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The University of San Francisco

COLLECTIVE LOVE AND CARE: AN EXAMINATION OF PINAY LEADERSHIP
IN COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of the School of Education of the
University of San Francisco

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
In
Organization and Leadership

By

Emily Sue Enriquez

Spring 2021

This thesis, written by

Emily Sue Enriquez

University of San Francisco

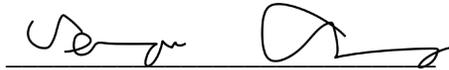
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Under the guidance of the project committee,
and approved by all its members
has been accepted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

In

Organization and Leadership



(Instructor/ Advisor)

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(Date)

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*So let it be known if you don't already
Pinays have always been part, and parcel, if not, imperative and critical to the struggle
Filipinas are no strangers to wielding our own power
Of all the privileges that exist in this world, none of which you may be a benefactor of
There is at least one you bare
And that is the privilege of having been born a Filipina
Your DNA contains building blocks made from the mud of over 500 years of resistance
and survival
And when you are ready, sis, we'll be right here*

“Us”

by Ruby Ibarra featuring Rocky Rivera, Klassy, and Faith Santilla
Spoken by Faith Santilla

First and foremost, this study would not be possible without the participation of my research participants - seven strong, smart, and resilient Pinay leaders. These women opened their hearts and shared personal stories with me. Their experiences are the foundation for this project. Thank you for joining me as my critical thought partners throughout this entire process and showing me what radical sisterhood looks like.

My deepest sense of gratitude to the staff and faculty of the School of Education who offered tremendous support and community throughout my entire time at USF. Despite working through a global pandemic and multiple crises, you all displayed strength, patience, and true leadership. I would like to specifically thank my advisors and professors: Dr. Seenae Chong, Dr. David Donahue, Dr. Darrick Smith, Dr. Jane Bleasdale, Dr. Danfeng Koon, and Dr. Mariana Mora. Your guidance and teachings prepared me to lead and change the world outside of USF.

I would like to thank my many Pin@y Mentors who nurtured my growth as a young undergraduate student at San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco. You all challenged me as a social justice educator. This work would not be possible without your teachings, care, and love.

To my soulmates and chosen family: Thank you for always lifting me up and believing in me, even when I found it hard to believe in myself. You bring stability, joy, laughter, and love to these uncertain and turbulent times. Your support got me through this journey. I am forever grateful for our friendship. I love you all.

The Enriquez Family (Ate Janice, Mike, Alex, Isaiah, Jonah, and Jacob): Thank you for your love and patience for the many years I have been away. I am able to do all that I do because of your love.

Finally, Mom, Dad, Matt, and Maya: Thank you for your sacrifices, support, and endless love. Everything I do, I do for you. Maya, I miss you every day. It's not easy living away

from all of you, thank you for never once doubting me and always pushing me to see everything through to the end.

Writing this while simultaneously experiencing multiple pandemics and crises was not an easy task. Despite being challenged to sit, research, and write during a time of unrest, this thesis became a way to center and ground myself. In a way, it became my hope for a better tomorrow. This thesis is a window into my soul. This work serves as an act of resistance where I do the decolonial act of listening and relistening to the women who told me their stories. I humbly and proudly present our experiences as Pinay leaders.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my ancestors - past, present, and future.

ABSTRACT

Pinays' experiences are often excluded in history. Despite this exclusion and erasure, Filipinas are utilized around the world to provide labor and care. This study looks at the experiences of Pinays living in the San Francisco Bay Area working in community-based organizations. This study utilized a grounded theory approach to further understand Pinay identities and experiences and the ways they inform their leadership. Attempting to address the lack of research on Pinay leaders in community-based organizations, this study will build on current Pinay epistemologies to further understand Pinay leadership. This study asks three research questions: 1) How do Pinays define and construct their identity? 2) In what ways do these experiences inform their leadership philosophies? And 3) How is leadership enacted by Pinays? There were seven participants who all self-identified as Pinay, work in community-based organizations, and were willing and able to contribute to the research topic. Their experiences serve as the foundation for what Pinay leadership looks and acts like. Findings suggest that Pinays experiences are molded by their families, communities, and experiences in community-based organizations. After a thematic analysis of the data, this group of Pinays' leadership focuses around *collective care and love, sisterhood and mentorship, taking and making space for others, breaking silence and stereotypes, and putting their leadership into action*. The findings are further discussed and suggestions for further research are made.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Pinays¹ face a myriad of issues on the personal, local, and global level. Many Pinays in the United States are stereotyped as being health care workers or nurses. Despite this stereotype of being nurses, Pinays are also categorized as sexual, obedient, and subservient subjects. After a quick internet image search of the word, “Pinay”, a slew of obscene and sexually inappropriate images pops up. After an urban dictionary search, a similar definition² to the images is generated. Pinays are portrayed across the internet without humanity. Knowing these negative definitions of the word Pinay exist, the researcher and a group of fellow Pinays came together to curate a list of issues we face rooted in our own experiences. This group of Pinays quickly identified over fifty different issues related to colonialism, imperialism, racism, sexism, capitalism, and beyond. Below is the summarized list of issues this group of Pinays created. While this list is shortened, it is not limited to only the issues listed.

1. mental health issues of anxiety, depression, and trauma
2. negative self-image and low self-esteem
3. imposter syndrome and not feeling “good enough”
4. burnout from school, work and other responsibilities
5. job security and unemployment
6. domestic violence and mental abuse
7. lack of knowledge around affordable housing
8. lack of leadership development and support
9. anti-Asian discrimination exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
10. colonial mentality and the belief that their cultural history, identity, and existence is inferior to the dominant group in the US

¹ Dr. Dawn Mabalon (2013) refers to Pinays as Filipina Americans in the United States, their identities and experiences are separate from Filipinas/ Pilipinas in the Philippines. This research will use the term Pinay to reference Filipina American women living and working in the United States.

² UrbanDictionary.com defines Pinay as, “the hottest Asian female breed. They are shrewd chameleons who can do whatever they want and flexible enough to adapt to different cultures and nationalities. Most are clever so they excel in school but they become strict parents.”

11. the effects of Spanish and US colonization and imperialism

In addition to the laundry list of issues Pinays face, the group of women described at the beginning also created a list of ways to address these issues. With this research project, I hope to utilize some of the action items we created. It is important for Pinays, whose experiences are often excluded and unnoticed in Filipinx American history, to be able to identify and solve their own problems. The previously mentioned group of Pinays and others like it, practice self-determination by strengthening relationships with one another and creating spaces of resistance and liberation. There are Pinay scholars, activists, teachers, leaders, healers, and community members working to challenge these images of what it means to be Pinay. Alternative definitions and meanings to being Pinay create new and different ways for Pinays to practice self-determination, community and more. Pinay scholar, teacher, and community leader, Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales (2005) challenges those negative stereotypes by creating ways for Pinays to name their own identities and tell their own stories. By using the term Pinayism as a way to, “look at the complexity of the intersections where race/ ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality/religion, educational status, age, place of birth, Diasporic migration, citizenship and love cross” (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2005, p. 141). Pinayism is the act of centering the Pinay experience and creating mechanisms for building connection and self-determination. This research does not attempt to offer a solution to all of these problems. Instead, this research will offer a space for Pinays to dialogue and reflect on their experiences and the ways they work and lead despite the multiple oppressions that impact them. This research will focus on one of the issues listed above, “lack of

leadership development and support” to further understand Pinay leadership and build upon existing Pinay epistemologies.

Statement of the Problem

It was my first day as a student at San Francisco State University; I was seventeen and away from my family in Southern California, for the first time. Being the first day of the semester and living on campus, I was eager to make friends and find a space on campus to call home. Remembering that I registered for the same English class as someone I met from the summer registration day, I frantically looked for her face in the crowd of strangers. I immediately recognized her and waved. Relief washed over me; I would not have to be alone for this class. After class we got to know each other more and bonded over our Filipina heritage. She invited me to a general meeting for the Filipino American student organization on campus. I was hesitant and nervous – I had Filipino classmates in high school and a small group of Pinay friends, but I never really connected with that part of my identity. I was unsure if I would fit in being mixed race: my father, an immigrant from the Philippines, and my white mother from the Midwest. However, I accepted her invitation and went to the meeting.

As a member (and eventual student leader) of that same Filipino student organization, I was introduced to a community and history of Filipinx Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area. This organization facilitated a service-learning program rooted in Filipinx and Filipinx American history, culture, community, and political affairs. During the program, we held theme weeks - one focused on Philippine history's heroes and sheroes. I learned about famous male Filipino figures leaders but only barely learned about famous Filipina women. In my own experience, I had not seen Pinays in a

professional or leadership role until I went to college. This lack of visibility can have adverse effects on Pinays. While my experiences in this organization led me to become politically active and played a major role (re)awakening in my own Filipina American identity development, this lack of Filipina or Pinay representation led me to seek Pinay mentors and leaders anywhere I could. My questions about Pinay leadership only grew as I grew as a Pinay leader myself. My early days in college ultimately led me to this research project to explore and understand the ways Pinays' experiences inform their leadership philosophies and practices.

Background and Need

Filipinx American scholars contextualize the Filipinx American experience through social, political, and historical lenses. These scholars have investigated the implications of colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, racism, and capitalism and their effects on the Philippines and its peoples. Filipinx and Filipinx American Identity formation is affected by Spanish and American colonization and imperialism. Because of the forced beliefs, language, and change of culture, Filipinos experience the phenomenon of Colonial Mentality, where they consciously and unconsciously view themselves and their culture as inferior (Strobel, 2001; David & Okazaki, 2006; Nadal, 2001; David, 2013). There is a need to further study leadership through an intersectional lens and the ways identity informs leadership. This study attempts to build upon existing scholarship of past and present Filipinx American research to bridge two bodies of research on (1) Filipinx American or Pinay identity and (2) leadership in order to further articulate Pinay leadership. This research attempts to build upon current Pinay epistemologies to center Pinays' voices and experiences within a leadership context.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to dismantle and challenge toxic and negative stereotypes that Pinays are silent, sexual, and subservient beings. In addition, this study aims to uplift Pinay voices and create spaces for them to dialogue, build relationships, and work toward liberation. Through highlighting their experiences and expanding on existing scholarship of Filipinx Americans and leadership, I hope to validate and affirm their experiences and create more places for them in academia and leadership.

Research Questions

Three research questions guide this study and will be discussed throughout the course of this thesis:

1. How do Pinays define and construct their identity?
2. In what ways do these experiences inform their leadership philosophies?
3. How is leadership enacted by Pinays?

Theoretical Framework and Rationale

Multiple theoretical frameworks guided this study. In pulling from multiple disciplines of Filipino and Filipino American scholarship, this study utilized decolonial and Pinayist frameworks to further understand Pinays experiences and leadership. Strobel (2001) describes the process of decolonization as the act of renaming and reimagining the self to connect with the past, present, and future. Decolonization is the dismantling of internalized oppression and negative self-image caused by colonial mentality. David (2013) describes colonial mentality as “a specific form of internalized oppression that has its roots in colonialism and has been transmitted through generations by more contemporary forms of oppression such as neocolonialism and internal colonialism”

(David, 2013, p.74). Much of the Filipinx American experience is marked by colonialism and colonial mentality. This study examines the ways Pinays engage in the process of decolonization through their leadership.

This study is also guided by the theoretical framework of Pinayism to center Pinays voices and experiences. De Jesus (2005), Tintiangco-Cubales (2005), Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009), Strobel (2010), Mabalon (2013), and Strobel (2015) discuss the various experiences Pinays face such as such as racism, sexism, and colonial mentality as a result of Spanish and US colonialism and other systems of domination. Tintiangco-Cubales (2005) and Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento (2009) articulates the experience of Pinays – or Filipina American women living in the United States – to create a framework and praxis for Pinays to decolonize and empower themselves.

