

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE RELATIONSHIP OF INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILY CONFLICT, RACISM-RELATED STRESS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AND THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ASIAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Counseling psychologists have long considered person-environment interactions (Gelso & Fretz, 2002). Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed an ecological model that broadened psychologists understanding of the multiple ecological contexts on development. The present study examined the role of two main ecological challenges: intergenerational family conflict and racism-related stress on the psychological well-being of Asian American college students ( $n = 131$ ) attending a large mid-Atlantic university. The findings of this present study support that these two ecological challenges are important to consider in conceptualization of the self-esteem problems, career problems, and interpersonal problems of Asian Americans. Significant relationships between these two ecological challenges and depression or anxiety were not found. Results suggest that racism-related stress contributes additional strain to Asian Americans career problems and self-esteem problems beyond that of culturally based intergenerational family conflict. A moderation hypothesis also was tested in this study. Collective self-esteem was not found to moderate the relationship between the ecological challenges and psychological well-being. Suggestions for research and practice as well as limitations were presented.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILY CONFLICT,  
RACISM-RELATED STRESS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING  
AND THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE SELF-ESTEEM AMONG  
ASIAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

According to an ecological perspective, development should be viewed as occurring in multiple and interacting contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, the psychological functioning of Asian Americans must be viewed in the context of multiple and interacting systems. The two main ecological challenges to development among Asian immigrants and their children in the United States are acculturation and their minority status (Kodama, McEwen, Liang, & S. Lee, 2002; S. Sue & Zane, 1987; Yee, Huang, & Lew, 1998). This study examines the influence of both of these ecological challenges on the psychological functioning of Asian immigrants and American born Asians.

The first ecological challenge occurs in the context of the family. The psychological development of a child is closely related to the relationships he or she forms at home with his or her family (Uba, 1994). Because of the security and stability they typically provide, parents are thought to be critical in that development. In western theoretical formulations of development, children develop autonomy as they grow into adolescence (e.g., Erikson, 1963). Laursen and Collins (1994) explained that it is typical for all families, regardless of race, to experience intergenerational family conflict during this period of the child's development. There are indications that these conflicts are associated with higher levels of depression (Greenberger & Chen, 1996) and anxiety (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002).

Despite some evidence that Asian American adolescents adhere to Asian values of deference to authority and interdependence (Ying, Coombs, & P. Lee, 1999), intergenerational conflicts within the Asian American immigrant family unit have been

documented (Chung, 2001; E. Lee, 1997; R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2001; L. C. Lee & Zhan, 1998). Though intergenerational conflicts between parents and children are likely to occur in all families regardless of ethnic background, Asian Americans of immigrant families report the likelihood of these experiences more often (R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2001). The greater likelihood of conflict in immigrant families stems from the contrast between the cultural values that parents bring from Asia and American values that influence their children (S. Chan & Leong, 1994; Dinh, B. Sarason, & I. Sarason, 1994; Thomas, 1995).

Though certain ethnic groups within the Asian American racial designation can trace their history back seven or eight generations, many Asian Americans today are either immigrants or children of immigrants (Okazaki & Hall, 2002; Yee et al, 1998). It has been suggested that Asian American children, because of socialization experiences in school, acculturate faster than their immigrant parents (E. Lee, 1997). This divergence of cultural orientation between parent and child has implications for the frequency and intensity of conflict within a family (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Y. Wong, 2002). Though scholars in psychology (e.g., Dinh et al. 1994; R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2001), education (e.g., Kodama et al. 2002), and Asian American studies (e.g., Chow, 1999) have written about intergenerational family conflict, Lowe (1996) has argued that analyses of Asian American families must take into account differences within group and their experience of oppression.

The second ecological challenge facing Asian Americans is their minority status, or, more specifically experiences with racism that occur as a result of the ways by which race has been socially, constructed and used to reinforce race hegemony (Omi & Winant,

1996). This challenge stems from the ways the physical and sometimes linguistic differences of Asian Americans are perceived and used by the dominant culture to maintain social classification. One result of these perceptions has been the subordination and marginalization of Asian Americans.

Racism can be either active or passive and can occur at various levels including institutional (e.g., discriminatory laws), societal (e.g., racial hate-groups), and individual (e.g., racial stereotyping by an individual) levels (D. W. Sue, 2005; Wijeyesinghe, Griffin, & Love, 1997). Asian Americans continue to be targets of racism (National Asian Pacific Legal Consortium, 1999, 2002). The long history of racism toward Asian Americans includes the lynching and mass murders of early Chinese migrants, legislation banning migration of persons from Asia, and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (see S. C. Chan, 1991). In recent years, the National Asian Pacific Legal Consortium (NAPALC; 1999, 2002) has reported an increase in reports of anti-Asian vandalism, intimidation and threats, and incidents involving bodily harm. For instance, between 1998 and 1999, incidents involving aggravated assault increased by 23% and threats and intimidation increased by 34%. In their most recent report, the National Asian Pacific Legal Consortium (2002) reported that there were nearly 250 incidents against Asian Americans, particularly South Asians, in the three months immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001.

Omi and Winant (1996) have argued that though the concept of race and its corollary, racism, have no real biological bases, it is a social reality which has real cultural implications. Psychologists are beginning to move beyond using race as an independent variable to studying the effect of racism on the individuals' well-being

(Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005). There have been a number of empirical studies that have examined the relationship between racist events and mental health (Fischer & Shaw, 1999). Though they were based largely on data from African American participants, these studies suggest a positive relationship between racism and physiological stress (Fang & Myers, 2001; Fernando, 1984; Jackson et al., 1996; Krieger & Sidney, 1996; Smith, 1985; McNeilly et al., 1995; Smedley et al., 1993) and an inverse relationship between racism and both life satisfaction and self-esteem (Broman, 1997; Jackson et al., 1996; Porter & Washington, 1979). Within the broad area of race-related scholarship, research regarding racism-related stress appears to be gaining more attention. Racism-related stress refers to a psychological response specifically due to direct or indirect exposure to racism that exceeds existing individual and group resources or that threatens well-being. Few empirical studies were found specifically related to the effects of racism on Asian Americans' mental health and well-being (e.g., Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987; R. M. Lee, 2003; Liang, Li, & B. S. K. Kim, 2004; Utsey, Chae, C. F. Brown, & Kelly, 2002). These studies have found that Asian Americans not only experience racism but that it affects their ratings of quality of life (Utsey et al., 2002), community well-being (R. M. Lee, 2003), and self-concept (Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987).

While racism related stress is beginning to garner more attention in research, scholars have studied the relationship between membership in a stigmatized group (e.g., racial minority) and how an individual feels about him or herself for more than 30 years (Crocker & Major, 1989). Scholars have argued that individuals who are members of stigmatized social groups have lower levels of self-esteem because of the negative messages that they receive in their daily lives. Given that positive self-esteem has been

understood to be important in psychological functioning (Wylie, 1979) and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984), it has been a construct of interest in psychological studies. For instance, studies have found that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with lower levels of risk for depression (H. Cheng & Furnham, 2003) and hopelessness (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989), but higher levels of self-esteem also have been found to relate positively to positive affect (Pelham & Swann, 1989) and to be a stronger predictor of life satisfaction than income or age (Diener, 1984).

In a review of theoretical and empirical work on the effects of racism on self-esteem, Crocker and Major found that empirical studies generally have been mixed when it concerns the relationship between self-esteem and stigmatized group members. They found that members of stigmatized groups do not necessarily have lowered levels of self-esteem. They explained that one reason for the inconsistent findings is that research regarding stigmatized groups generally has studied the effects of group level stereotypes that may have an effect on an individual's feelings about the group to which he or she belongs (i.e., collective self-esteem) but not to that individual's global self-esteem.

Basing their work in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), Luhtanen and Crocker (1990, 1992) extended the work of Crocker and Major by explaining that one reason that measures (e.g., Rosenberg, 1965) and theoretical articulations (Wylie, 1979) of self-esteem have failed to explain self-concept is because of their inattention to collective identity. According to social identity theory, an individual's self-concept or identity is a function of personal identity (i.e. how a person views him or herself as an individual) as well as social or collective identity (i.e. how a person views the social groups to which he or she belongs). Luhtanen and Crocker

suggested that by utilizing only the personal self-esteem construct, past research gave primacy to an individualistic perspective and provided only a partial view of individuals' self-concept. They suggested that collective self-esteem, the way in which an individual appraises group membership, acts much like global personal self-esteem in that it could serve as a moderator for events that threaten mental health.

In recent years, the effect of collective self-esteem on psychological well-being (Corning, 2002; Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Zea, Resien, & Poppen, 1999), subjective well-being (Bettencourt & Dorr, 1997), and personal self-esteem (Lay & Verkuyten, 1999) has been studied. In their study, Crocker and colleagues found that collective self-esteem predicted psychological well-being above and beyond individual self-esteem. Corning (2002) found that collective self-esteem moderated the effects of perceived discrimination on psychological distress. Together these studies support theoretical positions (e.g., Luhtanen & Crocker, 1990) that suggest that collective self-esteem can serve as a protective factor against threats to social identity.

Though Asian Americans continue to experience racism and are largely an immigrant population that experiences strains related to acculturation, no study was found that examined the influence of both racism and intergenerational conflict on psychological well-being. Thus, the first purpose of this research was to examine the influence of intergenerational family conflict and racism-related stress on psychological well-being of Asian American college students. A secondary purpose of this study was to then examine the contribution of racism-related stress to psychological well-being after the effects of intergenerational family conflict have been controlled. A third purpose of this study was to examine the moderator role of collective self-esteem in the relationship

between intergenerational family conflict and racism-related stress and psychological well-being among Asian American college students.

Given the existing literature regarding Asian American families, it was expected that there would be an inverse relationship between intergenerational family conflict and psychological well-being. However, it was expected that collective self-esteem would moderate the influence of intergenerational family conflict on psychological well-being. It also was expected that the effects of racism that have been found in previous research regarding African Americans, that the experience of racism is negatively associated with indicators of well-being (e.g., Jackson et al., 1996; McNeilly et al., 1995; Porter & Washington, 1979), would be replicated with Asian Americans. Further, it was expected that the results from the few studies regarding Asian Americans' experience with racism (e.g., Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987; R. M. Lee, 2003) also would be replicated. Thus, it was anticipated that there would be a negative association between racism and psychological well-being. Given the theoretical propositions of Luhtanen and Crocker regarding collective self-esteem, it was expected that collective self-esteem would moderate the effects of racism-related stress on psychological well-being.

The results of this study can advance the understanding of multiple ecological influences in the psychology of Asian American college students. It also can allow for increased understanding of the role of collective self-esteem in the psychological well-being of Asian American college students. Though there has been an increase in the number of publications regarding Asian American psychology (Okazaki & Hall, 2002), there remains an overall lack of research regarding racism (Liang et al., 2004) and family conflict (R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2002). It is hoped that this knowledge will provide

clinicians with a broader understanding of the multiple contexts that can hinder or contribute to the development of psychological well-being among Asian American college students.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of the Literature

Given the importance of multiple ecological systems (e.g., family, society) on the psychological development and well-being of Asian Americans, this chapter provides a review of literature on (1) family relationships and development; (2) acculturation; (3) intergenerational family relationships and psychological well-being; (4) perceived racism, racism-related stress, and psychological well-being; and (5) social identity theory and collective self-esteem.

Theorists have proposed that early childhood experiences, particularly within the family system, are central to the psychological functioning of people later on in life. Thus, the study of family dynamics and child development has received much attention in psychological research. Whereas earlier theorists primarily focused on the family system, psychologists have begun to understand and study the influence of larger social systems (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For instance, multicultural-oriented scholars in psychology not only have studied the family patterns of Asian Americans (e.g., Dinh, B. Sarason, & I. Sarason, 1994), they also have examined the role of culture and culturally based values in the relationships in those families (e.g., R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2002). The influence of an individual's culture of origin on family roles and relationships must take into account the various acculturation levels of individual family members. Hence, research has sought to understand the role of acculturation, that is, the process of adopting the values of a host society, in Asian Americans' ratings of intergenerational family conflict.

Since the family system does not function in value-free vacuum, the influence of other macro level system constructs (e.g., oppression, monoculturalism) also has garnered

attention. For instance, scholars have proposed theories for understanding how attitudes regarding membership in a social identity group (e.g., race, gender, etc.) are developed (e.g., Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Tajfel, 1982). Research also has sought to explain the influences of these attitudes on psychological functioning (e.g., Carter, 1991). The effect of racism on the psychological functioning of Asian Americans is one area in which research has been slowly growing. Racism effects on the psychological well-being (Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987; R. M. Lee, 2003), community well-being (R. M. Lee, 2003), and life satisfaction (Utsey et al., 2002) of Asian Americans has been studied. Others have begun to construct and test instruments designed to measure the level of stress associated with racist events (e.g., Liang et al. 2004).

#### *Family Relationships and Development*

The family unit and its dynamics are considered to be a central system in the psychological development of all individuals (Teyber, 2000). As a result, there has been a wealth of literature regarding the influence of family relationships (e.g., Rogers, 1956; Sullivan, 1953). Much of this literature has centered on the European American family experience, where there is a tendency for it to be nuclear, with the husband-wife dyad as the central relationship (e.g., Ying, Coombs, & P. Lee, 1999). Children are seen as members of the family who are born, grow, and eventually leave to live their own independent lives. The security and stability parents and families typically provide to children has been theorized to facilitate psychological development (e.g., Rogers, 1956; Sullivan, 1953). Furthermore, scholars have asserted that the child's early relationships with primary caregivers serve as a template for future relationships (e.g., Horney, 1945; Sullivan, 1953, Teyber, 2000).

Whereas childhood is seen as a period of dependence, the normal developmental path espoused by theorists suggests that adolescence is a period where autonomy is developed (e.g., Erikson, 1963; Chickering, 1969). Though multicultural scholars have agreed that families across cultures function to provide nurturance and adaptive life skills (Yee, Huang, & Lew, 1998), they also have argued that the emphasis of European American-based developmental models on autonomy is inconsistent with the value system of many Asian Americans (e.g., Kodama et al., 2001; D. W. Sue & D. Sue, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) also argued that traditional developmental models primarily have focused on individual personal history (ontogenesis) and on family systems (microsystems) and ignored two key dimensions: the larger community in which one lives (exosystems) and the larger cultural context of an individual (macrosystems). According to this ecological perspective, people develop in the context of and in the interaction between the different social environments (mesosystems). Taking into consideration these ecological dimensions may be particularly important for children of immigrant families, for whom interactions between the microsystem and macrosystem may be salient to development. In addition to navigating the complex family interactional patterns, these children also must negotiate contrasting value systems.

For children of Asian immigrant families, the interactions of these systems may be particularly salient. Kodama et al. (2001) explained that while traditional Asian familial and cultural values emphasize collectivism, interdependence, subjugating one's needs to those of the family, interpersonal harmony, emotional restraint, and deference to authority, the values of Western cultures are nearly the direct opposite. Western values reflect individualism and independence, egalitarianism, and place importance on sharing

feelings and thoughts. Though there is great within group variation (D. W. Sue & D. Sue, 2003), Asian Americans typically endorse Asian values more than do European Americans (B. S. K. Kim, Atkinson, & Wang, 1999).

The value orientations of both parent and child can influence parental behavior, adolescent perceptions of family life, and family interactions. Given that immigrant parents and their children are reared in different cultural environments, it is not surprising that studies have found that children and parents have different perceptions, expectations, and behaviors in the family. For instance, in a study comparing Chinese, immigrant Chinese, and European American parents, Lin and Fu (1990) found significant differences in parental control, encouragement of independence, and expression of achievement. In another study, Han (1985) found that Asian Americans rated larger emotional gaps in the parent-child relationship than did European Americans. In a study of attitudes and perceptions of family values of both adolescents and parents, Vietnamese adolescents tended to reject traditional Vietnamese family values more than did their parents but endorsed them more frequently than did their European American counterparts (Nguyen & Williams, 1989). Together these studies suggest that parents and children have different culturally specific expectations regarding the role of parents.

Values are not only apparent in individual level functioning but also are evident at the cultural level. For instance, value orientations also have influenced theoretical formulations of development. These models influence how psychologists, as well as lay people, consider what is and is not “normal” development for children (D. W. Sue & D. Sue, 2003). As mentioned earlier, according to western theoretical formulations, it is expected that children develop autonomy and separate from the family as they grow into

adolescence and adulthood (e.g., Erikson, 1968). During the stage of development it is typical for parent-child relationships to experience intergenerational strain (Laursen & Collins, 1994). Further it has been demonstrated that these conflicts are associated with negative psychological outcomes of children (e.g., Allen, Hauser, Eickholt, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994). These conflicts however are understood as a normal developmental process that results in autonomy.

Though it has been found that Asian American adolescents do defer to parents and other authority figures (Ying, Coombs, & P. Lee, 1999), intergenerational family conflict among Asian Americans have been documented to occur at higher rates than other racial groups (Chung, 2001; E. Lee, 1997; R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2001; L. C. Lee & Zhan, 1998, Pyke, 2002). The greater likelihood of conflict in Asian American immigrant families has been explained to be an outcome of the contrasting cultural values of parents and children (Chan & Leong, 1994; Dinh, B. Sarason, & I. Sarason, 1994; Thomas, 1995). These culturally based intergenerational family conflicts appear to be heightened during adolescence (Fuligni, 1998).

Though conflict during adolescence is seen, in western culture, as a precursor to the development of autonomy and maturity, traditional Asian values hold different perspectives. Among Asian American parents who adhere to traditional Asian values, maturity is best indicated by the ability to subjugate one's own desires for the greater good of the family (Ying et al., 1999). Parents may view children who do not conform to traditional Asian values as "too American" (Ying & Chao, 1996). Since Asian American children are unlikely to be socialized in a vacuum of solely Asian or western values, studies have found that they may view their parents and their values with negativity. In

fact, in one qualitative study, Pyke (2000) found that Asian American adolescents used the “normal American family” as a referent to describe their own experiences in the family. Though Asian values of caring for the elderly were deemed positive relative to western norms, many parenting behaviors were viewed negatively relative to European American families. This study is just one example of how complex microsystems and macrosystems interact and influence an individual’s worldview. Given the influence of the social environment and culture on development (e.g., Atkinson, Morten, & D. W. Sue, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), it is important to understand how these cultural differences may influence family relationships and psychological health among Asian Americans.

### *Acculturation*

One way scholars have studied cultural differences is to examine acculturation styles. The study of acculturation seeks to understand how individuals from ethnic minority and immigrant groups adjust to the culture of the dominant group. Acculturation has been found to be a useful construct to understand within group differences among Asian Americans (Tsai et al., 2002). For instance studies have found relationships between acculturation attitudes and outcomes such as stress (e.g., Mehta, 1998; Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002; Yeh, 2003), self-esteem (e.g., Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002), suicidal behavior (e.g., Lau, Jernewall, Zane, & Myers, 2002), and career development (e.g., Leong, 2001; Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999).

Acculturation is defined as the adoption of a new set of cultural values as a result of immigration. This process has been explained through the use of acculturation theories (e.g., J. W. Berry & Annis, 1974; J. W. Berry, 1995). B. S. K Kim and Abreu (2001) chronicled this history of acculturation theory and explained that acculturation theories

moved from anthropological and sociological constructs, where they were used to understand the bi-directional influence of ethnic groups at the group level, to psychology, where models were developed and used to elucidate the effects of acculturation at the individual level. For instance, whereas sociologists interested in acculturation study the effects of new group-level contact on each group, psychologists have used this same construct to understand individuals' psychological adaptation. Early psychological models of acculturation proposed a unidirectional process, where one comes into contact and adopts values, behaviors, and attitudes of the host culture (e.g., Gordon, 1964).

More recently, theory and research have reflected a bi-directional multidimensional approach, where individuals can adopt aspects of their host culture and continue to retain traditional values and behaviors (J. W. Berry, 1995). Studies have indicated that acculturation or generational status influence parenting behavior (e.g., Lin & Fu, 1990), parent evaluation of family relationships (Farver, Narang, & Badha, 2002), and child ratings of intergenerational family conflict (e.g., Dinh, B. Sarason, & I. Sarason, 1994; Rick & Forward, 1992). Generally, these research studies have indicated that immigrant parents and their American-raised children have differing levels of acculturation and hold differing values of what is appropriate parenting behavior. These different acculturation levels, or cultural orientations, serve to heighten intergenerational conflict that may occur between parent and child during the course of development (Chung, 2001).

#### *Intergenerational Conflict and Asian Americans*

Though intergenerational conflict in Asian American families has been found and is argued to occur more frequently than in European American families, only a few

studies have been conducted regarding Asian Americans. In general, these studies investigated the intergenerational dynamics with an Asian American family, while several examined the relationship of intergenerational family dynamics and mental health.

In one of the first studies concerning intergenerational family relationships among Asian Americans, Rick and Forward (1992) investigated the association between acculturation and intergenerational differences among Hmong refugee families. They predicted that adolescents would be more acculturated than their parents and that this would help explain higher levels of perceived intergenerational differences. They also predicted that the adoption of Western values and behaviors would be associated with perceived intergenerational differences.

Rick and Forward sampled 29 Hmong American high school students enrolled in an English as a second language program. These students represented nearly all (88%) of the entire Hmong population at that high school. Though the authors indicated that there was great range in the age of the participants at the time of immigration (5 -17 years old) and current age (16 to 20 years old), their length of residence in the United States was not made clear. Acculturation was operationalized through the use of an 18-item multiple-choice questionnaire that was developed for this study. Intergenerational difference was operationalized as the difference between students' acculturation and their perception of their parents' acculturation. A separate set of questions was developed to assess general family conflict. These 5-point likert-type items concerned behaviors and material culture (e.g., music, television).

