from which the research team will co-construct a new grounded theory with specific attention to bicultural identity negotiation processes in second-generation Chinese* Americans. These theories are not intended to actively shape interview questions or data analysis for the current study. Instead, the research team will interact with these theories primarily after data creation and analysis, to situate study results in the literature and comment on shared and new theoretical insights.

Summary

Shame resilience models are fitted to theoretical conceptualizations of shame. As indicated previously, dominant models of shame draw heavily on Western self-construal and societal values of independence and autonomy. Persons who are socialized in a collectivist culture, and certainly bicultural individuals socialized both in collectivist and individualistic cultures, will benefit from shame resilience theories that consider the systemic cultural context of their unique journey of identity negotiation and self-construction. This study attempts to bring visibility to how bicultural second-generation Chinese* Americans develop shame resilience while negotiating their bicultural identity, and to highlight how sociocultural systemic contexts and self-construction can be considered dynamically by clinicians and educators seeking to promote shame resilience.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD

This study will employ constructionist grounded theory methodology in order to more deeply explore and explain experiential processes related to bicultural identity shame and shame resilience among the bicultural Chinese* American population. The researcher's goal is to co-construct a theoretical model, grounded in the lived experience data from research participants, which can be used to sensitize clinicians, researchers, and theorists to the sociocultural and interpersonal aspects of shame and shame resilience specific to this population. This goal is in keeping with the historical purpose of grounded theory, which is to discover a working theory that best explains a basic social process in understandable terms (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Constructionist grounded theory continues the spirit of the inductive, comparative, and open-ended approach of original grounded theorists Glaser and Strauss, while responding to critics who view grounded theory as inappropriately wedded to a modernist epistemology that privileges the researcher's authority, blurs differences, and uncritically accepts positivist metanarratives of science and universal truth (Charmaz, 2014). Constructionist grounded theory highlights grounded theory as a process by which researcher and respondents share multiple realities and *co-construct* a theory (Charmaz, 2014). As such, the researcher assumes responsibility to be reflexive about their positionality, privilege, perspectives, and social interactions.

Research Questions

This project seeks to develop a constructionist grounded theory of how bicultural 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience interpersonal shame in family and societal contexts, and what processes facilitate their interpersonal shame resilience. The research questions are:

1. When do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?
2. How do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans make meaning of this shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?
3. What processes shape how Chinese* Americans move toward bicultural identity and shame resilience?

Self of the Researcher and Team

In addition to the research topic and design, the self of the qualitative researcher and theorist is an integral part of the research process. In constructionist grounded theory, it is understood that the researcher's own embodiments, positions, and positionality influence the subjectivity and uniqueness present in data creation, interpretive analysis, and theory construction (Charmaz, 2014). As such, it will be important for the researcher to be self-reflective throughout the process, and open to collaboration and feedback in order to bracket personal biases and remain faithful to see what the data communicates.

Primary Researcher

The primary researcher is an insider to the community of interest, as a second-generation Chinese*-American. The research topic at hand emerged largely out of her increased reflexive awareness of her bicultural identity and Chinese* family of origin, and reflections on the challenges of identity negotiation. Her status as an insider in this community enables her to have a ready sensitivity to Chinese* American cultural lenses on the phenomena of interest: shame and shame resilience, and bicultural identity negotiation. This may also be advantageous when recruiting participants from a Chinese*-American background, who may be socialized to value *guanxi*, or relationship, such that initial trust and rapport may be offered more easily with those whose background is more similar (Luo, 2011).

At the same time, she bears awareness of her positionality and privilege with her graduate-level education and middle-class background, as well in her roles as a family therapist, and wife of a pastor within Chinese* American communities. Because of the privileges and status associated with these resources and roles, it will be important for her as the researcher not to inappropriately leverage the power differential when recruiting participants or when inviting responses to sensitive questions during the interview. Because Chinese* culture socializes persons to be sensitive to place within a hierarchy and appropriate responses to persons in authority, proactive steps will be taken by the researcher to reduce participant sense of duty to say "yes" to participating in the study, by targeting participants who do not experience the researcher as a direct superior in leadership, or as a personal friend. As described below, professional and personal networks, and snowball sampling, will be used to refer participants to the study.

The primary researcher has also done considerable "armchair theorizing" and has offered a conceptual model presentation at a national conference (Hsieh, 2019) about the topic at hand. This process involved reviewing literature and conceptualizing possible models of how bicultural identity and shame could play a role in the life of Chinese* Americans. Constructionist grounded theory assumes that the researcher's prior reflections, life experience, and self of the researcher are valuable aspects of the researcher's role in theory co-construction (Charmaz, 2014). However, it is nevertheless important not to violate the spirit and standards of grounded theory's open-ended inquiry and attentiveness to participant responses as primary in theory construction. As such, a major part of establishing trustworthiness is acknowledging these biases and taking appropriate measures to account for them. Later sections describe plans to establish study rigor and trustworthiness.

Research Associates and Consultants

The primary researcher sought to collaborate with both cultural insiders and allies at all stages of research, including interview guide design, participant recruitment, and review of findings. Research was also conducted in collaboration with research assistants for participant recruitment, coding, and data analysis. It is the researcher's belief that collaboration with cultural insiders and research assistants allowed for more culturally-sensitive interviews, trustworthy results, additional theoretical insights, and ongoing partnerships to facilitate relevant and appropriate dissemination and use of research data.

Participants

Thirty participants were recruited through a combination sampling strategy, which involved: (1) defining inclusion criteria, (2) using professional and personal networks and (3) snowball sampling. Inclusion criteria was defined as follows: participants will be adults between the ages of 25 and 40 (Gen Y) who are fluent in English, self-identify as 1.5 or second-generation bicultural Chinese*-American,[2] and who have lived in Southern California for at least three years before the age of 18. Demographic data, including gender, age, ethnicity, generational status, occupation, educational level, religious/spiritual preference, geographic locations, family migration history, and constellations of family of origin and current household, were collected for descriptive purposes, rather than for screening.

Professional and personal networks were used to identify potential recruitment sites and individual participants. These networks include academic contacts at various educational institutions, personal contacts with Chinese* American helpers and peers (therapists, ministers, educators, community leaders), as well as professional list-serves and general social media webpages. As mentioned previously, while personal contacts and immediate colleagues served as participant recruitment helpers, participants in the actual study did not have a current first-degree relationship with the interviewer. Finally, snowball sampling will also be employed, a process by which current participants are encouraged to refer additional participants to the study.

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[2] As defined in the introductory chapter, *Bicultural* describes persons socialized by two distinct cultural systems that inform how one understands oneself, lives, and relates to others. *Chinese* American* refers to a person who identifies to varying degrees with a Chinese* heritage culture and American home culture. *1.5 and second-generation* refers to individuals who immigrated to the United States between the ages of 6-18 (1.5) or who were born, or immigrated before age 6, and were raised primarily in America (second).

Human Subjects Protections Considerations

The researcher used the entire recruitment process as a vehicle to build rapport and invite participants to indicate the date and time they preferred to schedule the video interview, and to ask questions about what to expect (Elmir, Schmied, & Wilkes, 2011). Care was taken to promote a comfortable interview environment conducive to private and confidential conversation, as well as quality audio and video recording. Additionally, professional and personal networks and snowball sampling will also be used to encourage referrals of interested parties and vicarious rapport prior to the interview.

Data Creation

Participant data was created through 90-minute individual semi-structured interviews with Zoom meeting software. Interviews will be held in a quiet space conducive to quality video and audio recording and confidentiality (e.g., home or professional office). A local computer and personal mobile voice recorder served as backup options for direct recording. Zoom guarantees steps taken to ensure that video and audio recording technology uses secure and confidential means of capturing and storing data during data creation (see https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Zoom-Security-White-Paper.pdf).

Participants filled out an online informed consent (including video/audio recording) and a brief demographic data form. Interview questions were open-ended and conversational, with more specific probe questions based on the energy of the participant and participant-interviewer interaction. The interview concluded with a review of a researcher debriefing statement. See Appendices A-D.

Human Subjects Protections Considerations

It is well documented by researchers that the topic of shame itself can be taboo, and that people often are reluctant to share explicitly about experiences of shame (Scheff, 2003; Brown, 2007). As such, it was of key importance that researchers employ care and sensitivity in the manner by which participants are invited to share life experiences that may prompt disclosure about shame. During the interview process, the researcher incorporated a conversational and therapeutic posture, which enhanced grounded theory skills of asking open-ended and counterbalanced questions, with extra care given to emotionally attune to the participant and monitor for verbal and nonverbal shame cues. Rapport was built through empathy, validation, and warm-up conversation (Elmir et al., 2011), and the researcher monitored the conversation for nonverbal and verbal shame cues (Dearing & Tangney, 2011). In sensitive moments of conversation, the researcher used clinical insight and sensitivity to directly check in with the participant and offer support and the choice to continue or not (Owens, 2006). Conversations were also documented for consultation with research and IRB advisors. At all times, it was the researcher's responsibility to prioritize the welfare of the participant over their "usefulness" in data creation.

Additionally, a more indirect, narrative, and contextualized approach to inviting disclosure about shame was employed for a significant portion of the interview. Core interview questions inviting participants to describe key relationships and significant experiences in their process of bicultural identity negotiation made no explicit inquiry about shame, to allow for participants to spontaneously describe their experiences without pre-supposing that shame is a relevant theme for all participants. This latitude

also allows for any spontaneous mentions of shame to be immediately understood within an interpersonal and cultural context of identity negotiation.

However, particular questions about culturally-contextualized dimensions of shame were also included in order to ensure that research questions were directly addressed. Participants were asked to comment on the relevancy and saliency of cultural honor and shame dynamics in their family of origin, to invite comments about the degree to which they were socialized into traditional Chinese* cultural concepts of honor and shame and collective identity. A later set of questions invited participants to share about a time when they felt pride or positive affirmation as a Chinese* American, followed by an invitation to share about a time when they felt shame or embarrassment. Both of these questions will be included, in order to remain as counterbalanced as possible and encourage a diversity of participant responses (Charmaz, 2014).

All participants were offered time to debrief at the conclusion of the interview, to gather feedback and discuss next steps. They were also given a supportive resource handout created by the researcher, with links to professional family therapists and educational resources that may be useful to continue processing their experiences. See Appendix D.

Transcription and Data Storage

All video and audio data files were captured and stored on an encrypted cloud server within Zoom meeting software. Zoom security allows the user to require all meetings to be end-to-end encrypted with the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256-bit algorithm (see https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Zoom-Security-White-Paper.pdf). For audio

and video data directly captured to a password-protected local computer or mobile voice recorder, all data was transferred immediately to a password-protected folder on the researcher's local computer, and an encrypted cloud server. Data sharing was limited to official research team members and involved granted access to encrypted cloud servers.

Transcriptions were completed by uploading video or audio files to Rev.com, which offers professional human transcription services that ensure that personally identifiable information are secure and private according to guidance from the published General Data Protection Regulation (see https://www.rev.com/security). Data was encrypted both in storage and in transit with industry best-practices (HTTPS and Transport Layer Security 1.2). All transcriptionists are vetted through a thorough screening process, receive training, and have signed non-disclosure agreements and strict confidentiality agreements (see https://www.rev.com/security).

Completed written interview documents and study-related memos and meeting notes were labeled with a participant code when stored. Consent form and master document that links names and codes were maintained in a secure password-protected folder separate from participant written records. Transcripts and other written data will be stored and retained for at least three years following study completion.

Data Analysis

Constant comparative analysis is a key feature of grounded theory methodology, which invites data analysis to begin as soon as the first data are created (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Willig, 2013). However, it should be noted that because of practical constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were recruited and interviewed

in a block prior to formal coding, rather than engaging in traditional constant comparative analysis to ensure full theoretical saturation prior to the conclusion of data creation. In order to account for the possibility that theoretical saturation would not be reached with the originally intended 20 participants, ten additional participants were recruited and interviewed, for a total of 30 participants.

Coding and analysis was conducted with the assistance of MAXQDA 2020 Analytics Pro software, which allowed for easy organization of files, coding, memo-writing, and search queries for analysis. Though formal coding did not ensue until after data creation, researchers engaged in field note and memo writing to record personal reflections and analytical insights throughout the entire process of data creation, and as an avenue to test prospective codes and consider emerging analytical relationships during analysis (Charmaz, 2014). The goal of data analysis was to generate components of a theory, grounded in participant words and experiences, which offer a deep and abstract conceptualization and interpretation of concepts and process in the research questions.

In keeping with constructionist grounded theory, data was initially coded by the primary researcher and research assistant staying "close to the data" through quick-read line-by-line analysis that focuses on noting data as observable actions (Charmaz, 2014, p. 116). Codes were sensitized, but not bounded, by the acknowledgement of symbolic interactionism theory's emphasis on joint action, meaning, process, agency, and identity (Blumer, 1969). Initial codes were kept short and simple, grounded in data, yet tentative, which allowed researchers to adjust them as data is compared to other data and varying researcher perspectives arise in collaboration (Charmaz, 2014). They were also organized under folders that corresponded to interview sections, for easier reference and access.

Next, researchers engaged in focused coding, in which initial codes that appeared most significant for the research questions, or were frequently observed, were prioritized to analyze and organize larger sections of data (Charmaz, 2014). These higher-level conceptual codes were used to organize and advance the theoretical direction of analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Whereas focused coding typically follows initial coding, the process at times became recursive, as new insights that emerge prompt a re-examination of earlier data for further insights (Charmaz, 2014). Whereas Strauss and Corbin popularized axial coding by using a frame of conditions to relate categories and subcategories for overall conceptual analysis, this study followed an alternative strategy that attempted to link categories through more emergent observations and attentiveness to what the data is saying about the research questions (Charmaz, 2014).

Following focused coding, the primary researcher engaged in theoretical coding to conceptualize how substantive codes are linked to one another, as hypotheses integrated into a theory (Charmaz, 2014). The primary researcher's research assistant also completed secondary coding for 20 participants, generating independent codes under high-level frames of research-question related categories (e.g., "shame in Chinese* spaces," "shame in American spaces" or "shame-based resilience") which could then be compared to codes from the primary researcher, to check for any adjustment to themes reported. The resulting process advanced the researchers' ability to communicate the emergent analytical narrative (Charmaz, 2014). As previously indicated, symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005) informed researchers' consideration of certain theoretical coding frames (e.g., the focus on meaning and the categorization of shame according to various cultural spaces). The

primary researcher heeded advice from Charmaz (2014), using memo-writing and collaborative discussion with a research assistant (secondary coder) to check whether theoretical codes are being too tightly applied to honor participants' perspectives, or constrain the process of allowing theory to freely emerge.

To add depth and nuance the developing theory, researchers engaged in theoretical sampling, which involves researchers intentionally collecting more data in order to deepen preliminary coding insights, check hunches, identify variations, and probe new questions formed about initial categories and their properties (Charmaz, 2014). As stated earlier, it is acknowledged that theoretical sampling was not conducted as fully as intended, due to practical constraints that prevented detailed and comparative coding during the process of recruitment and data creation. However, when it was deemed by the primary researcher that the 1.5 generation experience differed in significant ways from the second-generation experience at times, and that the female and male perspectives as well, care was taken to recruit more participants to guide a more balanced demographic representation of these perspectives. At times, care was also taken to adjust ways of framing or asking questions on the interview guide, in order to match unfolding awareness of conversation flow and participant feedback. Also, memos were created to more easily put together theoretical insights. Finally, data creation was concluded after thirty participants were interviewed, and memos indicated a sufficient diversity of themes relevant to the research questions for analysis.

Human Subjects Protections Considerations

In order to honor the confidence of participants, the researcher ensured ethical practices with respect to managing the anonymity of direct participant quotes by de-identifying data whenever reporting results. This involves the use of pseudonyms, the omitting of demographic data that would identify a participant, and the aggregating of thematic data in publications. As previously described, the primary researcher intentionally collaborated and consulted with other research team members in order to represent the words and experiences of participants faithfully in their context.

Establishing Rigor and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research may be established as rigorous and trustworthy by using methods that encourage validity, generalizability, and reliability (Morse et al., 2002; Creswell, 2014). Additionally, Charmaz (2014) highlights the importance of evaluating constructionist grounded theory on the basis of its originality, resonance, and usefulness to both scholars and general persons. It is important to note that qualitative research seeks to accomplish different ends with different means of data collection and data analysis than that of quantitative research. As such, these terms must first be defined and clarified for appropriate use as standards (Mayan, 2016).

Validity

In qualitative analysis, validity tends to be known as trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000), and refers to the degree to which researchers can be confident that the conclusions drawn are indeed accurately interpreted from the data, rather than superimposed from other sources. For this study, validity refers to

whether the constructed theory involves sufficient data analysis to demonstrate an accurate representation of bicultural Chinese* American participants' descriptions and lived experiences of shame and shame resilience in their process of constructing bicultural identity. A research study is deemed credible when researchers evidence intimate familiarity with the topic, collect sufficient data for theoretical sampling, include a wide range of empirical observations, and provide strong logical links between concrete data and their subsequent arguments and analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

To account for researcher bias and subjectivity, personal memos, in addition to research and coding-related memos, were used throughout the study to record significant thoughts, feelings, observations, and reactions of the researcher. The primary researcher also engage in purposeful reflection on the significance of her intersectional identity, positions, and positionality for the study, as a second-generation Chinese* American who is also female and Christian (Durdella, 2017). The primary researcher will frequently engaged in intentional conversation with her research assistant and with other cultural insiders (with de-identified data) in order to develop checks and balances for researcher responsiveness to data-driven ideas, theoretical and methodological coherence, and disciplined efforts to analyze data according to grounded theory constant comparative methods and attention to theoretical sampling and saturation (Mayan, 2016).

Peer debriefing and feedback through the research team and selected cultural insiders from the researcher's professional network served as additional checks and balances for researcher bias in the formation of the interview guide, and in the processes of data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2014). Finally, analysis of negative cases

was used to optimize data accuracy and representation of participant diversity and individual differences (Creswell, 2014).

Generalizability

Generalizability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which participants have been purposefully selected to represent a range of experiences with the central phenomenon of interest (Mayan, 2017). In this study, the research team sought to develop a grounded theory about the experiences of shame and shame resilience for bicultural 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans in Southern California. Within the boundaries of defined participant inclusion criteria, efforts were made to recruit participants from a diversity of backgrounds and participant social locations (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation, educational and economic class, relationship status, physical health and ability, generational status, spirituality). While specific quotas were not be attempted for any particular social location category, and snowball sampling amplified certain demographic characteristics more than others, sample demographic characteristics were noted and considered in the process of data collection and analysis (e.g., purposely requesting recruitment helpers to invite more male and 1.5 generation participants to balance ratios). Research assistants, personal and professional networks, and social media groups, were used to access research sites and participants outside the researcher's first-degree connections.

Reliability

Qualitative reliability indicates that the research approach is consistently applied across different researchers during the course of the project (Creswell, 2014). Whereas qualitative research assumes that the self of the researcher influences the research process—and as such, no two researchers or coders will see the data in exactly the same way—reliability implies that procedural and methodological steps are carried out with intentionality, transparency, and accountability to academic and professional communities (Durdella, 2017).

In order to ensure reliability, documentation of all procedures through an audit trail was used. Furthermore, field notes and code-related memos were created by the researcher throughout the study to ensure that data collection and analysis reflect current data analysis. The primary researcher developed a codebook for cross-coding checks, and engaged in regular and coordinated communication throughout data collection and analysis to identify discrepancies, alternative codes, and to share insights and questions arising from data analysis.

Quality of Theory

As previously mentioned, researchers also evaluated whether their final theory is original, resonant, and useful (Charmaz, 2014). This ensures that the theory is not only theoretically accurate, but makes a practical and significant contribution to both scholars and general persons (Charmaz, 2014). Researchers attended to whether final theory is *original* by considering whether its categories offer fresh and novel insights and conceptualizations of shame and shame resilience for bicultural Chinese* Americans.

Results were also compared to existing theoretical considerations of shame, shame resilience, and identity negotiation, to locate how study contributes to existing knowledge in the field. Furthermore, feedback from colleagues was also used to consider whether the emergent grounded theory *resonates* with participants and offers them deeper insights into their lived experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Finally, the quality of theory will be evaluated for whether it is *useful* in sparking future research, offering helpful insights for practical and everyday life, and contributes to our efforts to use research to better our social world (Charmaz, 2014).

Results

Data from individual interviews addressed the four research questions, which center on how 1.5 and second-generation bicultural Chinese* American experience and make meaning of shame when constructing their sense of bicultural identity, and on illuminating processes that facilitate shame resilience during bicultural identity construction. Interview data findings afforded the ability to provide rich and thick conceptual and process descriptions of how shame is experienced within various interpersonal and sociocultural contexts, and how participants respond to shame and develop shame resilience.

Common themes that emerged were used to propose a grounded theory of bicultural identity and shame resilience, and negative case examples were analyzed in order to deepen an understanding and articulation of individual differences that reflect Chinese* American diversity. Researchers also used participant responses to generate new working definitions of shame that can aid researchers and scholars who desire to

apply the concepts of shame and shame resilience to diverse populations and contexts. By employing a therapeutically-sensitive interview process as a researcher, this study also models building blocks of narrative assessment processes that clinicians may adapt for work with this population in therapy or educational settings.

Study Limitations

One potential limitation of this study is in the self-selecting bias of the participant sample. Participants as a whole were more psychologically-minded and insightful, were highly educated (with the majority of participants completing college, and some completing graduate and professional degrees), and were sufficiently comfortable in their sense of bicultural identity so as to be willing to speak about the topic with a researcher. While it is advantageous for participants to be self-reflective, it may limit the array of experiences represented within this Southern California regional area. However, involving participants who are already motivated, willing, and ready to engage the topic freely may be a more fruitful way to generate a working theoretical model that invites further refinement from other individuals in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE

PUBLISHABLE PAPER ONE

FACE- AND RACE-BASED SHAME IN 1.5 AND SECOND-GENERATION CHINESE* AMERICAN BICULTURAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Abstract

Mental health and family therapy professionals must be ready to respond to race-based trauma experienced by Asian American clients during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Yet Asian Americans are the lowest help-seeking group for mental health needs, with shame and loss of face cited as frequent concerns. This is part one of a two-part analysis of a qualitative interview study exploring themes of shame within bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans. Part one findings indicate that evaluative groups socialized participants into two contrasting identity frameworks, *Face* and *Race*, that influenced how participants experienced shame. Participants described shame in various crisis or ongoing identity-marking moments when one felt disapproval, disgust, or disconnection from a larger group, or felt socially obligated to hold in one's grief or trauma. Six meanings for shame emerged: (1) shame as pressure to achieve to save or recover face, (2) shame as feeling like an outsider, (3) shame as feeling less than or put down, (4) shame as feeling unseen, unknown, and unfelt, (5) bicultural shame as internalized loss of place and (6) bicultural shame as internalized loss of face. In all instances, participants described shame in social and cultural terms. Implications for shame as a socially conscious and contextual emotion, and a valuable witness to within-group and intergroup health, are discussed.