This study puts Pinayism into praxis by centering Pinays experiences, building relationships with other Pinays, and creating spaces of resistance to work toward liberation. Pinayism is a fluid concept focused on the Pinay epistemologies to nurture and grow sisterhood between Pinays and other colonized communities. The framework of Pinayism allows the researcher to engage in scholarship through a Pinay perspective.

Critical Leadership Praxis served as a framework for this thesis because it offers a foundation for Pinay leaders to form their leadership pedagogies. Critical Leadership Praxis was developed in San Francisco community-based organization, Pinoy/Pinay Educational Partnerships as a way for teachers to develop their critical leadership skills rooted in equity and social justice (Daus-Magbual, 2011). Two major components of Critical Leadership Praxis include building relationships with the self and community and commitment toward social justice. Critical leaders build their personal identities in

relationship to the communities they serve. Through using Critical Leadership Praxis and Pinayism as frameworks, the researcher hopes to further illuminate aspects of Pinay leadership.

Limitations of the Study

This study has two main limitations, including (a) timing of the study and (b) the sampling procedure and size. The timing of this study includes a limitation because this research study was conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic. All interactions with research participants were done virtually via the Zoom video-conferencing application. This may have influenced the results or responses of research participants because they may not have been able to be completely authentic through a virtual format or may not be in the best physical setting to conduct an interview. All research participants were recruited through the researcher's professional and or community network. Not all members of the larger population were allowed to participate in this study. This may influence results because this may present a very specific or tailored experience of Pinays.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it focuses on Pinays experiences in community-based organizations to further expand Pinay epistemologies and articulate a Pinay-centered leadership. Current and future Pinay leaders, researchers examining the intersection of identity and leadership may benefit from this research. This study focused on Pinays in leadership. While I, the researcher, am now exposed to Pinays in leadership in the San Francisco Bay Area, there is still a lack of representation and recognition of Pinays in leadership across the United States. Pinays still face multiple barriers and

access to leadership. This study is significant in that it will (a) acknowledge and validate the vast and varying Pinay narratives not often seen in academic spaces, (b) create a reflective space for Pinays to dialogue on the ways their identities and experiences inform their leadership pedagogies, and (c) illuminate the ways in which Pinays enact their leadership. It is my hope that this research may be used as a tool or guide for future Pinay leaders.

Definitions of Terms

Leadership: A fluid definition rooted in the ways a person or community influence each other to transform themselves. Leadership is not a title or rank that exists in a hierarchy. For this study, leaders build strong relationships with others in their community to work toward more equitable and just futures.

Filipino/a/x American: Refers to a person of Philippine origin, living in the United States according to their own gender identity. This research will utilize multiple terms to refer to Filipino/a/x Americans. “Filipinx” as an umbrella term to include the multiple identities Filipino/a/x people possess.

Pinay/Pinoy: Nickname for Filipina/os in America, adopted by some of the earliest Filipina/o immigrants to Hawaii and the United States. Now, the terms are accepted and used by Filipina/os worldwide to refer to anyone of Filipina/o Ancestry (Cordova, 1983; Mabalon, 2013)

Pinayism: is a fluid concept focused on the experiences of Filipinas in the US, “Pinayism aims to look at the complexity of the intersections where race/ ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality/ religion, educational status, age, place of birth, Diasporic migration, citizenship, and love cross.” (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2005)

Decolonization: The process and act of renaming and reimagining the self to connect with the past, present and future. Filipino-a-x American decolonization challenges existing narratives and stereotypes to create critical consciences, courage, and agency (Strobel, 2001).

Colonial Mentality: “a specific form of internalized oppression that has its roots in colonialism and has been transmitted through generations by more contemporary forms of oppression such as neocolonialism and internal colonialism” (David, 2013, p.74).

Critical Leadership Praxis: Developed in Pin@y Educational Partnerships, focuses on practicing leadership skills rooted in equity and social justice. (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2010; Daus-Magbual, 2011).

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction:

The purpose of this literature review is to first offer a brief history of Philippine to provide context and background on Filipinx and Filipinx Americans experiences. This will be important in understanding the ways in which Filipinx form their identity. Through colonization and imperialism, Spain and the United States forever changed the religion, education, language, cultural beliefs, and more of the Philippines. As an effect of colonialism, Filipinx Americans have unique experiences. One major phenomenon that Filipinx Americans experience is colonial mentality, the belief that one's culture and identity is inferior to that of dominant groups as a result of colonialism (David, 2013). Colonial mentality may manifest in different ways, but many Filipinx and Filipinx Americans must engage in the process of decolonization to unlearn these inferior beliefs and (re)learn and (re)connect to their Filipinx identity. The literature then explores existing scholarship that centers Pinay voices and experiences. As Pinays are the focus for this study, current literature looks at frameworks that offer an understanding to their experiences. Furthermore, this literature review will explore Critical Leadership Praxis, a framework for leaders working toward social justice and equity to transform themselves and their communities. This literature review will piece together Philippine history, Pinay scholarship and leadership theory to lay a foundation for this study.

Brief History of the Philippines

There is the popular saying, "The Filipinos have spent three hundred years in the convent, and fifty years in Hollywood" that attempts to summarize Philippine history. This phrase speaks to the colonial masters occupying the Philippine islands, but fails to

further explain the Philippines before the aforementioned ‘convent and Hollywood’ and how Filipinos emerged from the two.

Prior to the arrival of the Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 and the Spanish in 1565, Filipinos were not “Filipino”, but part of distinct and different ethnic groups across the 7,000-island archipelago. Even though English and Filipino (influenced by Tagalog) are considered to be the national language of the country, there are still several different languages spoken across the islands. Each region of the archipelago has different languages, customs, beliefs and more that still persist today. These groups did not always get along and often warred with one another. They were not a collective or unified nation like the one known today, but lived in *barangays* or small communities. *Barangay* comes from the word *balangay*, meaning boat. Inhabitants of this region were seafaring people and spent much of their time navigating it (Francia, 2013). Because of the geographic proximity to Indonesia, there is an Islamic influence in the Philippines, that is apparent in southern region of Mindanao. Just like in the Chinatowns around the world, there are still active Chinatowns in trading ports like the one in the nation’s capital of Manila. There are also migratory linkages between Filipinos and Pacific Islanders (Francia, 2013). It was not until the coming of the Spanish that the Philippines became what we know as the Philippines. Even the Philippines' name originated from the Spanish King Phillip II, demonstrating the colonial marks left by the Spanish.

The Philippines has a history of Spanish colonialism and US imperialism. Those countries employed several tactics to maintain dominance and power over the different native groups inhabiting the archipelago (Nadal, 2011; Francia, 2013). It is important to note that colonialism is a system and mechanism that exists today. Colonialism is not

only an event or point in history. There are connections across the world and between colonized peoples. Colonial structures persist today and one example is demonstrated through the sexual violence inflicted onto Indigenous and Native women. Native American scholar, Andrea Smith writes about the experience of Native women in North America, “Patriarchal gender violence is the process by which colonizers inscribe hierarchy and domination on the bodies of the colonized” (Smith, 2015, p. 23). The incredibly violent and painful experience of rape and sexual assault are tools used to control and suppress Native women and in turn, an entire population. There are connections between the experiences of Native women in North America and women in the Philippines.

Some of these tactics used by Spaniards include land seizure and forced labor of native populations to make profit for Spanish landlords (Francia, 2013). These land redistribution tactics benefitted more than just the Spaniards, but also the natives who served them. This created a culture of competition and intrapolitics between groups that lead to a hierarchical class stratification of Filipinos. In addition to land control, Spaniards exerted their power through the control of women’s bodies (2013). Many Filipino surnames were changed to Spanish ones as a way to pacify and hispanize Filipinos (Ocampo, 2016). The name changes are also a result of rape and marriages between native women and Spaniards. Sexual violence remains a tool for colonization and patriarchal domination over women and colonized peoples. These colonial legacies are passed down from generation to generation that can instill a belief of inferiority and internalized oppression in colonized peoples. Spanish colonization brought Catholicism and patriarchal gender roles. The patriarchal practices are amplified by what Aymara

Bolivian communitarian feminist, Julieta Paredes describes as *entronque patriarchal*, where the system of patriarchy that existed prior to colonization is combined with colonial patriarchy to further subjugate women (Paredes, 2008, p.26). Religious conversion is another form of control used by Spanish missionaries to pacify natives. The spread of Catholicism across the archipelago was prolific and is still seen today as the Philippines is the only Catholic country in Asia. These tactics were used in an attempt to completely alter the archipelago to resemble that of their colonizers.

Some of the very first Filipinos stepped foot onto North America in 1587, as forced laborers aboard Spanish trading ships during the Galleon Trade between Manila, Acapulco and Spain. Spanish ships landed in what is now present-day Morro Bay, California, and made contact with the native Chumash people. There are records of Manila Men building settlements in 1736 in the French occupied territory of Louisiana after abandoning harsh working conditions aboard Spanish trading ships (Bonus, 2000; Strobel, 2001; Francia, 2013). Filipinos are a legacy of both Spanish and American colonization and imperialism (Ocampo, 2016).

In the Spanish American war of 1898, the Philippines was sold to the United States for \$20 million (Francia, 2013). Following the American acquisition of the Philippines, American teachers flooded the Philippines to change its society by teaching English and western values. The reeducation of the Philippine people and status as an American colony forever altered the Philippines relationship with the United States and the rest of the world. There was an increase of migration between the Southeast Asian archipelago and the US. Filipinos migrated to the United States in various and distinct waves.

Shortly after the Philippines became a United States colony, Filipinos began migrating to the United States in various waves. Many of the first Filipino immigrants came as *pensionados*, or government scholars, attending universities in the United States (Strobel, 2001). Following the *pensionados* came the *manongs*³ from 1900-1930, mainly immigrant agricultural laborers who worked across the West Coast and Alaska. Up until 1934, Filipinos were considered US Nationals and could move freely between the United States and the Philippines. The Tydings McDuffie Act of 1934 granted independence to the Philippines, changing their status from National to Alien (Cordova, 1983; Strobel, 2001). The period of 1945 to 1964 saw many military families, students, and professionals immigrate to the United States (Cordova, 1983; Strobel, 2001). The passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act signaled an increase in skilled and educated immigrants entering the country. This period of migration is known as the “brain drain,” where many of the educated Filipinx migrated to the United States. Educated Filipinx continue to immigrate to the United States to this day. As the Philippines is the largest supplier of nurses to major urban US city centers (Choy, 2003). The Philippines and United States histories are linked through the various immigration laws that pushed and pulled Filipinx migration.

Filipinx American immigrants were often excluded from fair employment opportunities, access to housing, mixed-race marriages and more. Because of these experiences, the Filipinx American experience is also rooted in self-determination, activism, and liberation. Filipinx Americans are one of the largest Asian immigrant groups in the United States (U.S. Census, 2010). There are Filipino settlements across

³ Manong is an Ilokano term used to refer to older brother.

California, Hawaii, Alaska and more. Despite the historical link between the two countries, Filipinx American immigrants' apparent status as foreigners meant they still experienced racism, sexism, and exclusion (Mabalon, 2013). Filipinx Americans have always been part of social and political movements. For example: agricultural workers fighting for fair wages in the United Farm Workers movement, students fighting for self-determination and relevant education in the 1964 Student Strike at San Francisco State University, and whole communities fighting for a right to affordable housing at the International Hotel in San Francisco and many others movements. Filipinx Americans are no strangers to fighting for self-determination and liberation. This legacy of activism and leadership is birthed from a colonial and oppressive history.

Body of the Review

Filipino-a-x American Experience and Identity Development

Scholars contextualize the Filipinx American experience through social, political, and historical lenses. These scholars have investigated the implications of colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, racism, capitalism and their effects on the Philippines and its peoples. Understanding the history of the Philippines and its relationship with the United States is key to understanding Filipinx Americans experiences in the US. The Philippines and its peoples acquired different cultural values from Spanish and American occupation. For example, some of these include religion and patriarchal gender roles from the Spanish and an Americanized school system, individualism and competition from the United States (Nadal, 2011). Colonialism impacts the identity formation of Filipino Americans (Strobel, 2001; Nadal, 2011; David, 2013). Filipino Americans experience colonial mentality, a specific form of internalized oppression where an individual

believes their ethnic and cultural identity is inferior to that of the colonizers or others (David & Okazaki, 2013). As immigrants, Filipinos worked to fit in or assimilate into dominant American culture.