The results of their analyses led Rick and Forward (1992) to conclude that children rated their own level of acculturation higher than their perceptions of their parents' acculturation level. Additionally, Rick and Forward found that students who were more acculturated also reported higher levels of intergenerational difference. Interestingly, whereas a positive relationship between acculturation and ratings of intergenerational difference was found among students who spent fewer years in U.S. schools, there was an inverse relationship for students who spent more years in U.S. schools. Finally, general intergenerational family conflict was not associated with perceived intergenerational differences.

While this study provided an initial understanding of the Hmong American intergenerational family experience, particularly with respect to acculturation, there is one important limitation to this study. Specifically, although Rick and Forward explained that their sample represented 88% of their available population, the sample size of study is small enough to limit the power of the findings.

In another study of parent-child relationships among Vietnamese immigrant families, Dinh, B. Sarason, and I. Sarason (1994) sampled 49 Vietnamese-born university students, 124 American-born university students (83.1% European American; 16.1% Asian American; 0.8% African American), and 221 parents (50 Vietnamese-born; 173 racially diverse American born). These participants were administered the Revised UCLA Loneliness Questionnaire (LQ; Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980); the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965); the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ; I. G. Sarason, B. R. Sarason, Shearin, & Pierce, 1987); and separate versions of the Quality of Relationships Inventory (QRI; Pierce, B. R. Sarason, & I.G. Sarason, 1991) for their

mother and father; and the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI; Parker, Tupling, & L. D. Brown, 1979). Mothers and fathers were administered back-translated versions of the SSQ (I. G. Sarason et al., 1987), Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS; Zung, 1965) and the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, 1975).

Dinh et al. predicted that students born in Vietnam would have more negative views of him or herself and report relationships with parents less favorably than American-born students. They also predicted that, after controlling for parent and student individual characteristics, membership in an immigrant family would predict less positive student perceptions of parental relationships than an American-born family. Finally, given the expectations of Vietnamese boys and girls, they expected that males would report greater conflict than any other group.

The results of their study indicated that Vietnamese-born students reported lower quality of parental relationships (less social support and less social integration than did American-born students). More specifically, Vietnamese-born students reported having less support in their relationship with their mother and more conflict with and less acceptance from their father. Results from their study also indicated that sex, parental and student characteristics, and the country of student birth (which served as a proxy for cultural background) were significant predictors of the relationships with the mother and with the father. Finally, they found that Vietnamese-born male students had the most negative perceptions of paternal relationships than any other group, including Vietnamese-born female students.

Post-hoc analyses involving mean comparisons of American-born Asians were conducted to “gain insight into whether cultural factors related to Asian background or to

the immigration experience were more salient in explaining differences between [American-born and Vietnamese born] student groups” (p. 480). They found that American born Asians did not have significantly different perceptions of themselves or their relationships with their parents than either Vietnamese -born or other American-born students.

Though this study provided useful information regarding Vietnamese immigrant families, results must be interpreted with caution. This study has several limitations. First, the authors of the study neglected to differentiate Vietnamese families by their migration pattern. For instance, Vietnamese families who migrated voluntarily will have drastically different experiences from those who fled their country as refugees (Rumbaut, 2000). For instance, immigrants typically prepare to leave their countries of origin. They are able to make plans that ease their adjustment to the United States (i.e., settling in areas where there social support is readily available; learning to speak English; saving money). Refugees, on the other hand, have less opportunity to prepare and are more likely to have experienced trauma (Leung, Boehnlein, & Kinzie, 1997). The effect of these varied migration experiences were not explored in this study and since these data were not presented, it is unclear to which type of Vietnamese family (immigrant or refugee) this study should be generalized or whether trauma experienced during migration may have confounded the results. A second limitation of the study is that “country of birth” only indicates the physical location of birth. It does not indicate acculturation level or even levels of cultural adherence.

In an exploratory study of family relationships and depressive symptoms of Asian Americans and European Americans at two developmental junctures (early adolescence

and late adolescence/early adulthood), Greenberger and Chen (1996) surveyed 173 seventh and eighth graders (59 Chinese Americans; 30 Korean Americans) and 297 college students (75 Chinese Americans; 54 Korean Americans). Family relationship was operationalized through the use of the cohesion and conflict subscales of the Family Environment Scale (FES; R. H. Moos, & B. S. Moos, 1986). Depression was operationalized in this study by using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1975).

These authors found that Asian American and European American early adolescents differed significantly on only one variable. Asian American early adolescents reported less maternal warmth and acceptance than their European American counterparts. They found that Asian American college students reported less family cohesion, more conflict between themselves and their parents, and less parental warmth and acceptance than did their European American peers. Results from correlation analyses indicated that there was a positive relationship between family conflict and depression for both Asian American and European Americans. Family cohesion and family warmth and acceptance were inversely related to depression for both groups. Multivariate regression analyses indicated that ratings of family relationships for early adolescents contributed more to depression than in the college sample. Greenberger and Chen speculated that this might be related to the diminishing role of family as children move from early to late adolescence. A limitation of this study is that the sample only was recruited from schools in southern California. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to adolescents in other areas of the country.

In a cross-sectional and longitudinal study, Fuligni (1998) investigated intergenerational conflict and cohesion across Mexican, Chinese, Filipino/a, and European American adolescents. The purpose of this study was to see if adolescents with varying cultural traditions regarding authority and autonomy have different perceptions of their relationships with their parents and whether or not these change over time.

Fuligni's sample consisted of 6<sup>th</sup> ( $n = 281$ ), 8<sup>th</sup> ( $n = 297$ ), and 10<sup>th</sup> ( $n = 420$ ) graders in a southern California school district. In total there were 998 students of Mexican American ( $n = 168$ ), Chinese American ( $n = 148$ ), Filipino/a American ( $n = 403$ ), and European American ( $n = 279$ ) descent. The marital status of these children's parents varied. The parents of Chinese American and Filipino/a American children were more likely married than the other two groups. The responses from a sample of 353 students who were in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade had been surveyed two years earlier were studied. When compared to the original sample, this sample had a greater representation of Chinese and Filipino/a Americans and less Mexican Americans. The participants of the follow up survey also had parents who were predominantly in semi-professional and professional occupations. Students' generational status also varied. European Americans were more likely to report third generation status ( $n = 210$ ) than the three other groups combined. All but 27 of the Filipino Americans that reported their generational status were either first ( $n = 152$ ) or second ( $n = 213$ ) generation Americans. Mexican Americans reported predominantly second ( $n = 70$ ) or third ( $n = 64$ ) generation status. Exactly half of the Chinese Americans were second generation ( $n = 72$ ), with the remaining 72 nearly evenly split between first and third generation status.

Fuligni operationalized *Belief and Expectations about Authority and Autonomy* through the use of three measures. The first instrument, Acceptability of Disagreement with Parents, was developed for the purpose of this study. Participants responded to three Likert-type items for both their mother and father. Fuligni utilized a measure from Smetana (1988) to assess adolescents' beliefs about parental authority. Adolescent expectations' regarding behavioral autonomy was assessed with a scale used by Feldman and Quatman (1988). Conflict was operationalized with the Issues Checklist (Prinz, Foster, Kent, & O'Leary, 1979). Cohesion was measured with the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979).

In sum, results indicated that, although the four groups differed in their view regarding parental authority and individual autonomy, all adolescents reported similar levels of conflict and cohesion with parents. More specifically, the results indicated that all groups accepted parental authority but also suggest that adolescents of Mexican, Chinese, and Filipino descent were less willing to disagree with mothers and fathers and had a lower emphasis on individual autonomy than European Americans. Results of this study also indicate that girls, irrespective of their cultural background, held expectations for later autonomy than boys. Older adolescents reported a greater willingness to disagree with their parents and less likelihood of accepting parental authority than did their younger peers. Finally, students of later generations tended to be more willing to disagree with their parents and had expectations for earlier autonomy than their peers who were in more recent generations of Americans. As participants from all groups got older, they reported lower levels of family cohesion.

This study had several limitations. First, it could be the case that the study did not detect any differences in intergenerational conflicts because the scale that was used is not sensitive to conflicts that arise in immigrant families. Second, cross-sectional studies such as this highlight between group differences but mask important within group differences. For instance, the inclusion of a measure of acculturation status would have yielded important within group differences.

Tseng and Fuligni (2000) explained that though it is commonly known that language is an important component of family relationships, there has been little accompanying research regarding its role in the relationship within immigrant families. They described two types of language use patterns. In the first, *reciprocal*, parents and adolescents speak the same language. In the second, *nonreciprocal*, parents use their native language and adolescents use English to communicate with one another. To fill the gap in research, Tseng and Fuligni employed a cross-sectional design, involving East Asian, Filipino, and Latin Americans to examine the role of language in the quality of relationships between immigrant parents and their adolescent children. More specifically, they investigated the relationship between the two aforementioned language use patterns and cohesion, discussion, and conflict.

Tseng and Fuligni (2002) analyzed data from a larger project examining family relationships and educational outcomes in a northern California school district. Their sample consisted of 626 students (121 East Asians; 336 Filipino; 169 Latin American) from immigrant families. These students (52% girls) were in the sixth ( $n = 179$ ), eighth ( $n = 199$ ), and tenth ( $n = 289$ ) grades. Nearly a third of all the students were foreign born. Students who were enrolled in the eighth and tenth grades were administered a

follow up survey two years later. Tseng and Fuligni reported that 71% of the original sample took part in the follow up. Furthermore, the follow up sample did not differ from the original sample along any demographic factors.

Use of language was assessed through the use of two open-ended questions (i.e., “what language do your parents usually use when they talk to you?” and “what language do you usually use when you talk to your parents?”). As expected, the two patterns mentioned above emerged from their analysis. Parent-adolescent relationship was assessed using three separate measures. First, cohesion was operationalized through the use of the FACES II (Olson et al., 1979). Tseng and Fuligni created a five-item scale to measure participants’ willingness to engage in discussions with their parents about current classes, personal problems, future job plans, educational plans, and future family plans. Finally, the Issues Checklist (Prinz et al., 1979) was used to measure adolescent perceptions of the level of conflict with their parents.

Analyses indicated that adolescents who had nonreciprocal language use patterns with their parents reported less cohesion and discussion with their mothers and fathers than peers who had reciprocal language patterns with their parents. Additionally, cohesion and discussion were rated highest among those students who spoke the same native language as their parents. Cross-sectional analyses did not indicate any significant differences in the associations between language and relationships. A separate regression analysis did not indicate that language use was a significant predictor of parent-adolescent relationships. In summary, the authors argued that their study provides evidence that language plays a significant role in family relationships.

One of the limitations of this study is that the measure of conflict that was employed includes conflicts (e.g., cleaning up the bedroom; allowance) that may not be particularly salient for immigrant families or excludes conflicts that are present. One example of a conflict that is less common for European Americans (and more acculturated ethnic minorities) and not included in the Issues Checklist is the parent-adolescent conflict regarding the maintenance and expression of cultural traditions (L. C. Lee & Zhan, 1998). Choice of relationship partners is another experience common among Asian Indian women (Kakaiya, 2000). Use of an instrument with items reflecting the immigrant family experience would have increased the construct validity of this study.

In a study involving Asian Indian families, Farver, Narang, and Bhadha (2002) surveyed 180 American born Asian Indian adolescents and one of their parents. In their study, they assessed how adolescents differed in their rating of level of family conflict (Prinz et al., 1979), the Self Description Questionnaire (Marsh, Parker, & Smith, 1983), and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970), based upon their response to the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) and a revised version of the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARMSA-II; Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995).

Farver et al. made several predictions. First, they hypothesized that parents' ethnic identity and acculturation status would influence their adolescent children's self-identification and ethnic identity achievement. Second, they predicted that conflict would be higher in families where parent's had strong orientations toward their native culture or who were connected to neither culture than in families where parents had an assimilated or integrated acculturation style. It also was expected that conflict would be higher in

families where parents and children had different levels of acculturation. Third, they predicted that acculturation style would influence psychological functioning. Their final prediction was that large acculturation gaps between parent and child would result in higher levels of conflict.

Results of their study supported their predictions. Parents with marginalized or separated acculturation styles reported more frequent and intense conflict than did parents with integrated or assimilated acculturation style. Further, children from families with a large acculturation gap reported more frequent and more intense conflict than did children from families with little acculturation gap. They also found that there was less conflict in families where acculturation styles of adolescents and parents matched than when they mismatched. In another set of analyses, Farver et al. found that adolescents who are assimilated or integrated in their acculturation style reported higher levels of self-esteem than individuals who were less acculturated. Adolescents from families with an acculturation gap reported lower self-esteem and had higher anxiety levels than did adolescents from families with little acculturation gap. Given that this sample was recruited from an area in southern California, the results lack generalizability beyond that area of the United States.

In her study of intergenerational conflict, Chung surveyed 342 college-aged Asian American students (65% women). The participants' (102 Chinese Americans; 83 Korean Americans; 57 Japanese Americans; 40 Filipino Americans; 38 Southeast Asians; 18 other Asian American; 6 multiracial; 14 unknown) ages ranged from 17 – 31, with a mean age of 21. The purpose of her study was to investigate within group differences (i.e. gender, acculturation status, ethnicity) of Asian Americans' experiences with

intergenerational conflict. She operationalized acculturation status by using the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). Recognizing that the existing measures of family conflict were not sensitive to immigrant family strains, Chung developed the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI) to assess the nature of intergenerational family relationships. This instrument was developed for the purpose of this study.

Results of the study indicated main effects for gender, ethnicity, and acculturation level. More specifically, women reported more conflict than male students when it came to dating and marriage. Japanese Americans scored significantly lower on conflict regarding dating and marriage than all groups, and lower than Koreans and Southeast Asians when it came to family expectations. Using these self-report measures, Chung also found that more acculturated individuals, typically second or subsequent generations of Asian Americans, whose family had lived in the United States for an average of 21 years, experienced significantly less cultural intergenerational conflict than low acculturated individuals whose families had immigrated more recently. She explained that the results of this study suggest that Asian Americans whose parents have been in the United States longer may themselves have adopted western values that their children have learned.

One limitation of Chung's study is the fashion in which the ICI was developed. Since this study recruited participants from Asian American studies courses, it is likely that these students represent a subset of Asian American students and not all Asian American college students. Further validation of the concurrent validity of the ICI must be established in order for consumers to be clear of the construct and statistical

conclusion validity of these findings. Thus, findings of this study may only be generalizable to Asian Americans enrolled in Asian American studies courses in universities in southern California.

In their cross-sectional study, R. M. Lee and H. T. Liu (2001) sampled 406 college students at a large public southwestern university who identified as Asian American ( $n = 145$ ), Hispanic ( $n = 121$ ), and European American ( $n = 140$ ). Among the Asian American participants, there were 41 Chinese, 20 Vietnamese, 23 Indian, 16 Korean, 12 Filipino or Filipina, and 5 other Asian. Among the Hispanic group, there were 96 Mexican, 16 Central and South American and Caribbean. Participants of this study varied in their generational status (84 first generation, 109 second generation, 16 were 2.5 generation, 43 third generation, 53 fourth generation, 83 fifth generation, and 17 international students).

The purpose of the study was to see if cultural groups differed in their reporting of intergenerational family conflict, coping strategies to manage this conflict, and their combined effect on psychological functioning. Intergenerational family conflict was measured using the *Likelihood* subscale of the Asian American Family Conflict Scale (FCS; R. M. Lee, Choe, G. Kim, & Ngo, 2000). The other subscale of the instrument, *Seriousness*, was not used because it lacked adequate validation data. Coping strategies was operationalized through the use of the Brief COPE (Carver, 1997). Psychological distress was measured with the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis & Spencer, 1982).

Analyses of variance were performed to test for cultural group differences on the dependent variables. A significant group difference was found for the FCS, with post hoc

analysis indicating that Asian Americans were significantly more likely than Hispanic and European Americans to report family conflict. Follow up analysis of covariance was then performed with generation status as the group covariate to determine whether group differences were a result of the length of time in the United States. Generation status did not have a significant main effect.

Similar analyses were performed to test for the presence of main or interaction effects of parents' marital status, generation status, and family income with cultural group status on intergenerational family conflict. The only significant main effect was that Asian Americans had higher scores on FCS than Hispanic and European Americans. R. M. Lee and H. T. Liu also found that intergenerational family conflict was more strongly related to indirect coping styles for Asian Americans and European Americans than for Hispanic Americans, for whom intergenerational family conflict was more strongly related to direct coping styles. Correlations between direct coping and psychological distress did not reach significance for each of the three cultural groups. R. M. Lee and H. T. Liu's use of generation status as a proxy for acculturation was one limitation of their study. Though commonly used, generation status masks participants' actual level of adoption of the cultural values and behaviors of the host society.

In a study of Iu Mien American families, Ying and Chao (1996) studied the parent-child relationship in traditional Iu Mien families in both Laos and in the United States. Their assumption and main focus of the study was the influence of differential acculturation rates on intergenerational conflict in parent-child relationships. They employed a semi-structured, phenomenological approach in their study of these relationships. All participants were asked to give a brief history and to describe their

parent-child relationship. The parent sample was asked to compare and contrast the relationship they had with their parents to that of the relationship they have with their children. Furthermore, the parent sample was asked to describe parental expectations of children when they were young and now as older adults. Younger adults were asked to discuss their relationship with their parents, their parents' expectations of them, and their response to those expectations.

Ying and Chao's sample included six younger (18 – 21 years old) and six older adults (37 – 68) who had lived in the southern California region for at least five years. The sample was composed of equal numbers of men and women. The results of their study yielded three main themes of concern in the Iu Mien intergenerational relationship. The authors labeled the first category, "*Nature of the Parent-Child Relationship.*" This category was made up of the following subcategories "*Interdependence,*" "*Hierarchy or Equality,*" and "*Use of Physical Discipline.*" This category highlighted the differences between older adults and younger adults not only in their attitudes toward traditional Iu Mien and U.S. value systems, but also the responses and feelings they had toward their parents or children. For instance, one of the younger adults expressed anger and resentment toward parents' expectations.

The second major category was labeled "*Economic Survival and Continuation of Traditional Culture.*" Made up of two subcategories "*Economic Survival*" and "*Continuation of Traditional Culture,*" this category highlighted the feelings and compromises the younger women had regarding traditional Iu Mien gender role expectations. In one example, one young adult woman attempting to please her parents decided to give up her dream of becoming a doctor but not of education. The final major

category, labeled “*Non-Family Relationships*,” described the differences in the definition of and held importance of the family unit. The authors explained that whereas adults felt that children should attend more to the family and home, children gained emotional support and acceptance with peers with whom they were able to communicate.

This study provided valuable information regarding a small and seldom studied ethnic group. There were several noteworthy limitations of this study. First, the authors did not provide examples of the questions or enough detailed information regarding the analyses of data. Thus, it is unclear how the main themes were distilled from all the data. Second, though this study provided a picture of parent and child attitudes toward intergenerational relationships, these were not parent-child pairs. A qualitative study regarding a parent-child pair would be informative to psychologists, social workers, and to Asian American studies scholars. Finally, this study employed a small sample. A larger sample may have yielded additional information regarding parent-child pairs.

Using a grounded theory approach, Pyke (2000) explored the subjective experiences of Vietnamese and Korean grown children growing up in an immigrant family. Data for this study were collected from a larger study examining family and social experiences of grown Vietnamese and Korean children. The 73 participants (47 female) were from either a California university (47%) or were referred by those students who had been recruited. The sample was composed of nearly equal numbers of Korean Americans ( $n = 34$ ) and Vietnamese Americans ( $n = 39$ ). Seventy-seven percent of the sample immigrated at an average age of 5. The entire sample was composed of college graduates or students. The author explained that she had only one general assumption –

“that respondents are active agents in the construction of their family experiences” (p 245).

Pyke found that many of the respondents in her study provided accounts of negative interactions with their parents with regard to discipline, emotional closeness, or communication. She also found that respondents use “normal American families” as referent in describing their own experiences with and attitudes regarding their own families. *Comparison with television families*, *Comparison with non-Asian friends*, and *Contrasts with specific family behavior or characteristics described as normal or American* emerged as three categorical themes. More specifically, when providing negative accounts of their relationship with their parents, they criticized their parents for lacking American values. However, when describing their collectivistic family orientation, the American family became a negative referent point. Thus, the author proposed that “family ideology subtly yet powerfully influences children of immigrants, infiltrating their subjective understandings of desires for family life” (p. 251). Finally, the author reported gender differences in the types of criticisms of parents. For instance, females complained that parents gave more freedom and respect to sons.

Though this study provided insight into how Asian American children evaluate their family relationships and cultural values, the results of this study must be understood in the context of some limitations. For example, given that the sample is composed of many more 1.5 generation Asian Americans (those who immigrated at a young age but were primarily raised in the United States) than American born Asians, and because the entire sample represents a highly educated group, the results may not be generalizable to all Asian Americans.

*Summary of Research Regarding Intergenerational Family Relationships*

Though this area of research is relatively new, the studies that exist addressed two important aspects of scientific inquiry. First, with the exception of one study that was reviewed (Fuligni, 1998), the body of research replicates past research that used predominantly European American samples to study the influence of intergenerational family conflict on psychological well-being (e.g., Allen, Hauser, Eickholt, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991). For example, the studies reviewed here indicated that intergenerational family conflict was related to higher levels of depression (Greenberger & Chen, 1996) and anxiety levels (Farver et al., 2002), and lowered levels of self-esteem (Farver et al., 2002).

This body of research also serves to extend previous work by offering the field of psychology additional ways to understand factors that contribute to family conflict among immigrant families. For instance, as a whole, the body of research reviewed suggests that factors related to migration, acculturation (Chung, 2001; Rick & Forward, 1992; Ying & Chao, 1996), acculturation mismatches between parent and child (Farver et al., 2002), and language use patterns between parent and child (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000) contribute to intergenerational family conflict or differences (Rick & Forward, 1992) among various Asian American ethnic groups.