* While this study recruited participants who identified as "Chinese American," participants identified more specifically as Taiwanese American, Hong Kong American, and with the integration of Chinese with Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Malaysian cultures. Noted as Chinese* from here, to respect participant diversity.

Anti-Asian racism and xenophobia are surging again in the United States since the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, with nearly 6,603 hate incidents reported to Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center between March 2020-March 2021 (Jeung et al., 2021), and anti-Asian hate crimes increasing 149% in 2020 in 16 US cities (CSUSB Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, 2021). The murder of six Asian American women within three Atlanta massage parlors on March 16, 2021, has put the growing visceral fear and collective trauma for Asian American communities in national spotlight (Vaughan, 2021). These events echo anti-Asian undercurrents throughout Asian American history in the United States. Mental health and family therapy professionals must be ready to respond to race-based trauma experienced by Asian American clients.

Yet Asian American adults are the lowest help-seeking group for mental health needs, with only 23.3% of Asian American adults with mental illness receiving treatment in 2019 (NAMI, n.d.). Shame is frequently cited in Asian American mental and relational challenges (Wong et al., 2014), but can be a barrier for Asian Americans to seek or stay in therapy (Masuda & Boone, 2011). Furthermore, Asian American clients may not feel as understood by clinicians less attuned to the impact of bicultural identity and social location on their view of self (ChenFeng et al., 2016).

Dominant theories of shame and shame resilience built on Western cultural values of an autonomous self, may not fully resonate with Asian Americans, for three key reasons. First, Asian Americans are socialized into collectivist family and cultural systems that hold within-group nuances for shame missed by current theories (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Brown, 2006, Van Vliet, 2008). Second, Asian Americans are collectively experiencing resurgences of historic racism, which are social location and intergroup

aspects of shame unaddressed by dominant theories. Third, few studies explore how lived experiences of shame influence the bicultural identity construction process for 1.5 and second-generation individuals who dynamically socialize into multiple identity frameworks that inform their self-concept and way of relating.

As such, much more research must be conducted to build theories of bicultural identity construction and shame resilience that suit Asian American populations. This qualitative study explores themes of shame and resilience from the bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, one group within the larger banner of Asian Americans. As part one of a two-part study, perspectives from three major strands of identity formation (Chinese* cultural socialization, American acculturation and racialization, and bicultural identity negotiation) will be triangulated under a common lens of shame, to glean insights about how shame and resilience may be conceptualized to match 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* American lived experience.

Background

Chinese* Americans in the United States

Asian Americans currently hold the fastest population growth rate of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, growing 81% between 2000 and 2019, despite an overall slowing annual rate (Pew Research Center, 2021). Among Asian Americans, Chinese* Americans comprise the largest subpopulation (23%), a group which includes those who identify as Taiwanese American (Pew Research Center, 2021). According to Lee & Mock (2005), Chinese* immigration began in the 1840s when Chinese* male laborers fled the Opiate War to provide cheap labor during the California Gold Rush and

construction of the Transcontinental Railroads. Heavy discrimination ensued, including "yellow peril" racial slurs, and the killing of Chinese* workers during union miner riots and massacres. This culminated in the 1882 Chinese* Exclusion Act, which put a full stop to Chinese* immigration (Shih et al., 2019). Almost 40 years later, the Immigration Act of 1924 allowed men to re-enter, followed by wives permitted to reunite with husbands in 1943.

After the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, immigration quotas were repealed, ushering in large numbers of Chinese* students and educated professionals. From 1978 onward, more established US-China relations allowed for the arrival of students, diaspora refugees, and "astronaut" children who entered in order to receive green cards and return home (Lee & Mock, 2005). These contemporary waves of immigration reflect the greater Chinese* Diaspora, which includes Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Americas (Lai & Arguelles, 1998). During these waves, Chinese* migrated to the United States to find better opportunities for family, reunite with family members, find political asylum, and/or obtain skills or residency.

California continues to house the largest number of Asian Americans, with high-density populations in the Bay Area and Southern California. In 2010, Southern California was home to 2.9 million Asian Americans, with about 52% living in Los Angeles (Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, 2015). Southern California also includes the largest number of Asian ethnic groups outside their home country, as well as the first Asian American majority legislative district, California State Assembly District 49 in West San Gabriel Valley, with Asian American-owned businesses employing over 570,000 Americans (Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, 2015).

Dominant Theories of Shame

Shame is a universally acknowledged human experience that involves painful feelings regarding oneself that one is subsequently motivated to avoid (Czub, 2013), described as "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging" (Brown, 2012). Dominant conceptualizations of shame and shame resilience highlight shame as an affront to individual autonomy and a negative internal emotional experience that strikes one's sense of self at the core (Brown, 2006; Van Vliet, 2008). Shame ("I am bad") is often starkly contrasted with guilt ("I did something bad") as a primarily negative and maladaptive emotion about one's global and stable self before others (Wong & Tsai, 2007).

These conceptualizations of shame also inform the small, but growing, literature on shame resilience theories and clinical ideas about how to work with shame. Brown (2006) and Van Vliet (2008) both propose grounded theories of shame resilience, describing shame resilience as a process in which individuals become critically aware of cultural messages informing shame, and use their agency to evaluate those messages, connect with others, and grow from shame. Clinical compendiums reflecting these insights for therapeutic work with client shame have also been published (Dearing and Tangney, 2011; NICABM, 2017).

Whereas the capacity to experience shame may be universally observable and reported (Casimir & Schnegg, 2002; Mauro et al., 1992; Tracy & Robins, 2007a), cultural and intercultural researchers highlight how it is nevertheless a person's *culture* that constructs the "rules" of when and why a person feels shame (Fessler, 2004; Goetz & Keltner, 2007; Sheikh, 2014; Shweder, 2003; Wong & Tsai, 2007). Culture and emotion

researchers argue that dominant shame theories, which are built on Western cultural assumptions of an autonomous, independent self, may not be as applicable to collectivist conceptualizations of shame (Furukawa et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014; Wong & Tsai, 2007). Several researchers and clinicians also note the importance of checking one's assumptions about the meaning and experience of shame for persons of diverse cultural backgrounds (Dearing & Tangney, 2011; Shweder, 2003; Wong & Tsai, 2007). As such, sociocultural constructs of self and shame are important to consider when conceptualizing shame and promoting shame resilience with clients.

New Paradigms: Shame in Sociocultural Context

Currently, there is a scarcity of shame conceptual models that consider broader sociocultural systemic contexts. This gap becomes especially apparent when one works with Chinese* American clients, whose dynamic socialization into Chinese* heritage culture and broader American cultures, may greatly inform their interpretation of shame and self. For example, a Chinese* American client may experience more shame related to feeling disloyal or deviant from family or cultural norms, than shame related to the presenting event of distress (e.g., failing grade, feeling of rejection by friend or significant other). If a clinician misses the significance of interpersonal and cultural dimensions of shame (e.g., fear of shaming one's family, or burden of carrying the weight of pre-existing family shame), and these impacts on the clients' sense of family or group identity, clients may not "feel felt" or experience shame resilience in their deeper levels of self-understanding (ChenFeng et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2014). A closer examination of three identity construction processes informing Chinese* Americans' self-concept and

experience of shame (socialization in Chinese* collectivist culture, immigration and racialization in America, and bicultural identity negotiation) shows that their meaning and experience of shame may be especially multi-faceted.

Chinese Collectivist Culture and Shame*

Chinese* culture, one of several world cultures operating from a relational economy of honor and shame (DeSilva, 2000), considers shame to be a central organizational dynamic for community-based identity. In this context, shame serves as an instrumental and adaptive social emotion that motivates individuals' deference to authority and alignment with community norms (Greenberg & Iwakabe, 2011). Shame is primarily understood as loss of "face" for one's family or community; for Chinese* Americans, this highlights interpersonal dimensions (e.g., fear of shaming one's family, or feeling family shame vicariously), more than that of internal negative self-evaluation (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Wong et al., 2014). Liem (1997) compared to the structure of shame stories told by Euro Americans, first generation Asian Americans, and second-generation Asian Americans. He found that Euro Americans' stories reflected a dyadic structure of actor and audience, whereas first and second-generation Asian Americans more often described a triadic structure of actor, shamed other (family) and audience. This emphasizes the embeddedness of shame in interdependent relationships within one's group. Additionally, because the self is collectively constructed and regulated, rather than separate from one's actions, shame and guilt are not often seen in stark contrast with one another as they are described in Western shame theories (Wong & Tsai, 2007).

Chinese American Immigration and Racialization and Shame*

Racism and stereotyping have punctuated Chinese* American immigration history in the United States since the 1840s, including "yellow peril" racial slurs, the 1871 Chinese* Massacre, and the 1882 Chinese* Exclusion Act (Kim, 2012; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). To this day, Asian Americans are racialized ambiguously on the continuum between Whites and Blacks, subject to model minority and forever foreigner stereotypes (Shih et al., 2019). The "model minority" stereotype assumes parity with White social and economic success by virtue of their strong work ethic and compliance, masking within-group diversity (e.g., cultural origins, values, SES, and resettlement patterns) and persistent structural inequities. It also puts down other minorities through false comparison, hindering their causes for social justice (Shih et al., 2019). Asian Americans are also often perceived as "forever foreigners" based on their phenotypic Asian ethnic appearance, regardless of immigration or generational status (Tuan, 1999).

The anti-Asian bias reflected in these stereotypes have been made visible in the resurgence of discrimination and racial violence against Asian Americans since the COVID-19 outbreak. In Pew Research Center's June 2020 poll, 31% of Asian Americans surveyed reporting that they were the subject of racial slurs or jokes; fast forward to March 2021, 87% of Asian Americans surveyed cited some or a lot of discrimination against them in society. The early use of stigmatizing language such as "China virus" and "kung flu" by news media outlets and prominent politicians in reference to COVID-19, echo the "yellow peril" racial slurs of the late 19th-mid 20th centuries, during which time Europeans and Americans perpetuated the idea that Asian immigrants are spreaders of disease (Molina, 2006).

Chinese Americans and Bicultural Identity Shame*

1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans may also experience shame as part of their process of constructing identity within families actively negotiating social upheaval from life in Chinese* cultural contexts, and the host of social and personal adjustments necessary to carry life forward in the United States. This underscores the need to consider social location and dynamic intergroup and social adjustment aspects of shame. Within social interactions within broader American society, bicultural Chinese* Americans may experience shame in the form of racism and discrimination described above (Kim, 2012; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). Within their family system, bicultural Chinese* Americans may experience acculturative stress and acculturative gaps among family members, which at times can lead to role-reversal or disruption, intergenerational tension, greater family conflict, and poorer child adjustment (ChenFeng et al., 2015; Glick, 2010; Ho, 2014; Qin, 2008). Furthermore, bicultural individuals may also experience shame as an inner sense of marginalization or ambiguous loss of belonging to either or both their Chinese* heritage or American home cultures (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Navarette & Jenkins, 2011; Yeh & Hwang, 2000).

Current Study

As such, bicultural 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans will greatly benefit from a conceptualization of shame that is grounded in their words and lived experience, and considers their multiple social identity construction processes. In turn, their lived experiences make more visible the social and cultural dimensions of shame as a construct. Research questions include:

1. When and how do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?
2. How do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience and make meaning of shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?

Method

Symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015) as conceptual frameworks highlight the centrality of meaning in bicultural identity negotiation through social relationships. *Constructionist* grounded theory highlights sociocultural systems in shame and identity concepts, and the active role of researcher in co-constructing a grounded, process-oriented theory with participants (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). As such, researchers, like participants, are seen as research instruments who must be reflexive about their positionality, privilege, perspectives, and social interactions throughout the research process.

Participants

Participants were recruited based on the following inclusion criteria: 25-40 years of age, fluent in English, self-identify as 1.5 or second-generation bicultural Chinese*-American, and have lived in Southern California for at least three years before the age of 18. Direct recruitment was conducted by recruitment helpers, who were first-degree contacts within the primary researcher's professional and personal networks (university and clinical colleagues, professional list-serves, and cultural community peers and mentors), with email and social media serving as the primary modes of outreach.

Snowball sampling was also encouraged following participation. Care was taken to exclude any first-degree contacts of the primary researcher, in order to minimize feelings of social obligation during participation, as well as the complexity of researchers managing dual roles with participants during data collection and analysis. Thirty participants were enrolled, with 24 additional participants declined during screening due to unmet inclusion criteria. See *Table 1* (Appendix E) for demographics.

Procedure

Following recruitment, participants completed an online demographic form about their social context, family of origin and migration history. They then completed a 90-minute semi-structured online Zoom interview, to explore lived experiences in their negotiation of a bicultural identity, with touchpoints on family of origin relationships, relationships outside the family, concepts of face and shame, and identity resilience. Afterward, participants were debriefed and given supportive resources. See Appendices A-D for sample documents.

Self of the Researcher

The primary researcher is a cultural insider, which enabled a ready sensitivity to Chinese* American cultural lenses on the phenomena of interest and facilitated rapport-building with participants. At the same time, she bears awareness of her positionality and privilege with her graduate-level education and middle-class background, as well as in her roles as a family therapist in training, and spouse of a minister within Chinese* American communities. As such, cultural insiders and allies were enlisted as additional

researchers and consultants in all key stages of research, including interview guide design, participant recruitment, analysis, and review of findings.

Analysis

During data creation, field memo writing was used to record initial data reflections sensitized to research questions and theoretical frameworks, free thoughts related to questions and curiosities based on participant commonalities and uniqueness, and notes to self as related to my role as interviewer. This memo writing allowed for early comparison of data themes across participants, and formed the basis for minor adjustments in the interview guide, and to justify targeted recruitment of additional 1.5 and male participants to balance sample perspectives. Interview data, consisting of video and audio recordings, was subsequently converted into verbatim transcript and analyzed through the help of MAXQDA software.

Charmaz (2014) three-stage coding approach was then employed: initial coding (line-by-line analysis), focused coding (prioritizing frequently observed codes and organizing into conceptual codes), and theoretical coding (conceptualizing how substantive codes are integrated into final theory). To establish rigor and trustworthiness, a second researcher independently coded 20 of 30 participants to ensure congruence of themes, with frequent conversations to discuss coding observations and coding process, and to explore ways of understanding larger implications of data. Furthermore, negative cases were given weight in analysis, both to ensure nuance to the final theory, and to ensure that the research process itself represented the diversity of participants faithfully.

Findings

Findings make more visible the social locations and cultural contexts that frame the experience and meaning of shame for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans as they construct a bicultural identity. Participants connected to Chinese* and American cultures through social referencing groups (e.g., family, cultural networks, or social location identity) that socialized them into two contrasting frameworks for making meaning of identity within their larger group: *Face* in Chinese* culture and *Race* in White-normed American culture. These social referencing groups and identity frameworks influenced when and how participants experienced and interpreted shame.

Participants experienced shame both in crisis moments (e.g., immigration, overt racism) as well as in everyday life, typically activated when one felt disapproval, disgust, or disconnection from a larger group, or when one felt obligated to hold in one's grief or trauma. Six themes on the meaning of shame emerged as participants recounted their bicultural identity narratives: (1) shame as pressure to achieve to save or recover face, (2) shame as feeling like an outsider, (3) shame as feeling less than or put down, (4) shame as feeling unseen, unknown, and unfelt, (5) bicultural shame as internalized loss of place and (6) bicultural shame as internalized loss of face. The first four themes reflect social shame within a larger group in Chinese* and White-normed American social spaces; the latter two reflect internalized shame in one's self-concept as a bicultural individual. In all instances, participants described shame in social and cultural terms. See *Figure 4* (Appendix I).

Face Identity Framework in Chinese Culture*

Participants described the cultural construct of "face" as implicitly taught, yet essential to discern one's place within the family or cultural group hierarchy. Some conceptualized face as "social currency" or "social prestige and acceptability," and others highlighted face as the "dignity of the family" and one's honor to belong to it.

Henry, second-generation Taiwanese American, highlights the representational nature of face:

> When you are out in public, you are representing your family and you're representing your parents. And so if you do anything stupid or you look bad, it reflects how it is you were taught, and it's reflective of your parents and of the environment you grew up in. And so to save face is to not do anything stupid. Just act appropriately.

As such, shared commitment to save face and avoid shame was closely tied to representing one's family and identifying with one's group. Participants described being socialized to present an image that "everything is going well," and to avoid showing turmoil, mental or emotional vulnerability that could ultimately lead to shame—the experience of others in their social group "looking down on" or "thinking less of [them] and [their] family." Participants also shared that parents sometimes shame their child publicly when their child embarrasses them, to save face and show others in their cultural network that they still align with their social values, despite their child's behavior.

Furthermore, social location and social context also influenced how face-identity scripts were activated for participants. Participants' mothers were regularly cited as investing more effort into saving face than fathers, as were participants socialized as firstborn children. Furthermore, participants whose families regularly engaged with a

cultural network (e.g., religious community, extended family, regular family friends) tended to activate "face" concerns much more than those that did not. Jenny, second-generation Taiwanese American, explains that face was not as prominent for her family, likely because "[they] had no family in the US…there wasn't an association to other people to be embarrassed for or by."

Race Identity Framework in White-Normed American Culture

Participants readily referenced White or Western ideals and standards as normative for defining group status and acceptance in American society. Some equated "American" with "white" and described their adjustment process in terms of how "westernized" or "whitewashed" one was becoming, with White acceptance (e.g., "hanging out with white people") conferring social status. Conversely, shame in a race identity framework was experienced based on the degree that one was perceived to differ from White or Western norms, with the implicit expectation that one must assimilate to White norms in order to belong to the group. Rose, 1.5 generation Hong Kong Chinese* American, shares:

> The assimilation was really about how do I become like my neighbors? How do I become like the rest of the students at my school? And of course I didn't really understand just how diverse the group of students were as a whole, but I felt like, "Oh, my gosh, I have to learn English, I have to assimilate to this culture, I have to start dressing like them, I have to eat like them." These were the thoughts that crossed my mind when I was at that school.

Whereas all participants recognized the formative role of their immigrant Chinese* family for Chinese* cultural identity, they varied in terms of which cultural network(s) or social location identities most mirrored their identity and belonging (or lack of belonging) within American society (e.g., Chinese* and other ethnic immigrants,

Asian Americans, other persons of color). Many times, self-identifying labels were a clue to this constructive process. At times, participants used an identity label strategically to manage social identity shame (e.g., identifying as "Asian American" instead of "Chinese* American" to ease public embarrassment due to US-China political tensions), or to affirm solidarity with others, whether in shared shame (e.g., identifying with other persons of color who also "felt less valued by society"), or shared social progress (e.g., identifying with Asian Americans making strides into mainstream American pop culture).

Bicultural Identity Construction

Whereas all participants shared certain concrete cultural identity markers to be part of the study: identification as Chinese* American, 1.5 or second-generation, and residence for at least three years in Southern California, they represented various countries of origin, cultural networks and social location identities when describing their connection to Chinese* and American cultures and preferred self-identity. Furthermore, they differed in how they used language and concepts related to *Face* or *Race* when describing their identity negotiation process. This suggests that whereas certain bicultural identity markers may be similar across individuals, the meaning of one's bicultural identity and perception of self in a larger group, is an active and dynamic constructive process. Connie, second-generation Chinese* American, relates this in her process:

> As I grew, I realized, oh, it's okay if I don't identify specifically in this culture, this culture. I'll just take bits and pieces like, oh, I like the fact that my family's really hardworking and I'll take that. And then from the other culture, I like the way that they treat customers or customer service and things like that and stuff. So, all of those slowly build the pieces…it's nice when people validate that…but sometimes it's just conflicting.

Shame in Bicultural Identity Construction

Participants disclosed experiences of shame throughout the whole of their bicultural identity negotiation process. All themes were described in social and cultural terms, reflecting a view of self in relation to a larger social group. For the majority of participants, shame was described at the outset of identity construction, in recounting when they first became conscious of their Chinese* American identity. Typically, participants related consciousness of being Chinese* American in a White-normed American social space, and as a moment that shaped ongoing perception of self in the larger group.

Whereas similar themes of shame were noted in White-normed American and Chinese* spaces, cultural identity frameworks and group norms influenced how participants interpreted the meaning of shame. The social contexts and reasons for activated shame were diverse—at times, perceived social others or evaluative groups were present, and at other times, social norms of a group were inferred inwardly based on comparison of self to others directly observed or seen in media. Shame was experienced in crisis and watershed moments (e.g., immigration, overt racism through bullying or verbal teasing, experiencing major shifts in Asian population demographics within a school or neighborhood). Other times, shame was activated through microaggressions and social experiences in everyday life that triggered one to feel social disapproval, disgust, or disconnection from a larger group. Shame was also experienced as vicarious intergenerational shame, or as the feeling activated when one felt obligated to hold in one's grief or trauma because of Chinese* *face* cultural norms.

Shame as Pressure to Achieve to Save or Recover Face

Within Chinese* social spaces, participants reported feeling pressure to achieve in order to save or recover face. As noted above, the construct of "face" is prominent in Chinese* culture, with parents imparting to children the importance of representing and maintaining the dignity of one's family among others. Here, then, fear of shame is a strong motivator to save face. Immigration intensifies this need to save or recover face, as families experience social loss and upheaval, and feel an urgency to re-establish the family in American society. As such, those closest to the immigration experience often spoke of saving or recovering face in terms of social *survival* within American society. Janet, 1.5 generation Taiwanese American, recounts how face concerns motivated her:

> Especially when I was younger, I think that's also what motivated me to just hurry up and learn English, and be able to read, and be able to process, and get placed in honors classes if possible. That's definitely something I would say I go to sleep with, and then wake up with.