Despite the Philippines acquiring cultural values and behaviors from the Spanish and the United States - speaking English, being educated in an Americanized school system - their status as a minority meant they remained perpetual foreigners in the US (Ocampo, 2016). In order to assimilate or fit in, Filipinx American immigrants and their decedents negotiate different parts of their values, beliefs, and actions. (Nadal, 2011). Assimilation often means Filipinx Americans shed parts their cultural identity in order to be accepted as Americans. This 'shedding' may lead to the conscious or unconscious rejection of their own identity.

Sikolohiyang Pilipino is a broad examination into the Filipino-based psychology. It is liberatory, empowering and an interdisciplinary approach to understanding Filipino and Filipino American cultural values and ways of thinking (Strobel, 2001; Nadal, 2011; David, 2013). *Kapwa* is one of the main cultural values or aspects of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. *Kapwa* is the shared identity among Filipinx people, it is connection and shared experience. *Kapwa* can manifest in different ways but it focuses on the ways Filipinos are intrinsically connected to each other. In the absence of *kapwa*, "Filipino Americans may not have strong, positive and reliable social support networks that may serve as buffers or protective factors against many mental and behavioral health concern" (David, 2013, p. 136). This inferiority built up in the minds of Filipinos leads to mental illness such as depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation. The shedding of one's cultural values in

replacement for the colonizers or dominant group results in a lack of knowledge and traditions passed down.

Strobel (2001), Halagao (2004), David and Okazaki (2006), Nadal (2011), David (2013), continue to articulate multiple frameworks and practices of decolonization.

Colonial legacies are passed down from generation to generation that can instill a belief of inferiority and internalized oppression in colonized peoples. Pinay scholar, Lenny Strobel, writes about the colonial experiences of Filipino Americans and theorizes about a process for decolonization, "to unlearn the internalized oppression brought on by colonization, there is a need to study how colonial identities are constructed by master narratives that serve to reinforce the social and economic and political structures that perpetuate unequal and unjust relationships of power" (Strobel, 2001, p. xv).

Decolonization must begin with the self or mind, but cannot be done alone. As *kapwa* is the shared identity and connection to oneself and one's community, the process of decolonization must be collective. American ideals promote competition and individualism. These are counter to some Philippine cultural values. (Re)learning *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, relearning one's history and culture, building networks and relationships of support, and creating action plans is key to the process of decolonization. If colonialist legacies are patriarchal, capitalistic, individualistic, racist, and exclusionary, then the process of decolonization must dismantle those ideologies and move toward something collective and liberatory.

Andresen (2013), Letana (2016) explore Filipinx American identity through the examination of specific communities. Andresen looks at the impact of Filipino community-based organizations, Filipino Youth Activities, civic engagement and

leadership on the identity development of Filipinx American youth in Seattle. While participants' experience were not universal, Filipino community-based organizations played a role in strengthening Filipinx American identity in providing spaces to empower, learn and connect to their heritage and develop their leadership (Andresen, 2013). Findings from this research suggest that specific community-based organizations play a role in the process of decolonization.

Letana (2016) looked at the identity development of community college students taking Philippine Studies courses in San Francisco. Taking Ethnic Studies or Philippine Studies classes became a way for Filipinx students to learn about their people's history that they otherwise did not learn about in their K-12 schooling. The relearning of one's culture combats the years of erasure of Philippine history from American occupation in the Philippines and its colonial legacies (Letana, 2016). These Philippine Studies courses offered space for these students to (re)learn their history and positively shape their identity. Like community-based organizations, Philippine Studies courses play a role in the process of decolonization for Filipinx Americans by putting Filipinx American stories at the forefront and creating communities of resistance. Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, and Philippine Studies programs in colleges and universities play an important role in the process of decolonization.

Pinay Pedagogy

Pinays⁴ have a unique experience within the Filipinx American experience as they were often sidelined in history. Early US legislation and laws prohibited Filipinas from migrating to the United States. With the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act permitting

⁴ Pinays are Filipinas or Filipina-identified people outside of the Philippines (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2005).

educated and skilled laborers, Filipino nurses migrated en masse to the United States to fill labor needs for American public hospitals (Choy, 2003). Pinays also experience various social toxins like “domestic violence, high numbers of high school dropout rates, substance abuse, sexual behavior that may lead to pregnancy and HIV infection, and mental health issues and depression as a result of the colonial process” (Desai, 2016, p. 35). Tintiangco-Cubales (2005) articulates the framework of Pinayism as a way to define Pinays’ experiences in the diaspora and understand our experiences in relation to one another and build action plans toward liberation. Tintiangco-Cubales (2005) and Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento (2009) conceptualize Pinayism from an epistemological approach to describe, articulate, frame, and create a Pinay-focused way to navigate the world. Pinayism is rooted in reflection, theory, action, praxis, love, sisterhood, and more. Just as *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* centers around understanding Filipino cultural values and psychological experiences, Pinayism builds upon those genealogies to center the Pinay experience and understandings of the world. Pinays are the anchor to Pinayism as it “... aims to look at the complexity of the intersections where race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality/ religion, educational status, age, place of birth, Diasporic migration, citizenship, and love cross.” (Tintiangco-Cubales, 2005, p.141). This research study aims to expand and contribute to the field of Pinayism by looking at the experiences of Pinay leaders in 2021.

Building on this foundation, Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2009) further theorize Pinayism to include pedagogy, “an individual and communal process of decolonization, humanization, and relationship building ultimately moving toward liberation” (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009, p. 180). Pinayist pedagogy aims to

“create communities that critique oppression, seek social justice, and reproduce agents of social change” (p. 185). Building on Paulo Freire's (1996) notion of praxis, Pinayist pedagogy incorporates the five steps of praxis (1) identify the problem (2) analyze the problem, (3) create plans of action, (4) implement the plan of action, and (5) analyze and evaluate the actions. Pinays and others committed to decolonization and social justice may use the stages praxis as a framework toward liberation. Pinayist pedagogy is both individual and collective action seeks to not only decolonize the self but also teach and support others to do so. Pinayist pedagogy is rooted in examining history and critiquing systems of oppression to nurture future Pinay leaders prepared to respond to global problems. Pinayism and Pinay pedagogy push further into the process of decolonization as a way for Pinoys and Pinays to critically examine their identities, create spaces of resistance, and work toward liberation.

Critical Leadership Praxis

Traditional leadership theories are rooted in power, domination, and hierarchy (Daus-Magbual, 2011). Traditional leadership studies frame leadership through an *assigned perspective*, where leadership is derivative from positions and titles in an organization or structure (Northouse, 2010). There is a need to examine leadership through different and critical perspectives that put the different intersections of identity and power at the center. Leadership as praxis is derivative of Paulo Freire's (1996) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* concept of praxis. Freire (1996), Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento (2009), Daus-Magbual (2010), Daus-Magbual (2011), Canlas (2016) assert that praxis is a cycle and process of theory, action, and reflection. Critical leaders aim to redefine leadership through a social justice and equity lens.

Oppressed and colonized communities face a myriad of problems that call for critical leaders and movements. San Francisco community-based organization, Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) is the birthplace of Critical Leadership Praxis, "a leadership pedagogy centered on the commitment to both self and community growth" (Daus-Magbual & Tintiangco-Cubales, 2016). PEP is a service-learning leadership pipeline program which partners with San Francisco State University Asian American Studies, San Francisco Unified School District, and the Filipino Community Center (Daus-Magbual, 2010). With Critical Leadership Praxis, organizations like PEP are able to grow leaders rooted in their own identities in relation to their communities to transform the world. Transformative leaders transform themselves to transform their communities as they must do the important heart work of decolonization for themselves with their communities (Daus-Magbual & Tintiangco-Cubales, 2016). PEP explores leadership in relation to one's self and their community. Critical Leadership Praxis was created as a way for teachers to sharpen their leadership skills, but the principles of CLP can be applied to other fields and types of leaders.

Canlas (2016) critiques the lack of research around Asian American leadership through dismantling stereotypes of Asian Americans and challenging perceptions of Asian Americans and leadership. Using a participatory action research approach, worked with Asian American college students to understand the ways critical leadership praxis supports their needs and development. This research study ultimately led to the creation of Critical Asian American Leadership (CAAL) Praxis model. This model is based on four principles (1) directed toward social justice and equity, (2) Critical Asian American leaders must directly critique and address racism and other systems of oppression, (3)

grounded in counter-narratives of Asian American history and community cultural wealth and, (4) involves working in critical alliances (Canlas, 2016). Critical Asian American Leadership Praxis puts Asian American experiences at the center of discourse to further build upon Critical Leadership Praxis principles of self-identity and connection to one's community.

Francisco (2020) uses an ethnographic approach to tell the story of L.E.A.D. Filipino, a San Jose based non-profit organization aimed at creating spaces for Filipina/o/x Americans to “explore their histories, identities, and political agency” (Francisco, 2020, p. 23). L.E.A.D. Filipino focuses on the development of Asian American and Filipino American leaders. This literature further bridges identity and leadership together. L.E.A.D. Filipino's model of leadership is two parts: (1) exploring their histories and (2) exploring the self. Leadership models like these prove to develop critical transformative leaders. Studies and organizations in practice of Critical Leadership Praxis bridge the individual to the community with a commitment to social justice and transformation.

Summary

Filipinx American literature examines the implications of colonialism and imperialism on identity development. Filipinx and Filipinx Americans still face racism, sexism, and exclusion from many parts of society. This literature review shed light on their history, many experiences, decolonial Pinayist, and critical leadership frameworks to address and dismantle systems of inequity and oppression.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to understand Filipina Americans' or Pinays' unique experiences in community-based organizations. This study aimed to explore and connect the ways in which Pinay identities intersect and inform their leadership. This study serves as a way to recognize and validate Pinays' experiences as leaders in their respective fields. This research built upon existing scholars' work to further explore leadership rooted in Pinay epistemologies. In addition, this research study served as a space to record and recognize other Pinay leaders and their leadership philosophies. The researcher utilized one-on-one interviews with a grounded theory approach to record and analyze the data collected. Grounded theory research design "generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the view of a large number of participants" (Creswell, 2006, p. 63, as cited Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The findings from this project further articulate what leadership in action looks like for Pinays. Three research questions guided this study: (1) How do Pinays define and construct their identity? (2) In what ways do these experiences inform their leadership philosophies? And (3) How is leadership enacted by Pinays? The subsections of this chapter include (a) setting, (b) participants, (c) participant recruitment procedure, (d) instruments, (e) data collection, (e) data analysis, (f) human subject approval, (g) researcher background, and (h) summary.

Setting

Pinays and community-based organizations were the main focus for this study. Community-based organizations work toward serving the communities of which they

belong to and work toward addressing social change. Because community-based organizations are rooted in uplifting their communities, the researcher chose to examine the experiences of Pinays working to address social change. For the purpose of this study, the term community-based organization is broadly applied to include a public service employee and a small business owner. Reasons for this will be discussed further in the chapter. This study took place during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The pandemic affected nearly every aspect of everyday life including the ways research is conducted. As a consequence of the pandemic, some of the research participants relocated closer to the families or worked from home. Instead of in-person interviews and observations, all interviews were conducted virtually via the video-conferencing application, Zoom.