The experience of Asian American families is beginning to be uncovered by research. These findings regarding contextual issues offer some support to ecological models of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). While these initial scientific inquiries into the experience of children in Asian American families have given us valuable information, we also must recognize that there are several limitations to the research.

The first issue is that several of the studies (i.e. Farver et al., 2001; Fuligni, 1998; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999) utilized the Issues Checklist (IC; Prinz et al., 1979). Though two of the studies yielded significant results with the IC, one did not. A scan of the items on the IC suggests that these items capture only one component of family conflict in an immigrant or bicultural family. Use of an instrument that includes cultural issues salient to the population of interest may have yielded different results for all three studies. Intergenerational conflict may have been even higher for Asian Americans than was indicated in these studies utilizing the IC. A review of this research indicates that that this limitation is being addressed with the development of culturally sensitive instruments (i.e. Chung, 2001; R. M. Lee, Choe, G. Kim, & Ngo, 2000). Further demonstration of validity and reliability of these measures will strengthen the validity of studies employing them.

As mentioned earlier, this body of research suggests a pattern of family conflict across different Asian American ethnic groups. Though different Asian American ethnic groups have similar experiences, there are also great within group differences. Lowe (1996) has argued that matters of *heterogeneity*, differences based on Asian national origin, immigration history, class backgrounds and economic conditions, and gender be considered in any discussion of generational conflict. In fact, the major demographic variables of interest in these studies have been the generation or acculturation status of the individuals. However, the treatment of generational status and acculturation in these studies, as a whole, was problematic. Some studies tested for differences along generational status, others with measures of acculturation. Though the two are highly related, generational status is not an exact proxy for acculturation style. For instance, two

people from the same generation may have completely different acculturation styles or two people from different generations may have the same acculturation style.

Another observation of this body of research is that these studies may not be generalizable to Asian Americans living in the eastern half of the United States. Seven of the 10 studies reviewed had samples from the state of California, two from the southwest, and one from the northwest. Differences in the immediate political and sociocultural contexts of the different regions of the United States in which Asian Americans reside may influence the salience of ethnic culture, and the intergenerational family experiences as well. This trend is consistent with the overall picture of Asian American scholarship and is one reason why organizations (i.e. East of California) have emerged. Research must begin to include samples from the east coast. This will offer a more complete picture of all Asian Americans.

In her discussion of the treatment of generational conflict, Lowe (1996) argued that the history of survival and resistance against efforts of subjugation (*hybridity*) and current relationships of power and dominance (*multiplicity*) also should be addressed. She reasoned that the lack of attention to hybridity and multiplicity (e.g., racism) served to consolidate Asian Americans as one group, “oriental,” and essentializes Asian American culture. Furthermore, studying generational issues within an Asian American family without attention to hybridity and multiplicity serves to decontextualize the Asian American experience. Thus, the lack of attention of these systemic power relationships, in concert with intergenerational family conflict in the experience of Asian Americans is another limitation of these studies.

### *Perceived Racism and Psychological Health*

Consistent with Lowe's assertions regarding the inclusion of *multiplicity* in research, a second ecological challenge of interest in the proposed study, the experience of racism, is a result of Asian Americans' minority status. The vast majority of research regarding prejudice and racism has focused on stereotype formation and predictors of racist attitudes (Boeckmann & Liew, 2002). In other words, the focus of research has been on perpetrators and not their targets (Swim & Stangor, 1998). More recently, studies have begun to attend to the targets of prejudice and discrimination. There have been a growing number of empirical studies that have examined the relationship between racism and the psychological, physiological, and subjective well-being of targeted individuals and groups. Research has found a positive relationship between the experience of racism and physiological stress (e.g., Fang & Myers, 2001; Fernando, 1984; Jackson et al., 1996; Krieger & Sidney, 1996; Smith, 1985; McNeilly et al., 1995; Smedley et al., 1993) and an inverse relationship between racism and both life satisfaction and self-esteem (Broman, 1997; Jackson et al., 1996; Porter & Washington, 1979). Though these studies typically have not included the experiences of Asian Americans and have largely focused on African Americans, these studies generally suggest that racism is an important factor to consider in the well-being of racial minorities.

Though Asian Americans have experienced racism at the institutional, cultural, and personal level, discussions and research on race and racism have generally relegated this racial group to the margins (Hune, 1995; Liang et al., 2004). However, current national reports (e.g., NAPALC annual reports) and scholarship from a variety of disciplines indicate that Asian Americans are indeed affected by racism. For instance, in

addition to being considered the “model minority,” Asian Americans also must negotiate the common perception of them as being a “perpetual foreigner” (Takaki, 1989) or a “perfidious foreigner” (Suzuki, 2002). Espiritu (1997) also has explained that Asian American women must contend with stereotypes that have sexualized and objectified them, and have begun to discuss the implications of gender-based stereotypes and socialization on the psychological functioning of Asian American men (W. M. Liu, 2002). Espiritu explained that Asian American men have been stereotyped as both hypermasculine and effeminate. Leong (1995) also has discussed how Asian Americans must negotiate occupational stereotypes and glass ceilings at work.

Perceived racism has been theorized to operate as a psychosocial stressor (Dion, 2002). Thus, one area that may be particularly useful to study is the relationship between psychological functioning and racism-related stress. Psychological stress has been explained to occur when general life events in a person’s environment are perceived and appraised by that individual to be harmful but demand a response that is more than he or she is capable of making (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Racism-related stress includes specific experiences that are related to race and culture (Harrell, 2000; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993) and to a psychological response specifically due to direct or indirect exposure to racism.

Racism-related stress has been conceived as a multidimensional construct. According to Harrell (2000), it involves “the race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism, and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being” (p. 44). Harrell described six types of racism-related stress: (1)

*racism-related life events* (e.g., being discriminated against by peers), although significant, are infrequent and typically time-limited; (2) *vicarious experiences of racism* include experiences of family members or high profile cases involving strangers that invoke heightened psychological and emotional states (e.g., race-based hate crimes); (3) *daily racism microstressors* are typified by, conscious or unconscious, subtle or covert forms of marginalizing incidents (e.g., being asked where you are *really* from); (4) *chronic-contextual stress* involves social, political, and institutional inequities (e.g., the lack of representation of Asian Americans in textbooks); (5) *collective experiences* is explained as cultural or socio-political manifestations of racism that affect the collective (e.g., stereotypical portrayals of the “lotus blossom”); and (6) *transgenerational transmission* refers to the psychological experiences of a group that are passed from generation to generation (e.g., experiences of Japanese internees during World War II). Harrell argued that it is likely that individuals from all racial minority groups, because of their stigmatized status in the United States, experience these types of racism-related stress. However, much of the research regarding the effect of racism on psychological and physiological health has focused on African Americans.

#### *Asian Americans and Racism Related Psychological Outcomes*

Asian Americans represent a group of individuals who have been stigmatized historically because of their racial and cultural background. Since their arrival in the United States, Asian Americans, like other racial minority groups, have experienced personal and institutional forms of discrimination (Chan, 1991; Wu, 2002). In recent years, data have indicated an increase in experiences with racism among Asian Americans (NAPALC, 2002). However, research in this area has been scant. The

following studies indicate that Asian Americans do experience racism and experience the effects of stigma.

In one of the first studies involving racism and psychological outcomes, Asamen and G. L. Berry surveyed 45 Chinese American and 63 Japanese American college students in southern California. The purpose of the study was to examine how Asian Americans are affected by perceived prejudice and how they develop a self-concept while feeling alienated. To those ends, they examined the relationship between perceived prejudice (Perceived Prejudice Scale; Bell & R. V. Robinson, 1980) and multiple dimensions of self-concept (Tennessee Self-Concept Scale; Fitts, 1965) and feelings of alienation (Dean's Alienation Scale; J. P. Robinson & Shaver, 1973). No specific hypotheses were made. In their analyses, Asamen and G. L. Berry (1987) did not find any relationship between perceived prejudice and any of the dimensions of self-concept among Chinese Americans, but they did find an inverse relationship between perceived racial prejudice and physical self-concept among Japanese Americans. Their results also indicated that alienation and self-concept were inversely related for both Chinese and Japanese Americans. Analyses regarding the relationship between perceived prejudice and feelings of alienation, however, were not presented.

As is the case with many psychological studies, the authors sampled college students. These participants were recruited from an introductory sociology course as well as Asian American studies courses and organizations. Given that the authors did not report the number of these participants from each condition (i.e., sociology, Asian American studies, Asian American student organization) it is unclear to whom this sample can be generalized. Furthermore, the authors speculated that the differences that

existed between Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans in their sample were a function of generational status. Though generation status is used as a proxy for acculturation attitudes, measuring participants' attitudes toward discrimination or acculturation level would have provided greater understanding for any differences that existed.

In a cross-sectional study, Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) examined the effects of minority status stresses on the college adjustment of ethnic minority freshmen. Minority status stress was defined as resulting from the inability to cope with experiences of minority students that "heighten feelings of not belonging and interfere with minority students' effective integration into the university community" (Smedley et al., 1993, p. 435). These experiences are based on perceptions of the social climate, achievement stress, interracial and within group dynamics, and racism. The purpose of the study was to determine whether minority status stress conferred an additional risk to college adjustment and psychological health of minority students than did chronic role strains and live events stresses experienced by students. The authors hypothesized that minority status stress would be an additional source of strain and that it would be related to increased risk for negative outcomes beyond that contribution of ordinary stress. Their study included 45 African American, 54 Chicano, 25 Latino, and 37 Pilipino American students at a large University in southern California.

The results of their study indicated that minority status stress was not related to well-being (General Well-Being Questionnaire; U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, 1973), but was related to psychological distress (Hopkins Symptoms Checklist; Derogatis et al., 1974). After controlling for demographic variables, chronic role strain

(Current Concerns Scale; Prillerman, 1988), and general life event stress (Life Events Survey for College Students; Hammen, Marks, Mayol, & deMayo, 1985), minority status stress accounted for an additional 12 percent of the variance in psychological distress. After controlling for demographic variables and general life event stress, minority status stress also accounted for an additional and significant 9 percent of the variance in academic achievement. Statistical analyses also indicated significant between group differences. Smedley et al. reported that African Americans reported significantly higher mean stress levels than did other groups. Their analysis also indicated that women reported higher levels of achievement stress than did men. Race by gender interactions were not significant.

A limitation of this study is that the MSSS, a measure of minority status stress, is written in a manner that is general. In other words, Filipino respondents may have responded differently had items regarding racism been more specific to minority status stress experienced by Filipino Americans or other Asian Americans. Thus, a race-specific measure of racism-related stress of Asian Americans may have yielded different results. A second limitation is that this study was conducted at a highly selective university on the west coast. Thus, these students may represent a select sub group of their respective ethnic communities.

In a related study, Chiu and Ring (1998) studied the contribution of negative life events (Life Events Checklist; Johnson & McCutcheon, 1980) and minority status stress (Minority Student Stress Scale – Asian American; Prillerman, 1988) on behavioral problems and psychological distress (Child Behavior Checklist; Achenbach, 1991), and academic performance among 95 Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant adolescents. In

three separate regression analyses they found that minority status stress accounted for a significant 33 percent of the variance in psychological distress, and a significant 19 percent of the variance in behavior problems after controlling for demographic variables and negative life events. Their analyses indicated that negative life events were not a significant predictor of behavioral problems, psychological distress, and academic performance. Minority status stress did not significantly predict academic performance. The results of this study provided further support to the notion that minority status stressors contribute negatively to psychological well-being. However, Chiu and Ring revised an existing measure but did not provide sample items. Furthermore, they did not report any validity data. Thus, it is unclear what the measure assessed.

Ying, P. Lee, and Tsai (2000) examined the predictive effects of cultural orientation (General Ethnicity Questionnaire; Tsai, Ying, & P. Lee, 2000) and racial discrimination on sense of coherence (Sense of Coherence Scale; Antonovsky, 1993) among Chinese American young adults in the life domains of social affiliation and cultural pride. Sense of coherence is a construct that is related to a sense of confidence (Antonovsky, 1993). Ying et al. compared the 122 American-born and 231 immigrant Chinese American college students in their sample on sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987), frequency of racial discrimination, and cultural orientation in social affiliation and cultural pride domains (Tsai, Ying, & P. Lee, 2000). They did not find any significant differences in sense of coherence but did find that American-born Chinese reported less racial discrimination than did immigrants. In terms of cultural orientation, American-born Chinese were more likely to be *assimilated* whereas immigrants were more likely to be *separated*. The two groups did not differ in cultural pride.

Ying et al. used separate regression analyses to study the effects of cultural pride and frequency of racial discrimination on sense of coherence for the two groups. After controlling for demographic variables they found that sense of coherence among American born Chinese was related to being bilingual (vs. only English speaking) and significantly and negatively associated with experiences with racial discrimination. For immigrant Chinese, being bilingual, bicultural in pride (proud of both Chinese and American culture) was significantly and positively related to sense of coherence. Additionally, immigrant Chinese who were bicultural in affiliation, as opposed to assimilated in affiliation, had a lower sense of coherence. Finally, Chinese immigrants' experience with racial discrimination was significantly and negatively related to sense of coherence. The findings of this study were consistent with previous studies regarding racism and psychological functioning. More specifically, experiences with racism adversely affected an individual's sense of confidence. However, only one dimension of racism was measured. Further, this was a measure of frequency of the events as opposed to an evaluation of the incidents.

Utsey and Ponterotto (1996) developed the Index of Race-Related Stress for use with African American and Black individuals. They found three domains of race-related stress that coincided with previous literature regarding the types of racism (personal, institutional, cultural). In a follow up study, Utsey, Chae, C. F. Brown, and Kelly (2002) surveyed 70 African Americans, 45 Asian Americans, and 45 Latino/a college students and community members. Their study examined the effect of ethnic group membership on ethnic identity (MEIM; Phinney, 1992), race-related stress (Index of Racism Related

Stress; Utsey, 1999), and quality of life (WHO-QOL; World Health Organization Group, 1998). They also studied the effects of race-related stress on quality of life.

In a multivariate analysis, they found that African Americans scored significantly higher than did Latino/a and Asian American participants on cultural and individual forms of race-related stress. African Americans also scored significantly higher than Latino/as but not Asian Americans on institutional race-related stress. It was found that African Americans had significantly higher ethnic identity scores than did Latino/as and Asian Americans. Utsey et al. also found that ethnic group membership had a significant effect on quality of life. Follow up univariate tests indicated that African Americans had significantly higher quality of life ratings than did Asian Americans. Finally, stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of ethnic identity and racism-related stress on quality of life. They found that ethnic identity was positively related to quality of life, while cultural race-related stress was negatively related to quality of life. This study highlighted the differences in the experiences of racism and its effects across different racial minority groups. However, this study utilized a measure designed specifically for use with African Americans that may not have assessed the specific experiences of racism for Asian Americans or Latino/as.

In a recent paper, R. M. Lee (2003) discussed two studies that explored the effect of ethnic identity and other-group identity (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) in the relationship of racism (Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire; Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Perceived Discrimination Scale; Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000) and personal well-being (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965), psychological well-being (Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale; Radloff, 1977), social well-being (Social Connectedness Scale; R. M.

Lee, M. Draper, S. Lee, 2001), and community well-being (Collegiate Psychological Sense of Community Scale; Lounsbury & Deneui, 1996) among college students. In the first study, R. M. Lee hypothesized that (1) discrimination would be negatively associated with personal, social, and community well-being; (2) ethnic identity and other-group orientation would be positively associated with personal, social, and community well-being; and that (3) ethnic identity and other-group orientation would each moderate the negative effects of discrimination on all three forms of well-being.

He surveyed 91 Asian American college students in the first study and found that minority group discrimination (Ancis et al., 2000) correlated negatively with community well-being but not personal or social well-being. Ethnic identity and other-group orientation correlated positively with personal, social, and community well-being. R. M. Lee tested the moderator hypothesis and found that high other-group orientation moderated the effects of high minority group discrimination on community well-being. Ethnic identity and other group orientation also were tested for mediation effects. No significant mediation effects were found.

R. M. Lee limited his second study to Asian Indian American college students. He hypothesized that (1) personal ethnic discrimination would be negatively associated with personal and social well-being, and positively associated with psychological distress; (2) ethnic identity and other-group orientation would be positively associated with personal and social well-being but negatively associated with psychological distress; (3) ethnic identity and other-group orientation would each moderate the negative effects of discrimination on all three outcome measures. He surveyed 67 undergraduate students and found that perceived discrimination (Finch et al., 2000) was positively and

significantly related to psychological distress and correlated negatively with personal and social well-being. Lee also found that ethnic identity correlated positively with personal and social well-being. Other group orientation was correlated only with social well-being. Psychological distress was not correlated with either other group orientation or ethnic identity. Finally, neither ethnic identity nor other group orientation was found to be a moderator or have mediation effects in the relationship between perceived discrimination and well-being or psychological distress. These findings are an indication that ethnic identity, while an asset to psychological well-being, does not serve to protect an individual from the effects of racism. Use of a more race-related construct (e.g., salience of race) or race-specific coping strategies (e.g., joining race-based organizations) may have been more appropriate for the purposes of this study.

One common limitation in all of these studies is that the authors failed to use a measure of racism-related stress that was designed to measure aspects of racism that unique to the Asian American experience. For instance, Wu (2002) explained that the stereotypes of “model minority” and “perpetual foreigner” are two specific forms of racism that Asian Americans commonly experience. The phrase “model minority” was first coined in 1966 by sociologist William Peterson. The concept implies that Asian Americans have “made it,” that they are the modern day American “success” story. Hune and Chan (1997) explained that “Asian Pacific American students are perceived as well-behaved, diligent high achievers who persevere and are educationally successful despite socioeconomic and linguistic obstacles” (p. 44). The stereotype of “perpetual foreigner” is an assumption that Asian Americans, regardless of birthplace or citizenship, are unable

to assimilate to the host culture. This stereotype also implies that Asian Americans are loyal only to their country of “origin.”

In order to address this gap in the current literature and in order to promote more research, Liang, Li, and B. S. K. Kim (2004) developed the Asian American Racism Related Stress Index (AARRSI) through three validation studies. They used an ethnically diverse sample of Asian American college students (73 Korean, 66 Chinese, 53 Asian Indian, 34 Filipino, 21 Japanese, 19 Vietnamese, 19 multiethnic Asians, 12 Laotians, 12 Taiwanese, 5 Cambodians, 4 Hmong, 2 Thai, 2 Indonesian, 1 Pakistani, 19 other Asian) and found three factors of Asian American racism-related stress. They labeled them (1) *socio-historical racism*; (2) *general racism*; and (3) *perpetual foreigner racism*. These factors reflect personal and institutional forms of racism. Furthermore, the *perpetual foreigner racism* factor reflects a specific type of racism that Asian Americans experience.

The results of their studies yielded significant positive correlations between AARRSI total and subscale scores and Recent Racist Events, Lifetime Racist Events, and Appraised Racist Events scores (Schedule of Racist Events; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996). Significant positive correlations between the AARRSI total and subscale scores and perceived racism at work in public, and statements (Perceived Racism Scale; McNeilly et al., 1996) and between AARRSI total and Perpetual Foreigner Racism scores and perceived racism in academic settings (McNeilly et al., 1996) also were found. In addition, there were significant positive correlations between AARRSI's Socio-Historical Racism score and cultural mistrust of politics and with respect to the law (Cultural

Mistrust Inventory; F. Terrell & S. Terrell, 1981). Thus, it appears that the AARRSI is a measure that assesses several aspects of racism.

A limitation of the study, however, is that the authors were unable to find any significant correlations between the AARRSI and measures of global stress (Perceived Stress Scale; S. Cohen & Williamson, 1987), self-esteem (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Rosenberg, 1968), or physical or psychological symptoms (Hopkins Symptoms Checklist; Derogotis et al., 1974). It was suggested that the lack of relationship may indicate one of several things: (1) racism is experienced and understood differently among Asian Americans than African Americans; or (2) that Asian Americans attribute racism to out group attitudes as opposed to personal evaluations of the group. Liang et al. recommended that interpretations using the AARRSI be made cautiously until further validation of the psychometric properties can be established.

#### *Summary of Research Regarding Racism-Related and Asian Americans*

It appears that theoretical formulations regarding the effects of racism on well-being among Asian Americans are being developed slightly faster than empirical research in the area. Research regarding the psychological outcomes of racism among Asian Americans is just emerging. The results of the studies reviewed suggest that the experiences of Asian Americans with racism are similar but distinct from those of African Americans. In general, the experiences are similar in that research suggests that Asian Americans are also negatively affected by racism. For instance, several of the studies indicated an association between experiences with racism and negative psychological outcomes (e.g., Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987; Chiu & Ring, 1998; R. M.

Lee 2003; Utsey et al., 2002) as well as perceptions of community (e.g., R. M. Lee, 2003).

Though a majority of the studies reviewed do indicate a consistent pattern of associations (i.e., inverse relationship between racism and well-being), the results have not been overwhelmingly consistent. For instance, Asamen and G. L. Berry found differences between Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans and reasoned that their findings may be related to generational status. Furthermore, while R. M. Lee found that perceptions of racism were related to psychological and subjective well-being of Asian Indian Americans, he was unable to find similar results with a broader group of Asian Americans.

The lack of consistent results suggests that racism experienced by Asian Americans is a complex set of interactions that warrants further study. One explanation for the inconsistent results across the studies may lie in the measures that are being utilized to assess racism. Since previous research has utilized measures that do not assess specific forms of racism that Asian Americans report experiencing, results may, in fact, be underestimating the effects of racism on outcomes.