Firstborn children of immigrants also felt pressure to work hard as a way to survive. Aaron, second-generation Chinese* American and firstborn of five, vividly recounts his mother saying this one night when he was crying for help:

> Son, I can't help you, you can only help yourself. In this world, no-one's going to help you but yourself, and you're going to have to work three times as hard as anyone else just to get to the same level.

For other second-generation participants, pressure to achieve was described less in terms of survival in White-normed American society, and more as a means to please their parents and avoid the shame of disappointing them or their cultural community. Michael, second-generation Chinese* American, highlights the importance of achievement for his father:

> Yeah, I know for my dad... for I think Asian society in general, if you're not super successful, if you're not a doctor or a lawyer, you screwed up or something, somewhere along the line…And growing up, I feel like there's always a push for me to be someone of high stature, like an engineer or a doctor.

Sharon recounts how felt pressure to save face negatively impacted her sense of self and connection with her parents and their family friends:

> That's what I struggled with growing up too, the Asian family groups, the potluck parties. It just felt like all the parents are just competing with their children, with each other and using their children. And that's just never something that struck me that felt right. And I always felt also, I was a huge disappointment because my mom would mostly complain about me. I never really felt I fit in very well in that sense.

Shame as Feeling Like an Outsider

Participants frequently reported feeling like an outsider within White-normed American spaces, whether during major social losses and dislocation (e.g., immigration, leaving home for college after being "sheltered in diversity" in an Asian American-majority neighborhood) or in being rudely "othered" when they had expected to be included by peers (e.g., feeling rejection and disgust from peers due to different lunchbox food). Some participants described traumatic episodes as sudden overwhelm, emotional overload, or isolation, and others as a nagging sense of unwelcome and misfit with group norms (e.g., language fluency, mealtime rituals, lack of familiarity with White-normed "American" pastimes like camping, football, or Girl Scouts). The common thread in outsider experiences was a sense of feeling publicly exposed and judged as an unwelcome minority by a broader group—which manifested as an enduring undercurrent of being "the other" that could be re-triggered anytime (e.g., during covid-19 pandemic). Brian, second-generation Chinese* American, remarks:

> I do feel like I'm treated as an outsider or as a foreigner, even though I've been here my entire life. I'm born and raised. I espouse so many American customs, and traditions, and values. But… there's also this feeling of being a visitor… you feel like you're not completely welcomed at the end of the day. Just coping with that…has been a little bit uncomfortable. One day, you're kind of expected to kind of pack your bags, and [you] go like, "Where am I supposed to be going?"

In contrast, participants who felt like an outsider in Chinese* social spaces (e.g., among nuclear or extended family, immigrant or same-generation peers) felt judged from *within* one's group for not aligning with group expectations or norms (e.g., not speaking or reading English or Chinese* perfectly, not knowing all the appropriate cultural etiquette). Other times participants felt outcast by Chinese* others for aligning with a group deemed "outside" the boundaries of one's own (e.g., parents being leery about a Christian church "pulling their son away" from their family's Buddhist identity, or being othered by non-mainlanders [from China] whose countries of origin had political tensions with China). And at times, the "outsider" group that was suspect was American society, such that greater adoption of American norms was seen as supplanting Chinese* identity. Tina, second-generation Chinese*-Vietnamese American, felt caught up in this dilemma:

> Grandparents and parents were like, "Hey, you're forgetting how to speak our languages. Use English a little bit less," or like, "Oh, your English is so good, but your Chinese* is so bad. What's going on? We need to send you to Chinese* school." And [I felt like saying] "I don't know, this is just how my brain is working, this is how my brain is absorbing…I can't control my language acquisition, like sorry that I can't use Chinese* at school, I can't use Vietnamese at school, I just have to use English."

It is noteworthy that outsider feelings within one's own group were often triggered by acculturation gaps and different socialization contexts, rather than by intentional attempts to violate group norms, as perceived.

Shame as Feeling Less Than or Put Down

Many participants experienced overt or covert experiences of racism in White-normed American spaces, including teasing (e.g., being made fun of for "the way your eyes looked," "the language you spoke," "the color of your skin," for "being Chinese*"), bullying, microaggressions, sexual fetishization, or scapegoating. As a result, many participants expressed the impulse to hide their identity, "stray away from [Chinese*] culture," and internalized "feelings of inferiority" and self-loathing. Daniel, second-generation Taiwanese American, reflects on feeling rejected in his cultural difference:

> Third grade is probably the earliest that I can remember, in terms of experiencing… that cultural difference, where I went from being super excited, that I had noodles and kimchi packed for lunch, to being so incredibly embarrassed, and upset that I had noodles and kimchi for lunch…This is when my story starts of me wanting to become more and more white.

Some participants attributed racism to temporal tides in majority/minority group dynamics, such that Chinese* or Asian Americans were scapegoats for group shame during times their numbers were few and they were on the margins of White norms, implying that they might be less targeted in more recent cultural shifts. But many participants noted that the possibility of being scapegoated remains readily accessible. Helen, 1.5 generation Chinese* American, related feeling disappointed by the resurgence of anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic:

> We had to think about okay, is it safe for me to go outside? I've known people who have been yelled at…people have said racial slurs to them, just because they're Asian… it's been a very sad time to be back in that situation.

Within Chinese* spaces, participants felt less than or put down in the form of parental disapproval or shaming for not fulfilling cultural role expectations, or in feeling less empowered or "put in one's place" within a cultural hierarchy privileging males and

elders. These experiences reveal how shame is filtered and interpreted differently based on group norms and one's role and rank in the group. Aaron describes being disapproved by extended family for not meeting role expectations:

> I am the eldest son of the eldest son, so there were certain expectations bestowed on, or at least placed upon my back, in terms of leading ancestor veneration practices. My dad was expected to take on the role of hosting the ancestral shrines, but my mom's a Christian so she pushed back, and so my dad went along with that and so that created a huge intrafamilial rift…and a lot of additional drama. But yeah, I am definitely the eldest of five, and was expected to do a lot.

Female participants at times related feeling disapproved and shamed by their families for not fulfilling their cultural script in terms of career and marriage. Participants related tension and bitter conflict with parents over being a "huge tomboy" instead of "subservient, good, Asian girl," not wanting to pursue medicine or law, or by choosing a non-Asian domestic partnership rather than an in-group marriage. Age at times compounded experiences of shame due to gender or other social factors. Susan underscores the wounds of shame she held as the youngest and only girl in her family:

> Because especially being the youngest child and I'm the only girl I definitely felt…that there was always this sense of, "You're the youngest. You don't know what you're doing. You're not responsible. You're not adequate enough." Actually these are deep childhood wounds that I'm hashing out in therapy right now. Even in relation to our extended family…we all knew exactly what the age differences were. Like, "Okay. My cousin's up here, [brother] is second oldest, whatever." We just knew where we all were chronologically.

Shame as Feeling Unseen or Unknown

Several participants related feeling unseen or unknown in White-normed American spaces due to a lack of acknowledgement of ethnic origins, or because of cultural generalizations, tokenizing, or stereotyping. Taiwanese Americans frequently related feeling culturally unknown ("Is [Taiwan] a country? Is that Thailand?"),

superficially known (e.g., only for food) or unseen when lumped in with mainland Chinese* counterparts, an experience echoed with Chinese* American participants at large who encountered the sense of "all Asians are the same" and general underrepresentation in the general culture. David, 1.5 generation Chinese* American, also relates the weight of being unseen because of stereotypes:

> I think in general, we're [seen as] safe or timid. I think, especially a couple of decades earlier, I think we were just seen as...We were probably just there. We keep quiet. We don't make any...I mean, it's like how the whole model minority thing came about.

Within Chinese* spaces, participants also felt unseen or unknown with their parents at times, due to feeling unable to share their social and emotional world (e.g., about romantic interests, school experiences, feelings, about being an outsider at school, personal interests). Participants also reflected on gender differences in emotional socializing, such that men in the home were more oriented toward logic, acts of service and duties, compared to women socialized to be oriented toward relationships and emotions. Shame culture, which discourages sharing perceived weakness, at times hindered family members from accessing or processing grief together, resulting in heavy burdens of guilt in isolation. Rose, 1.5 generation Hong Kong Chinese* American, recounts carrying private grief and guilt for years after her beloved grandmother's death:

> Just within a month, within 30 days of us leaving [for America], my grandmother actually passed away. So that was a very sad event, and the timing made me feel like it was our fault. We couldn't take her with us, so it made me feel like we did something to kill her, basically…As it turns out, I learned much later that...my dad was actually quite relieved when she finally passed… [because] it gave her that freedom to finally say, "Okay, I'm done taking care of them. They're gone. They don't need me anymore. I can be at peace." That took me really all through my adulthood to finally internalize and understand…for a long time I felt so much guilt, I carried so much of that guilt with me when I thought about her... I guess now I'm finally at peace with her passing and feeling less guilt than I have before.

Bicultural Shame as Internalized Loss of Place

Participants frequently related the sense of "not belonging anywhere" as a bicultural Chinese* American. For 1.5 generation Chinese* Americans, immigration at times came with profound loss of social connectedness to country, neighborhoods, and extended family, and a felt need to assimilate to survive. Rose and Helen related poignant metaphors of "being in the middle of the ocean between two shores" and where one's only peace is "when [you're] on the plane…you're not in one place or the other, and you're with people who are in the middle of everything."

Second-generation participants also experienced identity liminality, not feeling "Chinese* enough" for international kids or "American enough" to be accepted among white peers. At times, "not belonging" meant "cognitive dissonance" and inner confusion, starkly disconnected compartments of daily life, or the felt need to "lead a lot of little lives" to adapt to one group or another. Brian, second-generation Chinese* American, offers this vivid word picture:

> Almost everything else that was present outside of home was really American. It was just like you step outside of your house, you're suddenly an American. You come back home, you're suddenly Chinese*. And so, it's kind of like this... dual identity going on. It's like almost kind of going from being at home versus not being at home.

Still others related a sense of loss of place around others who adjusted to bicultural identity differently. Stephen, second-generation Chinese* American, shares: "I realized I was probably the only Chinese* American I knew of within my context, that would uphold what it meant to be Chinese* in this way. It added to that loneliness." It is helpful to note that whereas the *feeling* of loss, disconnectedness, or isolation was

palpable and real, these comprised a *shared* reality across the collective of bicultural individuals.

Bicultural Shame as Internalized Loss of Face

A final theme relates to internalizing shame due to being Chinese* American in society. In American spaces, one's *physical* "face" and features could cue social rejection, as a marker of marginalized racial identity. Several participants who felt embarrassed around White majority group norms would begin internally "wishing [I] was white and feeling "hostility towards being Chinese*" and project embarrassment toward parents and family (e.g., feeling embarrassed when dad came for school pick-up, or when parents clipped coupons or needed lots of help translating documents and adjusting to life as immigrants). Rose, 1.5 generation Hong Kong Chinese* American, shared: "In my mind I would be like, 'Why can't you act more like American parents? Why can't you dress more...'" but years later felt "a bit ashamed of that reaction," sharing: "At the time I just wanted us to fit in, that was the biggest thing, right? I just wanted us to fit in, and we were so not fitting in."

Participants' experience of loss of face in Chinese* spaces typically was internalized as personal failure to uphold family or group "face" by aligning with expected norms and ideals. At times, shame was transmitted intergenerationally from the past (e.g., parents being "black sheep" in their own families and passing on this sense of exclusion and shame to their children). More often, participants were attuned to present-day parental pressure to achieve or succeed in order to *prevent* loss of face for the family (e.g., getting into college, performing well in one's academics or becoming the "best" in

one's profession or trade). However, others weighed in with the insight that this pressure was also borne out of parents' felt need to *recover face* as immigrants whose losses in a new land were palpable. Sharon, second-generation Chinese*-American, shares:

> And the whole idea of they gave everything for me so that I could give everything for them, that's very Chinese*…I still struggle with understanding and feeling if I think it's valid or not to say that their struggle means I owe them.

It is noteworthy that participants who experienced loss of face in White-normed American spaces often internalized this as an individual experience, whereas loss of face in Chinese* spaces always reflected a consciousness of one's group. Michael, second-generation Chinese* American, shares that while he faces external racism and prejudice from others, the struggle he feels most is wanting to make his parents happy. He shares:

> It's tough. 10 years ago I dropped out of college and I feel like from then until now I've always been trying to be successful…certain times when I would call my dad, it would make me sad that I'm not at the point in life where I can comfortably feel like, "Hey, I've made my dad proud."

Putting it All Together: Brief Clinical Vignettes

These two brief clinical vignettes, reflecting details from two participants' experiences, illustrate the application of this conceptual framework to bicultural Chinese* American individuals. The variety of ways these participants experienced Chinese* American identity point to the diversity of ways bicultural identity is constructed.

Julie

Julie is a second-generation Chinese* American who connects to her Chinese* cultural identity primarily through her parents and Chinese* church (Chinese* cultural network). As a child, she did not feel that her family (Chinese* immigrant family)

strongly socialized her into Chinese* cultural practices (e.g., Chinese* society through language and history), and her parents were fairly open to adopting American customs (e.g., American society through celebration of holidays, specific foods).

However, she recounts routinely feeling like an outsider in American social spaces (*Race* identity frame), because her family did not fit the same White American norms (e.g., familiarity with hiking or camping as a pastime), and because she felt "behind" other Asian Americans (Asian American evaluative group) who seemed more socially and culturally adjusted (e.g., Feeling like an outsider in Asian spaces). As such, Julie remembers wishing she could be like other Asian Americans who are able to still "look Asian" but could better navigate American social spaces (*Race* identity frame).

In her Chinese* church (Chinese* cultural network), Julie strongly felt the culture of *Face* identity activated when she recounts the importance of selectively sharing about herself or her family members (Chinese* immigrant family) in order to avoid scrutiny and remain seen as culturally appropriate by others (Feeling unseen). Today, Julie confesses that she does not typically feel pride in being Chinese* American, in part because of the stigma attached to being Chinese* in light of US-China political tensions (Feeling less than). She prefers instead to identify as "Asian American" and finds meaning and affirmation in seeing Asian Americans start to make more significant strides in leadership within the United States (Asian American group).

Garrett

Garrett is a second-generation Cantonese Chinese* who grew up connected to his Chinese* cultural identity through extended family (Chinese* immigrant family) within a

high-density Chinese* community (Chinese* cultural network) he describes as "living in a nicer part of China while not being in China." As a kid, Garrett reports that there was "never a time when I felt like I was not connected" to Chinese* identity. In his home, his family (Chinese* immigrant family) spoke solely Cantonese language (Chinese* society marker), de-emphasized the need to speak English (American society marker), regularly shared Chinese* history, philosophy, and war tales (Chinese* society), and made family trips to visit Asia (Chinese* society). His parents frequently distinguished between his family and others in town from different regions in China, or who were Taiwanese, (Asian, immigrant groups) and his mom would teach him lessons indirectly through the life examples of people they knew (*Face* identity in cultural network).

Garrett woke up to his "American" identity when he left home for college on the East Coast and suddenly interacted with more Whites and non-Asian peers (*Race* identity in American society). He recalls feeling surprised and slightly othered (Felt like an outsider) when British Chinese* students (Chinese* society in UK) told him that he was "so American" (American society), and he felt strangely akin to Chinese* international students coming from China to study in the United States (Immigrant group). He also tracked regional differences he felt when meeting Asian Americans from other parts of the country (Asian American group).

Garrett uses his parents' strategy (Chinese* immigrant family) of adapting to surrounding cultural norms, such that he is able to mirror Cantonese, Mandarin (Asian group) and mainstream American cultures (American society, code-switching) more easily than some other Asian Americans he knows (Asian American group). He's glad he pushed through the discomfort of leaving his home bubble, because he has learned a lot

about himself since then. For example, he's proud to have learned "mainstream American culture" of being aggressive and self-directing to advance his finance career, something he doesn't think he would have learned from Chinese* *face* culture. When the going gets tough, Garrett draws on resilience stories from his extended family members (Chinese* immigrant family), who have survived war, refugee camps, and immigration to America, knowing that his family is part of a Chinese* cultural history that spans millennia (Chinese* society).

Discussion

Using a grounded theory approach, we attuned to themes of shame within the stories of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans as they became conscious of their Chinese* American identity and constructed meaning from the complexities of bicultural experience within family and societal relationships. This paper is aimed at developing a conceptualization of shame for bicultural Chinese* Americans, grounded in their own words and lived experiences, as well as contributing insights to the broader literature on shame about the importance of considering shame in social location and social context. Participants' experiences of shame traversed Chinese* and White-normed American spaces, and at times reflected the intersection of identities as a bicultural individual.

Participants' shame stories reinforced much previous research about Asian American experiences, including facing "model minority" and "forever foreigner" stereotypes in American spaces (Shih et al., 2019), acculturation stresses and pressure for immigrants to assimilate (Miller, Kim, & Benet-Martínez, 2011), the priority of

interpersonal shame and saving face in Chinese* spaces (Wong et al., 2014; Wong & Tsai, 2007), and the experience of "cultural homelessness" and marginalization as bicultural individuals (Navarrette & Jenkins, 2011; Phinney, 2003; Yeh & Hwang, 2000). The unique contribution of this study is in triangulating these strands of identity formation under a common lens of shame, highlighting how the *intersection* of multiple sources and forms of identity shame influences how bicultural identity is constructed. Furthermore, this exploratory research allows us to gather deeper insights and ponder how the concept of shame may be operating within and between various social and cultural systems.

One key observation from this study is the salience of an evaluative group for conferring shame and social location. In contrast to many dominant theories of shame, in which shame is conceptualized as an unwanted internal and emotional experience of feeling unworthy (Brown, 2006), participants related shame as feeling like an *individual* who was seen as unworthy by a larger *group*. While *personal* experience of shame for these participants could be at times compatible with Brown's conceptualization, it is noteworthy that participants' related their life experiences more in terms of their social identity. This emphasis on shame in interpersonal and social context agrees with Wong et al. (2014) and Wong and Tsai (2007), who report that Asian Americans resonate more with descriptions about external shame (negative emotional evaluation by others) and family shame (concerns about shaming one's family) relative to internal shame (negative emotional evaluation of oneself), due to socialization in collectivist culture, which construes the self as interdependent with others. As such, findings are more compatible with Van Vliet (2008)'s grounded theory on shame in adulthood, in which shame is

conceptualized as an assault on the self (in self-concept, connection to others, and in a sense of power and control), because of the attention given to self in social context.

Shame in Chinese* spaces operates within a *Face* identity framework as a socially visible guardian of group boundaries and norms, and as the counterpoint for the desirable social currency of *face*. Participants who felt shame in Chinese* spaces often encoded it as social disapproval from elders or by the group at large, for not fulfilling cultural expectations or upholding group face. While initially one might assume that the need to save face was activated only in loyalty to one's family elders, participants' insights suggest that the greater evaluative group is the audience external to the family—at times one's extended family, a chosen family social network of friends, a cultural network community (e.g., a Chinese* church or parish) or neighborhood. As such, family elders—mothers in particular—serve as a proximate evaluative group, invested in making sure that the family reflects well to others, particularly those in the family's cultural or social network. The proximity or lack of proximity to a greater evaluative group outside the family may account for participant differences in how much they felt that *face* was emphasized by their family. These findings extend observations made by Liem (1997), who noted a triadic shame structure for Asian Americans, by noting the impact of a cultural network on *family* socialization as a unit within society.

Shame felt by participants in American social spaces was largely due to racism or xenophobia. The *Race* identity framework captures participant awareness of the racial hierarchy in American society, where White Americans are deemed the evaluative group, whose norms and approval set the criteria for conferring status. Within this hierarchy, immigrants and Asians/Asian Americans are conferred a more shamed status. As such,

when participants felt shamed due to the cultural marker of identity (e.g., microaggressions centered on eye shape, lunchbox foods from home, or use of non-English language), this served to reify an existing racial hierarchy, illustrating how shame can be transferred down the social ladder, from higher to lower rank individuals.

The *intersection* and *translation* of *Face* and *Race* identity frameworks through the lived experience of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans in White-normed American spaces is where we see the complexity of bicultural identity in richer detail. In moments where participants became more "self-conscious" of their unwanted identity as Chinese* or Asian, they also became more aware of their group's shamed status. This suggests that shame is not only a "self-conscious emotion" (Tracy, Robin, & Tangney, 2007) but a "socially-conscious" one.

Furthermore, the idea of socializing through nested evaluative groups helps us better make sense of bicultural shame as internalized loss of place and loss of face. In Chinese* culture, family elders serve as a proximate evaluative group to prepare the family to reflect well to a greater evaluative group—typically a cultural network, which in turn is mirrored by a larger society. But in the absence of a larger Chinese* society, the White American evaluative group becomes mapped as the greater evaluative group that confers social status to oneself and one's family in American society. As such, racism through a *Face* identity lens might be encoded as representing one's family face to the White social elders, and in turn having one's entire family, cultural network, and entire society shamed—a profound sense of shame from a cultural standpoint.

In light of this, it makes sense why internalized shame due to racism or xenophobia experienced in American spaces often had a profound and direct effect on

self-concept and relationship to one's parents or family. At times, participants who experienced "othering" of their Chinese* cultural identity in American social spaces reported hostility, embarrassment, and shame towards being Chinese*, a sense of wishing and wanting their parents or families to "be more White" and a higher degree of cultural conflict or felt disconnection with parents. As such, parent-child conflict that might typically be attributed to the disconnection related to acculturative stress, gaps or role reversal between family members (Ho, 2014; ChenFeng et al., 2015), we can also start to see as the product of internalized racism and loss of cultural face in society. In this sense, 1.5 and second generation children might be perceiving that their parents' "Chinese*-ness," when evaluated in light of White normativity, causes them to lose face among others in American society.

However, participants did not all experience the full potential for internalized bicultural shame. Perhaps this array of other bicultural identity experiences could be organized similarly to the variety expected in John Berry's acculturation strategy typology (2003), a framework depicting a dialectic between a 2 x 2 grid of four cultural group acculturation strategies (integration, separation, assimilation, or marginalization), constrained or facilitated by a 2 x 2 grid of four acculturation expectations of the larger group (multiculturalism, segregation, melting pot, and exclusion); see *Figure 1 (*Appendix F). In this study, various bicultural strategies were reflected in participant narratives, constrained or facilitated by social location and the degree to which one felt shame in American or Chinese* spaces. Whereas Berry's typologies helpfully highlight aims and outcomes, this study illuminates the dynamic and fluid process of identity construction, shaped by intersecting identities within a matrix of social experiences.

