ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: STORIES OF A TAIWANESE DIASPORA: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF TAIWANESE AMERICAN STUDENTS

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There is a growing emphasis on students' cultural experiences on campus. As such, the purpose of this study was to explore Taiwanese American students and their connection to Taiwanese culture. As a critical-cultural narrative inquiry this study (a) brought attention to Taiwanese American students and their engagement with Taiwanese culture, (b) expanded upon notions of home and experiences of bicultural integration, and (c) utilized diaspora as a theoretical perspective in a student development and higher education context. Research questions guiding this exploration included the following: (1) What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture? (2) How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture on campus? (3) In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of Taiwanese diaspora?

Eight Taiwanese American students from a Mid-Atlantic University participated in this study. Each participant engaged in two interviews. The outcome of this study included individual participant narratives and a grand narrative encompassing four themes: recognizing their parents' influence, navigating multiple cultural contexts, finding meaningful connections in non-Taiwanese American settings, and making decisions to move closer to Taiwanese culture. This study explored the importance of Taiwanese American students' connectedness to their ethnic cultural background.

STORIES OF A TAIWANESE DIASPORA: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY ON THE
EXPERIENCES OF TAIWANESE AMERICAN STUDENTS

by

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Dedication

To my family, I am forever grateful for your love and support. My accomplishments will always be our accomplishments.

莊份
陳月裡
莊麗香

莊麗雲
張筱純
張筱婷
張祐齊
張容熔

吳欽明
張惠微

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appreciation of the Taiwanese American student group at Pearl University. As a group, they showed me the relevance of Jeremy Lin, assisted with piloting interview questions and indulged me in my love of bubble tea.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Taiwan is home. As a Taiwanese born Taiwanese American, I experience two primary cultures, a Taiwanese culture and a United States (U.S.) culture. The experience of two or more cultures is one that I have witnessed many students in higher education struggle to balance, maintain, and embrace. Maramba (2008), in her study on the experiences of Filipina American immigrant families, found that Filipina American students, experienced tensions in balancing their familial and home expectations and student life on campus. This meant that the participants in Maramba's study were always "negotiating their multiple worlds… [and] spheres of biculturalism" (p. 345). A similar conclusion was drawn by Winkle-Wagner (2009a). Winkle-Wagner (2009a), in her study of African American women and their sense of perpetual homelessness, found that African American women experienced being caught between their home life and on campus interests such that they had to leave their home life behind while on campus and vice versa while at home, thus causing a sense of homelessness. For this study, the focus was on the experiences of Taiwanese American students and their cultural experiences with Taiwan. This focus on Taiwanese American students' experiences aligns with a sociological perspective on identity (Winkle-Wagner, 2009b). Winkle-Wagner (2009b) stated, "the sociological perspective emphasizes the *process* and *interaction* between the individual (self), other people, the larger society, and…college campus" (p. 27). Winkle-Wagner (2009a) did not address the development of students' ethnic identity, but rather the process of engaging with their identity through interactions in a specific cultural context. There is no research to describe Taiwanese American students' and a sense

of homelessness, but there is indeed enough research on Asian Americans to suggest that Taiwanese American students experience a negotiation of multiple worlds (Alvarez, 2002; Maramba, 2008; Museus, 2008, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2009a). One way that the balance of multiple worlds exists is within the establishment of organizations that specifically support Taiwanese American students in higher education such as the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Student Association (ITASA).

ITASA is an organization that provides "events and resources that explore and celebrate Taiwanese American identity in order to connect, inspire, and empower its community" (2016, para. 1). ITASA works with Taiwanese American Student Associations (TASA) on university campuses across the U.S. to engage college students in leadership development and regional conferences on "the preservation of Taiwanese culture [as] a cause worth fighting for… [to] share Taiwanese culture with as many people as possible so that our community can continue to grow and flourish" (2014, para. 2). This preservation and celebration of Taiwanese American identity and Taiwanese culture, through organizations like ITASA, or a campus specific TASA, is underrepresented in student development and higher education scholarship. On campus TASAs, like many student identity or culture-based student organizations, may offer students a place to explore, engage, and express their ethnic identity amongst students of similar or shared backgrounds (Museus, 2008). Museus' study on the role of ethnic student organizations, in the cultural adjustments of African American and Asian American students, at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), found that "[e]thnic organizations facilitated the cultural adjustment and membership

of minority student participants by serving as sources of cultural familiarity, vehicles for cultural expression and advocacy, and venues for cultural validation" (p. 576). These findings support the important role student subcultures play in students' on-campus experiences (Gottlieb & Hodgkins, 1963; Museus, 2008; Museus, Lâm, Huang, Kem, & Tan, 2012). In addition, research on student subcultures also encourages a need for greater understanding on how and why students connect to their ethnic-specific identity and culture beyond campus boundaries.

Going beyond campus boundaries means an exploration of students' awareness and connection to national events and trends. For instance, Jeremy Lin is a well-known Asian American athlete, more specifically, a Taiwanese American professional basketball player in the National Basketball Association (NBA). In 2012, Lin garnered the attention of the mass media for his pivotal role in an exciting six game winning streak with the New York Knicks. During the time of Lin's success, I had an opportunity to attend a TASA meeting on a predominantly White campus, and I observed members of this student organization sharing great excitement over Lin's sudden fame and ethnic identity as only one of two Taiwanese Americans ever to play in the NBA. It was clear that Lin brought attention to a Taiwanese Americans and Taiwanese culture (Treadway, 2012). Thus, it makes sense that students at this particular TASA meeting would be wearing Lin paraphernalia. One student had on a red t-shirt with Lin's name in traditional Chinese characters and another student asked where the shirt was purchased. The student with the shirt replied, "Taiwan," with great enthusiasm. Now, many years past Lin's initial success, Taiwan is again making mass media headlines. In Taiwan's most

recent 2016 presidential election, Taiwan elected its first-ever female President, Tsai

Ing-wen (蔡英文). The news of Taiwan's presidential election made worldwide news,

and like Lin, brings greater attention to Taiwanese culture. Little is known, however,

about how these off-campus events relate, influence, or garner a greater connection to

Taiwanese American or Taiwanese culture for students on campus. To what extent

does the mass media attention on Taiwanese culture through Taiwanese American

figures or Taiwanese news matter to Taiwanese American students on campus?

For me, Taiwan symbolizes my cultural home and one reason for my constant

and persistent interest in Taiwanese American people, news, and events. Personally,

supporting Lin and taking interest in Taiwan's recent presidential election is my way

of getting closer to Taiwanese culture and Taiwan. My family's immigration to the

U.S. in the early 1980s meant a transition into a new way of being, living, and

connecting to Taiwan. We had to redefine our ethnic identity, relationship to

Taiwanese culture, and build a new sense of cultural home in the U.S. However,

forever inherent and persistent in my family's immigration experience is a negotiation

and integration of U.S. culture, on one hand, and our Taiwanese culture on the other.

The experience of navigating and integrating two cultures is common for immigrant

families, but it is uncommon that student development and higher education research

captures the complexity of redefining dual and bicultural experiences in the context of

maintaining and sustaining a sense of home and relationship with one's original

culture. Although Maramba (2008) and Winkle-Wagners' (2009a) work related to

the concepts of bicultural experiences and home, it was research done by Benet-

Martínez and Haritatos (2005) on bicultural identity integration (BII) that better delves into the complexity of integrating more than one culture.

Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) used BII as an index to explore high and low levels of BII. Benet-Martinez and Haritatos found that individuals with high BII can "integrate both cultures in everyday lives" (p. 1019) and individuals with low BII "report difficulty in incorporating both cultures into a cohesive sense of identity" (p. 1020). Benet-Martinez and Haritatos also found that cultural conflict (e.g. assimilation or acculturation) stresses and cultural distance (e.g. proximity or ability to use cultural competence) matters in how individuals develop a high or low BII. There are countless studies in student development and higher education scholarship on the experiences of racially and ethnically minoritized students and their negotiation of bicultural integration, in particular, at PWIs (Alvarez, 2002; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Maramba, 2008; Museus, 2008, 2009; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Nadal, Pituc, Johnston, & Esparrago, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Renn, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008; Trice, 2004; Winkle-Wagner, 2009a). In this study, I explored this phenomenon of bicultural integration and home through the stories of Taiwanese American students in the context of their connection to Taiwanese culture.

I was intrigued to learn how Taiwanese Americans make and communicate their cultural connections and pride in their Taiwanese ethnic identity and Taiwanese culture. I wondered, do the students from the TASA group I observed identify their excitement over Lin's success as a point of cultural connection and pride in Taiwan? I also wondered to what extent do Taiwanese American students resonate with

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Taiwanese culture as a place of home or, as Winkle-Wagner (2009a) suggested, homelessness. If students related and celebrated Taiwanese cultural icons and events, such as Lin and the news of President-elect Tsai Ing-wen, then what meaning can be made about culture and home in the context of working and supporting Taiwanese American students at PWIs? To date, none of the current scholarship focuses on Taiwanese American students and their experiences of bicultural integration in the context of preserving, creating, and celebrating Taiwanese culture. Therefore, this empirical narrative inquiry sought to bring attention to Taiwanese American students and their stories of negotiating, preserving, creating, and celebrating Taiwanese American identity and Taiwanese culture. To further position the needs for this study, this chapter emphasizes (a) the purpose of the study after further illuminating the problems in existing research, (b) provide working definitions of relevant terms, (c) presents the research questions to be investigated, and (d) offers how this study is significant to student development and higher education scholarship.

Beyond Campus Boundaries

Underlying student subculture and bicultural research in student development and higher education is culture. Culture is an elusive term that is not easily defined in student development and higher education scholarship (Caughey, 2006; Geertz, 1973; Madison, 2012; Tierney, 1988, 1997; Van Maanen, 2011; Wolcott, 2008; Yon, 2000). Minimally, scholars use definitions of culture that point to an understanding of individual and group values, beliefs, and actions; which is important to recognize and understand, and especially salient when students may experience negative or discriminatory campus environments. Jayakumar and Museus (2012) stated, "campus

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culture research and discourse can help lead to more holistic understandings of the intersection between the deeply embedded and complex elements of institutions and their diverse student bodies" (p. 5). However, presently, campus culture research rarely includes or involves students' cultural experiences off campus. Student subculture research such as that of Museus (2008), Maramba (2008), and Winkle-Wagner (2009b) emphasized the important role racial and ethnic identification and affinity groups can play in students' satisfaction and success on campus and begins to expand students' cultural experiences to off-campus responsibilities, like familial responsibilities and expectations. However, these studies do not incorporate or account for events and experiences prior to on campus attendance and ongoing relationships with off-campus cultural contexts. Using an interdisciplinary lens and adopting an expanded notion of culture, I found diasporas to one cultural concept which addresses an integration of dual and bicultural experiences and an ongoing relationship with off-campus cultural connections.

Diasporas explore the intersection of locations, nationalities, identities, and experiences (Butler, 2001; Clifford, 1994; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Khan, 2007). As a theoretical tool and resource, diasporas are useful ways to delve into notions of home and home making (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Khan, 2007). A diaspora perspective utilizes terms such as homeland and hostland to distinguish a dispersal between two locations. Moreover, a diaspora perspective uncovers *how* and *where* individuals have ongoing relationships with their original home culture or homeland. Homelands are an individual's country of origin, nationality, or cultural affiliation with a nation-state (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Khan, 2007).

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Hostlands are an individual's current country, place of residence, or immigrated country (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Khan, 2007). Student development and higher education scholarship rarely, if at all, relates cultural and bicultural experiences to students' experiences in a homeland and hostland or diasporic context. When placing students' experiences in the context of a diaspora there is an inclusion and attention on social, historical, and political events between two or more cultures that differs from current student development and higher education research and practice.