The virtual format proved to be both helpful and a limitation. Despite not being able to interview and connect with participants in person, virtual interviews allowed the researcher to connect with Pinays living and working across all parts of the Bay Area. If the San Francisco-based researcher only conducted in-person interviews, they may not have been able to reach participants in the South or East Bay. The participants in this study work in community-based organizations located in San Francisco, East Bay, the Peninsula and the South Bay. If this study were conducted in a non-physical distancing time period, the researcher would have asked participants for permission to visit their organizations or conduct an interview close to their work. These community visits would aid in providing a better understanding of the communities the participants work in. This study would have taken place somewhere convenient to the participants' choosing. For example: a local coffee shop, in an elementary school, at a community center, or another place related to the research participants' background. Conducting research in a global

pandemic with enforced social-distancing measures challenged the idea of a physical or traditional setting. This created an opportunity to broaden the scope of research to include community-based organizations outside of the researcher's initial reach.

Participants

The participants of this study are seven self-identified Pinays that live and work in the San Francisco Bay Area at various community organizations. All of the participants graduated from Northern California colleges and universities for their undergraduate or graduate degrees. The participants are between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-four. This group of women works in education, youth development, workforce development, government and public services, education policy, nonprofit fundraising, small community business, or public broadcasting journalism. The selected participants allowed the researcher to analyze and understand Pinay identity in relation to leadership because they have experience as both Pinays and leaders in their communities.

Table 1

Pseudonyms and Participant Demographics

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Field</i>	<i>Organization Description</i>	<i>Role</i>
Maya	25	Bachelor of Science	Small Business, Food Service	Sells seasonal food items, services the Bay Area, hosts fundraisers for local organizations, Milpitas	Co-Founder, Co-Owner
Gabriela	27	Master in Public Health	Nonprofit, Education	Out-of-school time, serves youth ages 5-18, San Mateo County	Resource Development, Fundraiser
Teresa	25	Master of Science in Counseling, in progress	Nonprofit, Education	Out-of-school time, serves youth ages 12-14, San Francisco	Senior Program Specialist, College and Career Awareness
Magdalena	26	Bachelor of Arts	Nonprofit, Education	Serves youth ages 5-18, provides programs and services, San Francisco	Employment Coordinator
Carmen	23	Bachelor of Arts	Nonprofit, Education Research	Educational policy research and consulting, Alameda	Program Coordinator
June	34	Doctor of Education, in progress	Government, Education	Policy research, programs and services, career technical education to youth ages 12-14, San Mateo County	Project Manager
Fe	25	Bachelor of Arts	Nonprofit, Journalism	Public radio, television, and independent reporting on issues in the Bay Area, San Francisco	Podcast Producer

Participant Recruitment Procedure

The researcher used a purposive selection where, “the researcher selects individuals who are considered representative because they meet certain criteria for the study” (Bui, p. 145, 2019). Criteria for selection was (1) willing and able to contribute to the understanding of the research problem, issue, and phenomenon being explored (2) self-identified as Pinay and (3) work in a community-based organization. Because this study specifically looked at Pinays experiences in community-based organizations, the researcher used their current professional and educational networks to find and refer participants for this study. After identifying potential participants that met the criteria for study, the researcher sent emails inviting them to participate. Once participants initially agreed to participate in the study, the researcher scheduled an interview and sent them consent forms.

During the recruitment phase, an event happened across the country that affected many of the Pinays’ participation in the study. The 2021 Atlanta spa shootings claimed the lives of eight people, four of which were Asian American women. The women in this study took time to process, reflect, and grieve the loss of life from that hate crime. Because of this some of the participants were delayed in scheduling an interview. The researcher gave participants much needed space and time to process their emotions before scheduling any interviews. This event in conjunction with already living and working during the pandemic put stress on the participants’ mental, emotional, and physical well-being. During interviews, rather than lead directly into questioning the participants, each meeting with a participant started as a personal-professional check in for both the researcher and participant. The researcher and participant provided critical space to build

relationships, trust, and empathy between each other that lead to very candid and honest discussions about Pinays' experiences and leadership. For the researcher, it was extremely important to treat the research participants with kindness, patience, and humanity.

Two of the participants, Maya and June, were chosen to participate in the study despite not working for traditional community-based organizations. Maya, twenty-five-year-old small business owner, was initially recruited to assist the researcher in a practice interview. During the practice interview, Maya shared her leadership philosophy and business model. Maya's business and leadership will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. She was allowed to participate as an official participant because she challenges traditional individualistic approaches to business and uplifts other small businesses. After the practice interview, the researcher approached Maya and asked her to participate in the study as an official participant. Maya received a consent form and scheduled an official interview. June works for a local government agency facilitating educational and career technical training programs for youth. In addition to her current role, June has experience working at local schools rooted in social justice and equity. The researcher asked June to be part of the study because of her educational and professional background working in community-based organizations and current role providing youth education and career training.

Instruments

Data for this study was collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. All of the interviews were recorded to the researcher's University of San Francisco Student Zoom Cloud account. The interviews were then transcribed using the Zoom

transcription feature. The researcher took notes of the interviews to record any realizations or breakthroughs. Interviews were approximately forty-five minutes to one hour, with some interviews lasting more than 60 minutes. A copy of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix B. Interview questions for the participants included the following questions:

1. I would like to hear what you do at (*your work*) and how you came to (*that role*)?
 - a. Can you tell me how you go to your position?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* Who or what influenced you to pursue the field or position that you are in?
2. Can you tell me about a time you acted as a leader at your work?
3. How would you define your own leadership philosophy?
4. What parts of your personal history and background stand out to you as influencing the person you are today?
 - a. You can tell me anything from the beginning to where you were born to any recent experiences.
5. Will you describe a moment when you first noticed or experienced your race?
6. Are there specific experiences of yours that you think are uniquely Pinay?
7. Are there things about what is traditionally understood as being “Pinay” that you don’t relate or connect to?
8. Have you ever felt that your background or perspectives were left out of what’s considered Pinay? If you are willing, can you share a time when that happened?
9. In what ways does being Pinay play a role in your work and understanding of being a leader?
10. What are things that Pinays have to think about or do in leadership that is different than other folks? Can you give me an example from your own experiences?
11. Is there a person or persons you go to for support and personal/ professional development? Or are you that person for someone else?
 - a. If you would like, will you describe your relationship with them?
12. What are ways that being Pinay helped you as a leader OR being a leader helped you in who you are as a Pinay?
13. Is there anything else about being Pinay, being a Pinay leader, or just being a leader that you think is important for me to know about that we haven’t discussed yet?

Demographic Questions:

14. What is your age?
15. What is your gender identity?
16. What ethnicities do you identify with?
17. Where were you born? If born outside the US, ask when they migrated to the US
18. How old were you when you immigrated?
19. Where (in what general region) do you live now?

20. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Data Collection

The researcher individually met with each of the participants once over a month-long period. The interviews started with personal-professional check-ins and flowed into explanation of the research study to the research participants. If the participants had any questions or concerns, they were addressed prior to starting the interview. The virtual interviews lasted anywhere from fifty minutes to an hour and thirty minutes. Due to scheduling constraints, one participant was not able to answer all of the interview questions during the one-on-one meeting. They later sent the researcher written responses to the last few questions. The data was transcribed using Zoom's transcription feature. After reviewing the data, the researcher reached back out to a few of the participants for clarification on answers or to elaborate more on certain interview questions. Once interview transcriptions became available, they were downloaded into a Word processor document. The researcher edited the transcriptions to correct any mistakes or remove unnecessary words.

Data Analysis

After conducting interviews and transcribing them, the researcher performed a content analysis of the data by finding common themes, patterns, experiences, or definitions of leadership. The researcher engaged in a multi-step process to analyze the data. First, immediately after each interview, the researcher recorded any first impressions and reactions to the interviews. These notes were kept on a "master data analysis" document. As more interviews were completed, the researcher also recorded their first impressions of the data in relation to the previous interviews. Second, the

researcher reread and relistened to the interview transcriptions to refresh their memory of the interviews. The researcher then indexed the data to highlight common themes, patterns, and connections between answers and interviews. After indexing the interviews, the researcher wrote analytic memos to articulate the findings and themes. As mentioned previously, the researcher went back to some of the participants to ask for clarification and more context around their answers. This helped provide a more well-rounded understanding of the data. As the researcher found common themes, they went back to three of the participants to ask their perspective on the themes and receive feedback. After articulating the common themes, the researcher revisited past studies and scholarship on Filipinx Americans to recontextualize and add more understanding to the data. Data collected from the interviews highlighted the research participants background, identity, and experiences in leadership and working with their communities.

Human Subjects Approval

This research study has been approved by the University of San Francisco (USF) Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) under IRB Protocol #1438. The researcher took multiple steps to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants. First, the researcher provided informed consent to the participants to offer protection and confidentiality during the research study. Every single participant received and returned a consent form prior to the interviews. These consent forms explained (a) the purpose of the study, (b) actions requested of the participants, (c) duration and location of the study, (d) potential risks and discomforts, (e) potential benefits, (d) efforts to minimize risk and provide confidentiality. Prior to starting any interviews, the researcher reviewed the consent form and addressed any questions or

concerns of the participants. After the completion of the interviews, all of participants' real names were changed to pseudonyms on all of the transcripts, notes, and analytic memos. Other identifying information such as school or workplace name were removed from the findings and replaced with more generalized names, for example: "Northern California University or Afterschool-Youth Serving Nonprofit Organization" will be used in place of actual names unless the participant indicated their approval to use real names. All identifying documents were stored on a password protected computer. The participants did not have to answer any question they did not want to and were allowed to stop the interview at any time. Their participation in this study was voluntary and they did not receive any monetary benefit. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix A.

Researcher's Background

The researcher must recognize their background and the role it plays within this research study. The researcher's personal identity as a self-identified multi-racial Pinay is tied to the purpose of this study. In an effort to further concretize Filipinx American experiences, specifically Pinays, this research serves as a way to connect one's personal identity to their identity as a leader. Like the participants, the researcher also has experiences working in community-based organizations, attended similar universities, and participates in similar community-based organizations. These similarities created connection and community between the participants and the researcher. The researcher acknowledges that community-based organizations have the potential and opportunity to make significant positive social change in society by addressing systemic inequities and oppressions. The researcher also notes that community-based organizations may be

restricted or confined in the ways they address those inequities albeit funding restrictions, policy, resources, and or more. Because of the researcher's background, they may not be free of bias and worked to be as objective as possible during data collection and analysis.

Summary

This qualitative study utilized a grounded theory approach to explore Pinays' experiences as leaders in community-based organizations. This study used purposive sampling to determine research participants. Criteria for participation in this study was (1) willing and able to contribute to the understanding of the research problem, issue, and phenomenon being explored, (2) self-identified as Pinay, and (3) work in a community-based organization. The researcher utilized their educational and professional networks to find participants. Data was collected through one-on-one semi structured interviews. The researcher transcribed the interviews and performed a content analysis to find common themes, patterns, and experiences. Once the content analysis was complete, the researcher wrote analytic memos to consolidate themes and breakthroughs. They also kept field notes or a thesis journal to track thoughts, reactions, and other related notes throughout the entire duration of the study. In conducting this study, the researcher aims to dismantle toxic and negative stereotypes of Pinays by further understanding their experience in community-based organizations. This study was approved by the University of San Francisco's International Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS). A copy of the consent form and interview protocol may be found in Appendix A and B.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study explored the ways in which Pinays' identities and experiences working in community-based organizations inform their leadership philosophies. This exploratory study used a grounded theory approach to understand and begin building a Pinay-centered leadership philosophy or theory. Each participant shared stories connecting their past, present, and future and what they considered to be leadership. This chapter will explore the emerging common themes and patterns that came from the data.

Constructing Pinay Identity

Pinays primarily construct their identity through their interactions with others. Three primary interactions were crucial in their identity development: being othered; family; and their community. This group of Pinays shared personal stories of their families, friends, and what it was like growing up Pinay in the Bay Area. Each of them self-identified as Pinay and used different identifiers to describe being Filipinx American. Some examples of the differences are, "Filipinx, Filipina, Filipino American, American Filipino, Ilokano, and Pangasinan." All seven participants grew up in cities from each region of the Bay Area; the Peninsula, South Bay, East Bay and North Bay.