Participants' narratives make clear that though cultural markers may be similar, the *meaning* one makes of them drives a diverse array of identity constructions. At times, Asian-majority neighborhoods, schools, or religious communities served as a buffer and shield from awareness of the tides of minority experience within broader America; at times, these same communities served as a cultural safety net from which to face the known challenges of American life. For some, adopting American cultural markers of language, entertainment, and visions of independence, did in fact afford them greater social respect and inclusion, or facilitated a healing space separate from shame experienced in the *face* culture of one's family or cultural network. Additionally, Chinese* Christian churches offered a "new primary culture" that bridged aspects of both social worlds for some (ChenFeng et al., 2015), while for others, they reified Chinese* *face* culture and felt stifling. And in some cases, Chinese* immigrant culture and White-normed American racialization worked in tandem to support enactment of the Model Minority script, whereby receipt of social praise for achievement and usefulness in society keeps larger social realities of shame toward self and other immigrants or races (e.g., other persons of color) outside immediate awareness.

By putting internal emotional experiences of shame into a broader context of social postures of shamed and shaming group, whether mapped as a proximate or greater evaluative group, we start to recognize the personal and social dimensions to shame—how worth, dignity, and honor of the self is in part *conferred* by the welcome (or lack of welcome) from others. This, perhaps, is the ground for fuller self-awareness as a bicultural individual, as well as social accountability for White-normed American society, which is home for so many different cultural groups. Rather than seeing shame

simply as a negative emotional experience we must avoid or eliminate, we can reclaim the usefulness of shame as a *social witness* to the health and well-being of within-group and between-group relationships.

Implications for Clinical and Educational Practice

For many participants, educational experiences were a vehicle for self-reflection and greater critical consciousness about identity and collective history, and therapy was a healing space to unpack emotional burdens and find support for personal distress, relational strain and challenges, sometimes for the first time. Family therapists and educators are poised to explore deeper insights and new ways of relating that can address the shame of feeling like an outsider, less than, or unseen or unknown in everyday life.

As indicated in this study, participants who could all check a demographic box affirming "Chinese* American" as an identity actually represented a rich and multifaceted array of diverse histories, life experiences, values, and perspectives. While several stories carried themes (e.g., many 1.5 generation participants shared similarly felt pressure to assimilate as soon as possible following immigration), every story was unique, based on family migration history, family constellation, cultural and social networks, life experiences, values, priorities, etc. As such, it is important for family therapists and educators not to assume a monolithic bicultural experience, but to invite clients/students to share their bicultural identity story in their own words during initial assessment and ongoing dialogue—this has the dual effect of gathering valuable insights to better serve each client/student, and of giving client/students agency to speak about and process their identity shaping experiences.

The conceptual model diagram and interview guide may be adapted to spark or facilitate conversations with clients/students to locate themselves culturally, and share about their bicultural identity story and process its complexities with others; this may be especially insight-building when working with couples, families, or groups. They may be guided at the outset to share about their family migration story, their social context (e.g., what groups, relationships, practices have most shaped their sense of cultural connection), the influence of *Face* and *Race* identity frames in their life, and the major contours of their bicultural identity journey (e.g., starting and turning points in cultural consciousness and social relating around their cultural identity, naming complexities in different relationships and life domains)

In hearing a client share their bicultural identity story and significant experiences, it may be especially helpful to attune to themes of social identity shame and trauma, points of identity resilience, and points of connection or disconnection in relationships with significant others and social groups in context. In doing so, one can normalize and validate experiences of cultural tension and shame (e.g., feeling like outsider, less than, unseen) in one's relationships, and guide conversations about how larger complexities of identity shape one's everyday self-concept and relationships, to foster self-discovery and recognize collective touchpoints to others with similar experiences.

Limitations

In conducting this study, there are necessary boundaries and limitations to acknowledge for its application to various communities. Some limitations were planned in order to focus the project on Chinese* Americans, 1.5 and second-generation

experiences, the age range of 25-40 (Gen. Y Millennials), and the geographic touchpoint of at least 3 years residence in Southern California during childhood. As such, we necessarily cannot speak as faithfully to experiences of those who have experienced life outside of these boundaries (e.g., other generational cohorts in immigration status or chronological age, other bicultural individuals, biracial individuals, other Asian Americans, etc.). There is hope to use this template as a springboard for opportunities with other groups, to keep refining theory and experiential knowledge.

Outside of these intended boundaries, we acknowledge certain limitations of diversity of representation. Many participants in this study had access to college or graduate level education, and cited these experiences as affording specific resources and social situations that primed self-reflection, which might differ for others without these experiences. Additionally, participants who volunteered for the study may have been more likely to identify with Chinese* American or be willing to talk about this domain of their personal or social identity. Those who may be more reticent or reluctant to discuss topics related to their cultural identity may not be as well represented. It is with hope to reach others not yet represented that this research is being conducted.

Future Directions

This research is intended to advance knowledge and contribute new theoretical paradigms from which to develop personal, clinical, educational, and research applications concerning shame and identity construction for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans. Additional research can also be designed to extend this current line of study to other generational cohorts (e.g., first or third generation) or ages, and to

persons of other ethnicities or racial backgrounds (e.g., Asian Americans, other bicultural populations, multiracial populations, other persons of color). Further nodes of inquiry could also be pursued (e.g., bicultural identity and friendships, coupling, vocation, parenting, leadership, mental and emotional health, spiritual and community life), as well as the exploration of shame resilience processes. Further research could also involve adapting and pilot-testing the bicultural identity narrative interview with bicultural couples, families, or focus groups in clinical and educational applications.

Conclusion

Findings from this study make visible the influence of social location and social context on the experience and meaning of shame for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, and suggest that shame may actually serve as a witness of within-group and intergroup social health. As family therapists and researchers join others grappling with contemporary questions and challenges of social inequities and polarities of ideology about our way forward as a diverse society, how might insights from bicultural persons' lived experiences inspire new paradigms for how we can all sit with and relate to the "other" within our society and within ourselves? How can we *use* the witness of shame to shape visibility of our interconnectedness as a society and cultivate greater social accountability and compassion for others across social locations? This may be an especially helpful season in our nation's history to promote socially-conscious research with components of community participation and engagement, as an avenue by which we can develop paradigms for creatively and constructively addressing some of our larger social complexities as a multi-racial, multicultural society.

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CHAPTER SIX

PUBLISHABLE PAPER TWO

CONSTRUCTING BICULTURAL IDENTITY AND SHAME RESILIENCE IN 1.5 AND SECOND-GENERATION CHINESE* AMERICANS

Abstract

This is the second part of a two-part qualitative interview study exploring themes of shame and resilience within the bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans. Part one illuminated multiple sources of shame within intersecting Chinese* and White American social spaces, and part two explores the processes by which Chinese* Americans construct bicultural identity and shame resilience. Findings demonstrate how participants' resilience mapped to two different modes: *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* and *Whole-Self Identity Resilience*, each with six corresponding and contrasting themes. *Change Processes* capture participant reflections on how they moved from *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* toward *Whole-Self Identity Resilience* through one or more avenues of deeper insight and relational repair or connection related to Chinese*, American, bicultural identity spaces, or through a change in overall relationship to shame and self. Implications for clinical, research, and community engagement are discussed.

* While this study recruited participants who identified as "Chinese American," participants identified more specifically as Taiwanese American, Hong Kong American, and with the integration of Chinese with Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Malaysian cultures. Noted as Chinese* from here, to respect participant diversity.

Contemporary resurgence of racialized violence and xenophobia toward Asian Americans during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, juxtaposed with outcries for justice for Black Americans, pushes Americans to confront our nation's longstanding challenges with racism (Jeung et al., 2021; Tessler, Choi & Kao, 2020). The murder of six Asian American women within three Atlanta massage parlors on March 16, 2021, also put a national spotlight onto the visceral fear and collective trauma experienced by Asian Americans (Vaughan, 2021). These events echo anti-Asian undercurrents that punctuate the whole of Asian American history in the United States. As mental health and family therapy professionals, we need to prepare to explore and work with racial trauma in Asian American and other racial minority clients.

While the negative burden of racism on health is clear, Asian Americans are reported as having the *lowest* help-seeking rate of any racial or ethnic group, with only 23.3% of adults with mental illness engaging in treatment in 2019 (NAMI, n.d.). Many Asian Americans cite stigma, shame and "loss of face" concerns as primary reasons they might avoid seeking or staying in therapy (Masuda & Boone, 2011; NAMI, n.d.). Additionally, Asian American clients who engage in therapy may not feel as understood by therapists less attuned to how their sense of self is impacted by the complexity of negotiating bicultural identity and social marginalization (ChenFeng et al., 2016).

Current insights from the literature on shame resilience are built on Western or White norms of an autonomous and singular sense of self, where shame is described in internal and emotional terms (Brown, 2006; Van Vliet, 2008). These miss important aspects of Asian American socialization into collectivist, bicultural, and minority understandings of self, and of interpersonal shame (Wong & Tsai, 2007; Shih et al., 2019;

Yeh & Hwang, 2000). Additionally, bicultural identity researchers who assert it is *essential* for bicultural individuals to develop an integrated bicultural identity (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Phinney, 2001), tend to describe resilience in terms of individual competencies and adaptations to society (LaFromboise et al., 1993). More consideration must be given to the influence of social hierarchies, discourses, and marginalization on how bicultural individuals construct a sense of identity and build resilience (Cheng et al., 2014; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Toomey et al., 2013).

As such, it is valuable to generate new theoretical insights by exploring the lived experience of bicultural individuals in systemic context, by making social hierarchies and racial norms visible, and by examining resilience as a *process* by which individuals and families co-construct change within their lives. This study analyzes the bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, in two stages. The first paper explored lived experiences and meanings of shame within Chinese*, American, and bicultural identity frames. This second paper builds on the first, highlighting how Chinese* Americans construct bicultural identity and shame resilience.

Background

Chinese* Americans and Bicultural Identity Shame

According to Pew Research Center (2021), Asian Americans currently hold the fastest population growth rate (81%) of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Among them, Chinese* Americans—which includes those who identify as Taiwanese American—comprising the largest subpopulation (23%). And while the term “shame” may not always be used in the literature, it is a valuable lens with which to explore the

impact of enculturation, acculturation, immigration and racialization on bicultural Chinese* Americans and their families.

Within families of origin, bicultural Chinese* Americans may be socialized into Chinese* collectivist cultural values, where a sense of shame is considered instrumental and *adaptive* to regulating cultural boundaries and to motivating one's alignment and accountability to one's group (Greenberg & Iwakabe, 2011; Wong & Tsai, 2007). Furthermore, the immigration process introduces new pressures and identity changes for the family. Here, members may experience shame related to acculturation stress and gaps between spouses or among parents and children, which can lead to reversal or disruption of roles, intergenerational tension, greater family conflict, and poorer child adjustment (ChenFeng et al., 2015; Glick, 2010; Ho, 2014; Qin, 2008).

Within broader American society, bicultural Chinese* Americans experience shame as racism and discrimination, which punctuates their immigration history in the United States since the 1840s, including "yellow peril" racial slurs, the 1871 Chinese* Massacre, and the 1882 Chinese* Exclusion Act (Kim, 2012; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). Contemporary resurgences of anti-Asian bias, racial violence, and xenophobia have also risen since the COVID-19 outbreak (CSUSB Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, 2021; Jeung et al., 2021; Pew Research Center, 2021). Historically and to this day, Asian Americans find themselves racialized ambiguously on the continuum between Whites and Blacks, subject to stereotypes as both model minority and forever foreigner (Petersen, 1966; Shih et al., 2019; Tuan, 1999).

In light of these systemic social realities, bicultural individuals may experience internalized shame as an inner sense of marginalization or ambiguous loss of belonging

to either or both their Chinese* heritage or American home cultures (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Navarette & Jenkins, 2011; Yeh & Hwang, 2000). Shame may be inferred when Chinese* Americans labeled by Phinney (2003) as "marginal" reject or feel alienated by both American and Asian cultures (Yeh & Hwang, 2000), or when they view their cultures as oppositional rather than compatible (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Findings from part one of this study, summarized below, also add to this literature on bicultural identity shame for Chinese* Americans.

Bicultural Identity Resilience

Bicultural identity literature to date has focused on exploring individual resources, strategies, and competencies to facilitate identity resilience. LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) introduced the construct of bicultural *competence* as comprised of cultural knowledge, positive attitudes toward both cultures, bicultural efficacy (confidence in one's ability to live meaningfully within two cultures without compromising identity), cultural communication abilities and role repertoires, and a sense of grounding in each culture through stable social networks. Ting-Toomey (2015) also described intercultural competence, adding that mindful identity attunement (present awareness of one's thoughts and feelings and empathic responsiveness to another) is the essential link between culturally-sensitive knowledge and competent communication skills.

Strauss and Cross (2005) described four strategies that Black Americans use to negotiate their identity alongside White Americans, which may apply to other bicultural individuals who identify as an ethnic or racial minority. These include *passing* (attempting to pass as a member of the more dominant group), *buffering* (putting up a

psychological shield with dismissal or indifference when faced with racism), *bridging* (intentional use of connection and integration to reach diverse groups), and *code-switching* (communicating in distinct culturally appropriate ways depending on situational context). Similar to code-switching are strategies of *cultural frame-switching*, which refers to as the use of two or more different interpretative schemas to guide behavior and negotiate identity (Chen, Benet-Martinez, and Bond, 2008) and *cognitive flexibility,* which refers to awareness, willingness, and competence to flexibly adapt to various situations (Martin & Rubin, 1995; Kim & Omizo, 2005).

Most goals and strategies focus on functional ways bicultural individuals can achieve competence and adapt to relatively static constructions of multiple cultures. More research must be conducted to examine how social norms, discourses, and inequities impact bicultural identity and resilience (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). Berry (2003) suggests that individual acculturation strategies are constrained or facilitated by the acculturation expectations of larger society (e.g., multiculturalism, segregation, melting pot, and exclusion). We may develop new insights when we consider bicultural individuals within systemic context, make social hierarchies and racial norms more visible, and employ a process-oriented view of resilience.

Shame Resilience

Dominant theories of shame and shame resilience are built on Western cultural values of an autonomous self, and highlight shame as an affront to individual autonomy, and as a negative internal emotional experience that strikes one's sense of self at the core (Brown, 2006; Van Vliet, 2008). Here, shame ("I am bad") is often starkly contrasted

with guilt ("I did something bad") and is considered a primarily negative and maladaptive emotion about one's global and stable self before others (Wong & Tsai, 2007). Brown (2006) and Van Vliet (2008) both build on these conceptualizations of shame to propose grounded theories of shame resilience for adults, describing a process by which individuals become critically aware of cultural messages informing shame, and use their agency to evaluate those messages, connect with others, and grow from shame.

These theories, while helpful in many ways, may not fully resonate with Asian Americans, for a few reasons. First, shame resilience assumes that shame is always negative and maladaptive; Asian Americans are socialized into collectivist cultural norms that view shame as adaptive for reinforcing group identity and community conscience (Wong & Tsai, 2007). Second, dominant theories of shame and shame resilience typically do not make visible the social location and intergroup aspects of shame that mark the immigration, acculturation, and racialization experiences of Asian Americans. Third, when the self is understood as autonomous, typically the self is also viewed as a singular entity, whereas 1.5 and second-generation individuals live in the reality that identity—and the self—are constructed from multiple identity and meaning frameworks.

Current Study

This qualitative study proposes innovative paradigms that advance the literature on bicultural identity as well as shame resilience in new directions. Interviews explored themes of shame and resilience from the bicultural identity narratives of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, one group within the larger banner of Asian Americans. Perspectives from three major strands of identity formation (Chinese* cultural

socialization, American acculturation and racialization, and bicultural identity negotiation) were triangulated under a common lens of shame, to better glean insights about how shame and identity resilience may be best conceptualized according to 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* American lived experience.

Part one of this study explored how and when participants experienced shame during bicultural identity construction, as well as how they made meaning of these experiences. Participants described experiences of shame in crisis moments (e.g., immigration, overt racism) as well as in everyday life, often evoked when one felt disapproval, disgust, or disconnection from a larger group, or when one felt obligated to keep internal one's experience grief or trauma. Six meanings of shame emerged as follows: (1) shame as pressure to achieve to save or recover face, (2) shame as feeling like an outsider, (3) shame as feeling less than or put down, (4) shame as feeling unseen, unknown, and unfelt, (5) bicultural shame as internalized loss of place and (6) bicultural shame as internalized loss of face. The first four themes reflected social shame within a larger group in Chinese* and American social spaces; the latter two reflected internalized shame in one's self-concept as a bicultural individual. In all instances, participants described shame in social and cultural terms.

With themes of shame both frequently mentioned and culturally meaningful to participants' experience of their bicultural identity construction, this second part focuses on highlighting processes of resilience. The central research question guiding analysis concerned the exploration of processes that shape how 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans move toward bicultural identity and shame resilience.

Method

Symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015) were used as conceptual frameworks, emphasizing the centrality of meaning in bicultural identity construction through social relationships. *Constructionist* grounded theory makes visible the sociocultural systems that shape shame and identity constructs, as well as the active role of researchers in co-constructing a grounded, process-oriented theory with participants (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). As such, researchers are seen as research instruments who must be reflexive about their positionality, privilege, perspectives, and social interactions during the research process.

Participants

Participants were recruited based on the following inclusion criteria: 25-40 years of age, fluent in English, self-identify as 1.5 or second-generation bicultural Chinese*-American, and have lived in Southern California for at least three years before the age of 18. Direct recruitment was conducted by recruitment helpers, who were first-degree contacts within the primary researcher's professional and personal networks (university and clinical colleagues, professional list-serves, and cultural community peers and mentors), with email and social media serving as the primary modes of outreach. Snowball sampling was also encouraged following participation. Care was taken to exclude any first-degree contacts of the primary researcher, in order to minimize feelings of social obligation during participation, as well as the complexity of researchers managing dual roles with participants during data collection and analysis. Thirty

participants were enrolled, with 24 additional participants declined during screening due to unmet inclusion criteria. See *Table 1* (Appendix E) for demographics.

Procedure

Following recruitment, participants completed an online demographic form about their social context, family of origin and family migration history. They then completed a 90-minute semi-structured online Zoom interview, to explore lived experiences in their negotiation of a bicultural identity, with touchpoints on family of origin relationships, relationships outside the family, concepts of face and shame, and identity resilience. Afterward, participants were debriefed and given supportive resources. See Appendices A-D for sample documents.

Self of the Researcher

The primary researcher is a cultural insider, which enabled a ready sensitivity to Chinese* American cultural lenses on the phenomena of interest and facilitated rapport-building with participants. At the same time, she bears awareness of her positionality and privilege with her graduate-level education and middle-class background, as well as in her roles as a family therapist in training, and spouse of a minister within Chinese* American communities. As such, cultural insiders and allies were enlisted as additional researchers and consultants in all key stages of research, including interview guide design, participant recruitment, analysis, and review of findings.

Analysis

During data creation, field memo writing was used to record initial data reflections sensitized to research questions and theoretical frameworks, free thoughts related to questions and curiosities based on participant commonalities and uniqueness, and notes to self related to my role as interviewer. This memo writing allowed for early comparison of data themes across participants, and formed the basis for minor adjustments in the interview guide, and to justify attempts to recruit more male participants and 1.5 generation participants to balance perspectives. Interview data, consisting of video and audio recordings, was subsequently converted into verbatim transcript and analyzed through the help of MAXQDA software.

Charmaz (2014) three-stage coding approach was then employed: initial coding (line-by-line analysis), focused coding (prioritizing frequently-observed codes and organizing into conceptual codes), and theoretical coding (conceptualizing how substantive codes are integrated into final theory). To establish rigor and trustworthiness, a second researcher independently coded 20 of 30 participants to ensure congruence of themes, with frequent conversations to discuss coding observations and coding process, and to explore ways of understanding larger implications of data. Furthermore, negative cases were given weight in analysis, both to ensure nuance to the final theory, and to ensure that the research process itself represented the diversity of participants faithfully.

Findings

Figure 5 (Appendix J) depicts how participants used various strategies to build resilience while experiencing multiple sources of shame during their process of

constructing a bicultural identity. Two larger constructs, *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* and *Whole-Self Identity Resilience*, emerged as two contrasting modes of resilience by which participants' strategies (predominantly relating to internal self or relating to social groups) could be mapped. *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* themes included: (1) hiding and suppressing self to align with group, (2) rejecting cultural identity to be more White, (3) deflecting or tolerating racism, (4) assimilating and acquiescing to survive, (5) sheltering in one group, and (6) working harder to earn place and avoid shame. *Whole-Self Identity Resilience* themes included: (1) self-acceptance, self-advocacy, and emotional attunement, (2) interrupting racism and speaking truth, (3) joining collective courage and resilience, (4) promoting collective representation, (5) code-switching and bridge building, and (6) diversity-mindedness, empathy, and cultural humility. Each *Whole-Self Identity Resilience* theme contrasted a corresponding theme from *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience.*

Movement from *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* toward *Whole-Self Identity Resilience* was facilitated by experiencing *Change Processes*, described as eight emergent themes mapped in pairs across four identity constructs: *Reclaiming Chinese* Identity*: (1) connecting with roots and family history, and (2) experiencing renewal or repair in family; *Reclaiming American Identity:* (3) connecting with racial identity and history, and (4) experiencing guidance, advocacy and inclusion; *Reclaiming Bicultural Identity:* (5) "Leaving home" and differentiating identity, and (6) finding community with other "outsiders," and *Reclaiming Whole Self:* (7) disarming fear of shame and (8) re-envisioning self. Details for each section are expanded below.

Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience

Shame-influenced identity resilience strategies involve hiding, rejecting or playing down one or both Chinese* and American social identities. The first three strategies form a set pertaining more to how one relates to one's internal self. The second three strategies form a set pertaining more to how one relates to one's social groups.