Similarly, existing scholarship on students' experiences also define and utilize the concept of home, but this is done in a limiting and narrow fashion. For example, Delgado-Guerrero, Cherniack, and Gloria (2014) explored the "reasons undergraduate women of color join a cultural-specific sorority" (p. 45) and found that the women of color in their study affiliated with cultural-specific sororities, did so, in part, to find a source of "familial relationship" (p. 50) on campus. This supports the cliché notion that campuses, residential campuses, can serve as "a home away from home" for students. Moreover, this concept of home was evident in studies on racially and ethnically minoritized student experiences in student development and higher education scholarship. For example, in an early study on sense of belonging, Hurtado and Carter (1997) explored the experiences of Latino students and found that "for Latino students who attended predominantly White universities, feeling at 'home' in campus community is associated with maintaining interactions both within and outside the college community" (p. 338). Given that racially and ethnically minoritized students face challenges of discriminatory campus climates more so than

White students (Alvarez, 2002; Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Strayhorn, 2012), it is reasonable to assume there is a greater need and urgency to explore notion and experiences of home for racially and ethnically minoritized students. However, there are few empirical studies in student development and higher education scholarship that explore a home concept, beyond Winkle-Wagner's (2009a) description of homelessness.

One way to expand notions of home is seen through Espiritu's (2003) description of home. Espiritu described home as dwellings and physical locations and also suggested that home is "*literal* and *symbolic*" (p. 11). In a traditional and normative sense, home may be simply seen as where students come from before their campus experiences or where students go during breaks in the academic calendar, but scholars such as Espiritu (2003) argued that home is much greater than physical dwellings or places. Home is also theorized as real and imagined positions about the "human experience [by] examining the relationship between larger social structures and people's everyday lives" (Parreñas & Siu, 2007, p. 2). When considering notions of home with students in higher education, the ideas that are commonly supported and promoted in student development and higher education scholarship are encouraging students to identify their campus environment as a place of home and relating home to where they go while not physically on campus (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Klein, 2006). By expanding a definition of home, student development and higher education scholars can bring in a wider breadth of interdisciplinary concepts, such as that of diasporas, to students' cultural experiences on and off campus.

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The problems of narrowed definitions of culture and home are a concern for ongoing and growing scholarship on culture and bicultural experiences of racially and ethnically minoritized students on campus, but perhaps an even greater concern and problem is the invisibility of Taiwanese American experiences in student development and higher education scholarship. This invisibility is frequently couched and embedded in scholarship on Asian Americans or Asian international students. Frequently cited as a limitation is the treatment of Asian and Asian Americans as a monolithic race and ethnic identity (Alvarez, 2002; Hune, 2002; Inkelas, 2003; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Museus, 2008; Nadal et al., 2010; Suzuki, 2002). Asian and Asian Americans are far from monolithic, given the diversity in country of origins, languages, political structures, histories, and cultures within Asian and Asian American communities. The omission of the stark and significant differences between Asian and Asian American communities perpetuates misinformation and stereotypes about Asian and Asian American students on campuses. Moreover, for Taiwanese American students, the problems go beyond a monolithic categorization, the identification of Taiwanese American students is, at times, mislabeled to Chinese and Chinese American. This mislabeling of Taiwanese American students relates to social, historical, and political relations between the U.S., China, and Taiwan. One example of where mislabeling is perpetuated, outside of student development and higher education scholarship, is in the U.S. Census, where the U.S. Census Bureau counts Taiwanese Americans as Chinese or Chinese Americans (2011). An argument for linking Taiwan and China together is Taiwan's designation as a Republic of China, but Taiwan's longstanding relationship with the

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U.S. through a Taiwanese Relations Act (TRA) challenges the notion that Taiwanese American students are essentially Chinese (Rigger, 2011). This social, historical, and political complexity in naming Taiwanese Americans further supports a case for exploring the experiences of Taiwanese American students.

Working Definitions of Key Terms

Moving forward, there are several key terms and concepts in this study. These key terms are italicized in this section and serve as the concepts that most relate and hold a place of importance in this investigation. The key terms appear in alphabetical order, not in order of importance or relevance.

To define *Asian* and *Asian American,* I choose to use the U.S. Census Bureau's (2012) latest definition of Asian populations. A working definition of Asian Americans is "people of the Far East, Southeast Asian, or the Indian subcontinent, including for example Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam" (p. 3). Taiwan is not listed within this Census Bureau definition since Taiwan is considered part of the Republic of China. If specified in the U.S. Census, then Taiwan would also fall under the Census Bureau's definition of Asian American. In student development and higher education research, *Asian American* is sometimes used interchangeably with Asian Pacific American, Asian, or Asian Pacific Islanders and as Hune (2002) stated, "more importantly, it has come to represent numerous groupings as if they are a single coherent category" (p. 12). In this study, the terms Asian and Asian American were used to mirror how and when researchers and scholars described the experiences of

Asian or Asian Americans, but notably the use of Asian and Asian American may not include Taiwanese American students.

As already indicated, *culture* is an elusive term, but at the most basic level culture involves shared behaviors, rituals, symbols, beliefs and meanings (Clifford, 1986; Geertz, 1973; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Madison, 2012; Tierney, 1988; Van Maanen, 2011; Wolcott, 2008). In definitions on culture, culture is also considered an experience shared amongst a community and marks the existence and formation of a select group. In a more complex form, culture is displayed within the "taken-for-granted assumptions" (Schein, 1984, p. 4) and the everyday practices and lives of a select groups.

As an aspect of culture and a cultural perspective, a *diaspora* is a cultural perspective on the "connections between 'here' and 'there'" (Waldinger, 2008, p. 4) and signals the migration of a community or identity. In addition, the diaspora relates to ideas about physical and imagined notions of home and home-making (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Parreñas & Siu, 2007). A diaspora, for this study, was an explicit exploration of how and where Taiwanese Americans and Taiwanese culture appear and was made relevant by Taiwanese American students within a PWI.

Based on Taiwanese immigration and migration patterns, there are strong communities of *Taiwanese American* students in higher education (Ng, 1998). However, the identification of these Taiwanese American students was distorted by the treatment Taiwanese American students as Chinese American in research and practice. Nonetheless, there are other means to identify a presence of Taiwanese American students on campus. For example, ITASA and campus-based TASAs are

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evidence that there are strong connections to a Taiwanese American identity and Taiwanese culture among students in U.S. institutions of higher education (ITASA, 2014). ITASA supports at least 26 different Taiwanese American student organizations across the U.S. Thus, Taiwanese American students are those who have integrated into the U.S. through citizenship and self-identify as members of U.S. society and culture.

Related to the definitions of culture and diaspora, *home* as defined by Espiritu (2003) is "private domestic space and as a larger geographic place where one belongs, such as one's community, village, city, and country" (p. 2). Home as one site, or physical dwelling, was explored throughout this investigation. At a minimum, in this study, home was identified in relation to a cultural (Taiwanese) home that embodies home as "*literal* [or] *symbolic*" (Espiritu, p. 11). Home was explored as an experience and process for which Taiwanese American students articulate their sense of home and connection to Taiwanese culture.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical-cultural narrative inquiry that can (a) bring attention to Taiwanese American students' preservation, creation, and celebration of Taiwanese culture, (b) expand upon notions of home and experiences of bicultural integration, and (c) utilize diaspora as a theoretical perspective in a student development and higher education context. In this inquiry, a critical-cultural paradigm and epistemology means the phenomenon of interest starts at a "cultural perspective" (Guido, Chávez, & Lincoln, 2010, p. 10) and was critiqued for some form of "creative action for social justice" (Guido et al., 2010, p. 12;

Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Tierney, 1993). Moreover, this study was an empirical study illuminating Taiwanese American students' stories and connections to Taiwanese culture; which has yet to exist in current student development and higher education scholarship. This study contributed to the dearth of knowledge on the experience of Taiwanese Americans around their connection to Taiwanese culture.

By looking more in-depth at the experiences of Taiwanese Americans, educators and researchers may learn new ways to engage students in their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Too often, Taiwanese Americans students are grouped with Asian, Asian American, and Chinese or Chinese American experiences, even though their ethnic-specific identities are uniquely different from one another. Similarly, bicultural integration experiences, across different ethnic-identities, can be uniquely different from one another, especially under a literal and symbolic definition of home. Therefore, the research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture?

2. How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture on campus?

3. In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of Taiwanese diaspora?

The findings of this study present a collection of stories that captured the experiences of Taiwanese American students and a greater understanding for how Taiwanese culture was preserved, created, and celebrated through students' experiences. This follows the basis of narrative inquiry-based studies.

Methodology

Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) described narrative inquiry as an attractive methodology for student development research because it involves a "relationship between stories, identities, and meaning making" (p. 82). Similarly, according to Clandinin (2006), narrative inquiry methodology addresses a "three dimensional narrative inquiry space…the personal and social (interaction) along one dimension; past, present, and future (continuity) along a second dimension; place (situation) along a third dimension" (p. 47). This three dimensional space includes the researcher, participant(s), and the narrative(s) in the process of the inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Toolan, 2001). As a researcher, I drawn to methodologies that hold a strong emphasis on stories, social setting, and actors within the stories. This aligns with narrative inquiry methodologies. I am drawn to the *stories worth telling*, which are experiences that cannot be told and storied in any other way besides a narrative (Jones et al., 2014). This aligns with the paradigm and epistemology that I brought to this study.

The paradigm and epistemology that I brought to this study was a critical-cultural paradigm and epistemology, where I hold reality are socially constructed and culturally laden and "the intervention envisioned for the narrative inquirer focuses first on the qualities of lived experiences; it is in collaboratively transforming the narratives within which people live in that narrative inquiry seeks to lay the foundation for social change" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 50; Guido et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2014). In other words, I view power in the context and process of conducting the narrative, and ultimately this study. I adopted Brookfield's (2005)

view that, power and being critical means unearthing "a number of crucial tasks such as learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology, unmask power, contest hegemony, overcome alienation, pursue liberation, reclaim reason, and practice democracy" (p. 2). Thus, the methodology of narrative inquiry means unearthing Taiwanese American students' stories in the context of bicultural integration, diasporas, and home.

Significance

Founded in 1912, Taiwan is a small island located "off the southeastern coast of mainland Asia, across the Taiwan Strait from China [and] on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean. To the north is Japan; to the south is the Philippines" (Tourism Bureau, 2014, para. 1). As a country, Taiwan has a unique historical and political past that has been marred by decades of martial and colonial rule (Brown, 2004; Harrison, 2006; Rigger, 2011; Rubinstein, 1999). This past has put Taiwanese identity, nationality, and culture into question for the people of Taiwan, and those who have migrated from Taiwan to places like the U.S. (Brown, 2004; Harrison, 2006; Rigger, 2011; Rubinstein, 1999). More recently, the question for the people of and from Taiwan is between a Taiwanese or Chinese identity. Are you Taiwanese or are you Chinese? Where are you from; Taiwan or China? Given Taiwan's Republic of China status, this question may be mute for some, but for students in groups such as ITASA and campus-based TASAs this question matters. This is the greatest significance of this study, giving voice and recognition to students who hold a strong connection to their Taiwanese identity, heritage, and culture.

A study on the experience of Taiwanese American students goes beyond meeting the needs of producing ethnic identity specific research. This study encourages an understanding of social, historical, and political events that affect students' background in identity, heritage, and culture. How often does current scholarship on Asian or Asian American students highlight and integrate historical and political events traced back to students' ethnic and cultural origins? This is rarely part of existing student development and higher education scholarship on Asian or Asian American students. In general, existing scholarship focuses on the invisibility of Asian and Asian American students (Alvarez, 2002; Museus, 2009; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus, Maramba, & Teranishi, 2013), but what about the invisibility of social, historical, and political events that shape and influence identity and cultural connections?

This study seeks to bring attention to the influential role social, historical, and political events may play in how students come to identify their ethnic identity, specifically, a Taiwanese American identity and culture. Moreover, this study sought to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on students' cultural experiences and invites scholars to consider culture from a bicultural integration and diaspora perspective. As a theoretical and conceptual framework, diasporas facilitate the process of illuminating inherent and persistent bicultural connections (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Khan, 2007). Similarly, diasporas also encourage a greater exploration of a literal and symbolic notion of home (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Khan, 2007). For researchers and scholars, this study can set the stage for greater depth and breadth in the framing of students' experiences. For example, in

Maramba's (2008) study of immigrant families and Filipina Americans in the college experience, Maramba traced the migration and immigration patterns of Filipina Americans, but did not reference the "relationship between the Philippines and the United States [which] has its origins in a history of conquest, occupation, and exploitation" (Espiritu, 2003, p. 1). By offering historical and political events that have influenced the creation of an Asian ethnic specific identity, researchers and scholars, can make connections beyond students' immediate experience. The inclusion of greater breadth and depth in students' cultural or diasporic experiences, heeds Tanaka's (2002) call to make an 'intercultural turn' in student development and higher education research and scholarship. Tanaka challenged researchers and scholars to (re)think and (re)analyze the formation of student development theories, but in many ways, Tanaka's position on becoming more critical about student development theories is an applicable approach to being more expansive in connecting students' experiences with their social, political, historical, and cultural past and present.