Feeling Othered

Many of the participants described being "othered" or made to feel like an outsider or foreigner from school friends and strangers. Many participants mentioned that they did not question their Filipina identity until someone else made it apparent. As made evident by the participants' stories, many of them were made to feel inferior or different because of their identity. They each experienced feeling out of place by their own friends,

other classmates, or people in their communities because of others' perceptions and ideas of what it means to be American, Filipino, and or both.

Three of the participants shared stories of their classmates or childhood friends pointing out their difference and inferiority: Magdalena shared a childhood story of being othered. In the third grade, she was eating lunch with classmates at school. She and her classmates were talking about each other's nationalities when she shared that she was American since she was born in the United States. Despite this answer, one of her Filipina friends commented back, you're not American, you're Filipino (Interview #3, Magdalena). Magdalena shared that from that moment on she started to question her identity and whether she was American or Filipino.

June had a similar experience to Magdalena. June shared that she first remembers noticing her Filipino ethnic identity in grade school. She was with her classmates talking about pop stars like *NSYNC and the Backstreet Boys when one of her white classmates blurted out, Justin Timberlake would never like you! You're not white enough for him to like you (Interview #6, June).

Maya shared that she grew up around other people of color and never questioned her race until an interaction with a childhood friend. One day after hanging out, Maya's friend told her they weren't allowed to hang out anymore and said, I can't hang out with you because you are too brown (Interview #1, Maya). At least three of the participants shared stories of their classmates or childhood friends pointing out their difference and inferiority. Experiences like these made the participants feel that their identity as a Filipina was inferior.

Fe shared a different experience of growing up in a large Filipinx American community. She shared that she doesn't look "typically" Filipino and that people often questioned her ethnic identity growing up. Fe considers herself to look different than other Filipinos because she has lighter skin and resembles other Asian ethnic groups. Because of this, she felt she always had to prove she was "Filipino" enough to people. She remembers her mom making it a point to speak to her and her sister in Tagalog at the Filipino-owned businesses as a way to prove their "Filipino-ness". Despite this, the store owners would still be surprised, Fe said, "the Aunties⁵ would react, 'Ay, *Pilipino siya?* They're Filipino?' To me specifically and be like, 'No, you're not because you don't look Filipino. You look Chinese'" (Interview #7, Fe). Fe felt othered by her own community members for the way she looked. Despite knowing the language, customs, food, and more she always felt that she needed to prove her Filipina identity to others, especially within the Filipinx community.

In addition to being othered by other Filipinos, Fe shared a different experience she had in kindergarten. She was with her classmates learning the alphabet where she noticed her white classmates already knew some of the words being taught and she didn't. She told the researcher about that moment, "I was like, 'How do you know that? How do you know that and how come I don't know that?' And specifically realizing that the white kids who knew the words. I think that's also a very early moment where I feel like I was realizing race... in my relationship to them as white people versus me as this Asian person" (Interview #7, Fe). Fe's early experiences in kindergarten, made her notice the differences between what her white classmates already knew and what she did not.

⁵The usage of the word, "Auntie" or "Tita" denotes respect and familiarity for the Filipina store owner. Filipinos often use these terms to other Filipinos even if they may be strangers to give respect to the person

Gabriela shared that despite growing up surrounded by a lot of young, brown Asians, she was still the only Filipina in her neighborhood. She shared that, "I still had an identity crisis, I wanted to be Vietnamese, and I'm recently realizing this. I was like, "Wow, I really had some deep shame in who I was being Filipino." Gabriela participated in many Vietnamese cultural events because of her proximity to the Vietnamese community and shared that she learned a lot of Vietnamese cultural terms. She did not connect to her Filipino identity going so far as to explain that, "I had shame for not looking a certain way for Filipinos and I would be scolded for not knowing any Filipino languages. That played a factor in my not wanting to embrace my Filipino roots" (Interview #2, Gabriela). Gabriela chose to explore another ethnic group's culture over her own for fear of further being excluded and othered.

The research participants also mentioned that they were heavily influenced by their family and are in fact very proud of their Filipino heritage and Pinay identities. The next two sections will discuss that lessons from their family and community played an important role in their identity development.

At Home

Family proved to be one of the strongest influences in this group of Pinays' identity development. Each of the women shared that their families, especially their mothers and the other women in their families, taught them lessons of strength, care, and love. In addition, many of them shared they learned specific expectations for how to be a woman, how to dress, who to date, and how to treat people.

Magdalena shared some of the lessons she learned as a child from her mother, "I feel like the nature of catering to the folks. It's something that I was taught a lot about

when I was a kid from my mom particularly, like catering and like home keeping, hosting... those kinds of things are very much my love language now and I don't see it as pertaining to an oppressive thing that I had growing up.” (Interview #4, Magdalena).

Magdalena incorporated these lessons into her leadership.

Teresa also shared lessons of strength and love from her mother. Teresa’s mother immigrated from the Philippines and always did her best to provide for her family. Teresa shared, “despite whatever struggles she was going through, being an immigrant in America, creating a new life for her family, she was always willing give back and be there for people.” (Interview #3, Teresa). Teresa incorporates the lessons of strength and love she learned from her mother into her leadership.

When asking Gabriela about her Pinay identity she shared, “I was raised to be obedient and have respect for elders and not really talk back. That has played an issue in who I am as an adult and I need to learn how to speak up and just be assertive” (Interview #2, Gabriela). Being taught to be obedient and silent played a role in how she navigated the world as an adult.

In the Community

In addition to constructing their identities at home, this group of Pinays are shaped by their experiences and the people they met being part of different communities. Each of the participants stressed how important it was for them to grow up around other people of color and in diverse neighborhoods. Growing up in racially diverse communities exposed this group of Pinays to other ethnic and cultural groups that played a role in their upbringing. They shared with the researcher that they felt comfortable being around different groups of people and felt like they had a more critical or open

mind because of this. Many of the participants attended colleges or universities with Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies programs where they joined collegiate Filipino student organizations, created their own chosen-family, and built mentorships with professors.

Collegiate Filipino Student Organizations and Peer Relationships

All seven of the participants graduated from universities in Northern California. These universities also had on-campus Filipino student organizations of which created opportunities for these Pinays to learn more about the history, culture, and political affairs of the Philippines, participate in political and social events, and build lasting relationships with others. Despite being around other Filipinos and People of Color growing up, six of the seven participants shared that they did not fully address their Filipino identity until they joined these student organizations. Filipino collegiate student organizations played a role in reawakening or activating these Pinays to connect with their Filipino identity.

For some, joining these organizations taught them more about their Philippine heritage, “Joining these organizations brought me closer to the Philippines and understanding the culture and history. But not necessarily closer to my family’s history” (Interview #2, Gabriela). These student organizations frequently hosted workshops and educational events around Philippine history, culture, and art. One of the biggest events of the year is *Pilipino Cultural Night*, where members from the student organization perform Philippine cultural dances from across the archipelago in celebration of their identities as Filipinx Americans. For Gabriela, being a part of these events brought her closer to understanding the Philippines’ culture and history.

In building their knowledge of their ancestral homeland, they continued to contextualize their Filipino American identity in the Bay Area. As a product of joining Filipino organizations and attending Filipino-focused events, these Pinays continued their journeys in constructing their identities.

The participants built strong relationships with their peers which then turned into their second families. Having these support networks proved critical to this group's development. For one participant, joining a Filipina sorority brought community, sisterhood, and support throughout college. Some of the Filipino student organizations hosted inhouse mentorship programs like a *Kuya Ate Ading*⁶ Program that emphasized peer mentorship, guidance, and support for its members. For Magdalena, the people she met in these programs are now her chosen family, "Going to [Magdalena's college], having the friends that I've had and that I've been blessed with, who have supported me and have loved me through this time are my chosen family, they still hold me down now" (Interview #3, Magdalena). Teresa, Carmen, Gabriela, Fe, and Maya mentioned they still maintain relationships with the people they've met from these organizations and continue to go to them for support and guidance.

Mentors

In addition to leaning on their peer relationships, many of the Pinays in this study mentioned that their mentors offered the strongest support and guidance to them as they navigated college and pursued their current professional fields. Many of them took classes or graduated with degrees in Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, Public

⁶ Kuya/ Ate/ Ading Program. Kuya – Tagalog word for older brother. Ate – Tagalog word for older sister. Ading – Ilokano word for younger sibling. Programs like these pair students with each other to serve as a foundation of support during their college careers.

Health and or Educational Leadership. It is within these classes, that this group of Pinays met their Pinay professors and mentors.

Teresa spoke candidly about her Pinay mentors, “Both of them inspired me to give back to the youth, and make sure the youth are getting the support that they need either academically, mentally, emotionally, and holistically” (Interview #3, Teresa). Teresa’s Pinay mentors taught her important aspects of leadership and care.

Another Pinay professor influenced Carmen to pursue her current field of educational research, “I want to be like the professors that I had, the mentors that I have that are strong-minded Pinay women” (Interview #5, Carmen). For Carmen, her mentor supported her throughout college. Now Carmen wanted to model her leadership after her mentors.

Participants mentioned not having any Pinay teachers, mentors, bosses, or co-workers until they met their professors. This lack of Pinay representation in a professional space made a profound impact on them that lead them to not only strengthen their relationships with these professors but become mentors for others. Fe shared, “I started mentoring young Asian American women in journalism because I never had a mentor that looked like me. So I want to do that for other women” (Interview #7, Fe). Now, Fe takes time to meet with younger journalism students or colleagues to offer advice or support.

June shared that this lack of having older Filipinos that she could go to lead her to becoming a strong mentor for others, “I’ve never had a Filipino teacher, coach, mentor boss. So, I’m constantly trying to fill that void for others. I think that not having a Filipino

teacher, mentor, boss ever in my literally 30 years of being a student and in education is a huge loss” (Interview #6, June). Mentorship is important to the Pinays in this study.

This group of Pinays felt othered in their childhood by classmates, friends, or community members. As they grew older, they strengthened their connection to their Filipinx American identity through their experiences in collegiate student organizations and relied on their peer relationships and mentors for support.

Experiences and their Leadership Philosophies

This section attempts to piece together the research participants’ identities and their leadership philosophies. This group of Pinays’ leadership philosophies are rooted in the past, present, and future. Their past experiences became the foundation for their leadership philosophies, while they work toward more equitable and just futures for the communities they serve. When the researcher asked the group of participants about their work and how they came to the roles they are in, every person gave clear explanations for the reasons they do what they do. It was during this part of the interview when being asked about their leadership at work, that each of the participants’ purpose and passion really came through in their answers. Community-based organizations work toward serving the communities of which they belong and work toward addressing social change. The participants are clearly rooted in social justice and addressing the different levels of oppression that affect the communities they serve. Three common phenomena arose from the data that illuminates the ways their experiences and identities inform their leadership philosophies: (1) taking and making space, (2) breaking silence and stereotypes (3) sisterhood: the Ate/ Manang effect.

Taking and Making Space

The idea of *taking space* can be thought of in two ways: 1) the spaces occupied by someone and 2) the spaces the participants occupy. The idea of *making space* can also be thought of as creating more opportunities to uplift and help others to succeed. Space is in reference to the physical, virtual, mental, or emotional manifestation of the energy we have and give to others. The participants are almost hyper-aware of this idea of space. Many shared that they've experienced some form of oppression and hardship. Because of these experiences they want to work to address societal issues so others don't have to experience them. All of the participants share that they are conscious of how much space they do and do not take up in a professional setting.

Taking Space

Some of the participants shared they are conscious of the spaces they take up at work. They feel like they have to change the ways they are present in meetings to be portrayed as nice, professional, and friendly.

Maya went into detail about this aspect of space. When she speaks with clients she tries to come off as friendly and nice so people will want to work with her business, "I do feel obligated to give off a friendlier vibe, even through a screen. Because I am a woman or because maybe if I don't say or type it out in a certain way, someone might take in a weird way. Like ooh she was being kind of bitchy" (Interview #1, Maya).