Three Shame-Influenced Strategies: Relating to Internal Self

Hiding and suppressing self to align with group. Participants at times strategically used hiding or suppressing of self to align with a group and alleviate the stress of shame. In American spaces, suppression of one's self allowed participants to survive group pressures to "conform or be made fun of" during middle and high school. Daniel, second-generation Taiwanese American, shares:

> I'm not surprised when the middle school to high school students…have…that suicide rate. You're putting them in this crucible of...a space every day that basically tells you, "Conform or be made fun of"... Everything just led to suppressing who you were and what you were, and the stuff of your culture…you were forced to like the things that the crowd liked.

Michael, second-generation Chinese* American, shares about how he chose to hide his Chinese*-ness during the unfriendly climate of COVID-19 pandemic, a strategy he first developed in childhood:

> What's good is, people don't really see me as Chinese*, when they first see me, like, "Oh, this guy's Korean or Vietnamese," or something. So I can definitely hide it from people…I would say 10, 12 years ago, more or less, it's the same thing. I don't really feel comfortable telling people that I'm Chinese*. It is what it is.

In Chinese* spaces, hiding and suppressing self was a strategic way to manage relational harmony and to support social hierarchy, by avoiding triggers for mutual shame (e.g., strategically not sharing things with parents that they might disapprove or find

shameful). Brian, second-generation Chinese* American, shares how he curbs his self-expression at times out of intentional deference:

> I'm just kind of nodding along a lot of times. Especially when they're giving advice or saying something that I don't necessarily agree with, I just kind of nod along with that… I definitely won't fight back with extended family or anything like that, because they're my elders.

Rejecting cultural identity to be more White. Many participants coped with shame by trying to be more like their White peers, often at the cost of their own cultural identity. Susan, second-generation Taiwanese American, shares about how repeated microaggressions that she experienced growing up cost her a sense of valuing her own cultural identity:

> And I remember there were small moments where people would make micro-aggressive comments, like having small eyes or something like that and I would just feel just a deep sense of embarrassment and shame. And was really wishing that I were a blonde white girl. And I would even draw... This is something that I remember to this day, when I was really young…I would draw blonde white girls to represent me.

This internalized shame about one's Chinese* cultural identity at times spilled over into relationships at home and other Chinese* spaces. Ellen**,** second-generation Chinese* American, recalls "[not feeling] proud of being Chinese*" and carrying a kind of "hostility towards being Chinese*." Her internalized shame caused relational conflict with her mother. She shares:

> It was really difficult speaking to my mom about it too, because she would always be like, "[Ellen], you have to do A, B, C, D, because it's [our] Chinese* heritage," and I'm like, "No, I'm American. Why couldn't we have been white?"

Deflecting or tolerating racism. Other participants strategically deflected shame or tolerated racism, such as "writ[ing] it off as ignorance or bigotry" or as less severe

than what their parents faced. Michael, second-generation Chinese* American, shares his experience:

> So many people talk bad stuff about China, I'm just like, “Whatever.” At that point I feel like I don't really associate with being Chinese*. I'm a human being just like you…so I didn't really care about it too much. But sometimes they would make these broad assumptions about China and stuff, and I would get salty over it, but I wouldn't really express that. I would just keep it in.

Kevin, second-generation Chinese* American, compartmentalizes shame from racism so it will not bother him, and so he can maintain his typical “zen” mode, a strategy he’s also shared with his kids:

> [If] you can't think of a way to better the situation peacefully, then what's the point of really beating yourself up constantly over it? So I want them to also understand…unless you're going to keep thinking about a solution, don't be sad and don't be angry.

At the same time, Kevin shared that others may not react the way he does to racism, nor understand his reasons. In reflecting on how others might perceive his response, he shares about the subtle impact of Chinese* face culture in selecting what aspects of self to show:

> I think some people could point to as being the Asian or Chinese* passiveness, like we're just non-confrontational generally, and I think about that sometimes too where I thought about what if someone was attacking me for my race? When I picture that scenario I'm always like, “I would just walk away,” but I can imagine almost some other guy defending me and just video-taping the guy yelling at me, “I can't believe you called him that,” and I'm just like, “It's okay, it's okay. It's okay, just like keep on going,” but I feel almost more like it could be either identified as me being very calm or being very passive because of the fact that I don't want to embarrass myself any further, which is again, back to that face thing, where it's like, “Let's just leave it.”

Three Shame-Influenced Strategies: Relating to Social Groups

Working harder to earn place and avoid shame. Participants were regularly shown and taught by their parents to work harder and to persevere to overcome obstacles,

avoid shame, and earn success—at times told to "work three times as hard as anyone else just to get to the same level." 1.5 generation participants consistently worked extremely hard (e.g., throwing self into English books, TV, movies to learn English quickly and feel less behind), often at the cost of staying connected to their home Chinese* language or cultural identity for a long season. At times, participants also worked extra hard at home to help their parents earn a place and avoid shame. Jonathan, 1.5 generation Taiwanese American, spoke about being a language and culture broker for his parents, on top of his own adjustment as an immigrant:

> They had to rely me for a lot of things, right. They can't understand the letters, the mails and they have to have me read it to them… But a lot of these things, aren't just about language, right? It's about different rules, different cultural norms, even going into restaurants…it's always me ordering food. And I didn't thought of any different because I was just being obedient, right? My parents told me to do this. And I agreed to come to the States and we knew that it was going to be difficult. We knew, this is coming, but it still had an effect on your psyche.

Sheltering in one group. Some participants sheltered from bullying or shame from within a group, whether sticking with those they closely identified with or felt similarly outcast (e.g., other Chinese* Americans, other ethnic or racial minorities), or by seeking shelter from shame in a White peer group. Daniel, second-generation Taiwanese American, recounts:

> I started to have a group of Asian friends, but then I was like, I can be better than this. It was a really weird mentality, where it's just like, I'm going to start hanging out with like white people. And like, then everybody's going to see me as like that one Asian dude who has like all the white friends. And it was super dysfunctional, incredibly unhealthy, and it fractured my identity, because it was like, you're trying to pretend to be something, to prove something…[such that] my view of what is successful was completely broken.

At times, participants strategically sheltered in White or non-Asian friendships and connections, in order to find protective space away from pressures associated with

face-saving they felt at home or other Chinese* spaces, or because they felt greater acceptance or affirmation in these relationships or social circles for that season.

Assimilating and acquiescing to survive. Several participants strategically assimilated or acquiesced to the status quo in American spaces to survive outsider shame. 1.5 generation participants consistently related being in "survival mode" during immigration, feeling the urgency to "suppress" or "erase" their Chinese* identity in order to quickly communicate and "feel less of an outsider"—a reality they reflected on with regret. Aaron, second-generation Chinese* American, also felt the need to acquiesce to peers to survive school pressures and shame, as well as the need to acquiesce to his father's authority at home by muting his competing ideas, whether right or wrong. For Aaron, acquiescence was not about "standing up for your rights and privileges" but "do[ing] what you need to do to survive." When probed about his use of "acquiesce" to describe coping in both spaces, Aaron shared this:

> The Model Minority Myth came creeping into my head. That's how Asians become invisible, in that they acquiesce and they let the conflict pass by so that they can fight another day…I think that's the dual nature of being Asian-American in U.S society…you can speak up when it's convenient, but then you can also again, acquiesce or become silent when it's also convenient, because we're kind of floating under the Model Minority umbrella.

Whole-Self Identity Resilience

Whole-self identity resilience strategies involve exploring and expressing both Chinese* and American social identities. The first three strategies form a set pertaining more to how one relates to one's internal self. The second three strategies form a set pertaining more to how one relates to one's social groups. They are presented in order of corresponding shame-influenced identity resilience themes, to highlight their contrast.

Three Whole-Self Strategies: Relating to Internal Self

Self-acceptance, self-advocacy and emotional attunement. For many participants, the heart of resilience was self-acceptance, which included advocating for oneself and valuing the whole self, including emotions and vulnerabilities. This strategy contrasts the first shame influenced theme of hiding or suppressing oneself to align with a group. At times, this reflected a sense of having "freedom from both cultures…to express and realize how unique and different you are," to live life valuing one's own "internal mission statement" and personal "guiding principles," or to push through shame and failure to believe in oneself and try again. At other times, participants highlighted self-acceptance in terms of emotional courage. Susan, second-generation Taiwanese American, shares life lessons she's learned from processing grief:

> Emotional vulnerability with people that you know well and trust is the game changer…A lot of times people paint resilience to be this like, "Oh, you need to be strong. You need to fight back." But what I am learning in this season is that resilience looks like being honest with yourself and saying, "I need help." Or, "I can't do this on my own"… Or like, "I'm confused about my ethnic identity and I'd like to explore it further." I think, just saying that, shows more courage and resilience.

Joining collective courage and resilience. Some participants spoke of drawing on collective courage and resilience from their Chinese* cultural communities, to offer vision, camaraderie, and motivation to persevere. This strategy contrasts the second shame influenced theme of rejecting one's Chinese* cultural identity to be more White. Some highlighted resilience forged through circles of trusted relationships among parents, selected friends, and cultural networks that provide "immediate understanding," validating conversations, collectively shared values, and a strong "safety net" to count on outside of immediate family. Others highlighted how their family's stories of resilience

as wartime refugees or blue collar immigrants, help them gain perspective on their own hardships and press forward with greater gratitude and courage. Aaron, second-generation Chinese* American, shares how his vision of resilience is built on his family:

> Growing up, my extended family and a lot of my family members didn't have college educations…or even grade school really, so when they immigrated to the States they [were] relegated to menial jobs, busboy, a cook, line cook, bartender, and seamstress… I was constantly being reminded of what it took for my uncles and aunts, and extended family, to kind of strive and continue to make ends meet to get my cousins the things that they wanted and needed, and still show up every weekend without batting an eye and still laugh together, and eat together, and dine, and to be together with just pure joy.

Interrupting racism and speaking truth. Several participants spoke about resilience as interrupting cycles of racism and speaking truth to counter stereotypes. This strategy contrasts the third shame influenced theme of deflecting or tolerating racism. At times, this meant being one's own advocate to rise above expectations of others that are based on stereotypes. Lily, second-generation Chinese* American, shares:

> So, when you have stereotypes or judgments that are instilled upon you, then resilience is finding a way to bounce back from that and confront the situation, and learn from it and speak your truth basically, or stand up for yourself, and push back toward the judgment... and then being resourceful and finding ways to strengthen your position…For instance, if an Asian woman is judged to be quiet and subservient in the workplace…then finding that the resources to strengthen your voice and literally speak up, and double down on that so that you overcome that obstacle to advance.

Other participants used education as a resource to interrupt racism by sharing the minority perspective and by correcting misconceptions. Esther, second-generation Chinese* American, was appalled when her California history lesson "skipped over the part where they would lynch Chinese* people" and her teacher dismissed her questions about it. When Esther subsequently chose to write a book report on Chinese* lynchings, she recalls:

> The teachers were appalled. But they want to make it pretty and nice and skip over that stuff, but I think that that's when I was like, “Oh, the history is told from a certain perspective and they don't see this other perspective.”

Three Whole-Self Strategies: Relating to Social Groups

Promoting collective representation. Many participants described resilience as promoting collective representation for Asians and Asian Americans in society, often through workplaces. This strategy contrasts the fourth shame influenced theme of working harder to earn place and avoid shame, which emphasizes a season or posture of survival. Several participants drew meaning from representing Asian Americans in their workplace, even if as a token Asian person, especially for the opportunity to mentor and encourage others. For others, it meant taking a risk to shake up the status quo and blaze new trails for Asian Americans by founding new companies with new operational norms. And for Anna, second-generation Chinese* American, the low Asian American representation in her company motivated her to start valuing her identity and voice more:

> I got…five different emails or something, saying… “Hey, folks in more senior positions, we would really like you to mentor people.” The Asian [affinity] group happened to not hide the distribution list, I was like, “There's only 15 people.” I'm one of them. I was like, “Okay, maybe I should speak up a little bit more of so few, such a small Asian representation.” That's made me think about it a lot more. Maybe my voice does matter. I was like, “Well, they've got this group, but I don't feel super strongly about this identity but, now, maybe I should.”

Kevin, second-generation Chinese* American, also sees collection representation in everyday moments as a father. He recounted volunteering at his daughter’s school and hearing some kids making fun of the smells of the chicken tikka masala that an Indian kid brought, and immediately intervened by saying, “That's awesome” and sitting near them in order to say, “That's such a good meal. Did your mom make it?” Kevin explains: “I'm

not trying to be the hero to save the kid from the trauma I went through, but I think the education for that needs to begin at some point, right?"

Code-switching and bridge building. Participants regularly described code-switching as a regular part of their social experience, allowing them to "put on different hats," adapt one's self flexibly to one's context, and adjust quickly to cultural cues and climates in various social spaces. This strategy contrasts the fifth shame influenced theme of sheltering in one group. Aaron, second-generation Chinese* American, uses code-switching with extended family members who have "a lot of different personalities, and preferences, and communication styles," sharing how it has been "really helpful to have that flexibility to shift and to adjust to the climate that's appropriate."

This cultivated skill can also be used to build bridges with others outside the cultural community, such as David using his platform as a music producer to invite thousands of American artists to perform in China, moving from "just cultural exchange" to "be[ing] a bridge" within the current US-China political rivalry. Participants also found courage to build bridges and clarify misconceptions about immigrant experience. Jonathan, 1.5 generation Taiwanese American, recalls a time his fellow language tutors complained about investing so much effort into teaching immigrants English, only to see them return to ethnic grocery stores, groups and churches where they did not need to use English, such that they felt "disappointed and taken advantage of." He shared:

> But then when I hear that kind of thing, it brings me back to being an immigrant and I just want to tell them, "It's not that simple. As an immigrant, you're kind of lost. You're afraid. If you can be a part of the community, of course you want to be. But you're more comfortable with people in the same immigrant group, speak your language, understanding your culture.

Jonathan went on to say that he rarely speaks up in a group, especially given that the other tutors were all white and significantly older colleagues in their 60s and 70s, but that "this [was] something so important to [him] as an immigrant.

Diversity-mindedness, empathy, and cultural humility. Finally, participants describe resilience as renewed vision and unique resources they bring to the complexities of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity, and equity in American society. This strategy contrasts the sixth shame influenced theme of assimilating or acquiescing to survive. Many highlighted the bilingual or bicultural value to "see things from different perspectives," develop more intentional values, and find creative and substantive solutions to problems. Alice, 1.5 generation Taiwanese American, uses her ability to handle personal differences and unfamiliar situations as a strength to help others:

> Make them feel comfortable to ask. Try not to make people feel like, "Oh, I should know and I don't and so can't ask." Just being open with people and sharing my perspectives and letting them know that I'm an American too. I'm very American so I understand all different sides of it and asking them maybe where they're from or what's their culture?

Participants reflecting on their racialized identity at times asked themselves how Asian Americans could meaningfully engage in anti-racism. Some wrestled with newly felt shame over ways their Chinese* American immigrant communities appeared complacent or complicit in systemic racism against Blacks and other persons of color, by enacting the Model Minority script of "put your head down" and "do not bother anyone else." At times, participants differentiated from their communities to find their voice and posture in anti-racism. Others used bicultural empathy to build bridges with an "other" perspective on race within their family (e.g., someone who does not believe in systemic

racism), slowing down to help each person feel understood in a dialogue. Finally, some participants spoke about the relationship between perspective and humility:

> I think we talked about perspective, but also perspective as in understanding how big the world is, right?...Talk about the Bible and the perspective of philosophical perspective of Greek thinkers… There's also great Chinese* thinkers and that by extension, you know that, yeah, there's the same thing all around the world. There's great Indian thinkers; there's great Indian writers…I guess that instills in you humility, too, and perspective, and being more willing to listen to other people and more willing to share and not just thinking that "Oh, I know everything." And we, as a country, we know everything, that we are always right.

Change Processes: Redeeming Shame and Reclaiming Whole Self

Participants shared various turning points in their bicultural identity negotiation process that helped them experience change and move from *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* toward *Whole-Self Identity Resilience*. Eight total themes emerged among participant responses, mapped across four reclaiming-identity constructs (1) Chinese*, 2) American, 3) Bicultural, and 4) Whole Self). They include: *Reclaiming Chinese* Identity*: (a) connecting with roots and family history, and (b) experiencing renewal or repair in family; *Reclaiming American Identity:* (c) connecting with racial identity and history, and (d) experiencing guidance, advocacy and inclusion; *Reclaiming Bicultural Identity:* (e) "Leaving home" and differentiating identity, and (f) finding community with other "outsiders," and *Reclaiming Whole-Self Identity:* (g) disarming fear of shame and (h) re-envisioning self.

Reclaiming Chinese Identity*

Connecting with roots and family history. Second-generation participants experienced meaningful change as they connected with family roots through family

odysseys and personal travel to countries of origin, and through intentional learning of Chinese* culture through language, history, arts, religious practices and ceremonial rites. Visiting the physical and geographic *place* of one's family origins was grounding for many participants, giving concrete markers to recognize the contributions of Chinese* identity in one's values, beliefs, and lifestyle. Tina, second-generation Chinese*-Vietnamese American, recounted how her family's odyssey to see her grandfather's remote home village in China before he was too ill to travel, made a huge impact on her:

> So I think having that experience as like a 16 year old, seeing the exact place and essentially making an odyssey of like this 18 hour plane ride and then like an eight hour crazy drive in the mountains, and it's like really a treacherous car ride all the away to this place where, oh, my grandfather can point to the little tiny hut that he was born in. And so that made a huge impact of like… this place is so remote and so different from the rest of China, that's why it's important for me to point out that I know exactly where my family's from, or I know the generation number of our generations.

Tina also shared about how the special relationship she forged with her grandmother from Vietnam impacted her to cherish her roots and practice Buddhism to a greater degree than her siblings.

> But for me personally, I have an altar in my apartment, because again, it's with the grandmother who came over from Vietnam, she was very Buddhist. So she actually gave me Buddhist books that were in both Vietnamese and English when she came over. So I was reading them. So I became…very religious and was…very observant and understanding of those…I choose to practice them on my own and choose to do extra things in my own home, because I want to, but my other siblings have, they chose not to do that.

Experiencing renewal or repair in family. Several participants shared about significant change and healing from conflict or cultural clash, through renewed or repaired relationships with their parents. For some, this coincided with participants achieving a new milestone (e.g., Jenny pursuing a traditional career path which allowed parents to relax) or assuming a new family role (e.g., Lily becoming dad's caretaker

throughout the whole of his brain cancer treatment). Each case invited participants' parents to rest and trust them, and an opportunity for participants to humanize and empathize with their parents. On occasion, participants shaped relational healing with their parents. Daniel, second-generation Taiwanese American**,** describes a powerful story about persisting in helping his "standard Asian dad" express more affection with him, starting from his dad's reluctance to receive "I love you" from him, to his dad becoming willing to reciprocate "I love you" as their new conversation ritual. Daniel reflects:

> It became a thing of showing my dad…"It's okay for you as this like standard Asian dad to show emotion, because that doesn't show me that you're weak to me anymore…that shows me that you have a lot... of power in your words." I feel like these Asian dads, and these typical Asian families, feel like that's a sign of weakness and it's not. There's a ton of power in telling your kids how much you love, respect and care about them.

Reclaiming American Identity*

Connecting with racial identity and history. Both 1.5 and second-generation participants found it an eye-opening change to become critically conscious of their racial identity within a larger narrative of Chinese* and Asian Americans in the United States. Whereas most participants grew up with some awareness of race, stereotyping, and minority/majority dynamics, many participants did not awaken a deeper consciousness until college, when they participated in educational courses, helpful peer interactions, and engaged watershed moments in national discourse on race, such as Black Lives Matter and the covid-19 pandemic. Rose, 1.5 generation Hong Kong Chinese* American, shares how learning racial history in the United States was a connecting experience for her:

> I think that I've always been aware of this undercurrent of an anti-Chinese* sentiment without really understanding what's behind it or why people feel that way. And it wasn't until college, again, that I took an American history course, that I heard for the first time about the Chinese* Exclusion Act in California, and

> I was just so upset that I hadn't learned about that until college.

For Theresa, second-generation Chinese* American, dialoguing with fellow Chinese* Americans helped her acknowledge awkward realities and connect to her racial identity.

> [B]eing in a place where there's a lot of local conversation about the Black Lives Matters movement, and a lot of conversations about the role of affirmative action in a public university…always places Asian-Americans in a very awkward position, [one] that I don't think I've been able to fully reconcile…Our own individual Chinese*-American identity, within this larger American black white binary, that often doesn't feel like it has a space, for Chinese*-American conversations. That's just something that has been an ongoing topic of conversation among my circle of friends.

Experiencing guidance, advocacy, inclusion. This change process involves social relationships where participants experienced supportive relationships that freed them to make progress in society and access more of themselves. Several participants received guidance and encouragement from Chinese* family members (e.g., sisters and older cousins advising on school and career preparation), Chinese* cultural networks (e.g., Chinese* religious community offering "nodes and networks" of support and safety in major cities nationwide) and Asian role models at school and work. Sharon, second-generation Taiwanese American, shares:

> Just having those positive reinforcements…meeting people who looked like me, that I looked up to…They talk about role models a lot in engineering because they're trying to diversify, but it's real just like meeting Asian women who were independent, who broke away from the mold, or just were themselves, and it was very powerful because I think growing up, I didn't see a lot of strong Chinese* women that did their own thing.

At times, relationships in "American" spaces outside of home (e.g., professional counseling, non-Asian friends, family, spouse) helped participants experience emotional healing (e.g., decoupling "cultural toxicity" from typical immigrant experience) and new layers of self-discovery. Helen, 1.5 generation Chinese* American, shares:

> Counseling was really helpful for me. I talked through a lot of issues, and just having a place where I had, I could really talk and really, because it was, because [my mother] had told me so many times not to express my feelings, I had actually gotten to a point where I didn't know how I felt. I didn't have that sense of identity or I couldn't pinpoint ... And so going to counseling, having a good counselor talk me through things and talk about conflict resolution, talk about how to just even talk to my parents, and boundaries and everything was really helpful.