One way in which research in this area can be strengthened is through the development and use of measures that are designed specifically to assess the racism-related experiences of Asian Americans. For instance, though Black individuals in convenience or retail stores may experience the perception of being thieves more than Asian Americans, they are less likely to be perceived as a foreigner. Thus, measures such as the AARRSI may offer one way in which researchers can more accurately assess experiences of racism among Asian Americans.

Another explanation for inconsistent results is that these studies have not included other variables that may serve to mediate or moderate the effects of racism on well-being. Further, studying the effects of constructs that may serve to protect an individual from the effects of racism has so far been limited to coping style. One additional factor that has been theorized to protect an individual's psychological functioning from racism-related events is the individual's level of collective self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The role of collective self-esteem, a construct based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), has not been studied in racism-related research.

#### *Social Identity and Collective Self-Esteem*

Though the examination of the psychological well-being of Asian Americans is relatively new, research regarding the influence of intergenerational family conflict and racism-related stress also must consider potential moderating and/or mediating variables. One such variable, collective self-esteem, is based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982). It is a collectivist perspective (Hogg & Williams, 2000) that posits that an individual's self-concept is composed of two aspects. Whereas the first aspect, personal identity, includes individual attributes (e.g., competence, personal relationships), the second component, social identity, takes into account the value and emotional significance of group membership. In short, personal identity is concerned with how a person views him or herself as an individual and social identity refers to how people view the social groups (e.g., race, gender, etc.) to which they belong. Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) explained that since "social identity," a European term is inconsistent with what is typically understood as "social identity" in the United States, the term "collective identity" should be used. Notwithstanding differences in terminology, the theory suggests

that the degree to which a social group is valued determines the extent to which one's social or collective identity is positive. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that there are several ways in which social identity is protected or enhanced. For instance, people with negative views of their social group may attempt to dissociate themselves from that group. Other individuals may compare their group with other groups, thereby allowing for positive or negative evaluation of their own group.

Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) explained that an individualistic orientation to conceptualizing self-esteem has been a limitation of psychological research. They suggested that research regarding the protective factors of self-esteem must include both personal and collective self-esteem. Thus, whereas personal self-esteem moderates self-serving biases, collective self-esteem may be a useful construct in understanding the collective or group-level components of self-concept. In order to address this gap in research, Luhtanen and Crocker developed a 16-item measure of collective self-esteem (CSES) to address this void.

Individual items on the measure's subscales reflect four domains (*Membership*, how worthy participants feel as a member of a social group; *Private CSE*, measuring one's personal judgment about how good one's social groups are; *Public CSE*, measures an individual's judgment about how good one's social groups are as evaluated by others; and *Importance of Identity*, which assesses the importance of one's social group memberships to one's self-concept). In their initial study, they included responses from 82 participants. Demographic information was not provided. Results of their factor analysis, which included 43 items, indicated that 55.2 % of the variance was explained by these four factors. In order to shorten the length of the instrument, four items from each

subscale were selected for the resulting 16-item CSES. The authors reported alpha coefficients of the four subscales, as well as the total scale, ranging from .83. to .88.

In order to establish a more reliable factor structure, Luhtanen and Crocker sampled 887 college students (91% White, 3.6% Black, and 5.2% Asian). The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) and a measure of discrimination based on sex and on race also were administered to test the instrument's validity. Results indicated that the factor structure was stable. Furthermore, alpha coefficients for the scale and its four subscales ranged from .73 to .85. The collective self-esteem scale correlated moderately with the RSES and negatively with scores on the measure of discrimination.

The results of Luhtanen and Crocker's validation studies indicated the CSES is a measure of group-oriented identity (Aspects of Identity Questionnaire III; Cheek, Underwood, & Culter, 1985; Individualism-Collectivism Scale; Hui, 1988; Individuation Scale; Malasch, Stapp, & Santee, 1985; Internal Orientation Scale; Sampson, 1978), is related to self-esteem (Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory; Coopersmith, 1967; RSES; Rosenberg, 1965), and was inversely related to feelings of inadequacy (Janis-Field scale; Janis & Field, 1959). Though the CSES appears to be a valid measure, one major limitation of this study and the instrument itself is that the sample by which its psychometric properties were tested was overwhelmingly White. Thus, its usefulness with racial and ethnic minorities can be questioned.

In order to address this limitation, Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, and Broadnax (1994) tested the psychometric properties in a cross-sectional study that examined the relationship between collective self-esteem and psychological well-being. They surveyed 91 Black, 96 White, and 35 Asian American college students at a large public university

in the northeast. They gave all participants measures of psychological well-being as well as one of two versions of the collective self-esteem scale. In one version of the CSES, race was not mentioned (e.g., “The social groups I belong to are an important reflection of who I am”). In the second version of the CSES, race was mentioned (e.g., “Being Asian American is an important reflection of who I am”). Psychological well-being was operationalized using a measure of personal self-esteem (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965), depression (Beck Depression Inventory; Beck & Beck, 1972), hopelessness (Hopelessness Scale; Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974), and life satisfaction (Satisfaction With Life Scale; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Crocker et al. hypothesized that collective self-esteem would be positively related to psychological well-being.

On the race-specific form, separate correlation analyses were performed for each racial group. For White students, membership, private, and public collective self-esteem were positively and significantly related to personal self-esteem and life satisfaction. No significant relationships were found on any of the subscales with depression. However, membership and private self-esteem were negatively and significantly correlated with hopelessness. For Black students, membership and private collective self-esteem were positively and significantly correlated with life satisfaction and personal self-esteem. Life satisfaction also was significantly and positively correlated with the identity subscale. Membership collective self-esteem was positively and significantly correlated with depression and hopelessness. For Asian Americans only one significant relationship existed. Personal self-esteem was positively related to private collective self-esteem.

Correlation analysis using the general collective self-esteem subscales, where race was not mentioned, for each racial group yielded different significant relationships than the race-specific form. For White students, member, private, and public collective self-esteem were significantly and positively related to personal self-esteem and life satisfaction. Membership and public collective self-esteem were significantly and inversely related to depression. The public collective self-esteem subscale was significantly and inversely related to hopelessness. For Black students, membership and public collective self-esteem were positively related to personal self-esteem and inversely related to depression. The positive relationship observed for life satisfaction and membership, public, and identity reached statistical significance. These same three subscales were inversely related to hopelessness. For Asian Americans, the membership, private, and public collective self-esteem subscales were positively correlated with self-esteem and life satisfaction, and inversely related to depression and hopelessness. In sum, through a large number of correlation analyses, Crocker et al. found that collective self-esteem was a predictor of psychological well-being, even after the effects of personal self-esteem were partialled out, for Blacks and Asian Americans but not for White students.

Collective self-esteem also has been tested as a moderator in the relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological distress among women. In the first of two studies, Corning (2002) examined the association of personal self-esteem (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) in the relationship between perceived discrimination (Perceived Social Inequity Scale – Women’s Form; Corning, 2000) and psychological distress (Hopkins Symptom Checklist; Derogatis et al., 1974) among 100 women (78 European American;

9 Latinas; 4 Asian Americans; 2 African Americans, 1 American Indian, and 6 “other”) at a midwestern university. In a second study, she administered the collective self-esteem scale (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), a measure of perceived discrimination (Perceived Social Inequity Scale – Women’s Form; Corning, 2000) and psychological distress (Brief Symptom Inventory; Derogatis, 1993) to 125 women (88% European American; 5.6% Latina; 1.6% African American; .8% Asian American; and 3.2% “other”). She hypothesized that (1) there would be a positive relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological distress; (2) personal and collective self-esteem would be inversely related to psychological distress; and (3) personal self-esteem and collective self-esteem each would moderate the effects of perceived discrimination on psychological distress.

The results of the study provided support for her predictions. Discrimination was inversely related to indicators of psychological distress. Collective self-esteem and personal self-esteem both moderated the effects of discrimination on distress. Though this study provided support for the role of collective self-esteem as a “buffer” against the effects of stressors on health, this sample was predominantly White. Thus generalizing the “buffer” hypothesis to racial minorities may not be warranted when it concerns perceived discrimination based on sex.

In summary, though relatively new in psychological literature, collective self-esteem appears to be a social group oriented construct that is related to psychological well-being. The studies reviewed also suggest that collective self-esteem, as social identity theory predicts, moderates the effects of discrimination on psychological well-being. For instance, positive self-beliefs about an ethnic group to which one belongs to

should protect the self culturally based intergenerational family conflict. Additionally, beliefs that one's group is held in positive regard by outgroup members should protect that individual from denigrating remarks about one's group.

### *Overall Summary*

This literature review provided a summary of the research regarding racism and well-being, intergenerational family conflict, and collective self-esteem. Though the research in these areas is relatively new, the studies reviewed suggest that these are important constructs to examine when studying the psychological experiences of Asian American college students. Research regarding intergenerational family conflict suggests that these strains not only exist (e.g., Fuligni, 1998; Rick & Forward, 1991; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000) but are associated with differences in culturally-based value orientations (e.g., Chung, 2001; Dinh et al., 1994; Farver et al., 2002). Fewer studies have examined the psychological toll of intergenerational family conflict on children. Though it has been argued that intergenerational family conflict is related to negative psychological outcomes, (e.g., Collins & Russell, 1991; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999) this review of literature found few studies (e.g., Farver et al., 2002; Greenberger & Chen, 1996; R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2001). It is clear that our understanding of the psychological impact of intergenerational family conflict is limited. Further inquiry is needed to shed light on the relationship of family conflict and psychological well-being.

The existing body of knowledge suggests that Asian Americans continue to experience racism. Racism-related research, with African Americans, offers some indication that racism may have negative effects on psychological well-being of its targets (e.g., Broman, 1997; Jackson et al., 1996). The racism-related studies that were

reviewed indicate that minority status stress is significantly positively associated with psychological distress and behavioral problems (Chiu & Ring, 1998), and experiences with prejudice and racism is related to lowered levels of self-concept among Japanese Americans (Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987), a lowered sense of coherence among Chinese Americans (Ying et al., 2000), lower ratings of community well-being among a diverse sample of Asian Americans (R. M. Lee, 2003), and lowered levels of personal and social well-being among Indian Americans (R. M. Lee, 2003). Though a relatively new area of examination, it appears that racism is negatively associated with psychological, social, and community well-being among Asian American college students. However, given that these studies utilized surveys of racism or perceived discrimination that was not developed specifically to measure experiences that Asian Americans encounter, these studies may be underestimating the effect of racism on well-being. Thus, research utilizing measures specifically designed for use with Asian Americans must be conducted. Further, as a whole, the body of research dedicated to Asian Americans' psychosocial experience of racism is scarce. This research contributes to this developing area of study.

Finally, the review of literature suggests that the role of collective self-esteem in an individuals' psychological functioning has not been studied well. The studies that do exist suggest that collective self-esteem is positively related to personal self-esteem and life satisfaction and inversely associated with depression and hopelessness (Crocker et al., 1994). Of particular interest are Corning's (1992) findings, which offered support for Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) assertion that collective self-esteem would serve as a protective factor and moderate the relationship between discrimination and psychological

well-being. Crocker's theory has been tested with several populations (i.e., women; African Americans). Only one study was found which involved Asian Americans. It is clear that this test of theory also must be conducted with this group. The results of such a test will offer an understanding of what factors may protect Asian American individuals from the harmful effects of racism and culturally-based intergenerational family conflict.

In sum, the review of literature suggests that while intergenerational family conflict, racism, and collective self-esteem are related to indices of well-being (i.e., psychological, subjective, community) there is much more to learn regarding their individual and collective contribution to the psychological functioning of Asian American college students. Examining these factors collectively can provide a more complex understanding of the psychological functioning of Asian American college students.

#### *Overview and Statement of Hypotheses*

Given the existing literature regarding racism-related outcomes and the high potential for and negative impact of intergenerational family conflicts on Asian American college students' well-being, it seems useful to understand the contributions of each ecological challenge to the psychological well-being of Asian American college students. Thus, the first purpose of this research was to examine the relationship of likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and racism related stress to the psychological well being of Asian American college students. Additionally, this present study extended previous research by examining the additional toll of racism-related stress on psychological well being after the effects of demographic variables and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict had been accounted for. This present study also sought to extend previous

research by testing assertions that collective self-esteem serves as a protective factor in the relationship between the two ecological factors: racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and psychological well-being.

The dependent variable of this study was psychological well-being. For the purposes of this study, psychological well-being was operationalized through the use of five (Anxiety, Depression, Interpersonal Relations, Career Related Problems, and Self-Esteem) of the College Adjustment Scales (CAS; Anton & Reed, 1991) which measures components of college adjustment of college students. Including relevant demographic variables, the independent variables were racism-related stress and intergenerational family conflict. Demographic variables were included in analyses if they were found to be significantly related to outcome variables in preliminary analyses. In order to test the stress-buffering hypothesis offered by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992), the collective self-esteem construct was tested as a moderator variable. This decision was based on the recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986). They offered that variables that have been argued, in theory, to protect an individual from distress should be tested for their moderator effects.

Finally, in order to further existing research, this present study utilized Asian American college students as the population. Use of this population was appropriate because of the developmental challenges that college students, as opposed to older adults, experience with family conflict and racism. Young and Takeuchi (1997) also suggested that the inclusion of Asian Americans in research (and discussions) regarding race and racism could aid in psychologists' understanding of race relations beyond what is known or theorized for Blacks and Whites.

Given the existing literature regarding stress in general, racism, the relationships in Asian American families, and collective self-esteem it was hypothesized that:

- (1) There is a positive relationship between experiences with likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and psychological problems;
- (2) There is a positive relationship between experiences with racism-related stress and psychological problems;
- (3) Experiences with racism-related stress contributes positively to psychological problems after the effects of relevant demographic variables and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict have been accounted for;
- (4) Collective self-esteem moderates the relationship between experiences with likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and psychological problems; and
- (5) Collective self-esteem moderates the relationship between experiences with racism-related stress and psychological problems.

## CHAPTER 3

### Method

This study used a web-based survey methodology to investigate the relationships between racism-related stress, likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, and psychological well-being of Asian American college students. The independent variables of this study were racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict. Additionally, the moderating role of collective self esteem in the relationships between racism-related stress, likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, and psychological well-being was studied. The dependent variables were psychological well-being, which was operationalized as five components of college adjustment (i.e., anxiety problems, depression problems, career problems, interpersonal problems, and self-esteem problems). Furthermore data regarding the participants' ethnicity, year in college, gender, parent education and occupation, family structure, generational status, racial composition of neighborhood, as well as racial diversity of high school friends and college friends, and their enrollment in ethnic studies or Asian American studies courses were collected. Descriptive analyses were conducted with these variables.

#### *Participants*

Participants in this study were undergraduate Asian American college students enrolled at a large public university in the Mid-Atlantic. Participants were recruited through an electronic mail (e-mail) distribution list. This list contained 700 e-mail addresses of individuals who self-identified as being an Asian American. These participants were randomly selected from a list of students and their email addresses supplied by the registrar's office. An e-mail message containing an embedded link to the

web-based survey was sent to these students. In exchange for their participation, participants were entered into a drawing for a \$75 first prize, or a second prize of \$50. Over the course of 6 weeks, three additional e-mail messages were sent to participants who had not yet completed the survey.

These attempts yielded 72 messages from an email administrator indicating that the message could not be delivered because the recipients' account either exceeded the available disk quota or that the email address did not exist. The multiple requests yielded 137 participants representing 21.8% of the reachable sample. Responses from six of the participants, who were not traditionally aged college students, were not included in the analyses. It was thought that their current developmental experiences did not reflect those of interest for this study. For instance, the experience of a 40 year old individual would, expectedly, be different from that of a 17 – 23 year old individual. This yielded a final sample of 131 individuals.

The participants' age ranged from 17 - 23 ( $M = 19.96$ ;  $SD = 1.42$ ). Participants' ethnic backgrounds were 34 (26.0%) Chinese, 25 (19.1%) Korean, 18 (13.7%) Taiwanese, 16 (12.2%) Asian Indian, 9 (6.9%) Filipino/a, 5 (3.8%) Pakastani, 5 (3.8%) Vietnamese, 4 (3.1%) Multiracial Asian, 4 (3.1%) Multiethnic Asian, 3 (2.3%) Thai, 3 (2.3%) Japanese, 2 (1.5%) Cambodian, 2 (1.5%) Indonesian, and 1 (0.8%) Sri Lankan. For the purposes of all analyses, participants' ethnicity was aggregated, based on common socio-political history (L. Cheng & Yang, 2000; Misir, 2000; Rumbaut, 2000), into 5 categories which were East Asian ( $n = 80$ ; 61.1%), South Asian ( $n = 24$ ; 18.3%), South East Asian ( $n = 10$ ; 7.6%), Filipino/a ( $n = 9$ ; 6.9%), and Multiethnic/racial ( $n = 8$ ; 6.1%).

Participants' reported generation status varied. Students who were not born abroad also were asked to report the number of years they have been in United States. Fifty-six students reported that they were not born in the United States. The length of stay in the United States ranged from 1.11 to 23.70 years ( $M = 12.26$ ;  $SD = 5.54$ ). Participants also were asked what occupation his/her mother and father held. This open-ended item yielded 93 and 92 different occupations for each respectively. These different occupations were categorized as professional, service/blue collar, small business entrepreneur, stay at home, retired, not available, and unemployed. These categories were based on L. Cheng and Yang's (2000) description of the Asian American workforce. A summary of participants' other reported demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Demographic Characteristics of Participants ( $n = 131$ )

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	82	62.6
Male	49	37.4
Ethnic Background		
East Asian	80	61.1
South Asian	24	18.3
Southeast Asian	10	7.6
Filipino/a	9	6.9
Multiethnic/racial	8	6.1
Generation Status		
First	24	18.3
1.5	27	20.6
Second	78	59.5
Fifth	2	1.5
Academic Year		
First	36	27.5
Second	35	26.7
Third	35	26.7
Fourth	22	16.8
Fifth	2	1.5
Sixth	1	.8

## Marital Status of Parents (Most of Life)

Married	113	86.3
Divorced	8	6.1
Widowed	4	3.1
Remarried	2	1.5
Separated	2	1.5
Other	2	1.5
Not Reported	2	1.5

## Marital Status of Parents (Current)

Married	111	84.7
Divorced	8	6.1
Remarried	6	4.6
Widowed	4	3.1
Separated	2	1.5

## Sibling Order

Oldest	53	40.5
Middle	13	9.9
Youngest	48	36.6
Only Child	17	13.0

## Number of Siblings

None	17	13.0
One	67	51.1
Two	28	21.4
Three	13	9.9
Four	4	3.1
Five	1	0.8
Eight	1	0.8

## Primary Caretaker

Mother	100	76.3
Aunt	15	11.5
Sibling	3	2.3
Father	4	3.1
Other	9	7.0

## Location of Father's Education (Highest Degree)

Not in United States	71	54.2
In United States	56	42.7
Did not report	4	3.1

## Father's Educational Background

Some High School	5	3.8
High School Graduate	15	11.5
Some College	12	9.2
BA/BS	37	28.2
MA/MS/MEd	27	20.6
PhD/MD/JD	24	18.3
Not sure	11	8.4

### Mother's Educational Background

Some High School	7	5.3
High School Graduate	14	10.7
Some College	29	22.1
BA/BS	40	30.5
MA/MS/MEd	21	16.0
PhD/MD/JD	8	6.1
Not sure	12	9.2

### Location of Mother's Education

Not in United States	89	67.9
In United States	41	31.3
Did not report	1	.8

### Parental Income

Did not know	20	15.3
Less than 12K	2	1.5
12-25K	11	8.4
26-50K	20	15.3
51-75K	21	16.0
76-100K	24	18.3
101-105K	24	18.3
Over 150K	9	6.9

### Father's Occupation

Professional	80	60.6
Service/Clerical/Trade	22	16.8
Small Business Entrepreneur	14	10.7
Not Reported	11	8.4
Retired	4	3.1

### Mother's Occupation

Professional	58	44.3
Service/Clerical/Trade	30	22.9
Stay at Home	19	14.5
Small Business Entrepreneur	11	8.4
Not Reported	9	6.9
Retired	2	1.5
Unemployed	2	1.5

### Racial Composition of Neighborhood

Mostly White	63	48.1
Racially Mixed	38	29.0
Mostly Asian	17	13.0
Mostly Black	8	6.1
Mostly Latino/a	4	3.1
Not Reported	1	.8

## Racial Composition of High School Friends

Racially Mixed	65	49.6
Mostly White	33	25.2
Mostly Asian	30	22.9
Mostly Black	1	.8
Mostly Latino/a	1	.8
Not Reported	1	.8

## Racial Composition of College Friends

Racially Mixed	69	52.7
Mostly Asian	47	35.9
Mostly White	15	11.5

## Number of Asian American Studies (AAST) Courses

None	90	68.7
One	25	19.1
Two	6	4.6
Three or More	7	6.4
Not Reported	3	2.3

## Number of Ethnic Studies Courses (not including AAST)

None	83	63.4
One	25	19.1
Two	11	8.4
Three or More	11	8.4
Not Reported	1	.8

*Instruments*

*Asian American Racism-Related Stress Index.* The Asian American Racism-Related Stress Index (AARRSI; Liang, Li, & B. S. K. Kim, 2004) is a 29-item self-report measure (Appendix A). In the questionnaire, respondents are instructed to indicate their responses using the following 5-point scale that was adapted from the Utsey and Ponterotto's (1996) Index of Race-Related Stress: 1 = *This event has never happened to me or someone I know*; 2 = *This event happened but did not bother me*; 3 = *This event happened and I was slightly bothered*; 4 = *This event happened and I was upset*; 5 = *This event happened and I was extremely upset*. Although these response choices matched the purpose of the AARRSI items, a question could be raised about the wording for choice 1 in comparison to the rest of the choices. The decision to utilize this wording is a result of

a pilot study conducted by Utsey and Ponterotto (1996). They explained that in that study, a preliminary version of the IRRS used a typical Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *unaffected by the event* to 4 = *extremely upset by event*. Upon completion of data collection, Utsey and Ponterotto discovered that many of the questionnaires were incorrectly completed. They “suspected that requiring participants to check some items, while leaving others blank, was confusing” (p. 492). Based on this assessment, Liang et al. settled on using the 5-point scale in which no items are left blank. Utsey and Ponterotto also pointed out that this scale is consistent with other measures of stress. Liang et al. argued that for these reasons, they believed that their adaptation of Utsey and Ponterotto’s 5-point scale best fit their purpose. None of the items require reverse scoring.