Magdalena shared that in meetings she is conscious of the ways she is perceived telling the researcher, "I shrink myself in the Zoom box that has already shrunk so that I don't come off as threatening or so they don't assume that I'm threatening" (Interview #4, Magdalena). For Magdalena, she tries to take up less space in meetings.

Carmen shared that as one of the few Pinays in her workplace, “My own identity can sometimes feel like a weight and sometimes I ask myself do I belong here? Am I working hard enough? Am I doing the work? So, while there is a lot of credit to give to myself, there are days where I do have a lot of doubt because of the position that I’m in and the identities that I hold.” (Interview #5, Carmen). For Carmen and the other participants, they are very aware of the spaces they take up at work and in professional settings.

Making Space

The idea of *taking and making space* comes directly from Teresa. She currently works with middle school-aged youth managing a college and career awareness pathways program and teaches important social-emotional skills. Because Teresa works with youth, she described her leadership philosophy as, “In simple terms it is taking and making space...I know when to step up and when to give others a chance to step up because if you're constantly saying, ‘I can do it, I can do this’ you're taking away opportunities for other people to grow too” (Interview #3, Teresa). Teresa models leadership to her students by creating different opportunities for them to grow as leaders too.

Many of the participants notice who is in the room, who is speaking, who is not speaking, and they make it a point to uplift others and that other people’s voices are heard. For example, some Pinays went into workforce development to educate youth on how to prepare for careers outside of school because they want to see other people succeed. They acknowledge that they want to carve out space not just for themselves, but for others. The Pinays in this study are conscious of the space around them, the ways they

interact with the people in their space, and actively look for ways to include others in that space.

Breaking Silence and Stereotypes

The theme of breaking silence and stereotypes addresses some very painful experiences for this group of Pinays. Breaking silence can be thought of in terms of the participants recognizing when they were silent in situations and should have spoken up to advocate for themselves or their community. Breaking stereotypes include breaking traditional or old ideas of what it is considered to be “Pinay.” Like mentioned previously, these Pinays were taught to behave, dress, and act in a certain way. This group of Pinay leaders are transforming what it means to be Pinay leaders by speaking up and dismantling toxic and negative stereotypes.

Breaking Silence

The theme of breaking silence highlights when the research participants were silent in certain situations at work and how they’re learning to use their voices. Being silent can be thought of as the participants not verbally speaking up at work or in a different professional settings. Some of them articulated the ways they learned from being silent and how they wished they spoke up more during those situations. As leaders in community-based organizations they have a responsibility to advocate not just for themselves, but the communities they serve. It is important to have and use their voices to fight for change.

The theme of breaking silence can be seen with Gabriela’s experience working as a fundraiser for a youth-serving non-profit organization. She shared a personal and painful story from a meeting with a small group of predominantly white donors. During

this meeting some of the donors said something disrespectful about a youth member in the organization. Because the people in the meeting held higher positions of leadership and were major donors to the organization, she found it difficult to challenge their words and defend the youth. After the meeting, she shared the experience with her colleagues and trusted mentors to better understand the situation. She felt humiliated, weak, and powerless in that situation. She shared, “[the people in the meeting] didn’t see me or [my fellow Pinay colleague], because we represent the kids, and because we’re Asian. They talked over us and didn’t consider how we would feel.” (Interview #2, Gabriela). This experience became a catalyst for Gabriela. In a professional setting such as this, Gabriela saw how staying silent made a negative impact on not just herself but the youth she was serving. After this, Gabriela shared that she is working to speak up more to defend herself and the youth she serves.

Carmen shared that she is still finding her voice at work. Her identity as a young Pinay working with older, predominately white colleagues plays a role in the ways she uses her voice. She expressed that because she is one of the few people of color at work, “I feel imposter syndrome constantly. Although we do work toward social justice and equity there are times where it’s different” (Interview #5, Carmen). These participants shared their experiences of breaking silence and speaking up in oftentimes white professional spaces.

Breaking Stereotypes

The theme of breaking stereotypes indicates when this group of Pinay leaders challenged old ideas that Asian women or Pinays are quiet, submissive, and not suitable for positions of leadership or that Filipinos only become nurses. In discussing stereotypes

of Filipina women, June shared her perspective, “I get really upset at [them] because I feel like it feeds into the stereotype that Filipino women don't have a voice, or aren't aggressive or aren't assertive. Even though that's who I am, I feel like there's just so much internalized stuff around seeming weak” (Interview #7, June). Whether they experience stereotyping at work or in society, this group challenges those stereotypes as Pinay leaders.

Teresa demonstrates breaking stereotypes as a Pinay teacher through sharing her experiences working in schools. At one of the middle schools, she works at some of the teachers and staff assumed she was a student and treated her as such. When staff saw her in the hallways during class or working in a classroom during lunch, they assumed she was somewhere she was not supposed to be. She often got told to put her cell phone away or get back to class until she explained, she too was an employee at the school. People around her – consciously or unconsciously - stereotyped her as too young or too brown to be a teacher and employee. Teresa expressed her anger and frustration in those moments, “You know those people are not going to apologize to you. Like am I not worthy of an apology?” (Interview #3, Teresa). Experiences like this informs the way she carries herself in professional settings. She is conscious of how she walks, stands, speaks, dresses, and is always embodying what she considers a Pinay teacher to look and act like.

All of the research participants break away from the career stereotype of that Filipinxs become a nurses or work in health care. All of the participants work in community-based organizations, government services or operate their own small business.

During the middle of pandemic, Maya started a small business with her brother selling their favorite comfort foods. Maya shared, “we like to focus on community, and we want to be able to serve food to our community and share a part of ourselves with people, and hopefully like food does, bring people together” (Interview #1, Maya). Maya shared the ups and downs of starting a business during the pandemic but was surprised with how much support she has received. Instead of competing with other businesses, Maya works with other small business to uplift each other and teach each other new skills. She shared a story of connecting with her neighbor, “I invited him over to watch me do a photoshoot in my backyard. I helped him learn how to frame his photos, and do photography so he can sell his products”. She also learned new baking recipes and techniques from another neighbor. Collaborating with different members of her community has allowed Maya to grow her business. While Maya runs a business, she thinks it important to dismantle the notion of competition and include others in her success.

Fe breaks career expectations as a Filipina journalist. While society may have placed an expectation onto Filipinos to become nurses, she never felt that pressure from her parents to pursue a field in health care. She shared, “my parents never really second guessed or questioned my career path and I think they were very supportive of that. Even if it was very nontraditional, especially in a large Filipino community (Interview #7, Fe). This support enabled Fe to pursue her passion in journalism. As a Pinay journalist, she is oftentimes the only one in the newsroom. In her work she regularly reports on issues that matter to the Bay Area, people of color and other marginalized peoples.

Sisterhood

Sisterhood and mentorship proved to be a strong aspect in many of the Pinays' leadership. The idea of an "*Ate Effect*" came directly from the interview with Magdalena, "The Ate Effect, having somebody look up to you makes me want to be better" (Interview #4, Magdalena). From her time a collegiate Filipino student organization, Magdalena built strong relationships with her peers that turned into her second family. As one of the older members of that family, she felt a responsibility to set an example and take care of her younger members. This carries into her work where she mentors young adults as they transition into the workforce.

Carmen shared growing up as the eldest sibling had an impact on her as well, "Being [her sibling's] *Ate* made me grow my ability and capacity to care and grow the desire to look out for him. Overall, it helped me build that need to care" (Interview #5, Carmen). Carmen learned the skills to take care of others from being the eldest child in her family.

Many of the participants connect with other women for support and community in their workplaces. June shared that she connected with the researcher because of their shared Pinay identity, "I was excited to connect with you offline because I can't even recall the last time I was in a [professional setting] with another Filipino" (Interview #6, June). This speaks to the lack of Pinay representation in professional settings.

The research participants further added that many of their own experiences are in relation to other Pinays. Being Pinay is a communal experience. Carmen articulated her experience of being Pinay and the ways it informs her leadership, "I can't think of being Pinay without other Pinays. I feel like feeling Pinay is such a collective feeling. It's

always with other people where I feel that the strongest like, yeah this is a Pinay space. I'm proud to be a Pinay” (Interview #5, Carmen). As one of the few Pinays in her workplace, Carmen relies on other Pinays outside of her organization for support and guidance. She shared that many of experiences growing up and in college were with other Pinays. To Carmen and others, being Pinay and being a Pinay leader, is an experience that includes others.

Leadership in Action

For this group of Pinays, their leadership is rooted in collective love and care and is shown in their everyday actions and the ways they address inequities. Their leadership actions range from the everyday responsibilities that may go unnoticed to major movement building and community organizing within their workplaces. In addition, many of the participants stressed the importance of having leadership skills in order to get their jobs done. This section attempts to articulate that Pinays demonstrate their leadership through (1) the leadership skills they have (2) collective love and care and (3) in addressing inequities.

Leadership Skills

In addition to practicing care and love, many of the participants stressed the importance of also having the technical skills to lead. Maya shared her leadership philosophy in three simple words, “communicate, problem solve, and inspire” (Interview #1, Maya). As a business owner, Maya has to communicate with her partners and clients. If problems arise, Maya is the one to come up with a solution. Maya works to inspire not only her team, but the community she is in to come together and support each other.

For June she shared that someone in a leadership position may know leadership theory, but if they cannot put that theory into practice, then they are stuck. She shared having skills as a practitioner is critical to leadership, “So I had the skills, right? I had the administrative skill, I had the communication skills, the organization skills. If you're hella unorganized you can't do this job because it would be impossible” (Interview #6, June). For June, a leadership philosophy and leadership skills are both needed as a leader.

Gabriela also shared that in her line of work as a fundraiser, it is important to have specific set of skills. She shared that she plans multiple fundraising events every year and that, “as the leader I need to have the organizational plan of how to run the event and then also delegate roles to people who can support with planning the event. Over the years I have found the crew I want by my side to help run these events” (Interview #2, Gabriela).

Collective Love and Care

Collective love and care became a central theme to many of the interviews with this group of Pinays. Collective love and care in a professional setting may look different across organizations. This group of Pinays demonstrate care and love in the ways they lead at work and in their communities.

Maya relies on the support and mentorship from fellow Pinays and small business owners to grow and develop her small business. She shared stories of trading recipes and marketing techniques with her neighbors or that she often partners with other locally owned businesses in the Bay Area to strengthen relationships and promote each other. Maya shared, “We have to rely on each other. We are working to build a foundation, build community and build connections with one another to support each other.” (Interview #1, Maya).

Carmen is constantly working with a lot of different people. When it came to sharing her leadership at work, she articulated that her strength comes from her heart, “But all of it comes from the heart and I feel like it's the heart that really allows us to use our voices and really speak out” (Interview #5, Carmen). Carmen allows herself to be open and vulnerable with her colleagues. As a leader, her ability to care for colleagues and community comes from being open and honest. Continuing her answer, “The ability to be honest about what you can and can't do and where you're at I think is very important in terms of leadership, and also being able to open a space that allows for transparency and honesty. Because I feel like that is one of the major things in building a foundation on relationship with you, your team, and your colleagues” (Interview #5, Carmen).

Magdalena's leadership furthers the theme of collective care and love in her leadership. Like Carmen, Magdalena works with a lot of different people. She works with young adults transitioning into the workforce. Because of this, she leads by supporting her colleagues and youth in order to build community. She shared, “I am working with the intention to build each other up, that is everyone you are working with becomes your community. If I can do something small to teach someone something, it's better for the entire group. I want everyone to come together and collectively enjoy the work” (Interview #4, Magdalena).

Teresa also shares moments of collective care and love in her leadership. Teresa understands the importance of community wellness and taking care of each other. Many of these lessons of collective love and care came from her family and mentors. Teresa shared a moment when she stepped in to help her team. Some of her colleagues needed support on a project, she helped by sharing responsibilities and filling in when needed.