Reclaiming Bicultural Identity

"Leaving home" and re-discovering identity. For many participants, "leaving home" allowed for identity exploration outside a pre-existing identity script (e.g., immigration, leaving home for college, traveling outside the United States), leading to self-reflection and a differentiated identity and way of relating to others. For many 1.5 generation participants, leaving home later in life generated the ability to compare and embrace *both* Chinese* and American identities. Some second-generation participants grew up "sheltered in diversity" within densely populated Asian and Asian American neighborhoods, and were awakened to their "American" identity for the first time when leaving home for college. At times, leaving both "homes" through international travel offered insights into the beauty of cultures as not "right or wrong" but a "formative gift" and freedom to explore values. Denise, 1.5 generation Taiwanese American, shares:

> There's this sense of like, I can play around with my different values and behaviors. There's less of that stereotype of model minority, right? Like you're the American kid, you're the ABC (American born Chinese*) in Taiwan; those aren't imposed on you in the same way when you're traveling…there is more space to reflect and think about your own sense of values and being.

Finding community with other "outsiders." In parallel to Chinese* and American identity domains, participants reclaimed their bicultural identity when their feeling of "outsider" became a catalyst for community with others who could validate

their experiences. Participants found belonging in a variety of "outsider" contexts, including other 1.5. or second-generation Chinese* Americans, other immigrants, and Asian Americans. Whereas cultural networks offered validation and grounding in one's own identity, some participants found refreshingly distinct camaraderie with others outside their cultural networks. Daniel, second-generation Taiwanese American, shares:

> I didn't realize it, but throughout my… middle school high school life, I was looking for this group of people, who I could just be like, okay, these are my dudes, these are the people who have my back no matter what, regardless of my race, ethnicity, or whatever it may be. And I found those people…all these guys happen to be Christian fellows, and I wasn't a Christian guy. And that was my first experience into the Christian faith was, these guys welcoming me in, praying over me, and really blessing me in so many different ways.

Daniel later reflected on how it was this group's empathy and familiarity with his "outsider" experience that helped him to give the Christian church a chance.

> We had black guys, Indonesian guy, white guys…I feel like I was able to survive the church atmosphere, because of these friends, and the reason why, is because we were the only multi-cultured friend group that was existing at that church… God really blessed me with that, because if he didn't give me this group of guys, I wouldn't face the exact same thing, if I were to be found by another group of white guys, and then go to that church…everything changes…when you have a group of friends who, understand what it's like to be on the outside.

Reclaiming Whole-Self Identity

Disarming fear of shame. Several participants shared about change processes that brought new insights and experiences that disarmed the power of shame—not that shame is eliminated, but that *fear* of shame no longer decisively validates their worth or value in life. All of these experiences marked new paradigms at the core of where participants lived in fear of shame. Several participants described shame resilience and healing through their Christian faith and community, in which experiencing the gift of

God's love, forgiveness, and acceptance instilled a decisive spiritual identity, independent of one's felt need to perform well to cover the shame of being "not good enough" with others. Others described the gift of emotional vulnerability with trusted mentors or a therapist as a "game changer" for unpacking ethnic identity and learning how to process grief without shame. Sharon, second-generation Taiwanese American, found greater freedom by reframing the shame of failure:

> And maybe you failed at one thing, but resilience means that you don't stop. And then that's ultimately how you sort of win, is because you didn't stop at your loss. And that mentality...[that] it's really shameful if you fail at something…really what that means is you have to try again and do it again…just because you failed once, it doesn't mean it's a forever thing. I realized my thought process on resilience isn't just, resilience is a quality you have, it's more of a learned life perspective.

Re-envisioning self in community. Finally, participants shared how change processes allowed them to carry new visions of themselves in community with others into life. At times, participants experienced freedom within the complexities of bicultural identity by focusing on connecting with others through shared transcultural or spiritual identity. Stephen, second-generation Chinese* American, shares:

> All identity comes ultimately from the human experience. So just simply being human and that genetically we're virtually all the same, and that we're just nuances of this as color. We all operate under a certain idea of self and self-preservation and active preservation. So we have more commonalities than we would think. And ultimately spiritually that transcends the idea that we were made in the image of God.

Some found it helpful to consider themselves as a "global citizen" who is always "going to be me" rather than feeling pressed to choose between identifying as Chinese* or American. Aaron, second-generation Chinese* American, offers this illustration of the value of "both-and" bicultural living:

> It's like wearing glasses at first, and then you only put on sunglasses on one eye, and you know the difference between wearing glasses only or prescription sunglasses. There's a difference. And that gave me the understanding that I can see things differently from different perspectives, and still have both be true.

Discussion

Participants described various ways they showed resilience through the complexities of bicultural shame and identity construction, mapped to two different modes: *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* and *Whole-Self Identity Resilience*, each with six corresponding and contrasting themes. *Change Processes* capture participant reflections on how they moved from *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* toward *Whole-Self Identity Resilience* through one or more avenues of deeper insight and relational repair or connection related to Chinese*, American, bicultural identity spaces, or through a change in overall relationship to shame and self.

Participants' resilience strategies corroborate general observations from the bicultural identity literature noted earlier concerning how individuals function in larger society (e.g., passing, buffering, bridging, code-switching, etc.) and develop a sense of bicultural competence (e.g., positive affirmation and social grounding in multiple contexts, cognitive and cultural/social flexibility). Additionally, participants confirm aspects of existing grounded theories on shame resilience, particularly the usefulness of unpacking and evaluating cultural messages informing shame, connecting with others, and finding ways to grow through shame experiences. However, this study adds a great deal of nuance and depth to each body of literature by making the social and cultural dimensions of shame and of resilience, and the process of constructing meaning from ongoing internal and social interactions, much more visible in this population.

The most striking observation about resilience is also the most implicit—that identity is at the heart of resilience. Whether in service of a group identity or an individual one, whether in an American or Chinese* social space, the preservation of identity remains at the core of human need for belonging, security, and meaning. At times, participants accepted shame in one cultural identity or another in order to preserve a conferred or preferred identity. Many 1.5 generation participants felt the need to subordinate their Chinese* cultural identity in order to survive the pressures of fitting in with American peers after immigration, and many participants internalized shame of feeling inferior by slowly hiding or rejecting their cultural identity in order to be more similar or proximate to White norms. In contrast, other participants sheltered among culturally similar peers, embraced pride in their cultural identity, or intentionally chose to tolerate racist comments, rather than disturb their culturally preferred way of relating out of emotional restraint and calm. And at times, the same identity resilience strategy (e.g., hiding one's cultural identity) could be done as a way of resigning to accept shame, or as a strategic way to resist being seen by others who might be judging or rejecting—the subjective meanings held by participants were key in discerning the difference.

Participants showed a variety of resilience strategies, influenced by what they accessed through their parents' examples and how they internalized experiences of shame in broader society. In many instances, participants adopted similar resilience strategies within either cultural space, influenced by family examples from Chinese* collectivist culture or immigrant life. For example, Aaron's lived experience as a second-generation Chinese* American show how "working three times as hard" and "acquiescing" were strategies he used to smooth relationships and gain respect in American society as well as

his Chinese* family. Additionally, Garrett, second-generation Chinese* American, chose to adapt his self to his context, code-switching easily to fit the social norms and selectively sharing layers of himself, a skill he attributes to being bicultural as well as his family's Cantonese roots. However, others accessed alternative resilience resources through different relationships. This was notable in cases of greater emotional vulnerability and processing—typically this came through channels outside their culture, such as therapy, or through a family member socialized by Western or non-Asian norms.

Many times, change processes occurred after one had "left home" – for college or for work after living at home. Whereas this developmental milestone of establishing adulthood is comparable to persons from different racial or cultural backgrounds, it is likely of extra significance for bicultural Chinese* Americans who are experiencing their time at home from the vantage point of being socialized within their parents' social hierarchy. Another notable finding was in observing that many bicultural individuals lacked historical or cultural context for one or both of their cultural identities prior to adulthood, which arguably would have increased their sense of cultural loneliness and isolation. As such, finding words for felt, but previously unidentified or unprocessed, complexities of experience was life-giving for many participants. This is in keeping with case studies that show that contextual awareness is key for unlocking change and relational repair for second-generation Asian Americans (ChenFeng & Hsieh, 2018).

It might be tempting to consider Chinese* and American social and cultural worlds as equal and opposite forces for shaping identity in bicultural individuals, until one examines them in context of collectivist social hierarchy subsumed within the larger racial hierarchy within the United States. Here, the impact of internalized racism and

shame as an immigrant or Chinese* or Asian American become apparent. Racial hierarchy constrains the power and privilege that Chinese* Americans and other persons of color are invited to access in American society, and collectivist social hierarchy influences 1.5 and second-generation children to experience the weight of their shame and loss of power as well as that of their family. As such, parent-child conflict can be understood from the lens of broader discourses—where internalized racism or internalized loss of face can lead to self-rejection that manifests as protest or resentment toward cultural others within one's family or home.

In a similar way, whereas it may appear that one has "two" identities that one can choose to gravitate toward, trauma from shame experienced in either cultural identity space can play a formative role in which identity is claimed or pursued. When trauma from face-based shame was internalized in Chinese* spaces, protective space and alignment with identity in a non-Chinese* space was often a part of healing. When trauma from race-based shame was encountered in American social spaces, sheltering with others who hold Chinese* cultural identity sometimes was sometimes useful. But because the race-based shame often had to do with Chinese* identification, sometimes protective space motivated a different identification altogether—with other "outsiders" within American society (immigrants, Asian Americans, persons of color).

Shame-influenced identity resilience might also be called "Monocultural identity resilience" because resilience is either experienced in compartments, one at a time, or one preferred cultural identity is being highlighted at the exclusion of the other. At times, this resilience is more efficient, practical, necessary, or desirable in the face of certain circumstances. Some participants highlight the value their parents see in re-assembling a

Chinese* community and identity in the United States, some going so far as indicating that their parents lived as "expats" in the United States. 1.5 immigrants highlight their regret at "erasing" or "suppressing" their Chinese* identity to pursue the immediacy of survival in America via assimilation. Other times, one embraces one's monocultural identity because there is no exposure to a broader dissonance or identity dilemma. 1.5 participants, as well as second-generation participants who grew up "sheltered in diversity" did not feel conscious of their identity dilemma until displaced from the "cultural aquarium" they grew up with, and thrust into more diverse social environments.

As such, rather than assigning value or judgment, we can appreciate the multi-stranded possibilities for resilience as reflecting the unique acculturation strategies of generational cohorts, motivated by one's vision of conferred and preferred self—as primarily Chinese* within American society, Chinese* and American in different ways, Chinese*-American immigrants, in solidarity with a racialized self-understanding as Asian American, or simply "American." Participant's self-identity labels might provide a window into how one can explore visions of resilience and motivations for embracing multiple identities.

Yet we would be remiss if we did not highlight themes of uniquely *bicultural* resilience as they emerged in reflections of participants wrestling to make full use of their multiple cultural bids into a more integrated bicultural identity home. Whereas many natural resilience strategies allowed for one conferred or preferred identity to be preserved or even to flourish, uniquely bicultural resilience appears to be forged only through processes of change. Two of these *Change Processes* centered on reconnecting to roots and histories of either Chinese* or American culture. Reflections suggest that

recognizing one's life experiences within a larger collective narrative meets a deeply felt psychological need to know that one belongs to a people who both share shame and share resilience. Furthermore, relational repair or empowerment in either space can help that cultural community connection be embodied and transformative in real-time.

However, it is in the intersection of these cultural identities within a *bicultural individual*—that we truly see a non-additive and novel form of whole-self resilience. We see the treasured witness of "both-and" acceptance of both cultural parts of oneself, the building up of culturally differentiated thinking and agency to shape one's own cultural compass, and the seen, known, and felt validation of the "outsider" identity within oneself. Taken all together, these depths of change process for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* American individuals can free them to disarm the power of fear of shame and relate to themselves more holistically. And as stated earlier, resilience is borne through holding to oneself—and as such, with a bicultural internal self-concept, whole-self and bicultural resilience will be shone forth.

Implications for Clinical and Educational Practice

For many participants, educational experiences were a vehicle for self-reflection and greater critical consciousness about identity and collective history, and therapy was a healing space to unpack emotional burdens and find support for personal distress, relational strain and challenges, sometimes for the first time. Family therapists and educators are poised to invite deeper self-reflection for new insight and discovery of new ways of relating that can address the shame of feeling like an outsider, less than, or unseen or unknown in everyday life.

As indicated in this study, participants who could all check a demographic box affirming "Chinese* American" as an identity actually represented a rich and multifaceted array of diverse histories, life experiences, values, and perspectives. While several stories carried themes (e.g., many 1.5 generation participants shared similarly felt pressure to assimilate as soon as possible following immigration), every story was unique, based on family migration history, family constellation, cultural and social networks, life experiences, values, priorities, etc. As such, it is important for family therapists and educators not to assume a monolithic bicultural experience, but to invite clients/students to share their bicultural identity story in their own words during initial assessment and ongoing dialogue—this has the dual effect of gathering valuable insights to better serve each client/student, and of giving client/students agency to speak about and process their identity shaping experiences.

The conceptual model diagrams and interview guide may be adapted to spark or facilitate conversations with clients/students to locate themselves culturally, and share about their bicultural identity story and process its complexities with others; this may be especially insight-building when working with couples, families, or groups. They may be guided at the outset to share about their family migration story, their social context (e.g., what groups, relationships, practices have most shaped their sense of cultural connection), the influence of *face* and *race* identity frames in their life, and the major contours of their bicultural identity journey (e.g., starting and turning points in cultural consciousness and social relating around their cultural identity, naming complexities in different relationships and life domains).

In hearing a client share their bicultural identity story and significant experiences, it may be especially helpful to attune to themes of social identity shame and trauma, points of identity resilience, and points of connection or disconnection in relationships with significant others and social groups in context. In doing so, one can normalize and validate experiences of cultural tension and shame (e.g., feeling like outsider, less than, unseen) in one's relationships, and guide conversations about how larger complexities of identity shape one's everyday self-concept and relationships, to foster self-discovery and recognize collective touchpoints to others with similar experiences.

Points of resonance or difference concerning both nodes of resilience (*Shame-Influenced* and *Whole-Self*) can also be discussed, with deeper reflections on which resilience strategies offered by participants have been modeled or are familiar, which are desired but untested, and which strategies are undesirable, if any. Therapists and educators do well to also help clients and students discover the resilience they already are demonstrating in life, and to share visions of resilience in words and pictures that they find meaningful from their community, from their personal life experience. Here it is important to help clients not assume that "whole self" resilience is superior to "shame-influenced" resilience, but to recognize the merits and costs of either in different life seasons, and to validate that resilience options are also constrained by external social and practical realities and pressures.

Finally, change processes can be explored with clients, in the area of cultural identity that is most resonant with a client/student at a given time (e.g., American, Chinese*, bicultural identity), to the degree that a client is interested in gaining greater self-awareness, seeking healing or relational repair, or strengthening insight and

community connections. Here too, clients and students can be encouraged to exercise agency over their own process, choosing areas of growth or healing they would like to pursue, based on their felt concerns or priorities.

Limitations

In conducting this study, there are necessary boundaries and limitations to acknowledge for its application to various communities. Some limitations were planned in order to focus the project on Chinese* Americans, 1.5 and second-generation experiences, the age range of 25-40 (Gen. Y or millennial), and the geographic touchpoint of at least 3 years residence in Southern California during childhood. As such, we necessarily cannot speak as faithfully to experiences of those who have experienced life outside of these boundaries (e.g., other generational cohorts in immigration or age, other bicultural individuals, biracial individuals, other Asian Americans, etc.). There is hope to use this template as a springboard for opportunities with other groups, to keep refining theory and experiential knowledge.

Outside of these intended boundaries, we acknowledge certain limitations of diversity of representation. Many participants in this study had access to college or graduate level education, and cited these experiences as affording specific resources and social situations that primed self-reflection, which might differ for others without these experiences. Additionally, participants who volunteered for the study may have been more likely to identify with Chinese* American or be willing to talk about this domain of their personal or social identity. Those who may be more reticent or reluctant to discuss

topics related to their cultural identity may not be as well represented. It is with hope to reach others not yet represented that this research is being conducted.

Future Directions

This research is intended to advance knowledge and contribute new theoretical paradigms from which to develop personal, clinical, educational, and research applications concerning shame resilience and identity construction for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans. Additional research can also be designed to extend this current line of study to other generational cohorts (e.g., first or third generation) or ages, and to persons of other ethnicities or racial backgrounds (e.g., Asian Americans, other bicultural populations, multiracial populations, other persons of color). Further nodes of inquiry could also be pursued (e.g., bicultural identity and friendships, coupling, vocation, parenting, leadership, mental and emotional health, spiritual and community life), as well as the exploration of shame resilience processes. Further research could also involve adapting and pilot-testing the bicultural identity narrative interview with bicultural couples, families, or focus groups in clinical and educational applications.

Conclusion

Findings make visible the influence of sociocultural context on the experience and meaning of shame for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, and suggest that shame may actually serve as a witness of within-group and intergroup social health. Furthermore, resilience to shame can be expressed in many different forms, depending on life circumstances, cultural space, and one's conferred or preferred identity. Whereas

monocultural identity resilience is readily accessible, change processes—especially those regarding bicultural identity—allow for self-differentiated identity and embrace of the "outsider" within that allow for a uniquely bicultural, whole-self identity resilience.

As family therapists and researchers join others grappling with contemporary questions and challenges of social inequities and polarities of ideology about our way forward as a diverse society, how might insights from bicultural persons' lived experiences inspire new paradigms for how we can all sit with and relate to the "other" within our society and within ourselves? How can we *use* the witness of bicultural shame and shame resilience to shape visibility of our interconnectedness as a society and cultivate greater social accountability and compassion for others across social locations? This may be an especially helpful season in our nation's history to promote socially-conscious research with components of community participation and engagement, as an avenue by which we can develop paradigms for creatively and constructively addressing some of our larger social complexities as a multi-racial, multicultural society.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

Review of Purpose and Research Questions

Using a grounded theory approach, we sought to explore the sociocultural nuances of identity and shame, as well as the process toward shame resilience, as experienced and interpreted by 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans as they construct a bicultural identity. The research questions were:

1. When and how do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?
2. How do 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans experience and make meaning of shame during their process of constructing bicultural identity?
3. What processes shape how 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans move toward bicultural identity and shame resilience?

The first paper, chapter five, *Face- and Race-Based Shame in 1.5 And Second-generation Chinese* American Bicultural Identity Construction,* addresses the first and second questions. The second paper, chapter six, *Change Processes in Bicultural Identity Shame and Resilience for 1.5 and Second-generation Chinese* Americans*, addresses the third.

Discussion

Paper One

In this qualitative study, we attuned to themes of shame within the stories of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans as they became conscious of their Chinese* American identity and constructed meaning from the complexities of bicultural

experience within family and societal relationships. This paper is aimed at developing a conceptualization of shame for bicultural Chinese* Americans, grounded in their own words and lived experiences, as well as contributing insights to the broader literature on shame about the importance of considering shame in social location and social context. Participants experienced shame in both Chinese* and American spaces, and at times reflected the intersection of identities as a bicultural individual.

Participants' shame stories reinforced much previous research about Asian American experiences, including facing "model minority" and "forever foreigner" stereotypes in American spaces (Shih et al., 2019), acculturation stresses and pressure for immigrants to assimilate (citation), the priority of interpersonal shame and saving face in Chinese* spaces (Wong et al., 2014; Wong & Tsai, 2007), and the experience of "cultural homelessness" and marginalization as bicultural individuals (Navarrette & Jenkins, 2011; Phinney, 2003; Yeh & Hwang, 2000). The unique contribution of this study is in triangulating these strands of identity formation under a common lens of shame, highlighting how the *intersection* of multiple sources and forms of identity shame influences how bicultural identity is constructed.

There are several significant insights to take away from the study. First, shame ought to be conceptualized as a socially conscious emotion, in addition to a self-conscious one (Tracy, Robin, & Tangney, 2007). In contrast to many dominant theories of shame, where shame is conceptualized as an unwanted internal and emotional experience of feeling unworthy (Brown, 2006), participants related shame as feeling like an *individual* who was seen as unworthy by a larger *group*—whether in a Chinese* or White-normative American context. The consistency with which participants described

shame in social and cultural terms agrees with Wong et al. (2014) and Wong and Tsai (2007), who observed that Asian Americans resonate more with interpersonal than internal dimensions of shame. Furthermore, the *intersection* of *Face* and *Race* identity frameworks is where we see how bicultural identity influences shame. In moments where participants became more "self-conscious" of their "otherness" as Chinese* or Asian, they simultaneously became more aware of their group's shamed status. This suggests that shame is not only a "self-conscious emotion" but a "socially-conscious" one, whereby social group hierarchies are made more visible.

Second, the meaning and salience of shame is very much influenced by the intersection of *Face* and *Race* frameworks in how one affiliates and feels evaluated by a larger group. Participants who felt shame in Chinese* spaces often encoded it as social disapproval from elders for not upholding group face in the eyes of a greater evaluative group (e.g., extended family, chosen family social network of friends, Chinese* church or parish, or neighborhood), which in turn mirrored a larger society. But in the absence of a larger Chinese* society, the White American evaluative group becomes mapped as the greater evaluative group that confers social status to one's family in American society. As such, racism through a *Face* identity lens might be encoded as representing one's family face to White social elders, and in turn having one's entire family, cultural network, and society shamed—a profound sense of internalized shame.

Third, as such, we do well to note how internalized shame due to racism or xenophobia experienced in American spaces often had a profound and direct effect on self-concept and relationship to one's parents or family. At times, participants who experienced "othering" of their Chinese* cultural identity in American social spaces

reported hostility, embarrassment, and shame towards being Chinese*, a sense of wishing and wanting their parents or families to "be more White" and a higher degree of cultural conflict or felt disconnection with parents. As such, parent-child conflict that might typically be attributed to the disconnection related to acculturative stress, gaps or role reversal between family members (Ho, 2014; ChenFeng et al., 2015), we can also start to see as the product of internalized racism and loss of cultural face in society.

Fourth, identity and culture are not monolithic, but dynamically constructed. Through participants all identified as Chinese* American, the *meaning* of this identity drove a diverse array of identity processes. For some participants, Asian-majority neighborhoods, schools, or religious communities *shielded* them from awareness of their minority experience in broader America, but were for others a cultural safety net from which one could confront the *known* challenges of American life. Some participants who adopted American cultural markers of language, entertainment, and value of independence, did garner greater social respect and inclusion, or experienced a healing space for shame experienced in one's family or cultural network. And in some cases, Chinese* immigrant culture and American racialization simultaneously reinforced the enactment of the Model Minority script, where social praise for achievement and usefulness in society keeps larger realities of shame toward oneself and other immigrants or persons of color outside immediate awareness.