Conclusion

With minimal scholarship on Taiwanese American students, the review of related literature in this study focused on revealing bicultural integration, diaspora, and home as an organizing framework as they relate to Taiwanese American ethnic identity and culture. What is the history of a Taiwanese ethnic identity? What is Taiwanese culture? Thus, the review of related literature also highlights of Taiwanese social, historical, and political events that have shaped today's working definition of Taiwanese culture.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Related Literature

The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical-cultural narrative inquiry that can (a) bring attention to Taiwanese American students' preservation, creation, and celebration of Taiwanese culture, (b) expand upon notions of home and experiences of bicultural integration, and (c) utilize diaspora as a theoretical perspective in a student development and higher education context. As a qualitative study, the objective for this chapter and review of related literature was to present "an orienting framework" (Creswell, 2009, p. 29). Jones et al. (2014) situated frameworks as existing research and theories "that inform the phenomenon under study" (p. 10). To this end, this chapter situates the 'phenomenon under study' within five major categories: (a) Taiwanese culture and demographics, (b) culture, (c) home, (d) bicultural integration, and (e) diaspora. The review of these categories addresses the problems in current scholarship and expand upon the purpose of this study. Moreover, this review of the five organizing categories in this study enhanced the questions asked in the semi-structured interview process, analysis and interpretation of data, and resulting conclusions and points of discussion for future research and practice. Therefore, how and what is shared in this chapter carries a great deal of weight in the formation and implementation of this study (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006; Jones et al., 2014; Josselson & Lieblich, 2003).

Taiwanese Culture and Demographics

In an account of Taiwanese culture by two American anthropologists, Murray and Hong (1991), Hong, a Taiwanese born American, described the need to look at Taiwanese culture because "published fieldwork…presented Taiwanese culture as

Chinese culture" (p. 273). Moreover, Hong described a realization that Taiwanese culture was embedded and lost in other accounts. Hong stated,

> I soon realized that American anthropologists and mainland Chinese in Taiwan were not interested in Taiwanese culture. They seemed to be looking at [Taiwanese people], but were really looking through us to try to see traditional Chinese culture without seeing us, our culture, or our historical experiences... (p. 273).

Murray and Hong traced the ways Taiwanese culture has been intertwined and confused for Chinese culture given Taiwan's historical and political relationship with China. Murry and Hong noted, "Just to call Taiwan a 'province of China' is to take a stand…" (p. 282). This captures caveats that come with descriptions of Taiwanese culture and demographics. To identify and claim the existence of Taiwanese culture, and even a Taiwanese ethnic identity, is a political and purposeful statement and as Murray and Hong suggested, "[taking] a stand" (p. 282). Thus, the caveats in this description of Taiwanese culture and demographics are that Taiwan is a location, place, nation, and country separate from any other countries, but influenced by social, historical, political structures of China, Japan, and the United States, to name a few countries.

Personally, I am insistent on identifying as Taiwanese instead of Chinese, or another form of my ethnic identity. This stems from my cultural upbringing and sense of Taiwanese identity from my parents. As an immigrant, my cultural upbringing and sense of Taiwanese identity was rooted in what my parents taught me to eat, celebrate, and believe during certain times of the year, and major life events. I

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did not have a sense of Taiwanese culture and identity beyond my immediate family.

Thus, not identifying as Chinese was not a political act, it was a way of being.

However, now that I know more about identity development and culture, I recognize

that identity and culture involve a complex understandings of social, historical, and

political structures (Josselson, 2012). Josselson stated,

> Identity cannot simply be defined and declared by the individual…identity
>
> involves a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity in the context
>
> of a society or group that recognizes the individual as having a particular
>
> meaning or meanings (p. 40).

Thus, it is important to introduce what is Taiwanese culture and who are Taiwanese

American students, beyond my own account and experiences of Taiwanese culture

and identity.

Taiwanese Culture

Taiwan's historical and political history with China, Japan, and the U.S.

means that Taiwanese culture has become a blend of many cultures over the years.

Culture, according to Kuh and Whitt (1988), is defined as,

> …persistent patterns norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that
>
> shape the behavior of individuals and groups in a college or university and
>
> provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events
>
> and actions on and off the campus. (p. 6)

This is a useful and important way of defining culture, but common ways of learning

about a new environment are through food, language, and religion or spirituality.

These categories are broad ways to operationalize Kuh and Whitt's definition of

culture and begin the process of defining Taiwanese culture and Taiwanese American people.

Food. In Taiwanese culture, Liu and Lin (2009) found that, "Food is an expression of ethnic resilience" (p. 150). Understanding food in Taiwan is another way to understand Taiwan's history. Chuang (2009) suggested, "Taiwan has become widely recognized as a 'food paradise', seducing both foreign and domestic tourists with the promise of a unique cultural and gastronomic experience" (p. 84). This positions Taiwanese food as more than a tourist attraction; it is a fundamental part of Taiwanese heritage and connected to notions of a Taiwanese national identity (Chuang, 2009). Food culture in Taiwan has persisted through elements of Dutch, Japanese, and Chinese influences which can all be seen and traced through various Taiwanese dishes (Chuang, 2009; Liu & Lin, 2009).

According to the Tourism Bureau of Taiwan (2015), tastes of Taiwan are divided into three sections: gourmet cuisine, Taiwan snacks, and local products. This labeling by the Tourist Bureau of Taiwan is a clear evidence of Taiwan's fractured and resilient food culture. Foods most commonly associated with Taiwanese culture are the foods that Chuang (2009) described as unfit for formal political and state functions by previous Japanese and Chinese leaders, but the foods the Tourist Bureau of Taiwan (2015) has listed as Taiwan Snacks are the foods that most symbolize a Taiwanese identity. Popular Taiwanese foods include: pearl (bubble or boba) milk tea, stewed pork, oyster omelet, scallion pancakes, stinky tofu, steamed dumplings, Taiwanese meatballs, coffin bread, "guabao" sandwiches, and shaved ice, to name a few popular foods (Tourism Bureau, 2015). In a study on the sensory and memory

experiences of Taiwanese people and their relationship with Taiwanese foods, Chen (2010) highlighted the ways certain dishes remind people of past events. For example, Chen interviewed a Taiwanese woman who recalled that, "Only during Chinese New Year and important festivals did rural people eat [stewed] pork" (p. 13). Chen continued and found that "stewed pork sauce represented the old days of suffering and hard work" (p. 13), but this symbolism may not exist for many; it may depend on an individual's connection and view of Taiwan historically, politically, and socially. Nonetheless, Taiwanese culture and food are inextricably intertwined. Similarly, Taiwanese culture is inextricably tied to how Taiwanese people communicate with one another. This is less about the style of communication and more about the languages spoken in Taiwan and how language has shaped ways of being Taiwanese.

Language. Most people in Taiwan speak Mandarin Chinese with a distinct Taiwanese-Mandarin accent, but exploring what and how language is spoken in Taiwan illustrates Taiwan's complex culture. Huang (2000) suggested that the language of Taiwan is a mixture of co-languages: "Formosan (Austronesian), Hakka, Taiwanese, and Mandarin" (p. 145). Over the course of Chinese martial rule, Mandarin became the official language of Taiwan, but many Taiwanese people still speak and only understand Taiwanese (Huang, 2000; Tse, 2000). Prior to Chinese martial rule, the national education plan included Taiwanese and in some schools Japanese, but once China "reclaimed" Taiwan from Japan, the national curriculum removed any Taiwanese and Japanese language education, installing Mandarin as the official language (Huang, 2000; Tse, 2000). More recently, however, Taiwan's

Ministry of Education (2013) has developed resources and curriculum to include Taiwanese languages back into Taiwan's compulsory education system.

Nonetheless, the evolution of language over the course of the last three generations is in Taiwan is painful evidence of Taiwan's "occupation" by other countries. Tse (2000) found that, "language matters…children (who vary often can only speak Mandarin can no longer talk to their grandparents who can only speak the dialects)" (p. 156). To some extent, this has been the experience of my extended family in Taiwan. My maternal grandparents only spoke Taiwanese and understood some Japanese, my mom speaks and understands both Taiwanese and Mandarin, and in my generation, Mandarin is well-understood, and some Taiwanese is spoken or understood. However, some my cousins' children are proficient in Mandarin, but they can barely speak or understand Taiwanese. Researchers have found that questions related to who speaks which languages in Taiwan have been traced to different Taiwanese ethnicities and Aboriginal communities (Huang, 2000; Tse, 2000). These same questions tend to suggest how individuals learn about Taiwanese politics and relations to China (Huang, 2000; Tse, 2000). Uncovering and describing Taiwanese politics is one way to delve further into the values and beliefs of Taiwanese people, but exploring the religious and spiritual beliefs of Taiwanese people is also one way to share how, what, and why Taiwanese culture holds and values certain practices.

Religion and spirituality. An important aspect of any culture are the values and belief systems that are fundamental to cultural practices. This is similar for Taiwanese culture. There are many ways to look at religion and spirituality in

Taiwanese culture. Generally, religion and spirituality in Taiwanese culture is centered on Christianity, Buddhism, and different forms of folk religions (Chen, 2008; Yang & Hu, 2012). Yang and Hu (2012) found that the values of religion and spirituality for Taiwanese people, and within Taiwanese culture, focused a lot on connections to the past and ethereal.

Yang and Hu (2012) offered an overview of the different types of folk religions in Taiwan and described: common, sectarian, and individual folk religions. Communal folk religions were defined as, "those beliefs and ritual activities based in the local community" (p. 508). Sectarian folk religions were folk religions with some form of "organizational structure beyond local boundaries" (Yang & Hu, p. 509). Yang and Hu suggested sectarian folk religions are like Buddhist sects, but carry less organized recognition. Finally, individual folk religions were described as "religions that refer to supernatural beliefs and practices that are of any collectivity. This includes a variety of fortune-telling practices that reveal and change an individual's fortunate…" (Yang & Hu, p. 509). Folk religions, and aspects of Buddhism and Daoism, have become so interwoven with Taiwanese cultural practices that at times it is difficult to decipher which practices are a product of religion or spirituality versus traditional beliefs and practices.

Chen (2008) studied Taiwanese immigrants in the United States and explored the experiences of Taiwanese immigrants' relationship to Christianity and Buddhism. For the Taiwanese immigrants that were drawn to and found Christianity, the role it played was that of community and "great pride in Taiwanese culture and traditions" (Chen, p. 75). Chen stated, "what Taiwanese Christians find most objectionable

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about traditions is not necessarily the traditions themselves, but the blind acceptance that traditions evoke" (p. 75). Hence, Christianity and religion in the U.S. was a choice as opposed to "inherited" (Chen, p. 75), as religion is treated and seen in Taiwanese culture. As for the Taiwanese immigrants in Chen's study, who were already identified as Buddhist or became closer to Buddhism found that "Buddhism makes them feel close to their parents or grandparents who are in Taiwan or have passed away" (p. 108). Thus, generally, religion and spirituality in aspects of Taiwanese culture strongly relate to connections with the past, family, community, emotions, and different connections to fortune-telling and even the supernatural. As an immigrant and someone who is largely disconnected from organized religion and spirituality, how Taiwanese culture is shaped and influenced by Christianity, Buddhism, and folk religions is likely part of my experience with Taiwanese culture, but it is so embedded that I cannot determine or distinguish what is a cultural practice outside of religion and spirituality.

For example, at the passing of my paternal grandfather, I was instructed not to buy new clothes or cut my hair. My paternal grandfather strongly identified with Christianity, but it was unclear to me how new clothes or a haircut related to his religion. This example is likely a blend of customary practice and religion, but it illustrates a practice connected to the honoring of family as a cultural practice; which is a major aspect of any religion and spirituality in Taiwanese culture (Chen, 2008; Yang & Hu, 2012). Another major aspect of Taiwanese culture is an understanding of key historical and political events.