She shared, “I saw where I could step in in any way to take some of the workload off the coordinators and remind folks that I am here. I was more than happy to provide support in any way to alleviate the stress” (Interview #3 Teresa).

Addressing Inequities and Crises

On a global level, the world continues to experience the COVID-19 pandemic, state violence against black people, racist hate crimes against Asian Americans and more. In 2020 the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery sparked racial justice protests in the United States and around the world to abolish state sanctioned violence against black people. For some of the Pinay leaders in this study, they practice care and love through addressing inequities in their own workplaces and communities. The women in this study care and love not just for themselves, but for their colleagues, their communities and beyond. Many of the Pinays work in community-based organizations to address systemic oppression and inequities.

Two Pinays shared that in the Summer of 2020, they joined special committees at work to address white supremacy and racism in their workplaces, in addition to their everyday responsibilities. They asked not to be named while describing their examples. These women demonstrated their leadership by stepping into new and different roles at work to address inequities and make change. It is important to note, these women were not monetarily compensated for this additional work. These women felt their background and identity factored into their decision to participate in these committees. Some of these responsibilities included organizing their fellow colleagues of color, writing statements, working as liaisons between management and employees. They felt that if they did not participate in these activities some of the work would not get done. These women

continued to work and lead their communities despite an ongoing a public health crisis and social unrest.

Another Pinay shared a pivotal moment in becoming the leader she is today. She shared a personal story of experiencing gun violence at her workplace. This experience forced her to confront her role as an educator and ways to put her leadership into practice. She saw the need to expand her reach by teaching and educating more youth. The lessons from this event lead her to ultimately led her to the role she is in today.

Summary

Pinays derive their leadership from the lessons they learned at home, in their communities, and with their loved ones. Having been othered and dehumanized in the past, these Pinays work to create space to uplift others. At home they were taught love and care from their mothers, aunties, grandmothers, and other relatives. They have taken these lessons beyond their families and into their communities. They rely on their chosen families and mentors. They break traditional stereotypes of Pinays. Most importantly, their strength, resolve, and love are evident throughout their everyday leadership and in addressing inequities.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This research study puts Pinay voices and experiences at the center of discourse to understand our struggles, build relationships with one another, and create action plans for building more equitable and just futures. *Pinayism*, is both a framework for Pinays to connect our personal and global experiences together to create spaces of resistance against oppression. This study puts *Pinayism into praxis* through creating “engaged scholarship that expresses [Pinays’] perspectives and counternarratives” (Tintiango-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009, p. 180). This study aimed to further understand Pinay identity development, experiences working in community based-organizations, and the way these experiences inform their leadership. Through a grounded theory approach, this exploratory study aimed to understand and articulate the different aspects of Pinay leadership.

Discussion

Pinay Identity – Connections

As mentioned in previous chapters, *kapwa*, is a Filipino cultural value that emphasizes shared identity and connection among Filipino peoples (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). *Kapwa* is the collective identity and experiences of Filipinxs. The participants may not personally know one another, but are connected through their participation in this research study. Every single interview became moments of shared joy, anger, sadness, triumph, and connection between the researcher and the participants. In sharing parts of their souls with the researcher, the interviews became a sort of sacred-space for Pinays to dialogue, build, honor each other, and create spaces of resistance.

This study attempted to articulate their shared experiences and the ways they inform their leadership.

Moving Toward Decolonization

One major theme of Filipinx American identity development is the (re)learning of one's history and culture. The participants' experiences of being othered or feeling inferior because of their Filipino American identity sheds light on an important phenomenon experienced by colonized peoples. Filipino and Filipino American scholars articulate this phenomenon as colonial mentality, where, as an effect of colonialism, individuals and communities consciously and unconsciously view themselves and their culture as inferior (Strobel, 2001; David & Okazaki, 2006; Nadal, 2001; David, 2013). My findings suggest that there may be moments of colonial mentality present in some of the Pinays' upbringings. Some examples include when Gabriela shared her story of "wanting to be Vietnamese," or not wanting to explore her Filipina identity. She was afraid she would be judged for not knowing certain cultural customs or the language. The other Pinays shared similar stories of people making their Filipino ethnic identity apparent by othering or excluding them. These experiences may have ignited their feelings of inferiority, shame, and confusion around their Pinay identity that informs their leadership philosophies today.

Moving beyond colonial mentality, decolonization is the process to dismantle those beliefs and move forward into a new way of being that challenges these internalized oppressions. As is evident in other studies Andresen (2013), Letana (2016), and Francisco (2020), the process of decolonization begins with learning about personal histories. This group of Pinays engage in the process of decolonization - the unlearning of

internalized oppression they formed growing up - by further connecting and strengthening their Filipina American and Pinay identity.

The Pinays in this research study participated in decolonial spaces like Filipino community-based organizations, took courses in Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies, and learned more about their Philippine history and ancestry. For some, Filipinx collegiate student organizations played a formative role in the process of decolonization. This allowed them the opportunities to learn and connect to their Filipina identity. For some Filipinx Americans this process of relearning is a source of empowerment. Gabriela shared that joining these organizations brought her closer to her identity as a Filipina American. Others like Teresa, Carmen, Magdalena, and Maya shared that these spaces helped create a community of peers that eventually turned into their second families. The process of decolonization is both an individual and communal act, the student organizations the Pinays belonged to may have offered a communal space for their members to connect to their Philippine/ Filipino American identity.

Expectations

Letana (2016) found there is a strong connection between Filipinx Americans and their families. Their study articulates the pressure that Filipinx Americans have to meet familial expectations of having a financially stable job stems from their parents' desires for their children to succeed in the United States. My study partially affirms those findings as many of the Pinays in this study also cite their family as a major influence in their identity development. At Home these Pinays learned expectations of how a Filipina should dress, be silent and serve others, while simultaneously saw examples of strength, resilience and love in action put forth by the women in their families.

However, some participants shared that they were grateful their families or parents did not have those expectations to pursue a lucrative career or one in health care. Fe shared there may have been societal expectations for her to become a nurse or lawyer, but her parents almost never pushed her to pursue those careers. Fe's experiences and others like it shed light on the diverse experiences that Filipinx Americans have. There is a difference between familial and societal expectations. All of the Pinays in this study push back against societal expectations of pursuing careers in healthcare.

Experiences Inform Their Leadership

Moving toward humanization

This group of Pinays' leadership is rooted in three common themes of *taking and making space, breaking silence and stereotypes, and sisterhood*. In examining these themes further, they are all connected through past experiences where the participants felt dehumanized, humiliated, or left without support. Teresa shared stories of being confused as a student at the schools she worked at. Gabriela shared experiences of being talked over and misrepresented in meetings with major donors. In both of their situations, they never received apologies or follow-up from the people who caused harm. Teresa brought up an important point, sharing with the researcher, "Am I not worthy of an apology?" (Interview #3, Teresa). The people in these situations didn't take the time to address their wrongdoings, and some of them may have not even known they did something wrong. In essence they didn't see any fault in their actions. Those experiences dehumanized and humiliated the participants, making them feel angry and inferior in the workplace. Dehumanization is to take away someone's humanity and see them as something less than that. As Freire (1996) writes, dehumanization is a tool used by the oppressors to

maintain domination over the oppressed. Freire also asserts that the process of dehumanization, “marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it” (Freire, 1996, p. 26). While Teresa and Gabriela were dehumanized in those situations, those who hurt them may lack humanity in the ways they treated the participants.

Experiences like Teresa’s and Gabriela’s are just two examples of being dehumanized in the workplace. These moments influenced the participants to humanize others. Instead of continuing a cycle of oppression and dehumanization, these Pinays create space for others like them to succeed. Freire (1996) continues that “authentic liberation is the process of humanization... Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 79). The women in this study constantly examine their conditions and the ways to uplift their communities. They do not want to repeat the same painful moments or experiences or inflict them on others. The themes of taking and making space and breaking silence and stereotypes may stem from experiences of dehumanization and anger. However, their leadership also stems from other important places.

Sisterhood and Mentorship

Among these Pinays, mentorship and sisterhood are cornerstones of their leadership. The practice of sisterhood may stem from opposite ends of the spectrum: some of them were fostered by many Pinay mentors, while others had no Pinay teachers or mentors to guide them through their development. Carmen, Teresa and Magdalena, have many Pinay mentors and mentioned the importance of having strong Pinay mentors in their lives. They wanted to model their leadership after their mentors because of the

tremendous support and guidance they received. June and Fe shared they did not have Pinay mentors, teachers, or coaches and that is the reason they provide mentorship and sisterhood to other young women of color. They may provide sisterhood and mentorship as a way to make up for a lack of Pinay representation in professional settings.

The theme of sisterhood and mentorship is important and critical to current Pinay epistemologies in and out of leadership. This theme further builds on Pinay scholarship that, “Pinayism in academia is not just about theory production. Its key components also include accessibility and mentorship” (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009, p. 185). Pinay praxis is working to include other Pinays and create pathways for more Pinay leaders. Pinays include and guide other Pinays, regardless of having a leadership title. Principles of Pinayism may exist in the participants leadership through the ways they take and make space for others and in building strong relationships with other women.

Sisterhood is the connection between Pinays and the ways we uplift each other; it may be a prevalent phenomenon for Pinays, leader or not. Holding space – physical or virtual – for one another is important to the Pinay experience. Continuing the theme of Pinay sisterhood, Francisco (2020) mentions various community events that create spaces for Pinay professionals to build relationships, teach, mentor, and celebrate their identities as Pinays. Events like the Fly Pinays Summit (San Jose, CA) and the Pinayista Conference (San Francisco, CA) can serve as decolonial spaces of resistance. Events like these connect Pinays to each other and their Filipinx American identity. Some of the research participants mentioned attending these events had a powerful impact on them. Attending the Pinayista Conference became a point of activation for Maya. She became eager to connect and work with more Pinays afterward. For Carmen and June, the Pinay

experience is inherently linked to other Pinays. For them, being Pinay is a communal experiences that is defined in relation to other Pinays.

The Pinays in this study ground their leadership in humanization and sisterhood. Past experiences of dehumanization, humiliation, anger or lack of support influenced their leadership philosophies to include and uplift others. Because of these experiences, these Pinays work toward ending cycles of oppression.

Pinay Leadership in Action

The Pinays in this study enact leadership through collective care and love and in the ways they address inequities affecting their communities. For this group, collective care and love is seen in their everyday leadership actions. Many of them first learned love and care from the women in their families and life. Some mentioned that their mothers taught them to serve and take care of those around them. These women carried these lessons into their workplaces. They translated the idea of serving others into serving their communities through the work that they do. As part of community-based organizations they are constantly working to teach, provide programs and services, advocate, and uplift their communities.

Care and Love

Care and Love are evident in the everyday actions of this group of Pinay leaders. They transformed many old and traditional expectations of what it means to be Pinay into something more. Gabriela and Magdalena transformed the lessons they learned at home – about how to act and care for others - into the ways they care and lead at work. These Pinays are reimagining what it means to take care of others, especially in non-Filipino

spaces. These women are dismantling misogyny, sexism, racism, and other systems of inequities in different ways that their mothers may have not.

Maya's small business revolves around collective love and care. This is evident in the ways she offers support and mentorship to fellow businesses. In addition, her business builds community by bringing people together around one common thread: food. Maya's leadership and business build love and care in her community and clients.

Other Pinay leaders like Teresa and Carmen showed their love and care in the ways they interact with the people they work with. Teresa often checks-in with her colleagues, steps-in to help her team, or finds ways to incorporate these lessons with her youth. Carmen isn't afraid to display empathy and authenticity at work. Her leadership evolved over the years to include being authentic and honest about her capacity. She shows care through being authentic about her capacity, but doing the same with her colleagues. For this group of Pinays, the aspect of care and love of Pinay leadership pushes back against hierarchical and often times unempathetic professional spaces. Teresa breaks hierarchy by supporting her team, regardless of title or position. Carmen practices empathy with her teammates to build stronger relationships. Collective love and care come from many lessons learned at home and are translated into the ways they lead.