Fifth and finally, rather than seeing shame primarily as a negative internal emotional experience we must avoid or eliminate, we can reclaim its usefulness as a *social witness* to the health of groups and intergroup relationships. Just as physical pain signals a need for the body to curb danger, or rally resources for comfort or healing,

shame can be considered a social pain that signals that a group (or groups) of people need to attend to the health of their members. What are the "rules" that govern who feels more or less shame in a group? Who constructs these rules, and who holds power to shame others? By seeing internal emotional experiences of shame in a broader context of social postures of shamed and shaming group, we start to recognize how worth, dignity, and honor of the self is in part *conferred* by the welcome (or lack of welcome) from others. This, perhaps, is our ground for fuller self-awareness as bicultural individuals, as well as social accountability for American society, which is home for so many cultural groups.

Paper Two

Participants described resilience strategies they used when navigating the complexities of bicultural shame and identity construction, which mapped to two different modes: *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* and *Whole-Self Identity Resilience*, each with six corresponding and contrasting themes. *Change Processes* represent participant reflections on how they moved from *Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience* toward *Whole-Self Identity Resilience,* through at least one avenue of deeper insight, relational repair or connection related to Chinese*, American, bicultural identity spaces, or through a change in overall relationship to shame and self.

Participants' resilience strategies corroborate what the bicultural identity literature has indicated about how individuals function in larger society and develop bicultural competence. Additionally, participants confirm components of grounded theories on shame resilience, especially the usefulness of evaluating cultural messages about shame, connecting with others, and finding ways to grow through shame. However, this study

adds much more nuance and depth to each body of literature by increasing the visibility of social and cultural contexts for shame and resilience, and by illuminating how identity is dynamically and socially constructed.

Several takeaway points may be highlighted. First, valuing one's identity is at the heart of resilience; participants often accepted shame in one or both cultural identities or to preserve a conferred or preferred identity. Many 1.5 generation participants subordinated their Chinese* cultural identity to survive after immigration, and others hid or rejected their cultural identity to be more accepted within White American spaces. In contrast, others sheltered themselves with culturally similar peers, took pride in their Chinese* identity, or intentionally tolerated racism, rather than disturb their culturally preferred mode of emotional restraint. And at times, the same resilience strategy (e.g., hiding one's cultural identity) could be enacted when resigning to accept shame, or as strategic resistance to being seen by others who might judge or reject—the subjective meanings held by participants were key in discerning the difference.

Second, identity resilience is significantly shaped by social location and internalized race-based shame or trauma. Chinese* and American cultural identities are not equal and parallel forces, but rather, one's experience of identity in Chinese* spaces is influenced by larger racial discourses in American society. For example, parent-child conflict at times was the product of internalized racism that led to cultural self-rejection and resentment toward one's family. Furthermore, whereas trauma from face-based shame in Chinese* spaces often involved seeking a non-Chinese* healing space, race-based shame in White American spaces often motivated participants to identify with other "outsiders" in American society (immigrants, Asian Americans, persons of color).

Third, the mode of resilience (e.g., Shame-Influenced or Whole-Self) and various strategies of resilience that participants enacted were often influenced by family norms, the constraints of shame and survival, one's degree of bicultural identity consciousness, and one's preferred cultural identity. Shame-influenced identity resilience, or "monocultural identity resilience," was often modeled by first-generation immigrant parents and cultural similar communities less touched by minority experience pressures. Participants enacted this mode for survival in American society during immigration, felt pressures to match family or cultural expectations, and as a way to relieve the intensity of shame or identity dissonance during formative years. In less common instances, monocultural identity resilience was motivated by a desire to intentionally preserve a more pure Chinese* cultural identity. Whole-self identity resilience strategies were often enacted through seasons of bicultural identity discovery and exploration. They involve struggles to respond to identity dissonance, desires to connect to multiple selves and communities, and reflect a dynamic process of internal and relational change.

Fourth, whereas many resilience strategies allowed for one cultural identity to be preserved or even to flourish, uniquely bicultural resilience appears to be forged only through processes of change. Change processes often occurred when cultural homeostasis shifts, such as when one "leaves home" or when social roles or relationships changed. At times, this "leaving" was physical and social relocation (e.g., leaving home for college, work, or relationship), and at times it was more of a new way of seeing oneself (e.g., traveling outside of country, immersing in a new social or physical community). Two *Change Processes* centered on reconnecting to roots and histories of either Chinese* or American culture, which suggests that seeing one's life experiences within a larger

collective narrative meets a deeply felt psychological need for meaning and belonging—to know that one belongs to a people who both share shame and share resilience. Furthermore, relational repair or empowerment in either space can help that cultural community connection be embodied and transformative in real-time.

Finally, uniquely *bicultural* resilience can provide our society with a witness to the change processes needed to welcome the diversity in our society. Within the *bicultural individual, w*e see the treasured witness of "both-and" acceptance of both cultural parts of oneself, the building up of culturally differentiated thinking and agency to shape one's own cultural compass, and the seen, known, and felt validation of the "outsider" identity within oneself. Taken together, these depths of change process for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* American individuals can free them to disarm the power of fear of shame and relate to themselves more holistically. And as stated earlier, resilience is borne through holding to oneself—and as such, with a bicultural internal self-concept, whole-self and bicultural resilience will be shone forth.

Implications for Clinical and Educational Practice

Family therapists and educators are poised to invite deeper self-reflection for new insight and discovery of new ways of relating that can address the shame of feeling pressured to achieve, and of feeling like an outsider, less than, or unseen or unknown in everyday life. For many participants, formal and informal education was a vehicle for self-reflection and greater critical consciousness about identity and collective history, and therapy was a healing space to unpack emotional burdens and find support for personal distress, relational strain and challenges, sometimes for the first time.

Furthermore, the diversity of identity construction experiences represented in this sample reminds us that therapists and educators ought not to assume a monolithic bicultural experience of their clients. Instead, they can invite clients/students to share their bicultural identity story in their own words during initial assessment and ongoing dialogue. This has the dual effect of gathering valuable insights to better serve each client/student, and of giving client/students agency to speak about and process their identity shaping experiences. The conceptual model diagrams and interview guide from this study may be adapted to facilitate such conversations.

In hearing a client share their bicultural identity story and significant experiences, it may be especially helpful to attune to themes of social identity shame and trauma, points of identity resilience, and points of connection or disconnection in relationships with significant others and social groups in context. In doing so, one can normalize and validate experiences of cultural tension and shame (e.g., feeling like outsider, less than, unseen) in one's relationships, and guide conversations about how larger complexities of identity shape one's everyday self-concept and relationships, to foster self-discovery and recognize collective touchpoints to others with similar experiences.

Points of resonance or difference concerning both nodes of resilience (*Shame-Influenced* and *Whole-Self*) can also be discussed with reflection on formative experiences, resilience they are already demonstrating, and possibilities for the present. Here it is important to help clients not assume that "whole self" resilience is superior to "shame-influenced" resilience, but to recognize the merits and costs of either in different life seasons, and to validate that resilience options are also constrained by external social and practical realities and pressures.

Finally, change processes can be explored with clients, in the area of cultural identity that is most resonant with a client/student at a given time (e.g., American, Chinese*, bicultural identity), to the degree that a client is interested in gaining greater self-awareness, seeking healing or relational repair, or strengthening insight and community connections. Here too, clients and students can be encouraged to exercise agency over their own process, choosing areas of growth or healing they would like to pursue, based on their felt concerns or priorities.

Limitations

In conducting this study, there are necessary boundaries and limitations to acknowledge for its application to various communities. Some limitations were planned in order to focus the project on Chinese* Americans, 1.5 and second-generation experiences, the age range of 25-40 (Gen. Y), and the geographic touchpoint of at least 3 years residence in Southern California during childhood. As such, we necessarily cannot speak as faithfully to experiences of those who have experienced life outside of these boundaries (e.g., other generational cohorts in immigration or age, other bicultural individuals, biracial individuals, other Asian Americans, etc.). There is hope to use this template as a springboard for opportunities with other groups, to keep refining theory and experiential knowledge.

Outside of these intended boundaries, we acknowledge certain limitations of diversity of representation. Many participants in this study had access to college or graduate level education, and cited these experiences as affording specific resources and social situations that primed self-reflection, which might differ for others without these

experiences. Additionally, participants who volunteered for the study may have been more likely to identify with Chinese* American or be willing to talk about this domain of their personal or social identity. Those who may be more reticent or reluctant to discuss topics related to their cultural identity may not be as well represented. It is with hope to reach others not yet represented that this research is being conducted.

Future Research Directions

This research is intended to advance knowledge and contribute new theoretical paradigms from which to develop personal, clinical, educational, and research applications concerning shame and identity construction for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans. As such, insights from *Paper One* and *Paper Two* have been integrated into a full conceptual model that will continue to be refined over time with additional studies and more data. Future analysis focused on different aspects of the study (e.g., bicultural family experiences, bicultural Chinese* Americans and mental health, code-switching) may also be considered. See *Figure 6* (Appendix K).

Additional research can also be designed to extend this current line of study. This study can be extended to other generational cohorts (e.g., first or third generation) or ages, to persons of other ethnicities or races (e.g., Asian Americans, other bicultural populations, multiracial populations, other persons of color), to further nodes of inquiry (e.g., bicultural identity and friendships, coupling, vocation, parenting, leadership, mental and emotional health, spiritual and community life), or to deepen exploration of shame resilience processes. Further research could also involve adapting the interview to

bicultural couples, families, or focus groups, or to pilot-test clinical, educational, or group process applications.

Furthermore, family science researchers join scholars from other disciplines who are grappling with contemporary questions and challenges of social location, whether exploring intersectional social identities (e.g gender, ethnicity, race, class, culture, class, sexual orientation, spirituality), or exploring new paradigms to house the freight of contemporary concerns regarding social inequities and polarities of ideology about the way forward. How might insights from bicultural persons' lived experiences inspire new paradigms for how we can all sit with and relate to the "other" (whether cultural, racial, political, religious, ideological, etc.) in our social relationships, in our society? How can socially-conscious paradigms for shame and shame resilience allow us to *use* the witness of shame to shape visibility of our interconnectedness as a society and cultivate greater social accountability and contextual compassion for others across social locations? This may be an especially helpful season in our nation's history to promote socially-conscious research with components of community participation and engagement, as an avenue by which we can develop paradigms for creatively and constructively addressing some of our larger social complexities as a multi-racial, multicultural society.

Conclusion

Findings from this dissertation make visible the influence of social location and social context on the experience and meaning of shame for 1.5 and second-generation Chinese* Americans, and suggest that shame may actually serve as a witness of within-group and intergroup social health. Furthermore, resilience to shame can be expressed in

many different forms, depending on life circumstances, cultural space, and one's conferred or preferred identity. Whereas monocultural identity resilience is readily accessible, change processes—especially those regarding bicultural identity—allow for self-differentiated identity and embrace of the "outsider" within that allow for a uniquely bicultural, whole-self identity resilience.

As family therapists and researchers join others grappling with contemporary questions and challenges of social inequities and polarities of ideology about our way forward as a diverse society, how might insights from bicultural persons' lived experiences inspire new paradigms for how we can all sit with and relate to the "other" within our society and within ourselves? How can we *use* the witness of shame to shape visibility of our interconnectedness as a society and cultivate greater social accountability and compassion for others across social locations? This may be an especially helpful season in our nation's history to promote socially-conscious research with components of community participation and engagement, as an avenue by which we can develop paradigms for creatively and constructively addressing some of our larger social complexities as a multi-racial, multicultural society.

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APPENDIX A. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
School of Behavioral Health
Griggs Hall, 11065 Campus St.
Loma Linda, CA 92350
Phone: (909) 558-1900
Fax: (909) 558-0441

INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE: EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SECOND-GENERATION CHINESE* AMERICANS DEVELOPING A BICULTURAL IDENTITY

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jackie Williams-Reade, PhD
STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Natalie Hsieh, MA, MS, PhD Candidate

Key Information for You to Consider
• **Voluntary Consent.** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. If you decline or discontinue participation, there will be no penalty, and you will not be considered disrespectful or uncooperative. The person who invited you to participate will not be informed whether or not you participated. • **Purpose.** This study explores how second-and 1.5 generation Chinese* Americans form a bicultural identity through relationships with their family, cultural group(s), and broader society. We aim to help professionals better understand bicultural identity development in Chinese* Americans, as well as strategies to support their resilience and growth. • **Duration.** Participation is expected to last 90 minutes. If needed, you may be contacted within a year to clarify your responses or give input on study findings. This follow-up is optional and will be no longer than 60 minutes, unless requested by you as the participant. • **Procedures and Activities.** You will fill out a brief online demographic form, and then participate in a scheduled web-based interview. Topics include: your cultural history, your experiences navigating multiple cultures, and how these experiences have influenced your sense of identity and relationships in your family, cultural group, and in society.

- **Risks.** Every effort will be taken to minimize the risk of a breach of confidentiality. You may experience discomfort related to answering questions about your life experiences and relationships. At the end, the interviewer will ask if you desire referrals for further support.
- **Benefits.** Sharing personal experiences and stories with interested others can sometimes be beneficial. This study is also intended to increase insights for researchers and helping professionals working with Chinese* Americans. Additionally, participants will receive a $5 electronic gift card to Amazon or Target (your choice) upon completion of the interview.
- **Alternatives.** Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of this study is to explore how second- and 1.5 generation Chinese* Americans form a bicultural identity through relationships with their family, cultural groups, and broader society. The researchers hope to better understand the complexities of bicultural identity development and strategies to support Chinese* Americans in their resilience and growth.

You are eligible to participate if you are between ages of 25 and 40, speak English fluently, identify as Chinese* American (a person who has been socialized into both a Chinese* heritage culture and broader American society culture), identify as second or 1.5 generation (born and raised in USA, or migrated to USA before age 18), and have lived in Southern California for at least three years before the age of 18. Up to 50 participants across Southern California will participate in this study.

HOW WILL I BE INVOLVED?

You will fill out a brief online demographic form (about 10 min) and take part in a web-based, private interview (about 80 minutes). The interview will be video and audio recorded using encrypted teleconferencing software. You will be asked a series of questions about your cultural history, your experiences navigating multiple cultures in life, and how these experiences have influenced your identity and relationships within your family, cultural group, and in society. During the analysis period, you may be contacted to clarify your responses or give input on study findings so we may honor your words and insights in our final report. This follow-up contact is optional and will be no longer than 60 minutes, unless requested by you as the participant.

WHAT ARE THE REASONABLY FORESEEABLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS I MIGHT HAVE?

This study poses no greater risk to you than what you routinely encounter in day-to-day life. You may experience discomfort, sadness, or frustration related to answering questions about your personal life experiences and relationships. At the end of the interview, the interviewer will ask whether you would like referrals for supportive resources. Additionally, every effort will be made to minimize the risk of a breach of confidentiality. All audio and video recordings will be deleted after being transcribed.

Electronic data will be stored on a Loma Linda University encrypted server, and downloaded to a password-protected computer only accessible to the research team. No identifiable information will be used when discussing research results in publication or conferences.

WILL THERE BE ANY BENEFIT TO ME OR OTHERS?

The sharing of personal experiences, concerns, and stories with persons eager to listen and learn can sometimes be beneficial for those who participate. We also hope this study increases insights for researchers and helping professionals working with this population. You will also receive a $5 electronic gift card to Amazon or Target (your choice) upon completion of the interview.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Participation is completely voluntary. We encourage you to do what is best for you. The person or organization that invited you will not be notified whether or not you chose to participate, and declining consent will not in any way be considered disrespectful or uncooperative. You may also discontinue participation during the study at any time, and your data will be removed from any final analyses, and completely deleted three years after the study is completed. If at any time you do not want to answer a question, just let us know and we will change or move on to a different question.

WHO DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the study or its procedures, you may contact Dr. Jackie Williams-Reade via email at jwilliamsreade@llu.edu or phone at (909) 558-4547 x47025, or Natalie Hsieh via email at nhsieh@students.llu.edu or phone at (858) 699-9593. If you wish to contact an impartial third party not associated with this study about your rights or to report a complaint, you may contact the Office of Patient Relations, Loma Linda University Medical Center, Loma Linda, CA 92354, at phone (909) 558-4647 or e-mail patientrelations@llu.edu for information and assistance.

PARTICIPANT'S STATEMENT OF CONSENT

- I have read the contents of the consent form and my questions concerning this study have been answered to my satisfaction.
- Signing this consent document does not waive my rights nor does it release the investigators, institution or sponsors from their responsibilities.
- I hereby give voluntary consent to participate in this study.

I understand I will be given a copy of this consent form after signing it.

Signature of Participant	Printed Name of Participant
Date	

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I have reviewed the contents of this consent form with the person signing above. I have explained potential risks and benefits of the study.

Signature of Investigator	Printed Name of Investigator
Date	

APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Please take a few minutes to complete this form. This will help our team track the diversity of contexts represented among participants, as well as the unique experiences of you and your family. Your identifying information will not be shared with your responses.

First and Last Name _____

Questions About Your Social Context

What is your gender? (select one) ____ Male ____ Female ____ Other

What is your age? (select one) ____ 25-29 ____ 30-34 ____35-40

What is your ethnicity? (write in) _____

What is your generational status in the USA? (select one) You may add a clarifying note if needed.

____2nd generation (born and raised in USA or migrated to USA before age 6)

____1.5 generation (migrated to the USA between ages 6 and 18)

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (select one)

____ No schooling completed
____ Nursery school to 8th grade
____ Some high school, no diploma
____ High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)
____ Some college credit, no degree
____ Trade/technical/vocational training
____ Associate degree
____ Bachelor's degree
____ Master's degree
____ Professional degree

What is your current occupation? (write in) _____

What is your religious/spiritual preference or affiliation? (write in) _____

Questions About Your Family Context

Family Migration to the USA
(NOTE: Family refers to family of origin)

My family's country/countries of origin: (if multiple, please specify which parent/caregiver corresponds to which country) _____

Reason for family migration: _____

Year (or date range) of family migration: _____

Notes to clarify any of the above answers: _____

Places You Have Lived

Instructions: Please list each city/town/community in which you have resided, with the length of time, in chronological order. Please indicate which city/town/community was your birthplace. Example:
Beijing, China, 5 years (birthplace)
San Jose, CA, 4 years
Gardena, CA, 12 years
Boston, MA, 4 years
Los Angeles, CA, 4 years

Family of Origin Members
(persons you resided with regularly between ages 0-18; can include significant extended family, chosen family members who visited for a period of time, boarding schools, etc.)

Instructions: Please list family of origin members on separate lines according to their relationship to you, and current age. Include yourself in the list. Names are not necessary. Example:
Father, 60
Mother, 56
Maternal aunt, 54
Maternal uncle, 54
Older brother, 32
Older sister, 30
Self, 29
Younger brother, 27

Current Household Members (persons you reside with regularly)

***Instructions*:** Please list current household members on separate lines according to their relationship to you, and current age. Include yourself in the list. Names are not necessary. Example:
Male partner, 28
Self, 29

APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

- During this interview, we'll explore some of your personal experiences as a Chinese* American navigating multiple cultures. I'll ask you some open-ended questions to help you share about important relationships and life experiences. We'll aim to spend about an hour and a half (check with participant on time).
- I just want to double-check that using the term "Chinese American" fits with you, or do you prefer a different term (e.g., Taiwanese American)? (use preferred term)
- Sometimes participants wonder if there is a right or better way to answer some of these questions. Because each person's perspective is unique, do not worry about representing all Chinese Americans or other people when answering questions. I'm interested in learning from your unique experiences and perspectives. I expect your perspective to be both similar and different from others.
- Throughout the interview, I may ask you follow up questions to help you expand your sharing. Your responses will be confidential, and you can ask me to pause, change questions, or to stop anytime.
- Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

Bicultural Identity Story

1. Which relationships in your life connect you to Chinese culture? American culture?
2. When and how did you become more conscious of your being Chinese American?
3. Tell me about your cultural identity journey since that point (significant relationships, experiences, turning points).

Cultural Socialization in Family of Origin

4. How "Chinese" is your family? How "American"?
5. To what degree has saving face been a spoken/unspoken expectation in your family?
6. To what degree has being an individual been a spoken/unspoken expectation for your family?
7. How has navigating multiple cultures impacted your family relationships?

Acculturation and Racialization in USA

8. How do you feel Chinese Americans are seen and perceived in American society?
9. Can you share about moments you felt proud/positively affirmed as a Chinese American?
10. Can you share about moments you felt ashamed, embarrassed, or felt the need to hide or respond to shaming as a Chinese American?

Bicultural Identity Construction and Resilience

11. Who or what has helped you most in discovering/working out your cultural identity?
12. Can you paint a picture of "resilience" in your own words? What does it look and feel like for Chinese Americans to be resilient?
13. What are strengths and resources you have as a Chinese American?

RESOURCES BEYOND THE INTERVIEW

Thank you so much for participating in my interview study on bicultural identity with second- and 1.5-generation Chinese* Americans. By sharing your insights and perspectives, you have enriched my own. This resource list is my attempt to offer you support and encouragement beyond our interview. Please note that it is not exhaustive and reflects resources I am aware are available, rather than personal referrals.

BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN SOUTHERN CA

Family therapists, social workers, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists are available to help process specific concerns or goals related to mental and relational health. These agencies and individual practices offer specific resources for Asian Americans.

→ *New to Therapy? Start Here*

- What therapy is, when to go https://asiansdotherapy.com/new-to-therapy-1
- Finding the right therapist https://asiansdotherapy.com/ready-to-begin

General Directories (includes some other states)

- https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/asian/ (enter zip code; filters)
- https://www.asianmhc.org/apisaa#california (scroll to Southern California)
- https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral-Health-Directory-AANHPI-Californians.pdf (scroll to Southern California)

Los Angeles and Orange Counties

- Asian Pacific Counseling and Treatment Centers: https://www.apctc.org/
- Asian American Christian Counseling Services (AACCS): www.aaccs.org
    - Former AACCS staff http://aaccs.org/aaccs-clinical-staff-new-referral-information/
    - Community Referrals http://aaccs.org/community-referrals/

San Bernardino and Riverside Counties

- Asian American Resource Center http://www.aarc-ie.org/holistic.html
- Loma Linda University Health students and employees
    - EAP https://jobs.lluh.org/benefits/employee-student-assistance-program
    - LLUH Preferred Providers https://myllu.llu.edu/livingwhole/preferredproviders/

San Diego County

- Union of Pan-Asian Communities https://www.upacsd.com/

Specific Consideration during Covid-19

- Stop AAPI Hate: http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/
- Anti-Asian Racism https://www.asianamericanchristiancollaborative.com/read-statement

WEB RESOURCES AND ENGAGEMENT

These online and media resources bring visibility and greater awareness about Chinese*, Taiwanese, or Asian American history, culture, mental health, and personal stories.