Liang et al. (2004) reported three subscales of the AARRSI. The first subscale, Socio-Historical Racism (e.g., You learn that Asian Americans were historically targets of racist actions) includes 14 items that reflect transgenerational and vicarious experiences with either institutional or cultural racism that Asian Americans may have experienced. The 8-item General Racism subscale (e.g., Someone tells you that the kitchens of Asian families smell and are dirty) reflects Asian Americans’ experience directly and may occur on any given day. The last subscale, Perpetual Foreigner Racism (e.g., You are told that “you speak English so well”), contains 7 items that measure a specific form of racism that Asian Americans encounter. Specifically, items in this subscale measure Asian Americans’ experiences with being presumed to be an Asian national and not an American citizen. The total AARRSI and subscale scores are obtained by summing the items and dividing by the number of items in the subscale. Higher scores

on each of these scales indicate a high level of racism-related stress. In three separate studies, the coefficient alphas for the total scale ranged from .90 to .95 (Liang et al, 2004). Coefficient alphas for Socio-Historical Racism, General Racism, and Perpetual Foreigner Racism ranged from .82 to .93; .75 to .87; and .84 to .88, respectively. Liang et al., also reported 2-week test-retest reliability coefficients for the 29-item AARRSI, and the Socio-Historical Racism, General Racism and Perpetual Foreigner Racism subscales were .87, .82, .73, and .84, respectively. Data from the present study yielded a coefficient alpha of .94 for the total scale, and alphas of .88, .81, and .86, respectively, for the subscales. For the purposes of this study, only the total scale score was utilized. The range of the total scale score is 29 – 145.

Validity for the AARRSI (Liang et al.) was established through positive correlations with the Minority Status Stress scale (MSSS; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993), Schedule of Racist Events (SRE; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996), Perceived Racism Scale (PRS; McNeilly et al., 1996), and the Cultural Mistrust Inventory (CMI; Terrell & Terrell, 1981). Liang et al. (2004) did not find significant correlations with mental health variables as measured by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; S. Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983); Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1968); and Hopkins Symptoms Checklist (HSCL; Derogatis, Lipman, Rickels, Uhlenhuth, & Covi, 1974).

### *Intergenerational Family Conflict*

*Asian American Family Conflicts.* The Asian American Family Conflicts Scale (FCS; R. M. Lee, Choe, G. Kim, & Ngo, 2000) is a 10-item self-report measure (Appendix B) designed to assess participants' ratings of conflict between themselves and

their parents that reflect both intergenerational and acculturation differences. The statements are written to elicit responses that reflect the child's perspective. For instance, one item reads, "Your parents do not want you to bring shame upon the family, but you feel that your parents are too concerned with saving face." In the FCS, participants are asked to respond to items with both likelihood and seriousness. Likelihood of an item occurring is rated using a 5-item Likert-type scale ( $1 = \textit{almost never}$  to  $5 = \textit{almost always}$ ). The seriousness of the problem is rated using a 5-item Likert-type scale ( $1 = \textit{not at all}$  to  $5 = \textit{extremely}$ ). None of the items require reverse scoring. Scores on the two subscales are obtained by summing the 10 items on each scale. High scores on each of the scales indicate greater likelihood and seriousness of family conflict. R. M. Lee et al. reported coefficient alphas for Likelihood subscale (.89) and Seriousness subscale (.91); and 3-week test-retest reliability coefficients of .80 and .85, respectively. R. M. Lee et al. recommended use of only the Likelihood subscale until further analyses could be conducted to validate the Seriousness subscale. Thus, only data regarding the Likelihood subscale were used for this study. The range for the subscale was 10 – 50. The present sample of this study yielded a coefficient alpha of .86 for the Likelihood subscale.

Construct validity for FCS-Likelihood was established through positive correlations with family conflict items from the Social, Attitudinal, Familial, Environmental Acculturation Scale (SAFE; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987). Criterion validity was established through a test of the acculturation gap hypothesis. That is, individuals who are highly acculturated and perceive their parents to be traditional reported having more intergenerational family conflict than participants who are as acculturated as they perceive their parents to be.

*Collective Self-Esteem.* The Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) is a 16-item self-report measure (Appendix C). The CSES assesses participants' evaluations of themselves as members of a particular social group. For the purposes of this study and as recommended by Luhtanen and Crocker, the CSE items were modified to include "Asian American." For instance, an original item that reads "Overall, my social group is considered good by others" was modified to read "Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others." In the CSES, participants are asked to respond to a 7-item Likert-type scale ( $1 = \text{strongly to } 7 = \text{strongly agree}$ ).

Luhtanen and Crocker reported four subscales of the CSES (*Membership Esteem; Public Collective Self Esteem; Private Self-Esteem; and Identity*). Each subscale contained four items. The Membership subscale ( $\alpha = .80$ ) contained items that relate to how good one feels about his or her membership in a social group (e.g., I am a worthy member of my racial/ethnic group). The Private collective self-esteem subscale ( $\alpha = .90$ ) items are designed to measure participants' judgments of how good one's social groups are (e.g., I feel good about the racial/ethnic group I belong to). Items that assessed one's judgments of how others evaluated one's social group (e.g., Overall, my racial/ethnic group are considered good by others) made up the Public collective self-esteem subscale ( $\alpha = .77$ ). Lastly, the Identity subscale ( $\alpha = .80$ ) is composed of items that assess the importance of a group membership (e.g., In general, belonging to my race/ethnicity is an important part of my self image). In order to obtain subscale scores, specific items must first be reverse scored. The possible score range of each of the subscale is 4 – 28. Then subscale items are added and divided by four. Higher scores on

the subscales indicate higher levels of membership esteem, public collective self-esteem, private self-esteem; and salience of identity.

Validity for the CSES (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992) was established through positive correlations with personal self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), and collectivism (Hui, 1988). The authors also reported a 6-week test-retest correlation of .68 for the total scale. In a study of Asian Americans, Alvarez and Helms (2001) reported subscale coefficient alphas of .73 (total collective self-esteem); .64 (membership esteem); .75 (public collective self esteem); .75 (private collective self-esteem); and .75 (identity). This study yielded coefficient alphas of .69, .81, .71, and .82, respectively.

#### *Psychological Well-Being*

The *College Adjustment Scales* (CAS; Anton & Reed, 1991) is a self-report inventory (Appendix D) designed to assess common psychological and adjustment problems presented by college and university counseling clients. The measure was developed with data from 1146 students from across the United States. The sample reflected national enrollment proportions according to gender and ethnic group classification. This measure was used to assess psychological well-being. For the purposes of this study, only 60 of the original 108 items were included in the study. The 60 Likert-type items (*false or not at all true, slightly true, mainly true, very true*) yield scores on five 12-item subscales.

The first subscale, Anxiety (e.g., I feel tense much of the time), measures the participants' level of concern and worry about life events. The second subscale, Depression (e.g., I haven't felt much like eating lately), measures the degree to which a student feels a sense of hopelessness and sadness. The third subscale, Self-Esteem (e.g., I

don't have any particular strengths or talents), is a measure of general, or global, self-esteem. The fourth subscale, Interpersonal Problems (e.g., I have close and satisfying relationships), assesses the degree to which students have difficulty relating to others. The final subscale, Career Problems (e.g., I'm worried about finding a major), measures difficulties setting career goals and in making career decisions.

Raw scores on the subscales are obtained by summing the corresponding individual item responses. The range of possible scores is 12 – 48. Normalized T scores are obtained by plotting raw subscale scores. Higher scores indicate more problems encountered in that area. The total CAS raw score can be obtained by summing all items. The CAS (Anton & Reed, 1991) was found to be associated with the Beck Depression Inventory (A. T. Beck & Steer, 1987), the NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1989), and the Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory (E. J. O'Brien & Epstein, 1989). Anton and Reed reported the internal consistency of CAS scales to range from .80 to .92. In this study, results yielded coefficient alphas of .88 for the Anxiety subscale, .86 for the Interpersonal Problems subscale, .88 for the Depression subscale, .94 for the Career subscale, and .88 for the Self-esteem subscale. Convergent validity of the CAS also has been demonstrated (Anton & Reed, 1991).

The mean, standard deviation, range, and alpha coefficient of each scale and its subscales are presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
 Means, Standard Deviation, Ranges, and Reliability of Scales ( $n = 131$ )

Scale	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$
Anxiety	30- 78	50.73	9.95	.88
Interpersonal Problems	29- 75	51.62	10.20	.86
Depression	27- 78	51.66	10.50	.88
Career Problems	36- 80	53.27	10.48	.94
Self-Esteem	30- 78	53.66	9.49	.88
AARRSI	1- 5	2.55	.78	.94
Likelihood Family Conflict	1- 7	25.65	8.73	.86
Membership	2- 7	5.13	1.13	.69
Private CSE	2- 7	5.74	1.13	.81
Public CSE	2- 7	5.38	1.05	.71
Identity Importance	1- 7	4.72	1.47	.82

### *Demographics*

Participants were asked to provide the following demographic information: race, ethnicity, age, gender, generational status, number of years residing in the United States, past and current marital status of parents, primary care giver, number of siblings, their order among siblings, amount of exposure to Asian American studies and Ethnic studies material. Participants also were asked to report the demographic background of the neighborhood in which they spent the majority of their life, as well as the racial composition of his or her high school and college peers. This demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) was developed for the purpose of the present study.

### *Procedures*

Electronic mail addresses of individuals who self-identify as being Asian American were selected randomly from a list of email addresses provided by the University Registrar's office. These individuals were sent an electronic-mail (E-mail) message (Appendix F) asking them to participate in this research project. This E-mail informed them of the general purpose of the study, the estimated time to complete the web-based survey, and of the opportunity to win a cash-drawing. Potential participants were then sent a first reminder (Appendix G) one-week after the first request. A second

reminder (Appendix H) was sent two-weeks after the initial request. A final reminder (Appendix I) was sent three-weeks after the initial mailing.

Participants were directed to the first page of the web-based survey by clicking a hypertext link embedded in the email. This first page of the survey contained the informed consent form (Appendix J). The statement described the study in general terms, explained confidentiality, and invited participants to ask questions. Participants were informed that by entering the survey, they were providing informed consent, and that participation in the study should take approximately 30-minutes. After submitting their surveys, participants were shown a debriefing statement (Appendix K) that explained the study more clearly, provided a brief summary of the past research regarding Asian American families and racism, and gave the author's name and email address for further questions regarding this research. Further, in order to ensure that participants were aware of resources on campus, they were given contact information for the university's counseling center and Asian American Studies Program.

## CHAPTER 4

### Data Analyses

The major purpose of this study was to examine the relationships of racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, with self-reported psychological problems. A secondary purpose of this project was to test the additional contribution of racism-related stress to psychological function after the effects of likelihood of intergenerational family conflict had been accounted for. Finally, a moderator hypothesis in which collective self-esteem was thought to play a role in the relationship between psychological well-being and the two ecological challenges, racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, also was examined.

#### *Preliminary Analyses*

Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine the relationships of demographic variables on anxiety problems, interpersonal problems, depression problems, self-esteem problems, and career problems subscales, the moderator, collective self-esteem (i.e., membership, public, private, identity importance), and the two ecological challenges (i.e., family conflict, racism-related stress). Given the 11 analyses for each categorical demographic variable, an individual alpha coefficient of .004 (.05/11) was utilized. Preliminary analyses of categorical demographic variables yielded significant differences based on Parental Income, Location of Mother's Education, Highest Level of Education of Mother's Education, and Highest Level of Father's Education.

The relationships between age, number of siblings, and years in the U.S. after immigration, and measures of psychological well-being, the moderator variables, and the

ecological challenges also were analyzed. Bonferroni correction was made on the alpha level to protect against Type I error. Given the 120 correlation comparisons at overall alpha coefficient level of .05, the individual alpha level was set at .0004. Only one of the ordinal demographic variables yielded a statistically significant relationship. Racism-related stress was positively and significantly related to the number of Asian American Studies courses an individual completed. These preliminary analyses were conducted to determine whether demographic variables should be included in the main analyses. Variables that yielded statistical significance were included in subsequent analyses as covariates.

The present study's hypotheses and methods for testing them were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and psychological problems.

Correlation analyses were performed to examine the relationship between the Intergenerational Family Conflict – Likelihood subscale and the five subscales of the College Adjustment Scale (CAS). Bonferroni correction was made on the alpha level to protect against Type I error. Given the 15 correlation comparisons at an overall alpha coefficient level of .05, the individual alpha level was set at .003. Results of this analysis indicated that this hypothesis was partially supported (Table 3). Whereas results did not indicate significant relationships for likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and anxiety problems ( $r = .20, p = .019$ ), depression problems ( $r = .15, p = .078$ ), or career problems ( $r = .23, p = .009$ ), significant positive relationships between likelihood of family conflict and interpersonal problems ( $r = .26, p = .002$ ) and self-esteem problems ( $r = .25, p = .003$ ) were indicated. These represent small effect sizes J. Cohen's (1988).

Table 3  
*Intercorrelations between Psychological Well-being and Family Conflict (n = 131)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Anxiety Problems	-					
2. Interpersonal Problems	.689*	-				
3. Depression Problems	.780*	.731*	-			
4. Career Problems	.538*	.537*	.513*	-		
5. Self-Esteem Problems	.686*	.699*	.664*	.633*	-	
6. Family Conflict	.205	.262*	.154	.226	.254*	-

\* $p \leq .003$

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between racism-related stress and psychological problems.

Correlation analyses were performed to examine the relationship between racism-related stress, the five subscales of the College Adjustment Scale. To protect against Type I error, Bonferroni correction was made on the alpha level. Given the 15 correlation comparisons at an overall alpha coefficient level of .05, the individual alpha level was set at .003. This study yielded significant positive relationships between the standardized AARRSI total scale score and career problems ( $r = .29, p = .001$ ) and self-esteem problems ( $r = .29, p = .001$ ). According to J. Cohen (1988), these effect sizes were small. However, relationships between racism-related stress and anxiety ( $r = .16, p = .063$ ), interpersonal problems ( $r = .22, p = .010$ ), and depression ( $r = .15, p = .069$ ) were not statistically significant. Thus, this hypothesis only was partially supported (Table 4).

Table 4  
*Intercorrelations between Psychological Well-being and Racism-related stress (n = 131)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Anxiety Problems	-					
2. Interpersonal Problems	.689*	-				
3. Depression Problems	.780*	.731*	-			
4. Career Problems	.538*	.537*	.513*	-		
5. Self-Esteem Problems	.686*	.699*	.664*	.633*	-	
6. Racism-Related Stress	.163	.224	.160	.293*	.287*	-

\* $p \leq .003$

Hypothesis 3: Racism-related stress contributes to psychological problems after the effects of demographic variables and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict have been accounted for.

In this series of analyses, the relationship between racism-related stress and Anxiety Problems, Interpersonal Problems, Depression Problems, Career Problems, and Self-Esteem Problems were examined taking into account relevant demographic variables and the likelihood of intergenerational family conflict. To determine whether racism-related stress was related to psychological problems over and above relevant demographic variables and the likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, five separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses, with the five components of psychological well-being as dependent variables, were conducted.

Given the 5 family-wise comparisons at an overall alpha coefficient level of .05, the alpha level was set at .01. Scores for each variable were transformed to standardized centered z-scores and used in all analyses. Using standardized z-scores produces an unstandardized partial regression coefficient (*B* or Beta) that provides an understanding of the direct effect and size of effect of each variable (Aiken & West, 1991). Further, use of centered scores avoids problems associated with collinearity in interaction terms (Aiken & West).

Two separate regression analyses were performed for interpersonal problems and depression problems. In those two analyses, Number of AAST courses was entered in the first step, with family conflict entered in the second step. Racism-related stress was entered in the last step. As indicated by the  $R^2$  in the final regression, the variance accounted for by the predictor variables were 10.1%, and 6.2% of interpersonal problems,

and depression problems, respectively (Table 4). The two ecological challenges, racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict explained 10.0%, and 5.3% of the variance in interpersonal problems, and depression problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for interpersonal problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .04$ ), or depression ( $\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .06$ ).

Table 4  
Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Psychological Problems

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	95% <i>CI</i>	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$
<i>Anxiety Problems (1, 103)</i>							
Step 1							
AAST Courses	-.057	.081	-.068	-.22 to .10			
Parental Income	-.047	.063	-.073	-.17 to .08			
					.01	.01	0.55
Step 2							
AAST Courses	-.059	.080	-.071	-.22 to .10			
Parental Income	-.032	.063	-.050	-.16 to .09			
Family Conflict	.182	.098	.180	-.01 to .37			
					.04	.03	3.47
Step 3							
AAST Courses	-.140	.087	-.168	-.31 to .03			
Parental Income	-.042	.062	-.065	-.16 to .08			
Family Conflict	.092	.104	.091	-.11 to .30			
Racism related Stress	.242	.110	.247	.02 to .46			
					.09	.04	4.86
<i>Interpersonal Problems (1, 124)</i>							
Step 1							
AAST Courses	-.028	.076	-.033	-.18 to .12			
					.00	.00	0.13
Step 2							
AAST Courses	-.031	.074	-.036	-.18 to .11			
Family Conflict	.264	.086	.265	.09 to .43			
					.07	.07	9.43*
Step 3							
AAST Courses	-.099	.080	-.116	-.26 to .06			
Family Conflict	.191	.092	.191	.01 to .37			
Racism related Stress	.200	.098	.205	.01 to .39			
					.10	.03	4.16
<i>Depression Problems (1, 124)</i>							
Step 1							
AAST Courses	-.084	.077	-.096	-.24 to .07			
					.01	.01	1.18
Step 2							
AAST Courses	-.086	.076	-.098	-.24 to .07			
Family Conflict	.159	.089	.157	-.02 to .34			
					.03	.02	3.19

Step 3						
AAST Courses	-.153	.083	-.176	-.32 to .01		
Family Conflict	.088	.096	.086	-.10 to .28		
Racism related Stress	.196	.102	.198	-.01 to .40		
					.06	.03 3.69
<hr/>						
<i>Career Problems (1, 112)</i>						
Step 1						
AAST Courses	-.048	.079	-.057	-.20 to .11		
Father's Ed Level	-.097	.065	-.138	-.23 to .03		
					.02	.02 1.23
Step 2						
AAST Courses	-.053	.078	-.062	-.21 to .10		
Father's Education	-.076	.065	-.109	-.20 to .05		
Family Conflict	.198	.094	.195	.01 to .38		
					.06	.04 4.44
Step 3						
AAST Courses	-.161	.083	-.189	-.33 to .00		
Father's Education	-.091	.063	-.129	-.22 to .03		
Family Conflict	.089	.098	.088	-.10 to .28		
Racism related Stress	.307	.102	.313	.10 to .51		
					.13	.07 9.03*
<hr/>						
<i>Self Esteem Problems (1, 122)</i>						
Step 1						
AAST Courses	-.053	.075	-.062	-.20 to .09		
Locale of Mom's Ed	.522	.187	.244	.15 to .89		
					.06	.06 4.01
Step 2						
AAST Courses	-.054	.073	-.063	-.20 to .09		
Locale of Mom's Ed	.425	.186	.198	.06 to .79		
Family Conflict	.243	.088	.238	.07 to .42		
					.11	.05 7.57*
Step 3						
AAST Courses	-.151	.078	-.176	-.30 to .00		
Locale of Mom's Ed	.379	.181	.177	.02 to .74		
Family Conflict	.150	.091	.147	-.03 to .33		
Racism related Stress	.283	.096	.286	.09 to .47		
					.17	.06 8.67*

\*  $p < .01$

With anxiety problems as the dependent variable, Number of AAST courses and Parental Income were entered as covariates in the first step of this regression analysis. In this regression analysis, likelihood of intergenerational family conflict was entered in the second step. Racism related stress was entered in the last step. As indicated by the  $R^2$  in the final regression, the variance accounted for by the predictor variables were 8.6% of

anxiety problems. The two ecological challenges, racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict explained 7.5% of the variance in anxiety problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for anxiety problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .04, p = .03$ ).

The contribution of racism-related stress was statistically significant in predicting career problems and self-esteem. In the regression analysis with career problems as the dependent variable, Number of AAST courses and father's highest education level was entered as covariates in the first step. Likelihood of intergenerational family conflict was entered in the second step with racism-related stress entered in the last step. The total variance accounted for, in career problems, by the predictor variables was 12.9%. Racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict accounted for 10.7% of the explained variance in career problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was statistically significant for career problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .07, p = .00, B = .307$ ).

Self-esteem problems also was explained by racism-related stress significantly after the effects of Number of AAST courses, location of mother's education, and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict were controlled. These variables accounted for 17.4% of the explained variance in self-esteem problems. The variance accounted for self-esteem problems by the two ecological challenges was 11.3%. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was statistically significant for self-esteem problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .06, p = .00, B = .283$ ).

These significant results indicated that increased levels of racism-related stress contribute to career problems and self-esteem problems above and beyond what is explained by demographic variables and total likelihood of intergenerational family

conflict. Furthermore, with a small effect, the direction of the beta coefficient indicates that an increased level of racism-related stress is associated with greater levels of career-related problems and self-esteem problems.