Taiwanese History and Political Events

Taiwan is a small island located "off the southeastern coast of mainland Asia, across the Taiwan Strait from China [and] on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean. To the north is Japan; to the south is the Philippines" (Tourism Bureau, 2014). According to Taiwan's Tourism Bureau (2014), Taiwan was founded in 1912, "making it the first democratic republic in Asia" (para. 1). In general, Taiwanese people are proud of their democratic society, but Taiwan's history has been marred by colonization, martial rule, and constant political strife. It is impossible to provide important and relevant information related to Taiwan without articulating the ways in which the country has been shaped by politics.

There are many political parties in Taiwan, but the two most notable political parties are Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). For many years, most of the political corruption in Taiwan has been credited to KMT. The KMT was made up of Chinese Nationalists (mainlanders) who opposed Communist rule in China and for Taiwan; which led by Chiang Kai-shek to flee to Taiwan from China (Hsieh, 2005). Chiang Kai-shek became Taiwan's first president and expanded Chinese Nationalist interests (Brown, 2004; Harrison, 2006; Hsieh, 2005; Rigger, 2011). Chiang Kai-shek's leadership was both positive and negative for Taiwan (Brown, 2004). Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT abused their political position and power to control people's way of living and forcing a great deal of unrest and insecurity among Taiwanese people (Brown, 2004). For example, one of the most notable Chinese martial rule historic events was the February 28th, 1947 incident (Brown, 2004; Garver, 1997; Hsieh, 2005; Rubinstein, 1999; Williams & Lee, 2014),

commonly known as "2-28," and as Hsieh (2005) stated, "[it]has been frequently

evoked by Taiwanese activists as a symbol of Taiwanese resistance against

mainlanders' rule" (p. 15). The "2-28" incident was in essence an uprising of

Taiwanese people expressing discontent with the KMT and Chinese dictatorship, but

unfortunately the incident led to tens of thousands of deaths (Brown, 2004; Garver,

1997; Hsieh, 2005; Rubinstein, 1999; Williams & Lee, 2014). However, fortunately,

for the people of Taiwan, the "2-28" incident also spurred a major movement towards

Taiwan's independence and a second political party, the DPP (Brown, 2004; Garver,

1997; Hsieh, 2005; Rubinstein, 1999; Williams & Lee, 2014).

The DPP's interest has long been to further solidify and claim Taiwan's

political and national independence from China. However, in recent years, the DPP's

position has evolved to be more oriented with the status quo. Williams and Lee

(2014) edited a book titled *Taiwan's struggle: Voices of the Taiwanese*, and in their

book, Williams and Lee stated, "the public in Taiwan has made it clear in the polls

that a majority is in favor of the status quo" (p. 4). The status quo is maintaining

Taiwan's current form of democracy, diplomacy, and relationship with China. At the

same time, the status quo is also maintaining and sustaining strong ties to the U.S.,

despite China's relationship with the U.S. One way of documenting ties between

Taiwan and the U.S. is the Taiwanese Relations Act (TRA) of 1979. The TRA

secured a permanent and ongoing cultural and political relationship between the two

countries (American Institute in Taiwan, 2014; Ng, 1998; Rubinstein, 1999; Williams

& Lee, 2014). According to the American Institute on Taiwan (1979), the purpose of

the TRA is to:

…help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to

promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the

continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relates between the people of

the United States and the people of Taiwan, on for other purpose (para. 1).

As Rigger (2011) put it, "Taiwan is like a blood brother [to the U.S.]" (p. 189).

(Rigger) stated, "Taiwan commands the world's attention because its people have

crafted a nation too important to ignore…" (p. 187). Taiwan's geographical position

with a Taiwan-China Strait to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west has proven to

be a high trade route for the United States and many other countries around the world.

However, Taiwan's political relationship with the U.S., through acts such as the TRA

and China's hold of Taiwan as a Republic of China, stalls Taiwan's abilities to be a

fully independent land, country, and nation. In many ways, Taiwanese culture,

history, politics are so embedded in the current state of Taiwanese American's

existence that it is immensely difficult to truly define and describe Taiwanese

identities and nationality. Nonetheless, ITASA and TASA's work with Taiwanese

American students on college campuses signals a livelihood in the preservation,

creation, and celebration of Taiwanese culture and a recognition of Taiwan's complex

historical and political past. Thus, Taiwanese American students are "too important

to ignore" (Rigger, p. 187).

Demographics

There have been multiple waves of migration from Taiwan to the United

States. According to Ng (1998), Taiwanese migrations into the U.S. can be divided

into three distinct timeframes: World War II to 1965, 1965 to 1979, and 1979 until

present day. The first migration was largely Taiwanese students looking to study in U.S. institutions of higher education (Ng, 1998). During this first migration (around 1965), Taiwan and the U.S. established their first Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 (Ng, 1998). This was one of the agreements made between Taiwan and the United States "in which the United States pledge to protect the safety of Taiwan" (Ng, 1998, p. 16). As for the second migration (1965 to 1979), the U.S. signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that eased the immigration of Taiwanese and Chinese people into the U.S, based an individual's labor skills (Chen, 2008; Ng, 1998). These skills ranged from technical and scientific experience to cooks and restaurant chefs (Ng, 1998). Finally, the third wave of migration started around the same time the U.S. began increased political negotiations with China. New relations with China have impeded and negatively affected the intimate Taiwan and U.S. relationship of the past and has also slowed the exchange of Taiwanese international students in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2013; Ng, 1998).

Around the early 1980s, the IIE (2011) reported Taiwan as a lending country for sending Taiwanese students to study in U.S. institutions of higher education. The IIE (2013) found that international students are approximately 4% of total student enrollment in U.S. institutions of higher education. International students from Taiwan comprise of approximately 3% of the total number of international students and a majority of those students coming from Taiwan are in the U.S. for graduate study (2013).

Outside of an educational context, the Migration Policy Institute has documented that, in 2010, approximately "358,000 Taiwanese immigrants [resided]

in the United States [which] represented 0.9 percent of the country's 40 million total foreign born, making the Taiwanese-born population comparable in size to the Italian, Iranian, and Brazilian foreign-born populations" (McCabe, 2012, para. 1). McCabe noted that the migration of Taiwanese people into the U.S. is at such significant numbers for Taiwan, that annually Taiwan conducts its own survey on how many Taiwanese people now have "descendants in the United States" (para. 2). This information, according to McCabe, supports a "diaspora engagement in the homeland" (para. 2). Moreover, based on 2010 U.S. Census data, McCabe found that,

> Of the 475,000 self-identified members of the Taiwanese diaspora residing in the United States in 2010, more than three-quarters (76.6 percent) were born in Taiwan. About one in five (20.7 percent, or 98,000) were born in the United States or born abroad to U.S. citizens, and the remaining 2.7 percent were born elsewhere (para. 12).

To date, these may be the most accurate number of Taiwanese Americans in the United States, since there was a great push in 2010 for Taiwanese descendants to write-in "Taiwanese" on the Census (TaiwaneseAmerican.Org, 2010). This overview of select aspects of Taiwanese culture and demographics begins the process of engaging in the stories of Taiwanese American students. In addition, a Taiwanese migration is embedded into the work and purpose of ITASA and TASA.

Positioning itself as a leadership development organization for those interested in Taiwanese American identities and Taiwanese culture, ITASA (2014) is an apolitical organization that is largely focused on the development of college

students. ITASA (2016) focuses on three fundamental pillars to "connect, inspire, and empower" (para. 1) its members. ITASA partners and collaborates with college-based TASA organizations and regional or local Taiwanese groups such as Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices (TECRO), the Taiwanese American Citizens League (TACL), and Taiwanese American Professional (TAP) chapters.

One campus-based TASA (2016) articulated its mission as "dedicated to [the development and promotion] of Taiwanese/Taiwanese American culture, language, history, current affairs, and traditions" (para. 3). Common programs and events held by this TASA include group socials, club meetings, and events such as Taiwanese Night Markets, where students beyond TASA are invited to learn and enjoy Taiwanese traditions, snacks, and local products. This overview of ITASA and TASA offers a glimpse into the type of programs and services available to students interested in Taiwanese American identities and culture. The presence and existence of ITASA and TASA supports the notion that there is a critical mass of Taiwanese Americans in U.S. institutions of higher education, but little is known about the actual number of Taiwanese or Taiwanese Americans in the United States since any count of Taiwanese or Taiwanese Americans may be influenced by the Republic of China designation. Moving forward, working descriptors of culture, subcultures, bicultural integration, home, and diaspora further support the role of culture as a point of pride, identity, and home in this study.

Culture

Researchers and scholars exploring the concept of culture commonly describe culture as shared seen and unseen practices (Caughey, 2006; Geertz, 1973; Hall,

1990; Madison, 2012; Tierney, 1988, 1997; Van Maanen, 2011; Wolcott, 2008; Yon, 2000). Hall (1990) found culture to be "a sort of collective 'one true self,' hiding inside the many…people with shared history and ancestry [held] in common" (p. 223). Hall also stated, "our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provides us, as 'one people'" (p. 223). Deconstructing Hall's description of culture, culture is an individualized experience, but it also connects and brings people together to form a sense of oneness. This contrast of culture elicits the complexity of defining and studying culture. Kuh and Whitt (1988), in their monograph dedicated to defining culture from an institutional perspective, stated: "the term 'culture' has been used in a cavalier fashion to address almost any behavior, activity, or process in an institution of higher education" (p. 5). How can descriptors and definitions of culture move away from the use of culture in a "cavalier fashion" and still embrace the idea that culture is more and beyond any single descriptor and definition of the term? Narrowing a definition of culture may mean missing out on "behavior, activity, and processes" (Kuh & Whitt, p. 5) that hold cultural assumptions. However, broadening definitions of culture means falling into the trap that anything is culture or cultural. To avoid the process of naming anything and everything as culture, one way to view descriptors of culture is to organize a definition of culture into categories. According to Schein (2004), when exploring organizational culture and leadership, there are three common levels of culture: artifacts, beliefs, and basic assumptions. Schein found that everyone has the capacity to *see* culture and "the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer" (p. 25) depends on how culture is defined. Schein stated, "we agree that

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'it' exists and that it is important in its effects, but when we try to define it we have completely different ideas of what 'it' is" (p. 11-12). Thus, Schein proposed a definition of culture to start at artifacts, beliefs, and basic assumptions.

Artifacts are "phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture" (Schein, 2004, p. 25). According to Schein, artifacts are highly deceptive because they are easily seen, but the meaning and purpose of the artifacts is more difficult to understand and interpret. Artifacts can elicit perceptions and feelings of climate that are not physically visible in cultural observations. Similarly, cultural beliefs are also not readily visible. Cultural beliefs are what Schein termed espoused beliefs and values. Espoused beliefs and values exist through "social validation;" (p. 29) which Schein defined as "certain values… confirmed only by the shared social experience of the group" (p. 29). When confirmed, espoused beliefs and values become groups' "moral and ethical rules" (Schein, p. 29). The behaviors of these rules or norms are seen through artifacts, but many group rules and artifacts can be "taken-for-granted" (Schein, p. 31) and this is what Schein interpreted as basic assumptions. Schein found that basic assumptions are made of tacit knowledge or "implicit assumptions that actually guide behavior, that tell group members how to perceive, think about, and feel about things" (p. 31). Another way Schein described basic assumptions was as unconscious thoughts and ideologies that make groups "maximally comfortable with others who share the same set of assumptions" (p. 32). At this level of culture, basic assumptions are the most difficult to change, decipher, and interpret by others (Schein). Schein's and Kuh and Whitt's (1988) illustrations of culture are useful entry points into an exploration of

culture, but their descriptions do not address aspects of culture as a practice of cultural pride, a place of home, or needed connections to select communities. However, research on subcultures address the role culture plays in students' experience of community or communities on campus.

Subcultures

To reference an early publication on subcultures, Gottlieb and Hodgkins (1963) defined subcultures as "a segment of the student body at a given institution holding a value orientation distinctive of that of the college community and/or other segments of the student body" (p. 272). Gottlieb and Hodgkins, moreover, described colleges as "unique sociocultural systems" (p. 273) that foster and develop student subcultures as an essential part of students' experiences and successes in college. As an essential part of students' collegiate experiences, subculture research has taken many forms and contexts, but a prominent context relevant to this study is the study of subcultures as it relates to students' connection to identity-based organizations. This is evident in Museus' (2008) research on the role of ethnic student organizations, Museus and Maramba's (2011) research on Filipino American students, and Magolda and Ebben's (2007) research on students serving Christ, to name a few select subculture studies. In introducing the concept of student subcultures, Museus (2008) stated:

> …subcultures can be created and perpetuated by a variety of different groups on college campuses, such as student of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds, students who share an academic major, students of a specific religion, or members of a formal student organization (p. 571).