Addressing Inequities

Critical Leadership Praxis is a framework and way for leaders to connect their individual identity to their communities (Daus-Magbual, 2011). Critical leaders practice leadership skills rooted in social justice and equity (Daus-Magbual, 2011). Whether they are aware of it or not, there may be moments of Critical Leadership Praxis incorporated into the participants' leadership actions. This can be seen in at least two of the Pinay

leaders in this study. They saw the connections between their positions as leaders at work to what was happening in the community and world around them. They saw a need to address specific and localized problems within their reach. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, sparked racial justice protests across the United States and around the world. In the summer of 2020, the two Pinays in this study took on additional responsibilities at work to address white supremacy and racism in their own workplaces. These moments of crises illuminate the injustices and inequities that exist throughout the United States and in their communities. Many of the women were already doing social justice work, crises like the pandemic elevated their sense of urgency to serve their communities.

Pinay leader, June, works in a certain region of the Bay Area because she wanted to serve even more Filipino American youth. She also saw a connection between her identity as Pinay, a leader, and ways to transform her community. Her past experiences as a classroom teacher teaching a social justice curriculum forced her to confront and transform her own leadership and teaching pedagogy. She believes that leaders need to have the necessary skills in order to lead people. Critical Leadership Praxis is a way for teachers and leaders to practice leadership skills rooted in social justice and equity (Daus-Magbual, 2011). June continues to practice and sharpen her leadership skills; she is in the process of finishing a graduate degree in Leadership Studies. However, June was the first participant to mention that any theory or beliefs about leadership become moot if the person does not know how to put them into practice. June's leadership engages in praxis - a cycle of theory, action, and reflection – to sharpen her leadership skills.

Pinay Leaders

This research examined Pinay experiences, how they inform their leadership, and how they put their leadership into action. Much of the research participants' work centers around addressing systemic inequities and making space for their communities to succeed. Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento writes that "Pinayist educators create communities of social justice in the classroom" (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009, p. 185). Moving beyond the classroom and into community-based organizations, many Pinays in this study are actively working to create communities of social justice. Based off of the findings of this study, one aspect of Pinay leadership is to create communities of social justice, including others and working toward liberation.

Pinay leadership may look different for each of the participants. However, it is rooted in their identities as Pinays and Filipina Americans. Through a process of decolonization, (re)learning and (re)connecting to one's identity and history, these Pinay leaders carry a legacy of activism and self-determination throughout their work and lives. Building on Pinay epistemologies, critical Pinay leadership in action may look like collective love and care to make space and include others to uplift and transform their communities. Pinay leadership does not have to exist only within a community-based organization or classroom, but exists in all other aspects of life. Based on this study, Pinay leaders address inequities in their workplaces and communities. They are rooted in social justice and working toward liberation.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The first limitation revolves around research design and approach. A grounded theory approach was utilized to collect data,

perform a thematic analysis, to explore a Pinay-centered leadership philosophy rooted in decolonization and collective love and care. A different approach may be useful in order to fully optimize the Pinay participants' voices and data. For example, an ethnographic narrative or participatory action research approach may be useful for this type of study. These types of approaches would allow the researcher to tell the participants' stories in a more flexible and authentic way that better honors the Pinays' experiences. Because this study captures the data from seven different individuals working at seven different community-based organizations, it may be helpful to look at one community-based organization or broaden population of Pinays to include more narratives to capture a more specific or broader picture of Pinay leadership.

In addition to research design, I would reevaluate the interview questions and include surveys to collect quantitative data on the participants. The current interview questions performed well, but a further investigation into the Pinays' family backgrounds and the ways they employ leadership at work and in their communities would be needed to better answer the research questions. If possible, I would include observations of the Pinays' workplace or community to get a well-rounded understanding of the communities they serve. A second or follow-up interview would also help in providing more context and depth to the data collected.

My personal identity is not a limitation but does play a role in the research. Like the research participants and many other Filipinx Americans, I am also engaging in the process of decolonization to (re)learn and (re)connect to my Pinay identity. I share similar experiences to the research participants. For example, being othered or excluded, having familial expectations, participating in collegiate student organizations that

activated me, and working in community-based organizations. However, I also have very different experiences to the participants. One of the participants, Carmen, reminded me that “if you’re Pinay, you’re Pinay” and reaffirmed my own Pinay identity and voice in this study. This research served as a way for me to further develop my ethnic identity and engage in scholarly Filipinx American discourse. Please understand it was difficult to articulate and write about the Filipinx American experience in such an academic and professional way. I hope I accurately reflected our experiences and shed light on some of the many diverse experiences we have as a community.

As both a Pinay leader and researcher for this study, there were many times throughout that I wanted to interview myself or find a way to include my own voice into the data. Because of the grounded theory approach, my findings and discussion are based on the participants and not my own. This is where a participatory action research study design would be beneficial, so I, as the researcher, would have the opportunity to participate in the study as well. Regardless, I worked to be as objective as possible.

Recommendations for Future Research

As a researcher, scholar, and leader, I am excited at the possibilities of future research that centers Pinays’ voices. This research project also serves as a portal into what is possible in regards to Pinays and academia. Future researchers may want to examine different aspects of the Pinays’ identity to better understand how it impacted them. For example, many of the Pinays took Ethnic Studies courses or participated in social justice-oriented organizations. This speaks to the impact that higher education may have on Pinays. What does Pinay identity development look like across other college campuses? On a larger scale, how do these experiences build Pinay leaders? Four of the

seven participants mentioned similar Pinay mentors that supported and influenced them to pursue their fields. Future research may be needed around this aspect to better understand how mentorships promote Pinay leadership pipelines. Perhaps a case-study or participatory action research methods into sisterhood and mentorship would increase our understanding of this phenomenon. Future research may want to include the Filipinx American population as whole to include our Pinoy voices. It takes an entire community to make change, and it is important and beneficial to include Pinoys experiences as well.

Researchers from different disciplines may also be interested in examining the Filipinx American experience through their own fields. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* and researchers like EJR David took a psychological/ scientific approach to studying colonial mentality. More quantitative and mixed methods approaches would also be beneficial to expanding on research studies like this one.

Conclusions

This study shed light on Pinays experiences in community-based organizations to further understand Pinay leadership. Pinays are often excluded from history and their stories sidelined. Because of the colonial legacies of the Spanish and US, Filipinx Americans experience a specific form of colonial mentality that may lead to internalized oppression and negative self-view of one's own identity, culture, and community. Despite this, Pinays challenge these negative and toxic stereotypes. This study employs Pinay pedagogy and praxis to create spaces of resistance for the Pinay participants to reflect on their identity, build relationships, and create action plans. The Pinay leaders in the study practice their leadership every day and especially in times of crises. Through a grounded theory approach, findings suggest that Pinay leadership is rooted in the idea of collective

care and love. Many of the participants made it apparent they learned this idea of care from their families, chosen families, and mentors. They carry this into their leadership and on the teams, they work in. These Pinays are redefining what it means to be a leader in 2021.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM



Consent Form for Adults

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study entitled “An Examination of Pinay Leadership in Community Based Organizations” conducted by Emily Enriquez, a Masters student in the Department of Leadership Studies at the University of San Francisco. This faculty supervisor for this study is Professor Seenae Chong, a professor in the Department of Leadership Studies at the University of San Francisco.

WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:

The purpose of this research study is to understand Filipina Americans’ or Pinays’ unique experiences in community-based organization and other public organizations. This study will be conducted among Pinay identified individuals currently working in or had experience in community-based organizations or similar settings.

WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:

During this study, the following will happen:

You will be asked to participate in one 45–60-minute interview, where you will be asked questions about yourself, your identity, your experiences in leadership, and other follow up questions. With your permission, I will record the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, we can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.

DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:

Your participation in this study will involve one interview with a duration of approximately 45-60 minutes. The study will take place through a zoom video call or if the participant prefers, at a location that allows for social distance guidelines to be followed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

The risks and benefits associated with this study are a loss of your time and the risks associated with regular activities. The benefit of the study is that it may add to the research on the field of education and international/multicultural issues. This information, once collected, might be read by policymakers, educational experts, educators and scholars and could affect the educational

practice. If you do not want to participate in the study, you will not be mentioned in any documents of the study, and your decision to not participate will not be told to anyone. You may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty. If you are upset by any of the questions asked, the researcher will refer you to counseling services available publicly or at the university if you are a member of the academic community (student, staff or professor).

BENEFITS:

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study; however, the possible benefits to others include information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future. Through gaining an understanding of Pinays' experiences, we hope to validate and affirm the experiences of Filipina Americans and create more places for them in leadership and academia.

PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:

Any data you provide in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In any report published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant. To minimize the risks to confidentiality, real names will be replaced by pseudonyms on all interview and observation transcripts, and all audio files, observation notes, or other documents that contain personal identifiers will be stored in a password-protected computer or hard-drive that we will keep in a locked file cabinet until the research has been completed. Original audio-files will be destroyed at the completion of the study. Specifically, all information will be stored on a password-protected computer and any printouts in a locked file cabinet. Consent forms and any other identifiable data will be destroyed in 3 years from the date of data collection.

COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:

There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the principal investigator: [Emily Enriquez](mailto:emily.s.enriquez@gmail.com) at (714) 390-4372 or emily.s.enriquez@gmail.com or the faculty supervisor, Seenae Chong at (408) 421-2085 or srchong@usfca.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION. ANY QUESTIONS I HAVE ASKED HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today, it is nice to see you again/ meet you. As I mentioned before, I am a master's candidate at the University of San Francisco in the Organization and Leadership department. My thesis project is looking at and understanding Pinays' experiences in community-based organizations or public organizations. As a Pinay/ Filipina American myself, I want to further understand my and others' experiences working in non-profits and in leadership. Our experiences are so different from one another that I wanted to understand the differences and connections we have and what makes being a Pinay in nonprofits unique.

I really appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and share your own experiences.

There will be a 45–60-minute interview, with your permission, I plan to record this conversation, transcribe it and then use it for analysis purposes. I am going to ask you questions about yourself, your identity, what you do for work, and other follow-up questions.

I will use the recording to transcribe and use it for analysis purposes and then the recordings will be destroyed. I would like to remind you that you have the right to skip any questions and stop this interview at any time. Do you have any questions for me? Thank you and let's get started.

Interview Questions:

1. I would like to hear what you do at (*your work*) and how you came to (*that role*)?
 - a. Can you tell me how you go to your position?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* Who or what influenced you to pursue the field or position that you are in?
2. Can you tell me about a time you acted as a leader at your work?
3. How would you define your own leadership philosophy?
4. What parts of your personal history and background stand out to you as influencing the person you are today?
 - a. You can tell me anything from the beginning to where you were born to any recent experiences.
5. Will you describe a moment when you first noticed or experienced your race?
6. Are there specific experiences of yours that you think are uniquely Pinay?
7. Are there things about what is traditionally understood as being "Pinay" that you don't relate or connect to?
8. Have you ever felt that your background or perspectives were left out of what's considered Pinay? If you are willing, can you share a time when that happened?
9. In what ways does being Pinay play a role in your work and understanding of being a leader?
10. What are things that Pinays have to think about or do in leadership that is different than other folks? Can you give me an example from your own experiences?

11. Is there a person or persons you go to for support and personal/ professional development? Or are you that person for someone else?
 - a. If you would like, will you describe your relationship with them?
12. What are ways that being Pinay helped you as a leader OR being a leader helped you in who you are as a Pinay?
13. Is there anything else about being Pinay, being a Pinay leader, or just being a leader that you think is important for me to know about that we haven't discussed yet?

Demographic Questions:

14. What is your age?
15. What is your gender identity?
16. What ethnicities do you identify with?
17. Where were you born? If born outside the US, ask when they migrated to the US
18. How old were you when you immigrated?
19. Where (in what general region) do you live now?
20. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?