Hypothesis 4: Collective Self-Esteem moderates the relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and psychological problems

To test these hypotheses regarding the moderator role of collective self-esteem in the relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and psychological well-being, Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures were used. Three separate regression analyses were performed for interpersonal problems, depression problems, and self-esteem problems, with the mother's highest level of education and location of the mother's highest level of education were entered into the first step as covariates. Likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and collective self-esteem (i.e., Membership, Private Collective Self-Esteem, Public Collective Self-Esteem, and Identity Importance) scores were entered in the second step. The interaction terms likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and collective self-esteem (i.e., IFC X Membership, IFC X Private CSE, IFC X Public CSE, IFC X Importance) were entered in the last step (Table 5). As indicated by the  $R^2$ , the variance accounted for by all the variables were 24.7% of interpersonal problems, 14.9% of depression problems, and 27.0% of self-esteem problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for interpersonal problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .53$ ), depression problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .77$ ), or for self-esteem problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .41$ ).

Since participants' reported parental income yielded statistically significant differences in anxiety problems, it was included with location and highest level of

mother's education in the first step with location of mother's education and mother's educational level, as a covariate. Likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and collective self-esteem was entered in the second step. The last step included interaction terms. The variance accounted for by these variables was 14.5% of anxiety problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for anxiety problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .84$ ).

Participants' father's highest level of education resulted in statistically significant differences in mean levels of reported career problems. Thus, father's highest level of education was included as a covariate and entered in the first step with mother's highest level of education and location of mother's education. The second step included likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and collective self-esteem scales. The third step included interaction terms. In total, these variables accounted 30.0% of the variance in explaining career problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for career problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .56$ ). Examination of the regression summary table indicates that this hypothesis was not supported. Collective self-esteem did not moderate the relationship between the likelihood intergenerational family conflict and psychological problems.

Table 5  
*Summary of Regression Analyses for Family Conflict, Collective Self-Esteem and Psychological Well-Being*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	95% <i>CI</i>	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$
<i>Anxiety Problems (4, 88)</i>							
Step 1							
Parental Income	-.005	.076	-.008	-.15 to .14			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.153	.250	.071	-.34 to .65			
Mom's Ed Level	-.049	.094	-.062	-.23 to .14			
					.01	.01	0.46

Step 2					
Parental Income	-.026	.076	-.038	-.18 to .12	
Locale of Mom's Ed	.085	.255	.040	-.42 to .59	
Mom's Ed Level	-.037	.092	-.047	-.22 to .15	
Family Conflict (FC)	.139	.106	.134	-.07 to .35	
Membership	-.116	.126	-.113	-.37 to .13	
Private CSE	-.268	.129	-.254	-.52 to -.01	
Public CSE	-.046	.116	-.045	-.28 to .18	
Identity	.114	.122	.112	-.13 to .36	
					.13 .12 2.48

Step 3					
Parental Income	-.033	.077	-.049	-.19 to .12	
Locale of Mom's Ed	.054	.260	.025	-.46 to .57	
Mom's Ed Level	-.022	.096	-.028	-.21 to .17	
Family Conflict	.182	.120	.175	-.06 to .42	
Membership	-.077	.135	-.075	-.35 to .19	
Private CSE	-.269	.134	-.255	-.53 to -.00	
Public CSE	-.055	.119	-.054	-.29 to .18	
Identity	.060	.133	.059	-.20 to .32	
Mem X FC	.099	.131	.113	-.16 to .36	
PrCSE X FC	.029	.142	.030	-.25 to .31	
PuCSE X FC	-.027	.121	-.027	-.27 to .21	
Identity X FC	-.164	.154	-.172	-.47 to .14	
					.14 .01 0.35

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*Interpersonal Problems (4, 107)*

Step 1					
Locale of Mom's Ed	.461	.209	.225	-.05 to .87	
Mom's Ed Level	.048	.079	.062	-.11 to .20	
					.04 .04 2.53

Step 2					
Locale of Mom's Ed	.355	.200	.173	-.04 to .75	
Mom's Ed Level	.070	.073	.090	-.07 to .22	
Family Conflict (FC)	.194	.087	.193	.02 to .37	
Membership	-.054	.109	-.053	-.27 to .16	
Private CSE	-.335	.111	-.323	-.55 to -.11	
Public CSE	-.120	.096	-.116	-.31 to .07	
Identity	.207	.103	.210	.00 to .41	
					.22 .18 5.22*

Step 3					
Locale of Mom's Ed	.318	.202	.155	-.08 to .72	
Mom's Ed Level	.071	.075	.092	-.08 to .22	
Family Conflict	.211	.093	.211	.03 to .39	
Membership	-.028	.115	-.027	-.25 to .20	
Private CSE	-.328	.113	-.316	-.55 to -.10	
Public CSE	-.133	.097	-.129	-.32 to .06	
Identity	.164	.109	.167	-.05 to .38	
Mem X FC	.028	.112	.033	-.19 to .25	
PrCSE X FC	-.012	.113	-.013	-.24 to .21	
PuCSE X FC	.059	.102	.058	-.14 to .26	
Identity X FC	-.134	.123	-.144	-.38 to .11	
					.25 .02 0.80

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		<i>Depression (4, 107)</i>					
Step 1							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.141	.207	.070	- .27 to .55			
Mom's Ed Level	-.103	.079	-.135	-.26 to .05			
					.03	.03	1.89
Step 2							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.093	.208	.046	-.32 to .51			
Mom's Ed Level	-.099	.077	-.130	-.25 to .05			
Family Conflict (FC)	.137	.090	.139	-.04 to .32			
Membership	-.199	.114	-.200	-.42 to .03			
Private CSE	-.181	.116	-.177	-.41 to .05			
Public CSE	-.022	.100	-.021	-.22 to .18			
Identity	.119	.108	.122	-.09 to .33			
					.13	.10	2.66
Step 3							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.070	.212	.035	-.35 to .49			
Mom's Ed Level	-.088	.079	-.115	-.24 to .07			
Family Conflict	.169	.098	.171	-.02 to .36			
Membership	-.172	.120	-.173	-.41 to .07			
Private CSE	-.173	.118	-.169	-.41 to .06			
Public CSE	-.022	.101	-.021	-.22 to .18			
Identity	.091	.115	.093	-.14 to .32			
Mem X FC	.003	.117	.003	-.23 to .24			
PrCSE X FC	-.048	.119	-.052	-.28 to .19			
PuCSE X FC	-.029	.107	-.029	-.24 to .18			
Identity X FC	-.082	.129	-.090	-.34 to .17			
					.15	.01	0.45
		<hr/>					
		<i>Career (4, 103)</i>					
Step 1							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.382	.211	.185	-.04 to .80			
Mom's Ed Level	.277	.100	.350	.08 to .47			
Dad's Ed Level	-.210	.081	-.298	-.37 to-.05			
					.08	.08	3.41
Step 2							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.264	.198	.128	-.13 to .66			
Mom's Ed Level	.224	.094	.283	.04 to .41			
Dad's Ed Level	-.147	.077	-.209	-.30 to .01			
Family Conflict (FC)	.158	.087	.157	-.01 to .33			
Membership	-.403	.109	-.398	-.62 to-.19			
Private CSE	-.032	.114	-.030	-.26 to .19			
Public CSE	-.105	.098	-.100	-.30 to .09			
Identity	.349	.105	.350	.14 to .56			
					.28	.20	5.82*

Step 3							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.235	.200	.114	- .16 to .63			
Mom's Ed Level	.241	.095	.305	.05 to .43			
Dad's Ed Level	-.157	.078	-.224	-.31 to-.00			
Family Conflict	.186	.093	.184	.00 to .37			
Membership	-.361	.114	-.357	-.59 to-.13			
Private CSE	-.039	.116	-.037	-.27 to .19			
Public CSE	-.113	.100	-.108	-.31 to .08			
Identity	.291	.111	.292	.07 to .51			
Mem X FC	.089	.110	.103	-.13 to .31			
PrCSE X FC	.012	.114	.012	-.21 to .24			
PuCSE X FC	-.011	.101	-.011	-.21 to .19			
Identity X FC	-.186	.121	-.200	-.43 to .05			
					.30	.02	0.74
<i>Self esteem (4, 107)</i>							
Step 1							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.436	.210	.211	.02 to .85			
Mom's Ed Level	-.003	.080	-.003	-.16 to .15			
					.04	.04	2.75
Step 2							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.301	.199	.146	-.09 to .69			
Mom's Ed Level	.007	.073	.008	-.14 to .15			
Family Conflict (FC)	.210	.086	.209	.04 to .38			
Membership	-.231	.109	-.229	-.45 to-.16			
Private CSE	-.211	.110	-.202	-.43 to .01			
Public CSE	-.154	.095	-.149	-.34 to .03			
Identity	.188	.103	.190	-.02 to .39			
					.24	.20	5.78*
Step 3							
Locale of Mom's Ed	.299	.200	.145	-.10 to .70			
Mom's Ed Level	.000	.074	.000	-.15 to .15			
Family Conflict	.185	.092	.183	.00 to .37			
Membership	-.214	.114	-.212	-.44 to .01			
Private CSE	-.214	.112	-.205	-.44 to .01			
Public CSE	-.174	.096	-.168	-.36 to .02			
Identity	.186	.108	.188	-.03 to .40			
Mem X FC	.062	.111	.071	-.16 to .28			
PrCSE X FC	-.179	.112	-.189	-.40 to .04			
PuCSE X FC	.140	.101	.138	-.06 to .34			
Identity X FC	.069	.122	.074	-.17 to .31			
					.27	.03	1.00

\*  $p < .01$

Hypothesis 5: Collective self-esteem moderates the relationship between racism-related stress and psychological problems.

The same statistical procedure used to test for interaction effects in the previous hypothesis was utilized to examine the moderator hypothesis in the relationships between

racism-related stress and psychological well-being. In total five separate regression analyses were conducted. In three separate regression analyses, interpersonal problems, depression problems, and self-esteem problems were the dependent variables. In these three analyses, number of AAST courses taken, mother's highest level of education, the location of the mother's highest level of education were entered into the first step as covariates. Racism-related stress and collective self-esteem subscales were entered in the second. The interaction terms of racism-related stress (RRS) and collective self-esteem (RRS X Membership, RRS X Public CSE, RRS X Private CSE, and RRS X Identity Importance) were entered in the last step (Table 6). As indicated by the  $R^2$ , the variance accounted for these variables were 25.1% of interpersonal problems, 22.9% of depression problems, and 31.6% of self-esteem problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for interpersonal problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .88$ ), depression problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .41$ ), or for self-esteem problems ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .43$ ).

Participants' anxiety problems differed statistically significantly based on parental income. Thus, along with number of AAST courses and mother's level and location of education, parental income was added as a covariate in analysis involving anxiety problems. Racism-related stress and collective self-esteem were entered in the second step with interaction terms entered in the final step. The variance accounted for by these variables was 20.0% of anxiety problems. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant for ( $\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .51$ ).

Since the participants' career problems differed significantly based on father's level of education it was included as a covariate, along with mother's level of education, location of mother's education, and the number of AAST courses, in a regression analysis

for career problems. Racism-related stress and collective self esteem were entered in the second step, and the interaction terms in the third. The total variance accounted for by these variables in career problems was 38.3%. The increment in  $R^2$  in the third step was not statistically significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .04, p = .21$ ). Results of these analyses indicated that collective self-esteem did not moderate the relationship between racism-related stress and psychological well-being in this study.

Table 6  
*Summary of Regression Analyses for Racism-related Stress, Collective Self-Esteem, and Psychological Well-Being*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	95% <i>CI</i>	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$
<i>Anxiety Problems (4, 84)</i>							
Step 1							
AAST Courses	-.071	.087	-.087	-.24 to .10			
Parental Income	-.004	.078	-.006	-.16 to .15			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.191	.259	.089	-.32 to .71			
Mom's Ed Level	-.005	.098	-.063	-.24 to .15			
					.02	.02	0.51
Step 2							
AAST Courses	-.189	.095	-.231	-.38 to .00			
Parental Income	-.035	.077	-.052	-.19 to .12			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.093	.255	.043	-.41 to .60			
Mom's Ed Level	-.040	.094	-.051	-.23 to .15			
RRS	.242	.114	.244	.01 to .47			
Membership	-.049	.130	-.047	-.31 to .21			
Private CSE	-.324	.130	-.303	-.58 to -.07			
Public CSE	-.034	.125	-.033	-.28 to .21			
Identity	.117	.122	.115	-.12 to .36			
					.17	.15	3.11*
Step 3							
AAST Courses	-.231	.103	-.282	-.43 to -.03			
Parental Income	-.039	.078	-.057	-.19 to .12			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.088	.261	.041	-.43 to .61			
Mom's Ed Level	-.026	.095	-.033	-.21 to .16			
RRS	.198	.118	.200	-.04 to .43			
Membership	-.047	.134	-.046	-.31 to .22			
Private CSE	-.350	.132	-.327	-.61 to -.09			
Public CSE	.000	.134	.000	-.27 to .27			
Identity	.142	.127	.139	-.11 to .39			
Mem X RRS	.211	.146	.191	-.08 to .50			
PrCSE X RRS	-.188	.159	-.168	-.50 to .13			
PuCSE X RRS	-.040	.119	-.054	-.28 to .20			
Identity X RRS	.000	.129	.000	-.26 to .26			
					.20	.03	0.83

*Interpersonal Problems (4, 103)*

Step 1							
AAST Courses	-.019	.076	-.023	-.17 to .13			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.475	.214	.232	.05 to .90			
Mom's Ed Level	.051	.081	.067	-.11 to .21			
					.04	.04	1.71
Step 2							
AAST Courses	-.165	.080	-.203	-.32 to-.01			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.372	.201	.182	-.03 to .77			
Mom's Ed Level	.051	.074	.066	-.10 to .20			
RRS	.201	.094	.211	.01 to .39			
Membership	-.013	.112	-.013	-.23 to .21			
Private CSE	-.421	.112	-.403	-.64 to-.20			
Public CSE	-.079	.104	-.078	-.29 to .13			
Identity	.259	.103	.263	.06 to .46			
					.24	.20	5.62*
Step 3							
AAST Courses	-.171	.086	-.210	-.34 to .00			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.350	.208	.171	-.06 to .76			
Mom's Ed Level	.059	.077	.076	-.09 to .21			
RRS	.189	.096	.198	-.00 to .38			
Membership	-.017	.117	-.016	-.25 to .21			
Private CSE	-.425	.115	-.407	-.65 to-.20			
Public CSE	-.069	.113	-.068	-.29 to .15			
Identity	.253	.107	.257	.04 to .47			
Mem X RRS	.075	.122	.074	-.17 to .32			
PrCSE X RRS	-.074	.134	-.071	-.34 to .19			
PuCSE X RRS	-.026	.091	-.035	-.21 to .15			
Identity X RRS	-.053	.104	-.061	-.26 to .15			
					.25	.01	0.29

*Depression (4, 103)*

Step 1							
AAST Courses	-.112	.076	-.138	-.26 to .04			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.138	.213	.068	-.28 to .56			
Mom's Ed Level	-.122	.081	-.160	-.28 to .04			
					.05	.05	1.93
Step 2							
AAST Courses	-.215	.083	-.266	-.38 to-.05			
Locale of Mom's Ed	.048	.207	.024	-.36 to .46			
Mom's Ed Level	-.134	.076	-.174	-.29 to .02			
RRS	.256	.096	.269	.06 to .45			
Membership	-.160	.115	-.158	-.39 to .07			
Private CSE	-.264	.115	-.254	-.49 to-.04			
Public CSE	.013	.107	.013	-.20 to .22			
Identity	.160	.105	.163	-.05 to .37			
					.20	.15	4.00*

## Step 3

AAST Courses	-.235	.087	-.290	-.41 to-.06
Locale of Mom's Ed	.088	.210	.043	-.33 to .51
Mom's Ed Level	-.111	.078	-.144	-.26 to .04
RRS	.243	.098	.255	.05 to .44
Membership	-.148	.118	-.147	-.38 to .09
Private CSE	-.291	.116	-.279	-.52 to-.06
Public CSE	.029	.115	.029	-.20 to .26
Identity	.194	.109	.198	-.02 to .41
Mem X RRS	.109	.124	.107	-.14 to .35
PrCSE X RRS	-.244	.135	-.233	-.51 to .02
PuCSE X RRS	.016	.092	.022	-.17 to .20
Identity X RRS	.119	.106	.139	-.09 to .33

.23 .03 0.99

*Career (4, 99)*

## Step 1

AAST Courses	-.019	.080	-.022	-.18 to .14
Locale of Mom's Ed	.354	.218	.170	-.08 to .79
Mom's Ed Level	.267	.103	.338	.06 to .47
Dad's Ed Level	-.213	.084	-.299	-.38 to-.05

.08 .08 2.38

## Step 2

AAST Courses	-.148	.080	-.175	-.31 to .01
Locale of Mom's Ed	.212	.193	.102	-.17 to .60
Mom's Ed Level	.198	.092	.251	.02 to .38
Dad's Ed Level	-.172	.075	-.243	-.32 to-.02
RRS	.306	.091	.317	.12 to .49
Membership	-.377	.108	-.368	-.59 to-.16
Private CSE	-.161	.113	-.150	-.38 to .06
Public CSE	-.001	.105	-.001	-.21 to .21
Identity	.397	.101	.396	.20 to .60

.35 .26 8.34\*

## Step 3

AAST Courses	-.197	.085	-.232	-.36 to-.03
Locale of Mom's Ed	.255	.195	.122	-.13 to .64
Mom's Ed Level	.222	.094	.281	.04 to .41
Dad's Ed Level	-.186	.076	-.261	-.34 to-.03
RRS	.291	.092	.301	.11 to .47
Membership	-.355	.112	-.347	-.58 to-.13
Private CSE	-.220	.115	-.205	-.45 to .01
Public CSE	.054	.110	.052	-.16 to .27
Identity	.443	.106	.442	.23 to .65
Mem X RRS	.189	.120	.182	-.05 to .43
PrCSE X RRS	-.252	.133	-.235	-.52 to .01
PuCSE X RRS	-.019	.094	-.025	-.20 to .17
Identity X RRS	.095	.105	.109	-.11 to .30

.38 .04 1.49

		<i>Self esteem (4, 103)</i>						
Step 1								
AAST Courses	-.050	.077	-.061	-.20 to .10				
Locale of Mom's Ed	.412	.215	.199	-.01 to .84				
Mom's Ed Level	-.012	.082	-.016	-.17 to .15				
					.04	.04		1.72
Step 2								
AAST Courses	-.200	.078	-.244	-.35 to-.04				
Locale of Mom's Ed	.256	.196	.124	-.13 to .64				
Mom's Ed Level	-.028	.073	-.036	-.17 to .12				
RRS	.298	.092	.310	.12 to .48				
Membership	-.201	.109	-.197	-.42 to .01				
Private CSE	-.305	.109	-.289	-.52 to-.09				
Public CSE	-.088	.102	-.086	-.29 to .11				
Identity	.231	.100	.233	.03 to .43				
					.29	.25		7.44*
Step 3								
AAST Courses	-.240	.083	-.293	-.40 to-.07				
Locale of Mom's Ed	.287	.200	.139	-.11 to .68				
Mom's Ed Level	-.014	.074	-.018	-.16 to .13				
RRS	.278	.093	.290	.09 to .46				
Membership	-.211	.112	-.207	-.43 to .01				
Private CSE	-.331	.111	-.315	-.55 to-.11				
Public CSE	-.035	.109	-.034	-.25 to .18				
Identity	.263	.103	.265	.06 to .47				
Mem X RRS	.110	.117	.107	-.12 to .34				
PrCSE X RRS	-.144	.129	-.136	-.40 to .11				
PuCSE X RRS	-.070	.087	-.092	-.24 to .10				
Identity X RRS	.056	.100	.064	-.14 to .25				
					.32	.02		0.96

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\* p < .01

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to advance the understanding of ecological influences, both individually and in conjunction with one another, on the psychology of Asian American college students. More specifically, this study was designed as a way to address the relative lack of knowledge regarding the influence of racism and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict on the psychological well-being of Asian American undergraduate students. Further, this study tested a model in which the influence of racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict on psychological well-being would be moderated by different components of collective self-esteem.

#### *Beyond Intergenerational Family Conflict: An Examination of Racism-Related Stress*

First, regression analyses found that racism-related stress did not predict higher levels of anxiety problems, interpersonal problems, or depression problems above and beyond what likelihood of intergenerational family conflict contributed. Regression analyses did yield two significant findings. Results indicated that racism-related stress predicted career problems and self-esteem problems above and beyond contributions made by demographic and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict.

While the results of the present study indicate that there is nearly 90% of the variance left unaccounted for, this finding offers that racism-related stress contributes an extra 7.3% of the variance in predicting career problems that Asian American college students experience. More specifically, the findings indicated that racism-related stress poses an incremental “cost” to an individual’s functioning as it pertains to career

decisions and maturity that cannot be attributed to demographic background variables and family conflict.

This finding suggests that racism-related stress is a barrier to the career development of Asian Americans. It is plausible that Asian Americans, because of the general lack of racial socialization, internalize negative messages of racism. Internalizing racism may lower career decision-making self-efficacy, self-concept, or self-esteem, which may in turn negatively affect career development. In order to test these assumptions, future research should include a racial identity measure. The inclusion of such measure would allow for psychologists to understand how individuals operating from less sophisticated ego-identity racial identity statuses, who are more apt to internalize negative messages (Helms, 1995) differ in their career problems than those operating from more complex statuses.