This definition was one of the ways Museus made a case for his study on the role of ethnic student organizations for African American and Asian American students at a PWI. Museus explored how and why students got involved with their selected ethnic student organizations and found that the ethnic student organizations, as subcultures were "sources of cultural familiarity, vehicles for cultural expression and advocacy, and venues for cultural validation" (p. 576). These findings share many sentiments found in ITASA and TASA missions and purpose around Taiwanese American culture and identity.

Similarly, Museus and Maramba (2011) found that cultural connections and integration are important factors in Filipino American students' college experiences. This is most important when considering that another finding in their study indicated "that students from cultures incongruent with those on their respective college campuses must detach from their traditional cultural heritages to succeed" (Museus & Maramba, p. 250). Museus and Maramba admitted that this finding is "problematic for students of color" (p. 250). The problematic nature of this finding is evident and apparent in Winkle-Wagner's (2009a) research on African American women and their sense of perpetual homelessness that comes from navigating and balancing life on campus, and at home. However, student subculture research is still evolving, growing, and becoming more nuanced (Magolda & Ebben, 2007; Museus et al., 2012).

Magolda and Ebben (2007) studied the subculture of a Christian-based student organization, called Students Serving Christ (SSC), to define and describe a student subculture and to critique ways in which subcultures are conceptualized in higher

education. In some ways, Magolda and Ebben were also studying SSC as a subculture to interrogate their use of a critical and critical theory oriented framework on a socially dominant group identity. Magolda and Ebben stated, "The SSC case study analysis reveals the need for critical theorists in education to reflect on their theoretical assumptions to reveal binary and essentializing tendencies, which could lead to simplistic and superficial analysis of *the other*" (p. 153). It may appear that this position ventures away from a description of subcultures, but on the contrary, Magolda and Ebben brings into question who and when do people need subcultures. Magolda and Ebben stated, "student subcultures do not simply form because like-minded people desire to assemble and spend time together. Often, hegemonic resistance is the basis on which subcultures form and sustain their existence" (p. 154). Moreover, Magolda and Ebben also suggested that there is a need for greater care in the study and analysis of subcultures, they stated, "to study the origins and maintenance of subcultures can reveal the powerful, pervasive, and veiled natural order on campus that legitimates what is normal and how student subcultures are formed and sustained" (p. 154).

In relation to Taiwanese American students, ITASA and TASA serve and act as a place of Taiwanese American subculture on campus, but what influences their formation? Is there a form of resistance that is present within Taiwanese American subcultures, especially given Taiwan's historical and political events with China and the U.S.? To what extent is the resistance tied to the existence of a Taiwanese diaspora? These questions may not be fully answered through this study, but an understanding of culture and subcultures was relevant to this study. In addition, it is

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also clear that culture and subcultures offer students a place of familiarity, but rarely is this familiarity connected and tied to nuanced notions of home.

Home

As elusive as culture, home is a difficult concept to define and describe. Asking, where is home, is like asking "where are you from" or "how do you identify," and there are multiple student development and higher education sources that cite the complexity of these questions (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2004; Borrego & Manning, 2007; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Tatum, 2013). For example, in writing about identity, Tatum (2013) wrote:

> The concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. Who am I? The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? …Did I grow up speaking English at home or another language or dialect? Did I live in a rural country, an urban neighborhood, a sprawling suburb, or on a reservation? (p. 6).

In this excerpt of Tatum's work on identity, there are noticeable parallels and intersections between the concept of identity and home. Home, defined by Parks, as cited in Baxter Magolda's (2007) work, is "where we start from. It is what we aspire to. To be at home is to have a place in the scheme of life – a place where we are comfortable; know that we belong; can be who we are" (p. 1). This sense of home, "a place where we are comfortable; know that we belong; can be who we are" is a pinnacle of student development and higher education work. There are many studies

(Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Maramba, 2008; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Strayhorn, 2012; Winkle-Wagner, 2009a) that support the idea that "Not all students possess the knowledge, skills, and family background – cultural capital – needed to feel at home in higher education" (Baxter Magolda, 2007, p. 1). This does not mean that students who do not "possess the knowledge, skills, and family background" to feel at home need to change; however, this does imply that there is a place for greater exploration of, and attention to, the concept of home in student development and higher education scholarship and practice.

Moving beyond home as a physical location or dwelling and expanding on home as a place of identity and even culture, Parreñas and Siu (2007) and Espiritu (2003) provide useful theoretical notions of home for this study. Parreñas and Siu (2007) explored home in the context of Asian diasporas and viewed home as a reference to being in-between, "It is a place one left behind and place one currently inhabits" (p. 15). Similarly, and more specifically, Espiritu (2003) studied and traced the migration, relationship, and experience of home and home making amongst Filipino and Filipino Americans. Like the relationship between Taiwan and the United States, the Philippines and the United States have what Espiritu described as "a history of conquest, occupation, and exploitation" (p. 1). Espiritu's work on the migration of Filipinos in the U.S. happens under the umbrella of home making, leaving home, and home as a place of borders and possibilities.

To start, Espiritu (2003) is clear to define home as "*imagined* and *actual* geography" (p. 2) and "*literal* and *symbolic*" (p. 11). Moreover, home and "home making is most often a way of establishing difference and a means of jostling for

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power, homes are as much about inclusions and open doors as they are about exclusions and closed borders" (p. 2). The discourse that Espiritu draws from, related to borders and power, is outside of student development and higher education scholarship, but in an era of increased globalization and internationalization in higher education, Espiritu's work encourages nuanced perspectives on home and the experiences of students with multicultural or dual identity integration (Altbach, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Green, 2005; Roberts, 2015). There is an inherent duality to the exchange in the experiences of Filipino Americans in Espiritu's (2003) work. This is evident in Espiritu's "back-and-forth" and "here-and-there" connections. For example, Jennifer, a college student interviewed by Espiritu, returned to the Philippines and found that "going to the Philippines empowered her" (p. 219) to regain a new and connected sense of self. As a Filipina American, from the U.S., Jennifer found clear connections to place, culture, and life in the Philippines (Espiritu). This experience, and perspective of home, also encourages a strong connection and need for greater development of bicultural integration in student development and higher education scholarship; which is especially relevant to this study on the experiences of Taiwanese culture as a place of home for Taiwanese American identities.

Bicultural Integration

Navigating and integrating two cultures, by way of geographical location, on and off campus, or in the process of home making, is commonly seen in student development and higher education scholarship. The integration of two or more cultures is already apparent in most of the studies highlighted in this review of

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literature. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos' (2005) research on bicultural identity

integration (BII) simply labels and names dual and bicultural experiences differently

from studies such as Maramba's (2008) research on Filipina American immigrant

families' "[negotiation of] multiple worlds…[and] spheres of biculturalism" (p. 345)

and Winkle-Wagner's (2009) research on African American women's perpetual sense

of homelessness. Yet, these studies share many tenants found in Benet-Martínez and

Haritatos' (2005) work.

Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) indexed high and low levels of BII;

where individuals with high BII can "integrate both cultures in everyday lives" (p.

1019) and individuals with low BII "report difficulty in incorporating both cultures

into a cohesive sense of identity" (p. 1020). Benet-Martínez and Haritatos explored

the bicultural integration of Chinese American students and stated, "In today's

increasingly diverse and mobile world, a growing numbers of individuals have

internalized more than one culture and can be described as bicultural or multicultural"

(p. 1016). LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) also studied bicultural

integration, but they explored the "psychological impacts of biculturalism" (p. 395).

LaFromboise et al. found that much of the literature, on biculturalism, at the time,

followed five models: "assimilation, acculturation, alternation, multiculturalism, and

fusion" (p. 396). The assimilation model involved "a member of one culture [losing]

his or her original cultural idenitty as he or she acquires a new identity in a second

culture" (LaFromboise et al., p. 396). An acculturation model, similar to assimilation,

is the adoption and acceptance of a new identity and culture, but is more hierarchial in

nature (LaFromboise et al.). Phinney (1990) described acculturation as "The level of

concern [is] the group rather than the individual, and the focus is on how the minority or immigrant groups relate to the dominant or host society" (p. 501). This psychological impact of bicultural integration feeds into ethos around minoritized and majority or dominant and subordinate positionality within culture (LaFromboise et al., 1993; Phinney, 1990). Both assimilation and acculturation models involve a transition into accepting and becoming part of the new culture, but in the following models described by LaFromboise et al. (1993) the psychological impact illustrates greater bicultural competency and integration.

LaFromboise et al. (1993) defined the alternation model as "second-culture acquisition" (p. 399). This means that "an individual [has] a sense of belonging in two cultures without compromising his or her sense of cultural idenitty" (p. 399). Similarly, the multicultural and fusion model "promotes a pluralistic approach to understanding the relationship between two or more cultures" (p. 401). The fusion model, unlike multiculturalism, incorporates "sharing an economic, political, or geographical space [fused] together" (p. 401). The benefit of these models and BII is the researched directionality of how individuals and group move and traverse between one culture and another.

For example, in Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) exploration of Chinese Americans, Benet-Martínez and Haritatos computed mutiple correlations and path analyses to draw conclusions about the strength and directionality of Chinese Americans' bicultural integration. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos found that "*cultural conflict* and *cultural distance*" (p. 1038) were emergent constructs relating to low or high BII. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos described cultural conflict as "ethnic culture

clash" (p. 1039). Cultural conflicts may include stressors related to language

acquisition, discrimination, prejudice, and internal emotional distress or anger around

the acculturation process (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos). Cultural distance was

defined as "perception that one's two cultures are nonoverlapping, dissociated, and

distant from one another" (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, p. 1040). Benet-Martínez

and Haritatos presented cultural distance as a construct moreso related to decisions to

"keep…ethnic and mainstream identities separate in an effort to affirm both" (p.

1040). However, Benet-Martínez and Haritatos' BII research, in the context of home

and home making, begs the question, how easy or possible is it to control the

directionality of ones' bicultural integration? To what extent do external forces such

as a culture's social, historical, and political nature influence an individual's and

groups' high or low BII? Moreover, how do bicultural integration models attend to a

preservation, creation, and celebration of an ongoing relationship with home, when

notions of home (and identity) are instable and contantly influx?

As a fundamental piece of this conceptual framework, diasporas are inclusive

of the concepts reviewed thus far in this review of related literature. Diasporas are a

cultural perspective focused on the unique and binding experiences of individuals and

groups within a select community, keenly interested in the concept of home, and

inherently tied to bicultural integration models. Therefore, in this study of Taiwanese

Americans, diasporas were used as a theoretical perspective to explore an culture,

home, and bicultural experiences that no other current student development and

higher education scholarship has yet to accomplish.

Diaspora

Diasporas explore the intersection of locations, nationalities, identities, and experiences (Butler, 2001; Clifford, 1994; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Khan, 2007). Diasporas also uncover *how* and *where* individuals have ongoing relationships with their original home, home culture, or homeland. Student development and higher education scholarship and practice rarely, if at all, identifies students' diasporic experiences on or off-campus. Thus, in an effort to promote experiences beyond campus boundaries, I described characteristics of diasporas according to Butler (2001) and relate those characteristics to current literature on Asian and Asian American students. This illustrated *how* and *where* diasporic concepts already appear in the field of student development and higher education. Butler (2001) succinctly characterized diasporas, originally conceived by (Safran, 1991), as:

1) dispersal to two or more locations

2) collective mythology of homeland

3) alienation from hostland

4) idealization of return to homeland

and 6) ongoing relationships with homeland (p. 191).

Dispersal to Two or More Locations

Gupta and Ferguson (1992) studied the effects of dispersals through ethnic and location identifiers. For example, Gupta and Ferguson found that "the terms 'society' and 'culture' are routinely and simply appended to the names of nation-states, as when a tourist visits India to understand 'Indian culture' and 'Indian society'" (p. 7). Gupta and Ferguson asserted that affixing the names of

"geographical territories" (Gupta & Ferguson, p. 7) to culture is problematic. In other words, cultures have become intertwined with geography and place. To locate and treat cultures and societies in this way ignores how individuals carry their culture with them, from one place to another (Gupta & Ferguson). For, Taiwanese Americans, like Espiritu's (2003) work with Filipinos and Filipino Americans, are caught in a state of dispersal. This is well documented in the Migration Policy Institute's publications on the immigration of Taiwanese people into the U.S. (McCabe, 2012). Moreover, the dispersal of people from Taiwan to the U.S. is at such a significant number for Taiwan, that on an annual basis Taiwan conducts its own survey on how many Taiwanese people now have "descendants in the United States" (McCabe, para. 2).