History

- Chinese* American history http://www.asian-nation.org/chinese.shtml
- Taiwanese American history http://www.asian-nation.org/taiwanese.shtml
- Asian American history https://sparks.fuller.edu/centered/the-asian-american-experience-a-free-reading-guide/
- *Asian Americans* PBS documentary (2020) https://www.pbs.org/weta/asian-americans/

Mental Health and Social Media Communities

- Subtle Asian Traits https://www.subtleasiantraits.com/
- Subtle Asian Mental Health https://www.reddit.com/r/samh/
- Asians Do Therapy https://asiansdotherapy.com/
- Asian Mental Health Collective https://www.asianmhc.org/
- Erasing Shame www.erasingshame.com

  Asian American Mental Health: https://erasingshame.com/mental-health-asian-americans/

  Asian American *Seen* series: https://erasingshame.com/seen/

- Asian America: the Ken Fong Podcast http://asianamericapodcast.com/
- Asian Enough https://art19.com/shows/asian-enough

CONNECTING BACK

If you know of a helpful resource that you don't see here, please feel free to contact me to share it with me so I can keep learning and connecting!

Thanks very much!

Natalie Hsieh

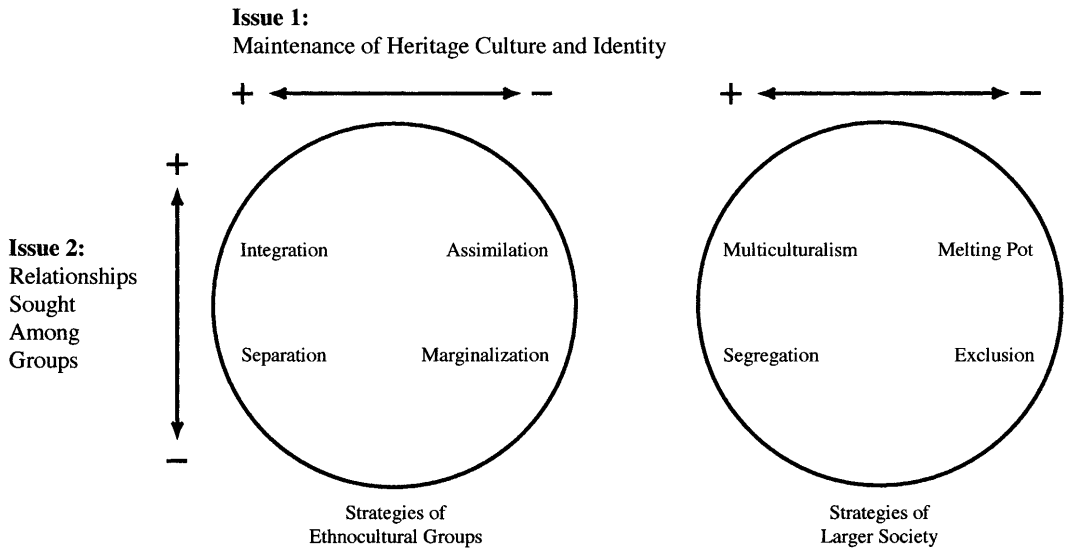
Last updated 10/10/2020

APPENDIX E. - *Table 1.* Demographics of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Gen.	Education	Occupation	Spirituality	Family Country of Origin	Reason for Migration
Julie	Female	35-40	Chinese	2	Master's	Previous copywriter	Christian	China, Hong Kong	School and work opportunity
Brian	Male	25-29	Chinese	2	Master's	Graduate Student / Research	None	Cambodia	Escape from war
Connie	Female	25-29	Asian	2	Bachelor's	Graduate Student	Spiritual	China	Wanting a better life
Grace	Female	25-29	Chinese	2	Bachelor's	Software engineer	Christian	China	School/work opportunity
Rose	Female	35-40	Hong Kong Chinese	1.5	Bachelor's	Marketing and communications	Mindfulness	Hong Kong	Tiananmen Square events of June 4, 1989
Aaron	Male	35-40	Chinese	2	Professional	School social worker	Christian	China, Burma	Cultural Revolution
Michael	Male	25-29	Chinese	2	Associate	Military civil engineer	Agnostic	China	Better life
Janet	Female	35-40	Taiwanese	1.5	Professional	Pharmacist	Christian	Taiwan	Political, education
Tina	Female	25-29	Chinese Vietnamese	2	Master's	Development/ Engagement Manager	Buddhist & Hakka Chinese	Vietnam	Post- Vietnam War
Alice	Female	35-40	Taiwanese	1.5	Bachelor's	Facility Planner	None	Taiwan	Better opportunities
Kevin	Male	35-40	Chinese	2	Master's	Public Relations Director	Protestant	Hong Kong / China	Job, career opportunity
Helen	Female	35-40	Chinese	1.5	Bachelor's	Student Services Specialist	Christian	China	Graduate school
Jenny	Female	35-40	Taiwanese	2	Master's	Digital Marketing	N/A	Taiwan	Life and career
Stephen	Male	25-29	Chinese	2	Bachelor's	College Pastoral Intern	Christian	Vietnam	Vietnam War
Sarah	Female	25-29	Chinese	2	Bachelor's	Registered Nurse	Seventh Day Adventist	Hong Kong, China, Malaysia	Military and education
Esther	Female	35-40	Chinese	2	Master's	Stay at home mom	Christian	Taiwan/China	Opportunity
Garrett	Male	25-29	Chinese-Cantonese	2	Bachelor's	Commercial real estate finance	Buddhist	Hong Kong / China	Economic
Denise	Female	30-34	Taiwanese	2	Master's	Speech therapist, psych assistant	Atheist Buddhist	Taiwan	Graduate school
Theresa	Female	30-34	Chinese	2	Master's	Graduate Student	Roman Catholic	Taiwan	Work, graduate school
Anna	Female	35-40	Chinese	2	Master's	Hardware Program Manager	Buddhist	Taiwan	Education
Ellen	Female	25-29	Chinese	2	Master's	Management Consultant	Agnostic	China	Better opportunities
Susan	Female	25-29	Taiwanese	2	Bachelor's	Unemployed	Christian	Taiwan, Brazil	Safety, political oppression, economic conditions
Jessica	Female	25-29	Chinese	2	Bachelor's	Software quality assurance engineer	Spiritual not religious	China	Opportunities, education
Lily	Female	35-40	Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong	2	Master's	Marketing	Christian Buddhist	Hong Kong, Taiwan	Family
Daniel	Male	35-40	Taiwanese	2	Some college	Founder	Christian	Taiwan	Better Life
David	Male	30-34	Chinese	1.5	Bachelor's	Producer	None	China	Unknown
Gary	Male	25-29	Taiwanese	2	Professional	Physician	Christian	Taiwan	Education and job
Henry	Male	25-29	Taiwanese	2	Bachelor's	Staff Accountant, local CPA firm	N/A	Taiwan	Education/schooling
Jonathan	Male	25-29	Taiwanese Chinese	1.5	Master's	Marketer, future medical student	Agnostic	Taiwan	Education, opportunities, culture
Sharon	Female	25-29	Chinese	2	Master's	Engineer	Agnostic/ spiritual	Chinese	Work

APPENDIX F.

Figure 1. John Berry (2003) Acculturation Strategies



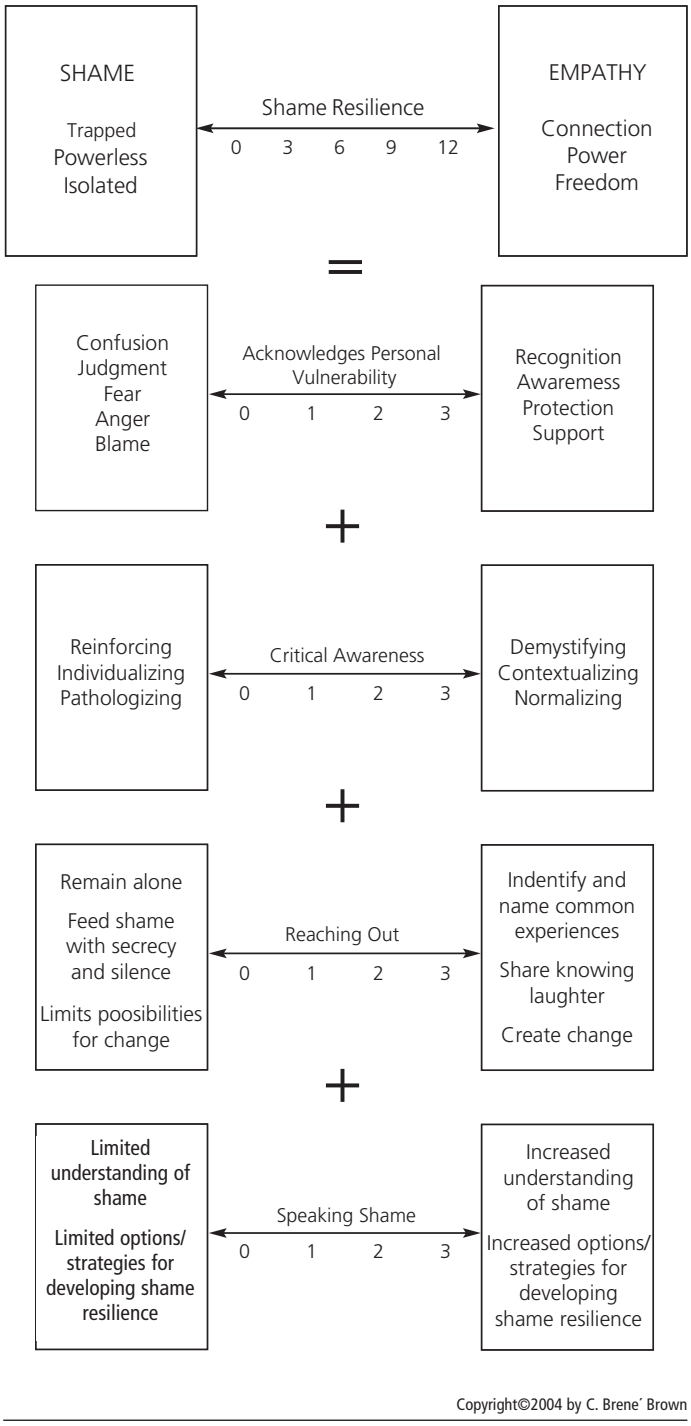
Four acculturation strategies based on two issues—views of ethnocultural groups (*left*) and of larger society (*right*).

Reprinted from:

Berry, J. W. (2003). Conceptual approaches to acculturation. In K. M. Chun, P. Balls Organista, & G. Marín (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (pp. 17–37). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10472-004

APPENDIX G.

Figure 2. Brené Brown (2006) Shame Resilience Theory

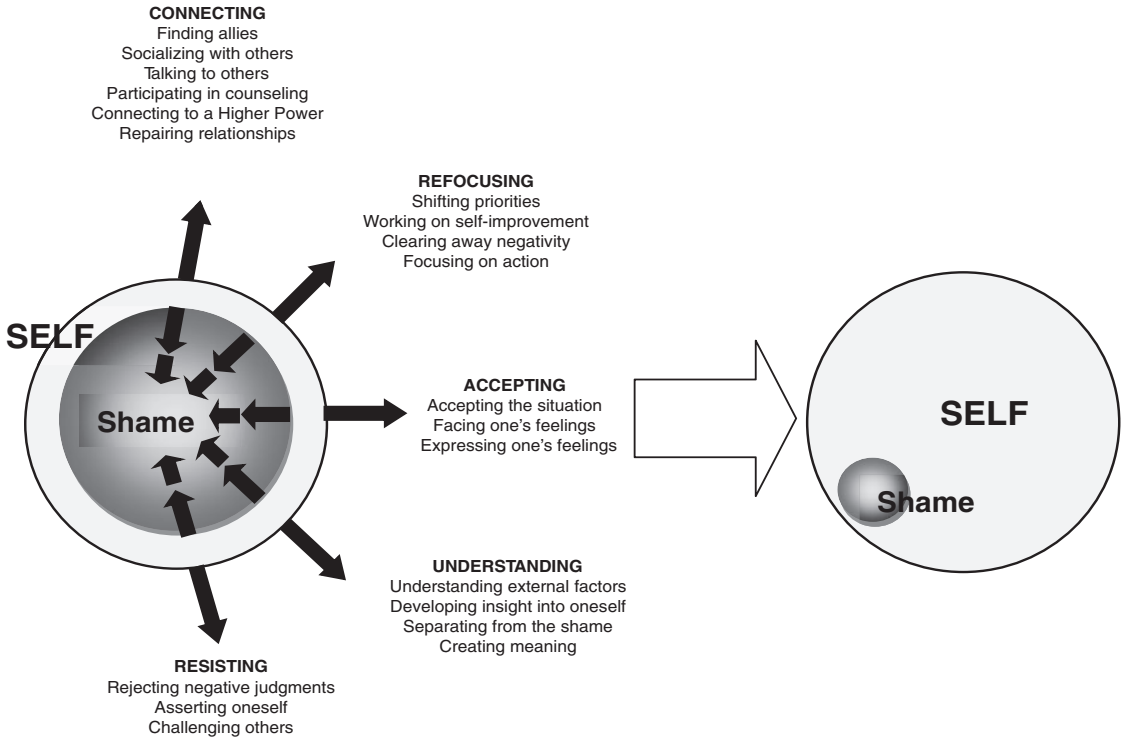


Reprinted from:

Brown, B. (2006). Shame resilience theory: A grounded theory study on women and shame. *Families in Society*, *87*(1), 43-52.

APPENDIX H.

Figure 3. Kim Van Vliet's (2008) Shame Resilience Theory



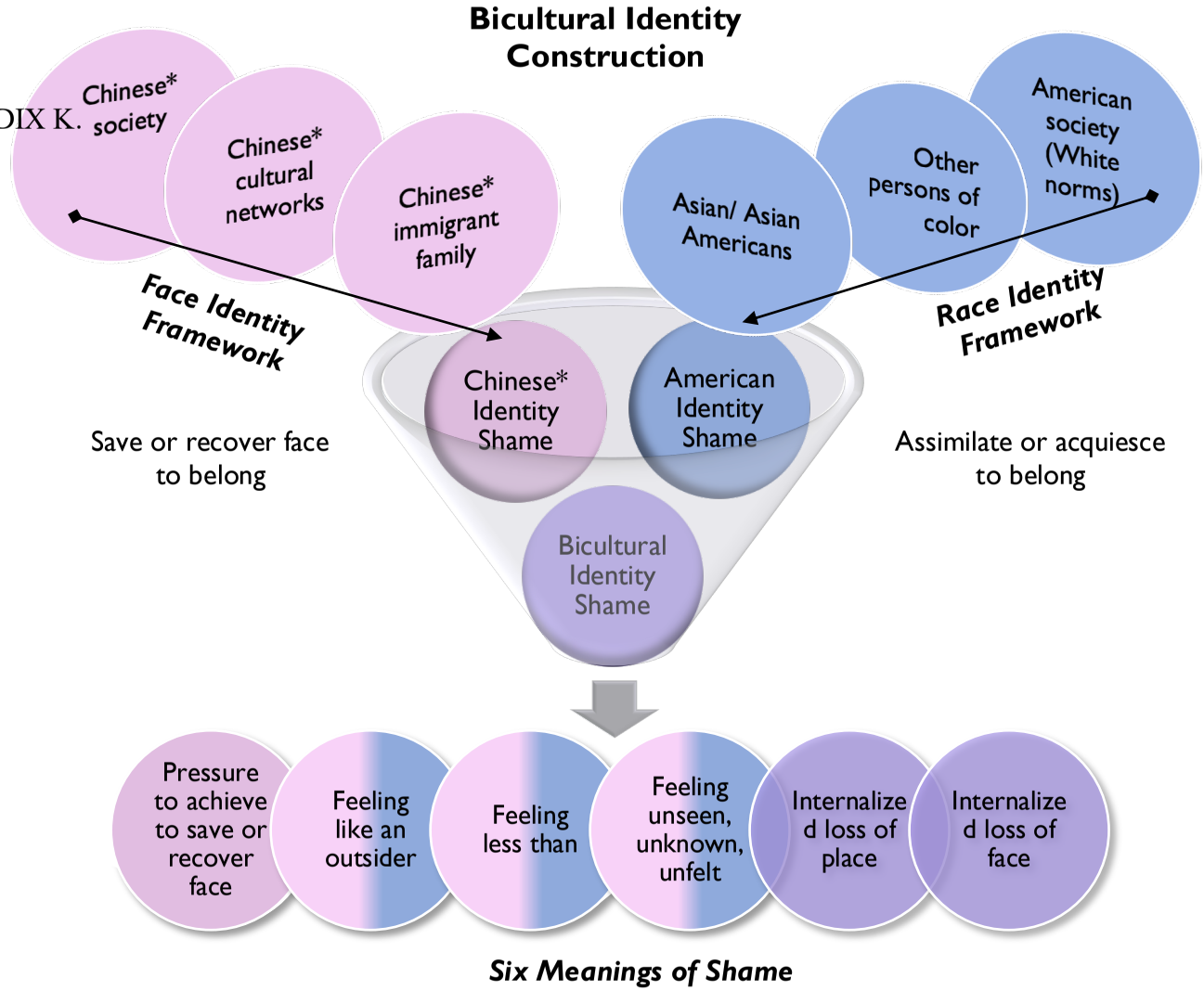
The process of rebuilding. The arrows extending outward from the self represent the expansive and enhancing forces of the five main subprocesses on the self. The inward arrows represent their effect on shrinking and externalizing the shame from the core self.

Reprinted from:

Van Vliet, K. J. (2008). Shame and resilience in adulthood: A grounded theory study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *55*(2), 233.

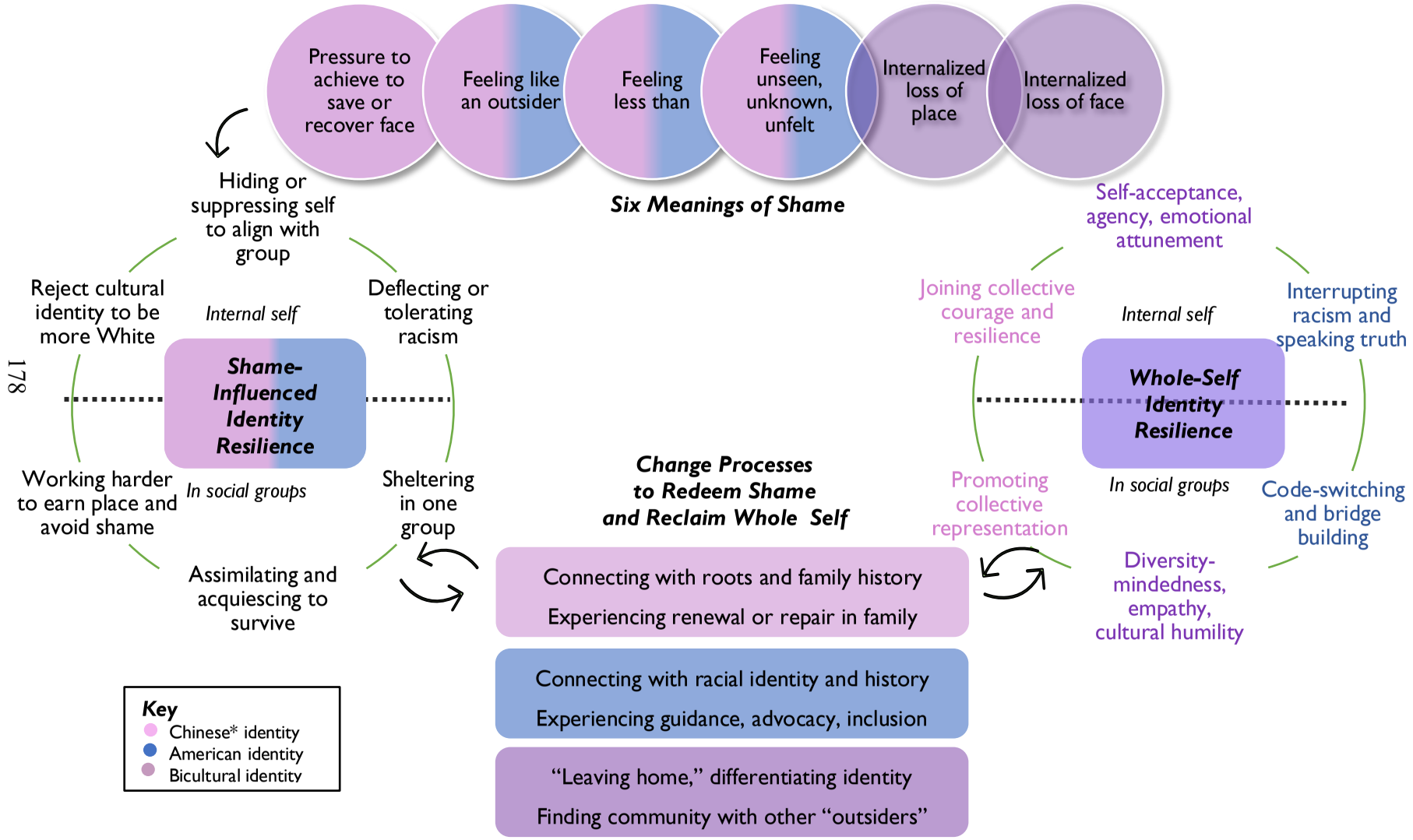
APPENDIX I.

Figure 4. *Face* and *Race* Identity Constructs and Six Meanings of Shame



APPENDIX K.

APPENDIX J. - *Figure 5.* Shame-Influenced Identity Resilience, Whole-Self Identity Resilience, and Change Processes



APPENDIX K.

Figure 6. Bicultural Identity Construction and Shame Resilience Theory for Chinese* Americans