It also is possible that Asian American college students view racism as something that is more difficult to control and problematic when it comes to their career, particularly when experiencing family conflict, than other aspects of psychological functioning. More specifically, Asian American students may have developed more strategies to cope with and understand their interpersonal problems, anxiety problems, and depression problems than career-related issues. Further, Asian Americans may perceive their career to have more importance to them than their ability to develop interpersonal relationships, such they may be willing to accept interpersonal problems.

The results of this analysis also contribute to psychology's understanding of how both ecological challenges influence career problems. Empirical examinations of the influence of family and racism on career-related outcomes, particularly among Asian

Americans and other ethnic minorities, are lacking (M. Brown, 2004; Tang, 2002; Whiston & Keller, 2004). In this study, racism related stress and the likelihood of intergenerational family conflict explained 10.6% of problems experienced with career-related issues among Asian American college students. This result is consistent with Kodama et al. (2001) proposition that negotiating internal values with those of family regarding career choices and racism is a major developmental task and stressor for Asian American college students. Though much of the variance in explaining career problems is left unexplained this finding provides some initial support for utilizing an ecological model for understanding the career development of Asian American college students.

The results of the present study also offer that racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict explain significant 11.3% variance of self-esteem problems. Further, racism-related stress contributes an extra 5.9% of the variance in predicting self-esteem problems that Asian American college students experience. More specifically the findings indicate that racism-related stress negatively affects Asian Americans level of self-esteem even after the effects of demographic background variables and family conflict alone have been accounted for and that the ecological challenges together are worthy of future empirical consideration.

This finding is consistent with racial identity theories (e.g., Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Helms, 1995) that postulate that negative race-based experiences are internalized and can result in lower self-image. It is possible that individuals who are socialized to understand racism do not internalize negative messages and may be able to appropriate responsibility of hateful race-based messages to its messenger(s). Thus, these individuals' self-esteem remain unaffected in the face of race-

based events. This view is consistent with scholars who have argued that supportive family environments, in which children are socialized to understand racism, would minimize the negative effects of minority status (L. C. Lee & Zhan, 1997; Yee, Huang, & Lew, 1997). It is plausible that in families where there is culturally-based family conflict, children are not receiving this socialization. This assumption must be tested in future research.

Though the overall small effect size for career problems ( $B = .318$ ) and self-esteem problems ( $B = .286$ ) should be considered, this study supports scholars who argue for the inclusion of race-related constructs, beyond race as category, in research (Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005). Further, given the small amount of variance accounted for by racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, other variables must be considered. Among those that should be considered are racial identity status and racial socialization.

#### *Intergenerational Family Conflict and Psychological Well Being*

Examination of zero order correlation analyses indicated that likelihood of intergenerational family conflict is positively and significantly related to psychological well-being. More specifically, as hypothesized, results from this study suggest that increased likelihood for intergenerational family conflict in an Asian American college student's family is associated with more problems with interpersonal relationships and self-esteem. First, these results support existing scholarship (e.g., E. Lee, 1997) and are consistent with research that has found that intergenerational family conflict exists in Asian American families (e.g., Chung, 2001; R. M. Lee & H. T. Liu, 2001; Pyke, 2002). The results of this study also suggest that likelihood of intergenerational family conflict is

associated with various aspects of psychological functioning. Much of the previous literature, at the time of this study, established that language conflicts, generational status, and value differences between parent and child help explain the occurrence of intergenerational family conflict. Fewer studies (i.e., Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Farver et al., 2002) have studied the psychological toll of this particular conflict. The results of the present study not only found that family conflict exists among Asian Americans but that these types of familial relationships are associated with some aspects of psychological well-being.

Results from this study yielded a significant positive relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and self-esteem problems. This finding is consistent with previous research which established that increased culture gaps between parents and children had deleterious effects on self-esteem among Asian Indian American young adults (Farver et al., 2002). One explanation for this relationship is that Asian American adolescents, who have culturally-based conflicts at home, do not feel that their opinions, desires, or wishes are validated, which may result in more problems with self-esteem. Alternately, given that Asian American parents have been found to utilize more guilt and shame (D. W. Sue & D. Sue, 2002) the participants' problems with self-esteem may be a result of having conditions placed on their acceptance. Rogers (1956) has written extensively about the importance of unconditional positive regard on the development of a coherent self.

With regard to likelihood of intergenerational family conflict, the results of this study also suggest that increased levels of conflict with parents are associated with greater interpersonal problems. In their review of literature on Asian American

development, Okagaki and Bojczyk (2002) found empirical attention to the normative development of peer relationships among Asian Americans to be sparse at best. However, the results of this study are consistent with theoretical propositions which assert that the family unit is an influential socializing agent in an individual's life and that men and women learn interpersonal skills and develop relational styles from those early relationships with caregivers (e.g., Horney, 1945; Teyber, 2000; Ying, Coombs, & P. A. Lee, 1999). Alternatively, Asian American parents, who adhere to more traditional values, may assert more control in the social relationships that their children develop. This value orientation is likely to be in conflict with values that Asian American children and adolescents are exposed to in both popular media and in their school and social environments. These conflicts in values may result in difficulties in establishing, nurturing, and maintaining interpersonal relationships with peers.

This study however was not able to replicate the significant relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and high levels of depression, as Greenberger and Chen (1996) did. In their exploratory study of young adolescents and late adolescents, Greenberger and Chen found the relationship between family conflict and depression to be weaker among the latter group. They argued that depressed mood of late adolescents may be influenced less by family relationships because of their access to extrafamilial support systems. Thus, one possible reason for this study's inability to support the findings of Greenberger and Chen's is that the sample used in this study may have had greater access to or utilized extrafamilial support more effectively. Because the present study did not assess for social support, this interpretation of the null finding should be read with caution. Given the significant correlations between psychological

well-being variables, it also is plausible that likelihood of intergenerational family conflict indirectly affects depression. For instance, it is conceivable that Asian Americans who experience intergenerational family conflict experience lower levels of self-esteem which can then affect levels of depression. Given the dearth of research in this area it is recommended that these results be interpreted with care until further studies can replicate the contradictory relationship between family conflict and depressed mood found in this study and that of Greenberger and Chen.

The relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and anxiety also was not found to be significant in the present study. Given how intergenerational family conflict can create a tenuous family home environment, it is surprising that anxiety was not found to be significantly related. It may be that these participants live away from home and thus are less likely to experience those conflicts with parents. However, this study did not test for differences based on current living situation. Thus, this possibility must be tested in future analyses. Alternately, it may be that Asian Americans expect and have to come realize that culturally-based conflict with their parents is a “fact of life” for all Asian Americans. Recently, Roemer and Orsillo (2002) have written about the importance of encouraging acceptance in therapy with clients diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder. This assumption also must be tested in future studies.

Contrary to expectations, the relationship between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and career problems also was not found to statistically significant. Empirical studies examining the influence of family on Asian Americans’ career development still is in its infancy. Though it has been argued that family is in an

influential system in the career development for Asian American youth (Kodama, et al., 2001, Leong, 1997; Leong & Chou, 1995), studies have found mixed results. For instance, Tang, Fouad, and Smith (1999) did not find that family involvement in career planning was associated with career decision-making self-efficacy however they also found that it was related to career choice. The findings of the current study, while studying only the impact of likelihood of intergenerational family conflict on career problems, suggests that the family's influence on vocational identity and career decision-making is complex. Given the inconsistent results of previous studies and this study's null findings, future empirical examination is warranted. Future studies may study whether conflict with fathers has more influence on career related outcomes than conflict with mothers. Further, family conflict may affect different aspects of career development differently. For instance, family conflict may affect career interests but not career decision-making self-efficacy.

Though effect sizes yielded in these relationships between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and interpersonal problems and self-esteem problems are relatively small, these findings reinforce the importance that research not only examine the factors that contribute to intergenerational family conflict among Asian Americans but also the negative effect of those family dynamics on the mental health of young adult children. The inability to find significant relationships between likelihood of intergenerational family conflict and anxiety problems, depression problems, and career problems was surprising. Given the inconsistent findings of this present study and those of the past (e.g., Greenberger and Chen, 1996) additional research regarding these three psychological outcomes is warranted.

*Racism-Related Stress and Psychological Well-Being*

As hypothesized, results from correlation analyses yielded significant relationships between racism-related stress with career problems and self-esteem problems. These findings are consistent with previous research that has found that experiences with racism are associated with negative psychological outcomes (e.g., Asamen & G. L. Berry, 1987; Chiu & Ring, 1998; R. M. Lee, 2003; Utsey et al., 2002). The influence of the experience of race on career-related outcomes has been discussed by multicultural-oriented scholars (e.g., M. Brown, 2004; Leong & Hardin, 2002) and has been implied in several career theories (i.e., Lent, S. D. Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Gottfredson, 2000). However, career theories, because of their inattention to socio-political realities, lack cultural validity (Leong & M. Brown, 1995). The present study, finding that racism-related stress is associated with career problems, lends support to these previous theorists who have considered the toll of racism. It also suggests that racism-related stress be included in studies regarding vocational identity, development, and maturity.

Racism-related stress also was found to be significantly and positively associated with self-esteem problems. This finding is consistent with Jackson et al. (1996), who found that the experience of racial discrimination is negatively associated with self-esteem among African Americans, with Asamen and G. L. Berry's (1987) work that found that perceived prejudice was related with lower levels of self-concept among Japanese Americans, and with Ying et al. (2000), who found that experiences with racial discrimination were related to a lower sense of self coherence among American-born and immigrant Chinese college students. This result suggests that experiences with racism-

related stress depress an individual's level of self-esteem. One possible explanation is that individuals internalize denigrating and devaluing remarks that are the hallmarks of racism. This psychological response has been explained by racial and ethnic minority identity models (Atkinson, Morten, & D. W. Sue, 1993; Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Helms, 1995). However, since the method of analysis in the present study was correlational, an alternative explanation is that those with lower levels of self-esteem report feeling greater levels of racism-related stress. Further examination of this relationship is warranted.

Contrary to expectations, racism-related stress was not found to be significantly associated with interpersonal problems. Previous research examining these relationships among Asian Americans is relatively non-existent. Scholars from a variety of fields have written and studied the implications of racism on perceptions of climate in the college settings (see Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). For instance, R. M. Lee (2003) found that experiences with discrimination were negatively related to perceptions of community well-being – a sense of being connected to the campus community – among Asian American college students. However, in a qualitative study B. S. K. Kim, Brenner, Liang and Asay (2003) found that while 1.5 generation Asian American college students experienced racism they did not report any difficulty forming intercultural relationships. The results of the present study appear to support their findings.

There are several possible reasons for the null relationships in this study. First, students' ethnic identity could moderate this relationship. For instance, individuals who are bicultural or other-group identified may find it easier to navigate interpersonal relationships on a predominantly White campus. The present study did not assess ethnic identity. As such, this hypothesis must be tested in another study. This study also did not

assess students' coping strategies, which also may buffer the effects of these relationships. Students may actively cope with racism-related stress by joining culturally-oriented organizations or using church groups to find support. They also may choose to take courses to understand racism more effectively.

The results of this study also did not yield significant relationships between racism-related stress and anxiety. Given the unsettling nature and oft-times unexpected encounters with racism, it is surprising that experiences with racism are not associated with anxiety. For instance, African American individuals who are targets of racist events have been found to have increased heart rate, worry more, and have difficulty concentrating (McNeilly et al., 1996). However, the analyses of this study did not yield similar results. One possibility is that the measure used to assess racism-related stress incorporated only one direct experience of race-related assault. Thus, it may be that items included in the measure, while affecting other aspects of psychological functioning, do not provoke the physical and psychological reaction associated with anxiety. This does not suggest that Asian Americans are not targets of physical attacks because of their race, only that future studies utilize a measure that incorporates those aspects of racism. Contrary to expectations, the results of this present also did not yield a significant relationship between racism-related stress and depression. This result was surprising. It may be that the effect of racism on depression is indirect. It is plausible that racism-related experiences influenced depression through self-esteem. This should be tested in future analyses.

*The Moderating Role of Collective Self-Esteem*

Psychologists operating from an ecological perspective argue that psychological functioning must be viewed in the context of multiple and interacting systems (Fouad & M. Brown, 2000). The examination of the role of collective self-esteem as a moderator variable in the relationships between two ecological contexts is a reflection of those arguments. Given the significant contribution of collective self-esteem in the regression models, it is likely that evaluations of group membership are important constructs to further examine. Contrary to expectations however, analyses testing the role of collective self-esteem as a moderator variable in the relationships between ecological challenges and components of psychological well-being did not support the moderator hypotheses. Beta values indicate that the various components of collective self-esteem have little to no moderating effect at all.

Though difficult to speculate, one possible reason for this study's null findings may lie in how Asian Americans view race, ethnicity, and racism. Future studies should consider the role of racial identity in the development of collective self-esteem. For instance, individuals who are operating primarily from the conformity status (Helms, 1995) may not view the world from a race-based lens. Alternately, individuals who are operating primarily from an immersion status may view their world more from a race-based perspective. These differences in world-view may have an effect on collective self-esteem's ability to moderate the relationship between racism, culturally-based family conflict, and psychological problems. Thus, racial identity's role as a moderator may provide a more effective moderator than collective self-esteem.

Another possible reason for the null findings is that of racial socialization.

Individuals who are socialized by their parents, peers, or educators to understand racism and monoculturalism may have different tendencies in responses to the measures or even hold attitudes toward participating in a study about Asian American college students. Examination of mean scores of collective self-esteem subscales indicated that participants have, on average, high levels of collective self-esteem. Further, examination of scores indicated a restriction in the range of scores. This may have resulted in the reduction of correlation coefficients and may be a reflection of a sample that is not representative of Asian American college students. A more heterogeneous sample may have yielded different findings. These results point to the complex relationship of racism, collective self-esteem, and psychological well-being and the need for research to further study these constructs. Future studies might examine what role collective self-esteem occupies in these relationships.

### *Limitations*

There were several limitations to this study. First, this study, utilized a correlational field design. Gelso and Fretz (2002) explained that within this class of research, it is not possible to “determine what is causing what” (p. 75). Thus, from a methodological standpoint, the results of the study do not suggest that racism-related stress and likelihood of intergenerational family conflict caused impairment in aspects of psychological functioning.

A second issue is sampling limitations. Given that this study sampled primarily college-aged students, the results may not generalize to Asian Americans who do not or have not attended college and who are not college-aged. Further, examination of

descriptive data suggests that this sample was, as it concerns marital status, homogenous. Nearly 85% of the sample reported having intact families currently or for most of their lives. This results of this study cannot be generalized to the adolescents who come from homes where are parents are separated or divorced. It is plausible that Asian Americans who come from those homes experience more family conflict.

Examination of demographic data also indicates that there were more East Asians than any other group combined. This may be an indication that other groups of Asians do not consider themselves to be Asian American. Further, given the sample size, this study was not able to test the relationships for each specific ethnic group. Thus, experiences of racism and intergenerational family conflict may have been masked by aggregating ethnic groupings into one racial group. In fact, given the large number of East Asians, the results of this study may have been skewed to reflect the experiences of East Asians. Examination of demographic data also indicates that the sample included nearly twice as many women than men. It may be that men felt less comfortable revealing their psychological and emotional states in a study. Regardless of the reason for the lack of participation from men, the findings of this study should be interpreted with sample's gender composition in mind.

Third, while the sample was randomly selected from the population at a university, the small response rate is a major limitation of the study and raises some questions about the nature of the sample. Unfortunately, respondents and non-respondents cannot be compared in any meaningful way to understand what factors differentiated them. However, some speculation can be offered. For example, this self-selected sample may only represent those feeling comfortable sharing their experiences.

It is plausible that individuals who come from homes where there is significant conflict did not feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Further, data collection commenced during the middle of the Spring academic semester. During this time, students may have been preoccupied with Spring Break, mid-term examinations, or finals. Thus, this may have limited the return rate and resulted in a sample that is not representative of college students.

Fourth, there are issues concerning the instrumentation employed in this study. Many of the instruments utilized in the present study are relatively new and may require more psychometric testing. The instruments measuring family conflict and racism may not encompass all aspects of either of the constructs. Nonetheless, these instruments measuring racism-related stress and family conflict were the only measures identified that were constructed to be sensitive to Asian American issues. Further, this study only measured likelihood of intergenerational family conflict. The severity of these conflicts was not analyzed but may have altered the relationships between family conflict and psychological problems. For instance, individuals who report more severe intergenerational family conflict may experience greater psychological problems. Moreover, the measure utilized to assess intergenerational family conflict did not differentiate conflict experienced with participant's mother and father. It is plausible that conflict is experienced differently with mothers and fathers. Treating parents as an undifferentiated unit may have masked the effects of conflict with one of the parents. Future studies should include a measure for that assesses levels and severity of conflict with each parent.

Given that the study employed Internet technology to recruit participants and distribute the on-line measures, environmental conditions during the completion of the survey were not controlled. Another limitation of this study is its mono-method approach to data collection. This study could have been strengthened by the incorporation of a qualitative component, which allows participants to respond without the restrictions posed by measures. In terms of statistical analyses, the alpha level established for statistical significance in these analyses was purposely set at a more conservative level to control for Type I error. However, doing so may have increased the likelihood for Type II error - that a significant relationship existed - but was rejected statistically. Finally, the relatively small sample size may have restricted this study's ability to yield significant relationships among the variables.

#### *Implications for Research*

The results of this study point to the complexity of ecological concerns and psychological health. This study raised important questions that should be addressed in future research. First, it appears that racism-related stress and culturally based family conflict are related to aspects of psychological well-being. While collective self-esteem did not appear to buffer the effects of racism or family conflict other variables must be explored. One possibility is to examine the coping strategies employed by Asian Americans. Researchers have begun to explore the role of coping (Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000). Future studies could examine how Asian Americans cope with these ecological issues and how coping strategies moderate or mediate these relationships. Since little is known about the coping strategies employed by Asian Americans when it concerns racism-related or familial experiences, a first step in this

area of inquiry is to examine whether Asian Americans cope through active or avoidant methods. Alternately, are other methods such as religious support groups or meditation employed to gain understanding or acceptance of these experiences? Future studies might consider assessing for spirituality or religiosity or comparing church/temple attendees to non-church/temple attendees.

The effect of racial socialization on mental health also is beginning to be examined (e.g., Fischer & Shaw, 1999). Racial socialization is the process in which individuals learn about racism from parents, mentors, or peers (Stevenson, 1994). This process allows individuals to understand racism as a part of a systemic issue. It is plausible that individuals who are socialized to understand racism are less likely to be affected by racist events. For instance, individuals who understand racism as a manifestation of external events or other people may be less likely to internalize negative messages and experience less psychological problems. Thus, it is important to understand Asian Americans' experience with racial socialization and its role in mental health. Future studies might wish to employ qualitative methodology to examine how, if at all, Asian Americans are socialized to understand culture and/or race.

Finally, differences in psychological functioning as a result of racist events or likelihood of intergenerational family conflict may be found among individuals with different racial identity statuses (e.g., Helms, 1995). For instance, those individuals in less developed statuses (e.g., conformity) may experience more problems with self-esteem, interpersonal problems, or career than those in more sophisticated statuses (e.g., internalization). Individuals whose behaviors and thoughts are typified by conformity may not view traditional Asian parental behaviors and values as reminders of what they

do not want to be – Asian. Alternately, those who are more sophisticated in their racial identity status may view behaviors and appreciate their bicultural upbringing. Those differences among Asian Americans should be examined in future research.

Another direction for research is to examine the effect of racism and intergenerational family conflict on life satisfaction or subjective-well being, an individual's evaluation of his or her life (Diener, 2000). Because of the stigma attached to reporting symptoms associated with psychological problems (i.e., depression problems, anxiety problems, interpersonal problems, self-esteem problems, career problems), researchers may find measures of life satisfaction to be a useful alternative. While the current study examined how these challenges are related to psychological well being, studies using life satisfaction would provide psychologists with an understanding of how ecological challenges affect emotional and cognitive evaluations of one's life. . Finally, though these data indicate that racism-related stress and intergenerational family conflict may have negative effects on the psychological well-being of Asian Americans, it does not provide evidence for how, if, or when these challenges may be introduced in therapy. Thus, future research may wish to explore the process and outcome of interventions aimed at exploring these ecological challenges.

As stated earlier, qualitative methodology might be considered in future research. Qualitative methods have been argued to centralize participants' experiences while allowing them to direct the nature of research (Morrow, Rakhsha, & Casteneda, 2001). For instance, the AARRSI may have constricted respondents' experiences with racism to what was developed for the instrument. Interviews would allow for additional form of racism-related experiences to emerge. Further, qualitative research would allow

participants the opportunity to share how they learned about and cope with racism. In short, a qualitative study such as this would complement and add data that are not easily attained through the use of surveys.

### *Implications for Practice*

The limitations notwithstanding, the results of the present study have several implications for practice. Though more research is needed to understand the effects of racism and intergenerational family conflict on psychological well-being, correlation analyses suggest that practitioners should attend to both ecological challenges. The following suggestions for practice reflect the ecological model for understanding client dynamics. Further, suggestions also will include interventions that can be offered in the context of community.

Neville and Mobley (2001) presented an ecological approach to counseling by which therapists actively seek to understand the role of ecological demands, multiple social identities, and individual strengths in their work with clients from marginalized groups. The results of this present study suggest that practitioners may wish to invite Asian American clients presenting career problems to share their experiences with racism and in the context of family. An exploration of these ecological concerns moves therapy beyond traditional frameworks of vocational counseling (e.g., Holland, 1997; Super, 1990) to include cultural and race-based issues in career development.