In the context of higher education, dispersals are evident in tracking student population numbers and demographics. Institutions and associations of higher education routinely record the number of students coming from outside of the U.S., out of state, or outside the region of the institution. This indicates that there are multiple ways in which borders are drawn to define and describe students' movements to campus.

Referencing the internationalization of higher education, the American Council on Education (ACE) suggested that "high-quality education must prepare students to live and work in a works characterized by growing multiculturalism and diminishing borders" (Green, 2005, p. iii). Thus, strategies for the internationalization of higher education can be seen in expansion and development of programs such as study abroad, international branch campuses, and increase the

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enrollment of international students within U.S. institutions of higher education

(Green, 2005). Over the years, it is evident that students from Taiwan have sought

and desired a U.S. higher education experience, but to what extent is their dispersal,

migration, and movement recognized and acknowledged in experiences of

international students in student development and higher education scholarship?

Renn, Brazelton, and Holmes (2014) reviewed student development journals between

the dates of 1998-2011 to evaluate the extent at which journals within the field were

attending to the trend of internationalization. In their review of the *Journal of*

College Student Development and *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*,

Renn et al. found, two "articles about domestic students in [Taiwan]" and one "article

about international students in [Taiwan]" (p. 287). Three articles on the experiences

of Taiwanese students is an astoundingly low number when Taiwan remains one of

the leading countries for international students in the U.S. However, it is possible

that the experiences of Taiwanese students are embedded in the experiences of

Chinese students, or a greater category of Asian and Asian American students.

The treatment of Asian and Asian American students, as an aggregate student

population, is a major limitation of student development and higher education

scholarship. This is frequently cited by many scholars and educators (Alvarez, 2002;

Hune, 2002; Inkelas, 2003; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Museus, 2008; Nadal et al.,

2010; Suzuki, 2002). Based on Asian countries, diversity and differences in

nationality, culture, language, political structures, histories, and many other facets,

Asian and Asian American students are far from monolithic. Any omission of the

stark and significant differences between Asian and Asian American communities

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perpetuates misinformation and stereotypes about Asian and Asian American students on college campuses. Moreover, by not recognizing the histories and locations of Asian and Asian American students' cultures, scholars are also ignoring any relevance dispersal may have in students' experiences. Maramba (2008) found that the participants in her study did not want to "[forget] about their culture while balancing college student life" (p. 342). The dispersal of locations, in this case, is not just bounded to the borders of nation-states, but also between the location of home and campus life. Studies like Winkle-Wagner's (2009a) attend to this divide, but the central focus is not on a sense of home as a cultural concept, as described in this review of related literature. The framing of home tends to be physical sites and localized within family (Winkle-Wagner).

Collective Mythology of Homeland

Home is represented in people, places, artifacts, stories, and imaginations (Espiritu, 2003; Silva, 2009). In diasporas, generally, a sense of home and homeland refer to a community's place of origin (Butler, 2001; Clifford, 1994; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Khan, 2007). However, place by itself is meaningless without some form of collective mythology of home and homeland (Butler, 2001; Patterson, 2006; Safran, 1991). As Safran (1991) stated:

> Some diasporas persist – and their members do not go "home" – because there
> is no homeland to which to return; because, although a homeland may exist, it
> is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically,
> ideologically, or socially; or because it would be too inconvenient and

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disruptive, if not traumatic, to leave the diaspora. In the meantime, the myths

of the return serves to solidify ethnic consciousness and solidarity… (p. 91).

"Ethnic consciousness and solidarity" (Safran, p. 91) in the form of shared stories,

memories, and beliefs of home creates a bond amongst members who have

experienced a displacement or dispersal from one place to another (Butler, 2001;

Patterson, 2006; Safran, 1991). Safran (1991) suggested that the process of

identifying a collective mythology of homeland involves a triangulation of homeland,

hostland, and shared experiences to the extent that the experiences are known, and

relevant or conscious, to those within a diaspora. Khan (2007) defined this

consciousness as "a mutually defining dialogue with the historical conditions in

which the community finds itself and with the cultural expressions it manifests" (p.

143). Butler (2001) similarly found consciousness as a means of connecting those

within a diaspora, to one another, to form a sense of community which maintains their

'collective mythology of homeland'.

In student development and higher education scholarship, ethnic and racial

consciousness is often linked to W.E.B Du Bois' (1903) "double consciousness"

concept. Teranishi (2002) described "double consciousness" as a "sense of always

looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (p. 145). This description differs

from consciousness in diasporas, but arguably being in the state of having a

"collective mythology of homeland" implies that those within the diaspora may

already have a "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others"

(Teranishi, p. 145). If this is the case, then it is likely that there is a prior

acknowledgement how home and host cultures do, or do not, infuse with one another.

As already described, bicultural integration models emphasize this connection and the psychological stresses of dual and bicultural experiences (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; LaFromboise et al., 1993).

Looking at Asian American students' identity consciousness, Accapadi (2012) suggested a polyculturalism approach. According to Accapadi, polyculturalism "requires us to understand the ways in which our cultural histories intersect, draw parallels in the experiences and social location of communities, and sustain emancipatory, anti-racist educational efforts" (p. 71). Accapadi argued that stage models of identity development are overly linear and there is a strong need to look at Asian American identity consciousness through non-hierarchical paradigms, given the complexity of Asian American experiences.

Alienation

Diasporic alienation is similar to the experiences of invisibility and discrimination (Butler, 2001; Safran, 1991). Clifford (1994) suggested the isolation, or alienation, of communities further solidifies the existence of a diaspora. Clifford stated, "... the term *diaspora* is a signifier, not simply of... movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement" (p. 308). The act or experience of alienation marks a different sense of belonging for those within a diaspora from members of a dominant culture (Butler, 2001; Clifford, 1994; Safran, 1991).

With Asian and Asian American students, Museus and Chang (2009) found the invisibility (or alienation) of Asian and Asian Americans to be a major and persistent challenge. Leading the alienation of Asian and Asian Americans are myths

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and stereotypes of Asian and Asian Americans on campus. One myth, that renders Asian and Asian Americans invisible, is the misconception that all Asian Americans are high-academic achievers (Museus & Chang). Museus and Chang stated, "…the oversight can be attributed to just the success mythology" (p. 95). When select racial and ethnic identities are seemingly high-academic achievers, then there is a tendency to not focus on those succeeding, but those in-need or crisis. However, Museus and Chang found that despite success or need, there is still substantial knowledge to be learned about Asian American students. The obstacle for new knowledge to emerge is the "chronic burden to debunk the model minority myth" (Museus & Chang, p. 97).

The model minority myth is likely the most well-known stereotype and form of alienation associated with Asian and Asian Americans. The construction of the model minority stereotype and its connections to Asian and Asian American in the United States is so strong that it is seldom or rare to find publications that do not address how the model minority stereotype affects Asian and Asian American experiences. Before the model minority stereotype entered into Asian and Asian American scholarship, it was present in "the popular press" (Suzuki, 1977, p. 23). In his commentary on the creation and evolution of the term model minority, Suzuki found, in the mid-1960s, that "the popular press [began] calling attention to the seemingly phenomenal success of Asian Americans" (p. 23). During this time, Asian Americans were "becoming accepted into white, middle-class society through their hard work, uncomplaining perseverance and quite accommodating" (Suzuki, 1977, p. 24). These ideas of social and economic success misled Asian Americans and, subsequently, U.S. society into identifying Asian Americans as the ideal minority

racial and ethnic group. Instead of celebrating social and economic successes of

Asian and Asian Americans, the model minority stereotype has become rather

consequential for Asian, Asians Americans, and other racial and ethnic communities.

Stereotyping Asian and Asian Americans into a highly successful racial and ethnic

minority group wrongly assumes that Asian and Asians Americans are all the same,

successful, and meant to acculturate and acclimate into a predominantly White U.S.

society. This also locates Asian and Asian Americans as other and different from the

"hostland" (Butler, 2001, p. 191).

Poon et al. (2016) critiqued how the model minority stereotype is applied in

research on Asian American Pacific Islands (AAPIs) and found that "research on

AAPIs in higher education cannot start with an agenda of disproving the model

minority thesis, as it centers the hegemonic narrative of [model minority stereotype]"

(p. 22). For this study on Taiwanese Americans, the model minority stereotype is not

a focal point in the problems leading up to this study. However, the model minority

stereotype, and treatment of Asian and Asian American students as invisible, is a

highly relatable point to the experience of alienation in diasporas. In addition, it is

important to note that despite any attention given to the model minority stereotype

and perpetual invisibility of Asian and Asian American student experiences, there are

numerous publications and scholars consistently promoting, advocating, and

researching Asian and Asian American student experiences. For example, Museus,

Maramba, and Teranishi (2013) edited a book titled *The Misrepresented Minority:*

New insights on Asian American and Pacific Islanders and their implications for

higher education that addressed trends, which tend to center on Asian and Asian

American students' academic achievement and interests, identity development, experiences of discrimination, and experiences with acculturation or assimilation in U.S. institutions of higher education. Ching and Agbayani (2012) edited a book titled *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Higher Education: Research and Perspectives on Identity, Leadership, and Success,* and years earlier, McEwen, Kodama, Alvarez, Lee, and Liang's (2002) produced *New Directions for Student Services* series monograph titled "Working with Asian American College Students". These are only a few publications that support and indicate an ongoing effort to make Asian and Asian Americans students' experiences highly visible in student development and higher education scholarship and practice. Although, it is also important to note that publications alone cannot change the reality that forms of alienation and isolation exists for Asian and Asian American communities.

Idealization of Return to Homeland

Like "collective mythology of homeland", "idealization of return to homeland" promotes a bond amongst those within the diaspora. However, returning to the place of origin, home, and homeland can be impossible or infeasible for diaspora communities (Butler, 2001; Dayal, 1996; Hall, 1990; Lee, 2005; Patterson, 2006; Safran, 1991). After migrating or being displaced from homelands, homes may no longer exist or may no longer feel and look the same (Patterson, 2006; Dayal, 1996). Being unable to return to home or a homeland's original state, members of diaspora communities can feel as outsiders or external to their place of origin (Butler, 2001; Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Museus, 2009; Ong et al., 1996). This can be interpreted as foreigners in the hostland and, if returning, foreigners in the homeland.

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Thus, at times, diasporic and minoritized communities purposefully form "ethnic neighborhoods" as "ethnic enclaves" (Silva, 2009, p. 695) that provide "spaces of comfort and community, and discarded as symbols of alienation and dissimilation" (Silva, 2009, p. 695). The "ethnic enclaves" that Silva (2009) cited are spaces where individuals can 'fit in,' but these spaces are also locations where "otherness" (p. 695) is real and part of a larger existence for minoritized populations in U.S. culture.

Within student development and higher education scholarship, ideas around "fit" and "ethnic enclaves" are apparent in student subculture scholarship. This is most important considering research that illustrates campus cultural norms and preferences. Where do students, who are outside campus and cultural norms, go for support and cultural connections? Researching campus tours as a ritual, Magolda (2000) suggested that campus tours were a way of norming students to the campus culture. However, Magolda found that the norms communicated through campus tours were for that of "normal" "students of traditional age, heterosexual, unmarried, interested in dating, attending college full-time, prone to consuming alcohol, and living on campus" (p. 38-39). Following this finding, Magolda stated, "I cannot help but wonder how the students who do not fit this profile" (p. 39) may fit in on campus. One way students may fit on campus is through participation and creation of student subcultures. It is clear through Museus' (2008) research on ethnic student organizations that African American and Asian American participants in his study found positive cultural influences in belonging to their ethnic student organization. In some ways, ethnic student organizations are synonymous to "ethnic enclaves" on

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campus. However, even with ethnic student organizations or "ethnic enclaves" on campus, students may still feel the stresses of being "foreign" on campus.

Claire Kim (1999) suggested, "Asian Americans have been denigrated to more often as outsiders or aliens" (p. 106). This same sentiment was echoed by Museus and Park (2015). In their study of on the experience of racism in the lives of Asian American students, Museus and Park found the "perpetual foreigner" stereotype and discriminatory practice relevant to their participants' experiences on campus. Museus and Park stated that, "This theme included others' assumptions of foreignness based on physical appearance and challenges to Americanness or being in the United States" (p. 562). Although, Museus and Park noted that often this experience was perpetuated by "others' assumptions" (p. 562), and not that of Asian American students, the feelings of foreignness still align with the "idealization of return to homeland;" where there is a question of belonging in the homeland and hostland (Butler, 2001; Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Museus, 2009; Ong et al., 1996).

Ongoing Relationship with Homeland

An "ongoing relationship to homeland" signals the presence of "here and there, past and present, and hostland, self and other" (Bhatia & Ram, 2009, p. 142). In addition, an 'ongoing relationship with homeland' suggests that those within the diaspora "*are part of constructing diasporan identity, rather than homeland actuality*" (Butler, 2001, p. 205). As referenced in an "idealization of return to homeland," there is the idea of return and then there is the reality that a dispersal to a hostland has forever altered and changed the experience of a homeland that may or may not exist (Butler, 2001; Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Museus, 2009; Ong et al.,

1996). This is a fundamental characteristic of diasporas. As Butler (2001) argued, an 'ongoing relationship with homeland' solidifies an existence of diasporas and there is a great deal of power in naming, identifying, and maintaining diasporic connections.

In the case of Taiwanese American students, those connected to ITASA and TASA, there is a clear "ongoing relationship with homeland" within a Taiwanese diaspora. ITASA's (2014) mission to preserve and celebrate Taiwanese American ethnic identity and Taiwanese culture is evidence of a strong connection and relationship to Taiwan. However, this has yet to be explored through empirical means.

Conclusion

The review of related literature started with a characterization of Taiwanese culture and provided demographic information on Taiwanese people in the United States, as a way of relating to the concepts of culture, home, bicultural integration, and diaspora. The literature on culture, home, bicultural integration, and diaspora support an exploration of Taiwanese American students within underutilized concepts in student development and higher education scholarship. Coupling home, bicultural integration, and diasporas together illustrates a different and nuanced view on culture and subculture. Moreover, home, bicultural integration, and diaspora encouraged an organization of culture that moves beyond on campus perspectives of culture, but to students' experiences within their cultural home or culture origin. Therefore, this review of related literature is truly an "an orienting framework" (Creswell, 2009, p. 29) given the lack of inclusion of home, bicultural integration, and diaspora in current student development and higher education scholarship.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology and Methods

The review of related literature has conceptually framed the phenomena of interest in this study. In essence, the review of related literature explored culture from beyond through the simplistic descriptors of shared behaviors, rituals, symbols, beliefs, meanings, and mutually understood acts (Clifford, 1986; Geertz, 1973; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Madison, 2012; Tierney, 1988; Van Maanen, 2011; Wolcott, 2008). The literature cited viewed culture as also the "connections between 'here' and 'there'" (Waldinger, 2008, p. 4) and intimately connected to ideas of belonging and home (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Espiritu, 2003; Khan, 2007; Schlossberg, 1989; Strayhorn, 2012). Waldinger's (2008) notion that culture is about the "connections between 'here' and there'" (p. 4) promotes the idea that culture and people are dynamic and transient and laden with bicultural and multicultural integration experiences. This was particularly true for students of dual and multiple identities such as Taiwanese American students. Moreover, culture, from diaspora perspective, was one that encourages seeing students within their chosen cultural context.

Moving forward, the purpose of this methodology and methods chapter was to outline and detail the processes of conducting this critical-cultural narrative inquiry. To start, I reiterated the purpose of the study and the research questions guiding this exploration. I also (a) defined narrative inquiry as a methodology, (b) described my paradigm and epistemology as a researcher, (c) offered my own researcher reflexivity, (d) outlined data collection methods and procedures, (e) shared results of

participant recruitment and selection processes, (f) provided plans for data analysis and interpretation, and (g) discussed trustworthiness measures relative to this study.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical-cultural narrative inquiry to (a) bring attention to Taiwanese American students' preservation, creation, and celebration of Taiwanese culture, (b) expand upon notions of home and experiences of bicultural integration, and (c) utilize diaspora as a theoretical perspective in a student development and higher education context. Moreover, this study is an empirical take on Taiwanese American students and their connection to Taiwanese culture. It is rare to find student development and higher education studies which center students' experiences around their ethnic specific cultural background. Therefore, this study contributes to the dearth of knowledge on the experience of Taiwanese Americans around their experience with Taiwanese culture. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture?

2. How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture on campus?

3. In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of Taiwanese diaspora?

At the end of this study, the intent was to have a collection of stories that can capture the experiences of Taiwanese American students, in the context of their connection to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture.

Narrative Inquiry

Qualitative studies are exploratory, descriptive, and heavily rooted in personal experiences, stories, and narratives (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Glesne, 2006; Jones et al., 2014; Lincoln, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). As an ethnographer by training, Glesne (2006) found that, "Qualitative researchers…seek to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them" (p. 4) and in her experience, "because ethnography was one of the early qualitative research approaches, the methods of participant-observation and in-depth interviewing are often referred to as ethnographic field methods whether or not one is doing an ethnography" (p. 9). However, Jones (2002) suggested that qualitative inquiries need qualitative methodologies to "[describe] the theory and design undergirding the research process" (p. 462). Personally, as the qualitative researcher in this study, I have situated myself somewhere between Glesne (2006) and Jones (2002). I am grounded by qualitative inquiries that identify a researcher's epistemology, conceptual framework, methodology, and methods and I am aware there are ethnographic techniques that may also align with the research questions slated for this study (Glesne, 2006; Jones, 2002). As Jones stated, "All research decisions must be seen as flexible and responsive to unanticipated conditions and the nuances of the research process; therefore, decisions may be seen as tentative at times" (pp. 463-464). Furthermore, the nature of qualitative studies and decisions made throughout this inquiry must return to the phenomenon of interest (Jones, 2002). For this study, narrative inquiry was the methodology that best emphasized a sense of experience, the cultural experiences of Taiwanese American students. The

experience is subjective and focused on the untold stories of Taiwanese American students.

Narrative inquiries offer opportunities to make meaning and interpretations of experiences, cultures, histories, and events through storytelling (Bell, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Currie, 2010; Josselson & Lieblich, 2003; Toolan, 2001). Given the aim of this study was to explore and discover participants' (historical, social, and cultural) experiences, this study is well situated for qualitative methodologies and more specifically a narrative inquiry.

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), "The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms… The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). Similarly, Bell (2002) stated, "Narrative inquiry rests on the epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experiences by the imposition of story structures" (p. 207). Bell referred to story structure as the ways stories are communicated. There are tales, stories, and narratives that people want to share, but how, when, and why stories are communicated can drastically vary from one culture to the next. As Bell stated, "Although the notion of story is common to every society, the stories themselves differ widely - one of the defining features of culture is the story structures through which it makes sense to the world" (p. 207). How and when are stories and narratives created, presented, and communicated to others? What is the purpose of the narrative? Who is telling and retelling the story? These are all questions and considerations for using and doing narrative inquiry in qualitative studies.

Clandinin (2006) proposed that narrative inquiries address a "three dimensional narrative inquiry space…the personal and social (interaction) along one dimension; past, present, and future (continuity) along a second dimension; place (situation) along a third dimension" (p. 47). This three dimensional space includes the researcher, participant(s), and the narrative(s) in the process of the inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Toolan, 2001). As Clandinin (2006) stated, "Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process" (p. 47). Toolan (2001) used a narrative linguistic studies approach to look at narratives and presented another way to consider the relationship between the researcher, participant(s), and the narrative(s) by using the terms teller, tale, and addressee. In this case, the teller was participants, addressee the researcher (or listener), and the tale the stories and experiences being exchanged (Toolan, 2001). Toolan posited one of the great complexities of narratives is the proximity or distance between the teller, tale, and addressee. As Toolan stated, "we may feel that we are dividing our attention between two objects of interest: the individuals and events in the story itself, and the individual telling us these events" (p. 1). Thus, the attention and focus of narrative inquiries are not only on the stories being told, a focus must also be on the participant(s) (teller) and researcher (addressee), and the distance the participant(s) and researcher have to the actual story (tale) (Clandinin, 2006; Toolan, 2001). As Clandinin (2006) stated, "Participants' stories, inquirers' stories, social, cultural and institutional stories, are all ongoing as narrative inquiries begin…[an] ongoing

[process of] negotiations" (p. 47). For Josselson and Lieblich (2003), "narrative research is a voyage of discovery" (p. 260) in co-constructed meanings between the researcher and participants. In attempt to disentangle, recognize, and acknowledge my philosophy and experiences in the co-construction of this narrative, I leaned into my own views on knowledge, realities, and experience as a Taiwanese American immigrant. As Jones (2002) stated, "Knowledge of the self and consciousness about how this self is inserted into the text that is rewritten is imperative" (p. 471). This was especially relevant since this study is a combination of what participants tell and my interpretations and re-storying of their experiences. Therefore, as the researcher, I started with my view of the nature of reality and knowledge.

Paradigm and Epistemology

According to Jones et al. (2014), "*paradigm* is rather consistently referred to as a set of interconnected or related assumptions or beliefs, but it is also referred to as *worldview*" (p. 3). Personally, the worldview that I hold, which extends beyond this study, is a view on reality that experiences, truth, and knowledge are based on social constructions rooted in cultural-orientations. This paradigm is best articulated as a blend of critical and cultural perspectives on the nature of reality. Guido et al. (2010) suggested, "Critical paradigms promote the deconstruction and critique of institutions, laws, organizations, definitions, and practices for power inequities…" (p. 9) and "The underlying premise within cultural paradigms is that most of what is known is socially constructed" (p. 10). For me, the organization of socially constructed realities is intertwined with dimensions and experiences of power (Guido

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et al., 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Tierney, 1993). This is where my account of knowledge or my epistemology is relevant to the design of this study.

The epistemology and knowledge that were constant for me, in this study, was one of subjective truths undergirded by historical, social, and political dimensions of power (Creswell, 2007; Guido et al., 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Tierney, 1993). The epistemology that best framed these dimensions of power is a critical theory-oriented epistemology. Critical theory is an underlying belief in the process and goal of emancipation from a higher order power (i.e., political, historical, and social systems) (Brookfield, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To be critical means believing and knowing power dynamics exist and function at all levels of society (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This requires an exploration of personal and social identities and how power works in society and culture to create and perpetuate positions and experiences of privilege and oppression (Johnson, 2001). Brookfield (2005), in his book on the use of critical theory to understand adult education and learning, found that critical theory was a means to unearth "a number of crucial tasks such as learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology, unmask power, contest hegemony, overcome alienation, pursue liberation, reclaim reason, and practice democracy" (p. 2). Brookfield positioned critical theory as an intellectual perspective that has clear theoretical and practical applications in education. As tool in this inquiry, a critical theory related perspective aligns with the purpose and intention of narrative methodologies. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) stated, "the intervention envisioned for the narrative inquirer focuses first on the qualities of lived experiences; it is in collaboratively transforming the narratives within which people

live in that narrative inquiry seeks to lay the foundation for social change" (p. 50).

Action or change, in this context, is highly subjective. As Chase (2007) stated, "For some people, the act of narrating a significant life event itself facilitates positive change" (p. 667). In a critical theory epistemology, narrating experiences, especially minoritized experiences, can be an act of transformative change and liberation (Brookfield, 2005; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Jones et al., 2014).