Clients who present problems with self-esteem also may benefit from this exploration of family and culture, and racism. Racial identity theorists have proposed that one goal of therapy with people of color experiencing low self-esteem be to uncover the effects the racism (e.g., Helms, 1995). The rationale for this suggestion is that an

exploration of these issues would serve to liberate the consciousness (Ivey, 1995) from the negative effects of oppression. Additionally, while counseling theories have long proposed that interpersonal problems are a result of early childhood dynamics (e.g., Sullivan, 1953) the results of this present study suggest that clients may benefit from an exploration of their interpersonal style in the context of cultural conflicts. Clients may gain insight into their coping strategies and, through this, develop new relationship approaches.

Therapists who explore these two ecological issues are encouraged to resist stereotypes of Asian Americans' experiences. For some Asian Americans, career problems, self-esteem problems, or interpersonal problems may not be a result of culturally based family conflict or racism. Other factors also should be explored. As such, psychodynamic, humanistic, and cognitive-behavioral approaches should not be discouraged and may be integrated in therapy (D. W. Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996) with Asian Americans presenting these concerns. Clinicians are instead encouraged to incorporate a social constructionist approach (Gonzalez, Biever, & Gardner, 1994) and entertain all ideas and maintain curiosity. By taking this approach, therapists may facilitate clients' willingness and openness to share their story.

Given that Asian Americans tend to underutilize mental health services (D.W. Sue & D. Sue, 2003) and their lack of willingness to seek help (B. S. K. Kim & Omizo, 2003) it may be important for clinicians seeking to address issues related to family conflict and racism to expand their helping role. In recent years, counseling psychologists have called for an increased role in advocacy. Atkinson, Thompson, and Grant (1993), in offering their Three-Dimensional Model to counseling, also argued that clinicians should

expand their conceptualization of the helping role to include consultant, advocate, and advisor. In a test of that model, Atkinson, B. S. K. Kim, and Caldwell (1998) found that even among acculturated Asian Americans, the role of traditional psychotherapist was found to be least helpful. Asian Americans in that study preferred for a counselor to offer advice, consultation, and facilitate the use of family and community support systems.

Vera and Speight (2003) argued that though multicultural counseling has encouraged clinicians to be more socially and culturally aware in their individual therapy and clinical training, the field needed to increase its role in the community. Similarly, psychologists engaging in vocational counseling with women have argued that clinicians in the field should become more active in schools and in other ecological contexts (e.g., Cook, Heppner, & K. M. O'Brien, 2002; Fassinger, 2000).

In integrating these roles (i.e., advocate, consultant, and facilitator of indigenous support systems) an ecological framework of development is transformed into an ecological framework of intervention. One suggestion is for counseling psychologists to partner with school counselors or community mental health agencies to develop psycho-educational programs aimed at parents who wish to understand their own reactions to western values and behaviors observed in their own children. Alternately, counseling psychologists can develop programs for Asian American youth to enhance their understanding and coping strategies for navigating racism and the conflict they experience between themselves and their parents. Given the results of this study, this type of intervention may serve to alleviate or prevent the internalization of racism and, in turn, aid in the development of positive self-esteem and positively affect career outcomes.

Another avenue for prevention and remediation oriented interventions is to develop relationships with churches or temples. For parents who adhere to traditional Asian values and who are religious, the church or temple may represent a safer more familiar setting for psycho-educational workshops geared toward enhancing family functioning and well-being. Further, given the importance of churches and temples for newly arrived Asian immigrants (Abe-Kim, Gong, Takeuchi, 2004; Min, 2000) it may provide psychologists with the opportunity to work with Asian Americans.

### *Conclusion*

As noted in the introduction, the purpose of this present study was to examine the role of two ecological challenges, alone and in conjunction with each other, on the psychological well-being of Asian American college students. The findings of this present study support that these two challenges are important to consider in therapy with this population, particularly as they concern self-esteem problems, career problems, and interpersonal problems. Further, results suggest that racism-related stress contributes additional strain to Asian Americans beyond that of the likelihood of intergenerational family conflict. In light of the results, it was recommended that additional research be conducted to study the complex interaction of these two ecological systems. From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that clinicians providing psychological services consider the implications of culture and minority status on the functioning of Asian Americans. Finally, given the underutilization of psychological services, an ecological framework for providing psychological services to Asian Americans also was suggested. It is hoped that practitioners find clinical utility in the findings and clinical suggestions.

## APPENDIX A

### AARRSI

Instructions: Please read each item and choose a response that best represents your reaction. 1 = This has never happened to me or someone I know, 2 = This event happened but did not bother me, 3= This event happened and I was slightly bothered, 4= This event happened and I was upset, 5 = This event happened and I was extremely upset.

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1) You hear about a racially motivated murder of an Asian American man.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2) You hear that Asian Americans are not significantly represented in management positions.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3) You are told that Asians have assertiveness problems.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4) You notice that Asian characters in American TV shows either speak bad or heavily accented English.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5) You notice that in American movies male Asian leading characters never engage in physical contact (kissing, etc.) with leading female characters even when the plot would seem to call for it. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6) Someone tells you that the kitchens of Asian families smell and are dirty.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7) You notice that US history books offer no information of the contributions of Asian Americans.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8) You see a TV commercial in which an Asian character speaks bad English, and acts subservient to non-Asian characters.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9) You hear about an Asian American government scientist held in solitary confinement for mishandling government documents when his non-Asian co-workers were not punished for the same offence.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10) You learn that Asian Americans were historically targets of racist actions  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11) You learn that most non-Asian Americans are ignorant of the oppression and racial prejudice Asian Americans have endured in the U.S.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12) At a restaurant you notice that a White couple who came in after you is served before you.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |

- 13) You learn that, while immigration quotas on Asian peoples were severely restricted until the latter half of the 1900s, quotas for European immigrants were not. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14) Someone tells you that it's the Blacks that are the problem, not the Asians. 1 2 3 4 5
- 15) A student you don't know asks you for help in math. 1 2 3 4 5
- 16) Someone tells you that they heard that there is a gene that makes Asians smart. 1 2 3 4 5
- 17) Someone asks you if you know his or her Asian friend/coworker/classmate. 1 2 3 4 5
- 18) Someone assumes that they serve dog meat in Asian restaurants. 1 2 3 4 5
- 19) Someone tells you that your Asian American female friend looks just like Connie Chung. 1 2 3 4 5
- 20) Someone you don't know speaks slow and loud at you. 1 2 3 4 5
- 21) Someone asks you if all your friends are Asian Americans. 1 2 3 4 5
- 22) Someone asks you if you can teach him/her Karate. 1 2 3 4 5
- 23) Someone tells you that "you people are all the same." 1 2 3 4 5
- 24) Someone tells you that all Asian people look alike. 1 2 3 4 5
- 25) Someone tells you that Asian Americans are not targets of racism. 1 2 3 4 5
- 26) Someone you do not know asks you to help him/her fix his/her computer. 1 2 3 4 5
- 27) You are told that "you speak English so well." 1 2 3 4 5
- 28) Someone asks you what your real name is. 1 2 3 4 5
- 29) You are asked where you are really from. 1 2 3 4 5

**APPENDIX B**  
**ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY CONFLICTS SCALE – REVISED (PART I)**

The following statements are parent-child situations that may occur in parent-child relationships. Consider how likely each situation occurs in your present relationship with your parent and how serious these conflicts are. For the purposes of this study, please consider “parent” to be your primary caregiver. Read each situation and answer the following questions using the following rating scales:

*How likely is this type of situation to occur in your relationship with your parents?*

1.....2.....3.....4.....5  
 Almost      Once In      Sometimes      Often Or      Almost  
 Never      A While           Frequently      Always

*How serious a problem is this situation in your relationship with your parents?*

1.....2.....3.....4.....5  
 Not At      Slightly      Moderately      Very Much      Extremely

<u>Family Situations</u>	<i>How likely is this type of situation to occur in your relationship with your parents?</i>		<i>How serious a problem is this situation in your relationship with your parents?</i>	
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Always</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Extremely</u>
1. Your parents tell you what to do with your life, but you want to make your own decisions.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
2. Your parents tell you that a social life is not important at this age, but you think that it is.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
3. You have done well in school, but your parents' academic expectations always exceed your performance.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
4. Your parents want you to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the family, but you feel this is unfair.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
5. Your parents always compare you to others, but you want them to accept you for being yourself.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
6. Your parents argue that they show you love by housing, feeding, and educating you, but you wish they would show more physical and verbal signs of affection.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5

<u>Family Situations</u>	How likely is this type of situation to occur in your relationship with your parents?		How serious a problem is this situation in your relationship with your parents?
	<u>Never</u>	<u>Always</u>	<u>Not At All</u> <u>Extremely</u>
7. Your parents don't want you to bring shame upon the family, but you feel that your parents are too concerned with saving face.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
8. Your parents expect you to behave like a proper Asian male or female, but you feel your parents are being too traditional.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
9. You want to state your opinion, but your parents consider it to be disrespectful to talk back.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5
10. Your parents demand that you always show respect for elders, but you believe in showing respect only if they deserve it.	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5	1...2...3...4...5

## APPENDIX C

### CSE-R

**INSTRUCTIONS:** We are all members of different social groups or social categories. We would like you to consider **your race** (e.g., Asian American) **or ethnicity** (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino/a, etc.) in responding to the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the following scale:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree somewhat</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree somewhat</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>

- \_\_\_ 1. I am a worthy member of my race/ethnic group.
- \_\_\_ 2. I often regret that I belong to my racial/ethnic group.
- \_\_\_ 3. Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others.
- \_\_\_ 4. Overall, my race/ethnicity has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
- \_\_\_ 5. I feel I don't have much to offer to my racial/ethnic group.
- \_\_\_ 6. In general, I'm glad to be a member of my racial/ethnic group.
- \_\_\_ 7. Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on the average, to be more ineffective than other groups.
- \_\_\_ 8. The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.
- \_\_\_ 9. I am a cooperative participant in the activities of my racial/ethnic group.
- \_\_\_ 10. Overall, I often feel that my racial/ethnic group is not worthwhile.
- \_\_\_ 11. In general, others respect my race/ethnicity.
- \_\_\_ 12. My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of a person I am.
- \_\_\_ 13. I often feel I'm a useless member of my racial/ethnic group.
- \_\_\_ 14. I feel good about the race/ethnicity I belong to.
- \_\_\_ 15. In general, others think that my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.
- \_\_\_ 16. In general, belonging to my race/ethnicity is an important part of my self-image.

**APPENDIX D**

**College Adjustment Scale  
Anton and Reed, 1991**

**Scale is Copyrighted and May Not be Reproduced**

## APPENDIX E

### Demographic Questionnaire

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Year in School :     1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 6<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity? Please check all that apply:

Asian Indian     Cambodian     Chinese             Filipino  
 Indonesian     Hmong         Japanese         Korean  
 Laotian         Singaporean    Taiwanese       Vietnamese  
 Thai             Malaysian     Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Generation since immigration (check one):

1<sup>st</sup> (you were born outside of the U.S.)  
 1.5 (born outside of the U.S.; but spent more than two-thirds of life in U.S.)  
 2<sup>nd</sup> (you were born in the U.S.; either parent born in the country of origin)  
 3<sup>rd</sup> (you and both parents born in the U.S.; all grandparents born in country of origin)  
 4<sup>th</sup> (you and both parents born in the U.S.; not all grandparents born in U.S.)  
 5<sup>th</sup> (you, both parents, and all grandparents born in the U.S.)

If not born in the United States, how long have you resided in the United States? \_\_\_yrs

What has been the marital status of your parents for the majority of your life?

married  divorced  widowed  remarried  separated

At the present time, what is your parent's marital status?

married  divorced  widowed  remarried  separated

Parents' Highest Level of Education (please specify the highest degree earned/ educational level obtained):

Mother:             Don't Know  
                           Some High School  
                           High School Graduate  
                           Some College  
                           BA/BS  
                           MA/MS/Med  
                           PhD/MD/JD

Did you mother complete this level in the United States?     Yes             No

Father:        \_\_\_ Don't Know  
                  \_\_\_ Some High School  
                  \_\_\_ High School Graduate  
                  \_\_\_ Some College  
                  \_\_\_ BA/BS  
                  \_\_\_ MA/MS/Med  
                  \_\_\_ PhD/MD/JD

Did you father complete this level in the United States?    \_\_\_Yes        \_\_\_No

Parents' Current Occupation:

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Who was your primary caretaker(s) during your childhood (check all that apply)?

Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Grandmother \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Father \_\_\_\_\_ Grandfather \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Stepmother \_\_\_ Aunt \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Stepfather \_\_\_ Uncle \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

In my family, I am the:

\_\_\_The oldest sibling \_\_\_In the middle\_\_\_The youngest child \_\_\_ The only child

How would you describe the racial composition of the following (1 – mostly White; 2 – mostly Asian/Asian American; 3 – mostly Black; 4 – mostly Latino/a; 5 – racially integrated)?

Your friends in high school \_\_\_\_\_

Your friends in college \_\_\_\_\_

The neighborhood where you spent the majority of your life \_\_\_\_\_

How many Asian American Studies courses have you completed? \_\_\_\_\_

How many Ethnic Studies courses have you completed? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F

### Email Recruitment

Dear Student,

The Department of Counseling and Personnel Services at the University of Maryland invites you to participate in a web-based study that explores the family and social experiences of Asian American college students. In this study, Asian Americans are defined as individuals who can trace their ancestry back to Asia, including the Indian subcontinent.

This study has received approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (HSR # 04-0131). You were randomly selected as a University of Maryland student identifying yourself as Asian or Pacific Islander. You will receive two additional email messages, which will serve as a reminder to participate in the web-based study. If you do not wish to receive these email messages, for any reason, please respond to this email with the subject header, "OPT OUT."

Because the questions in this study are of a sensitive nature, every step has been taken to ensure your confidentiality and privacy. Please be assured that your responses will be kept COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. Furthermore, only group data will be reported, meaning no data will ever be reported in connection to you individually. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

At the completion of the study, two participants will be selected randomly, from the surveys on the website, to receive a cash prize of \$75 or \$50. The first 100 students to respond will be entered into a drawing for the \$75 cash prize. The next 200 students will be entered into a drawing for the \$50 prize. Additionally, your participation in this study will contribute to growing literature regarding the experiences of Asian Americans. The results of this study will inform educators and psychologists of the Asian American experience.

I would greatly appreciate your help. If you have any questions or concerns about this study please feel free to contact Christopher Liang by e-mail at [cliang@umd.edu](mailto:cliang@umd.edu). If you wish to participate in the study, visit <http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang>. If you have any difficulties while on completing the study, please feel free to contact me. Again, thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Christopher Liang, MA  
University of Maryland  
Counseling Psychology  
Counseling and Personnel Services Department

## APPENDIX G

### Email Recruitment Follow-Up – First Follow Up

Dear Student,

You were recently invited to participate in a web-based study ([www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang](http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang)) concerning family and social experiences of Asian American students. This email is a reminder for the opportunity that you have to contribute to growing and needed research regarding the experiences of Asian Americans.

Many students already have participated in my web-based study. However, in order for these data to have any meaning, I need for more of you to complete the survey as well. Participating in this study simply means completing the web-based survey. On average students have completed the survey in about 15-20 minutes.

The results of this study are important. This study will inform educators, psychologists, and the general public, as they decide on policy and the provision of student services, of the Asian American experience.

The anonymity of participating students can be assured. You may withdraw your participation at any time during the study without penalty. You may complete the study at <http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang>.

At the completion of the study, two participants will be selected randomly to receive a cash prize of \$75 or \$50. The first 100 participants will be entered into a drawing for \$75. The next 200 participants will be entered into the drawing for \$50.

Thank you again for your support of this project. If there are any questions about this project, please contact Christopher Liang at (301) 405-0996 or [cliang@umd.edu](mailto:cliang@umd.edu).

This message is a reminder. If you already participated, please disregard this email. There only will be one more reminder. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Christopher Liang, MA  
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology

## APPENDIX H

### Email Recruitment Follow-Up – Second Follow Up

Dear Student,

You were recently invited to participate in a web-based study ([www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang](http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang)) concerning family and social experiences of Asian American students. This email is the last reminder for the opportunity that you have to contribute to growing and needed research regarding the experiences of Asian Americans.

Many students already have participated in my web-based dissertation study. However, in order for these data to have more meaning, I need for more of you to complete the survey. Participating in this study simply means completing the web-based survey. On average students have completed the survey in about 15-20 minutes.

The results of this study are important. This study will inform educators, psychologists, and the general public, as they decide on policy and the provision of student services, of the Asian American experience.

The anonymity of participating students can be assured. You may withdraw your participation at any time during the study without penalty. You may complete the study at <http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang>.

At the completion of the study, two participants will be selected randomly to receive a cash prize of \$75 or \$50. The first 100 participants will be entered into a drawing for \$75. The next 200 participants will be entered into the drawing for \$50.

Thank you again for your support of this project. If there are any questions about this project, please contact Christopher Liang at (301) 405-0996 or [cliang@umd.edu](mailto:cliang@umd.edu).

This message is a reminder. If you already participated, please disregard this email. There will be no more reminders. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Christopher Liang, MA  
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology

## APPENDIX I

### Final Follow-Up

Dear Student,

Congratulations on completing the school year. I know that many of you have been busy these past several weeks with final projects and exams and may not have had the time to participate or may have simply missed my earlier requests for your participation in my study concerning family and social experiences of Asian American students.

I had hoped that I would not have to bother you with another request, but the sample for the study is still not at the ideal number to make those data in the study meaningful. Participating in this study simply means completing the web-based survey. On average students have completed the survey in about 15-20 minutes. You can participate in the study by simply visiting:

<http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang>

The results of this study are important. This study will inform educators, psychologists, and the general public, as they decide on policy and the provision of student services, of the Asian American experience.

The anonymity of participating students can be assured. You may withdraw your participation at any time during the study without penalty. You may complete the study at <http://www.otal.umd.edu/~cliang>.

At the completion of the study (in two weeks), two participants will be selected randomly to receive a cash prize of \$75 or \$50. The first 100 participants will be entered into a drawing for \$75. The next 200 participants will be entered into the drawing for \$50.

Thank you again for your support of this project. If there are any questions about this project, please contact Christopher Liang at (301) 405-0996 or [cliang@umd.edu](mailto:cliang@umd.edu).

If you already participated, please disregard this email. There will be no more reminders. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Christopher Liang, MA  
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology

## APPENDIX J

### THE ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

#### STUDY DESCRIPTION AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I understand that I will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire measuring my feelings, thoughts, and reactions to a variety of situations and topics related to being an Asian American college student. Neither my name nor any information that could identify me will be asked in the questionnaire so that my privacy can be strictly maintained. In addition, my responses will be kept in a secure electronic file in the investigator's office. To further protect my privacy, only the researcher will have access to them until they are destroyed.

My participation (responding to the questions) should take between 20-30 minutes. The risks of participating are limited to the possibility that I may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions asked on the surveys. Should I feel uncomfortable with the tasks being asked of me at any time during this experiment, I may end my participation with no penalty to me. Should I have any questions or concerns regarding the study, I may contact the principal investigator listed below.

Following my participation, I will be given a more detailed explanation of the study. Furthermore, should I have any questions the researcher can be contacted via email at cliang@umd.edu. While this study is primarily intended to benefit psychologists and educators, my assistance will also allow researchers to build upon the existing knowledge about the Asian American experience.

I am at least 18 years of age and I have freely volunteered to participate in this study, and have been informed in advance as to what my tasks would be, and what procedures would be followed, both for the study and to protect my privacy. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions, and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction. I am aware that I have the right to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time, without prejudice. However, in order to be considered for the cash drawing, you will need submit your email address.

If I have questions about my rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, I may contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; (e mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-4212.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Christopher T. H. Liang, M.A. 1122 Cole Student Activities Building, at 301-405-0996.

**RESEARCH ADVISOR:** Ruth E. Fassinger, Ph.D. at 301 405 2873.

By selecting "I agree" I am affirming my agreement with the terms above and will directed to the survey . If you do not agree, simply close this window.

**APPENDIX K**  
Debriefing Statement

Dear Participant:

You have participated in a study in which you responded to several questions about your attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors about your relationship with your parents, racial issues, and personal feelings.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between intergenerational family conflict, racism-related stress, and psychological well-being (anxiety, depression, interpersonal problems, etc.). Recent studies indicate that some Asian American adolescents and young adults experience racism and culturally-based intergenerational family conflict. Further, psychological scholarship suggests that there may be a relationship between these experiences and psychological well-being (e.g., self-concept, stress, etc.) for some individuals. These psychological responses are expected but are not very well understood. Finally, some theorists have proposed that a sense of cultural pride or group-level esteem may serve to protect some individuals from the potential negative effects of racism and intergenerational family conflict. However, the role of cultural pride is largely unknown. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to our understanding of racism, intergenerational family conflict, and cultural pride.

If you should want to discuss your feelings and/or thoughts regarding these topics, you may wish to schedule an appointment with a trained psychologist at the University of Maryland Counseling Center. An appointment can be made by calling 301-314-7651. You may also utilize the Counseling Center's Walk-in counseling, which is available to students of color every day from 3 to 4 p.m. The Counseling Center is located in the Shoemaker Building. If you would like to learn more about these topics in an academic environment, you may wish to obtain a course schedule from the Asian American Studies Program office. The Asian American studies program is located in room 1122 Cole Student Activities Building and can be reached by calling 301-405-0996. Courses spanning a number of topics are offered every semester.

Your participation is appreciated. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask. Finally, it is important that you do not discuss this study with anyone. Knowing the purpose of the study could affect how others respond to the questionnaires.

Sincerely,

Christopher Liang, M. A.  
CAPS Department  
University of Maryland, College Park  
College Park, MD 20742  
[cliang@umd.edu](mailto:cliang@umd.edu)

Ruth E. Fassinger, Ph.D.  
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