At the same time, having a critical theory perspective is also envisioning possibilities and alternate realities (Brookfield, 2005). Simply put, a critical theory epistemology and view of knowledge communicates a means of organizing experiences, centers on minoritized experiences, and aims to transform existing realities (Brookfield, 2005; Jones et al., 2014). As Brookfield (2005) suggested, "Power is omnipresent in human existence" (p. 46). Power divides, orders, and organizes people and communities based on many facets of shared experiences, beliefs, and identities (Johnson, 2001). A common way to view the presence and existence of power is through an understanding of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and religious oppression (Brookfield, 2005; Johnson, 2001). Power also dictates and establishes norms and dominant ideologies, which further perpetuate the experiences of privilege and oppression in society (Brookfield, 2005; Johnson, 2001). Brookfield (2005) stated, the theory of critical theory "[generates] provisional explanations that help us understand and act in the world – helps us breathe clearly when we feel stifled…" (p. 4). The examples that Brookfield (2005) offered were inequities based on race, class, and gender. Through the adoption of a critical theory lens, I believe in Brookfield's (2005) position that "inequities [based

on social identities] play themselves out in front of our eyes, reflecting dynamics that seem beyond our influence" (p. 6). I believe this to be the reality and consequence of power. The *way things are* can appear so embedded in everyday life that people are unable to see future and alternate possibilities (Brookfield, 2005). The embedded aspect of everyday life is a core component of culture, and this is where my paradigm and epistemology intersect and align. On the one hand, there is my worldview of experience that constituted in socially constructed realities and, on the other hand, there is my sense that knowledge that is tied to dimensions of power. Thus, the nature of this study was one that is a critical-cultural inquiry.

In this blended critical-cultural paradigm and epistemology, the phenomenon of interest starts at a "cultural perspective" (Guido et al, 2010, p. 12) and is critiqued for some form of "creative action for social justice" (Guido et al, 2010, p. 12). Put in other words, through the lens of a qualitative narrative methodology, I entered into this study with a critical-cultural paradigm and epistemology that hopes for change in participants that brings a greater sense of self, consciousness around culture, and a willingness to engage in a cultural dialogue (Guido et al., 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Tierney, 1993). In turn, I hoped participants' engagement may lead to a continuity of similar dialogues with others.

Moreover, for this study, in my own critical-cultural perspective, I recognized that, as Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) stated, "critical researchers enter into an investigation with their assumptions on the table, so no one is confused concerning epistemological and political baggage they bring with them to the research site" (pp. 305-306). As such, I found it necessary to acknowledge my "political baggage"

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(Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 306), which is embedded in my description of a critical-cultural paradigm and epistemology for this study. As part of my baggage, I view campus communities as locations with embedded societal norms, traditions, and practices connected to larger histories and cultural practices. LeCompte and Schensul (2010) wrote:

> Critical theorists are interested in how the history and political economy of a nation, state, or other system exerts direct or indirect domination over the political, economic, social, and cultural expressions of citizens or residents, including ethnic minority groups and others who are marginalized or without power (p. 63).

Therefore, as a second part of the baggage I brought into this study, I willingly admit that my aim was to bring attention to the experiences of Taiwanese American students, Taiwanese culture, and the existence of a Taiwanese diaspora. This leads me to be even more forthcoming with my own reflexivity for this study.

Reflexivity

Self-reflexivity or autoethnography was described by Atkinson (2006) as "a product of the interaction between the [researcher] and a social world" (p. 402). Jones et al. (2014) described reflexivity as a process by which "Researchers need to consider how they are going to negotiate the self-other relationship, and then they must divulge it" (p. 46). To me, as the researcher, I was an active actor alongside participants in this study. Therefore, I provided my own narrative as it relates to my experiences as a Taiwanese American. This served as my way of recognizing how

and where my biases came through in the shaping of participants' experiences, and ultimately this inquiry.

As illustrated in scholarship on Asian Americans, there is a strong sense of a "perpetual foreigner" and in-between cultures phenomena that is difficult to explain and know, unless one is in that said position. I find myself deeply embedded in a dual and bicultural dynamic. I am a Taiwanese American immigrant who immigrated to the United States at the age of three from Keelung, Taiwan. Given that I was born in Taiwan and I hold a strong interest to feel and be connected to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture, I have a reluctance to claim and own the American side of my Taiwanese identity. Nonetheless, according to scholarship on Asian Americans, I am part of a "1.5-generation" (Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay, 2003). This implies that I was born in a country outside of the United States, but came to the United States prior to being an adult. It also signals that I carry and hold cultural connections to my place of birth; which is true to my experiences. I have a constant curiosity, pride, and sense of loss around my culture and heritage, because of my dual and bicultural dynamic.

The curiosity I have as a Taiwanese (American) tends to be a desire to learn and know more about Taiwan's history, political past, and social norms. In some ways, this can be interpreted as, I want to know what it is like to be Taiwanese in Taiwan, not a Taiwanese born person in the United States. What would it have been like to grow up in Taiwan? Who would I be if I were only Taiwanese? How would I see and view my surroundings, as a Taiwanese person? What and how would my relationships to my parents, siblings, and extended family be different, if I grew up in

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their same country? It is the connections and relationships I have with my family, both immediate and extended, that give me the greatest amount of pride and sense of loss around my culture and heritage.

My parents immigrated to the United States with little to no English skills in speech, reading, and writing. My two older sisters and I were all enrolled in English as a Second Language classes in grade school, but in our home life we communicated in Mandarin and Taiwanese with each other and our parents. This is the only way I learned any of my Mandarin and Taiwanese speaking abilities. To this day, I am unable to read and write traditional Chinese characters and I cannot comprehend complex words or sentences that may be above an elementary grade level of Mandarin and Taiwanese. The language skills that I have learned from listening and speaking Mandarin and Taiwanese is likely my greatest connection to Taiwanese culture. It is how I directly communicate with my mom and family members in Taiwan. Without my, albeit limited, language skills, I would not have the existing and close relationships that I have with my mom and extended family. However, at the same time, given my limits and inabilities around reading, writing, and comprehension of complex speaking skills, I have often questioned if I have the fullest relationships possible with my mom and extended family. What would it be like to write my mom emails, text messages, and letters in Chinese? How would I be different with my aunts, uncles, and cousins? These are questions I can never answer and I can never go back in time to put myself in a place where I have the means and opportunities to enhance my language skills. Nonetheless, it gives me great pride to share and say that I can speak Mandarin and Taiwanese and I feel a sense of loss

around the possibilities or connections that I am and may be missing with family and friends. My reflections of my own loss with Taiwanese culture tend to be about the potential "what ifs" and "what could have been" if my upbringing were under different cultural circumstances. This leads me to the memories that I have of being in Taiwan, when I am in the physical place of where I hold my cultural connections.

As part of an informal assignment for an ethnography course, I reflected on a recent memory of Taiwan that directly relates to part of my perception of Taiwanese culture. I have vivid memories of being in the middle of the Keelung Night Market in Taiwan and inhaling the scents of fried chicken nuggets seasoned with basil and a special red spice and Taiwanese meatballs made of tapioca and filled with beef, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, and topped with a red sweet and sour sauce. I also recall watching older Taiwanese women and men making fresh mochi filled with red beans or peanuts. I also remember watching similar merchants wrapping Taiwanese sausage with sticky rice in a plastic sandwich bag to make it convenient to eat and walk like so many Taiwanese snack foods. I watched vendors shave large blocks of ice to make shaved ice desserts that are topped with a variety of different ingredients such as peanuts, beans, fruits, and jellies. However, the most memorable Night Market experiences for me are finding the best and busiest drink vendors for a taste of Taiwan's traditional black milk tea with tapioca pearls. This is a popular and well-known Taiwanese food invention and now more commonly known as "bubble or boba milk tea." Recalling my sensory experiences in the Night Market also includes a high amount of yelling, pushing, and jockeying for position in food lines or bargaining opportunities for cheap merchandise. In this trip back to Taiwan and my

last trip to a Night Market, I remember bargaining for dog clothes and buying new chopsticks to bring back to the United States as gifts for friends. During this trip, I remember throwing ping-pong balls into small fish bowls filled with water and beta or goldfish. If I landed the ping-pong ball into the bowl, then I won the fish. For me, the Night Market was akin to United States flea and farmers' markets combined with the feelings of a state fair or carnival. This glimpse into my view of Taiwanese culture was one I perceived to be familiar for Taiwanese American students. It is in family life, educational experiences, and political viewpoints where I believed there were more variations in Taiwanese cultural experiences that came to light because of this study.

My parents and grandparents were all from Keelung, Taiwan. My parents met around mid-1970s through a version of an arranged marriage. My mom happened to meet my dad's sisters through a flower-arranging class and soon after my parents were arranged to be married. My mom is the youngest of four siblings: one older sister and two older brothers. My dad is the second youngest of six siblings: one older brother, three older sisters, and one younger sister. On my dad's side, his older brother immigrated to the United States and convinced my dad that there was an opportunity in the United States to start a new life in the Chinese restaurant business. This is how my family ended up immigrating to the United States, and more specifically Minnesota. In Minnesota, my parents worked at my uncle's Chinese restaurant before opening their own Chinese restaurant, House of Chang. House of Chang was open for close to twelve years until my parents separated and eventually divorced. During this time, I made at least three trips back to Taiwan with my mom.

There were two trips with my mom that included my two sisters and one trip with my mom where it was just me. It was extremely difficult financially for us to travel back to Taiwan; as a result, when we did return the impetus was either due to the passing of an extended family member or an extended family member was severely ill. This made travels back to Taiwan quite challenging. Ultimately, travels back to Taiwan were and still are today always met with mixed emotions. There was usually a great deal of sadness and celebration, all at the same time. On return to Taiwan, my mom, cousins, uncles, and aunts would squeeze months and years of events into days and weeks; we were always making up for lost time. I recall every trip included a birthday cake without an actual birthday to celebrate.

Connecting with my extended family in Taiwan was never a real challenge for me, but as I have gotten older I have noticed new desires and challenges. I have just enough language skills to engage in basic conversations. However, in more recent trips back to Taiwan, I have noticed changes in my desire to connect with relatives. On one of my last trips back to Taiwan, as an adult, I wanted to move past basic conversations and foster a more independent relationships with my cousins to enter more complex conversations about life, family, and work; unfortunately, I was limited by my Mandarin and Taiwanese sentence structure and vocabulary. This desire was also met with feeling limited by time.

Between my high school, college, and early graduate school years, there was a long stretch of time where I never returned to Taiwan. During this time, my parents divorced and my mom and sisters relocated from Minnesota to North Carolina. When I finally returned to Taiwan, again with my mom, I returned for the funeral of my last

living grandparent. This trip, like when I was seven, was a real reminder of how much I feel a great deal of sadness and joy in calling Taiwan my home and place of origin. On the one hand, Taiwan stands as a cherished location of my past and a significant part of my identity. On the other hand, Taiwan also signals a sense of loss in family, time, and culture.

However, for now, the more I learn about Taiwan and Taiwanese culture the more I can learn about myself and come to a better understanding of how to integrate my Taiwanese background. I know far more about my United States cultural context than my Taiwanese background. Living and growing up under social structures of the United States, I am keenly aware of what it means to be a United States citizen and what is U.S. culture, but I am always aware that I am not just a United States citizen. At home, I speak conversational Mandarin and Taiwanese with my mom and siblings and in our visits back to Taiwan, I am acutely aware that Taiwan and the United States are vastly different places and there is so much I do not know about Taiwan and Taiwanese culture; yet, I am proud to be Taiwanese. Thus, in some ways, searching for Taiwanese culture is a means to learn more about missed and new experiences and become more connected with an environment outside of my home life, but still resembles Taiwan.

My identity and familiarity with Taiwanese culture, from my home life, makes me an "insider" in this study (Anderson, 2006). LeCompte, Schensul, Weeks, and Singer (1999) wrote, "research methodologists advocate matching the ethnicity of interviewers with the ethnicity of potential interviewees, on the grounds that people will feel more comfortable talking with someone who resembles them" (p. 37), and

my ethnicity provides a platform to build rapport with participants (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). Throughout the interviews, I observed participants ease in talking to me about Taiwanese culture. However, I also noticed how my assumptions of Taiwanese culture did not mirror their perceptions of our shared cultural background. For example, in my connection to Taiwanese culture, I follow news related to Taiwan's current political state and the upcoming inauguration of President-elect Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文). This was not the case for the Taiwanese American students in this sample. As such, it was evident that my experience with Taiwanese culture was similar and distinct from participants. With this in-mind, I maintained my own researcher journal and indicated areas where my biases and perceptions of what was shared may be influenced by my descriptors of Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. This leads me into the actual data collection methods and procedures for this study.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collection procedures included (a) participant recruitment, (b) participant selection, and (c) interviews. These research methods developed into the transcripts, field notes, and text for data analysis and interpretation. However, there was an important note to make about evolution of these selected data collection methods and procedures.

During the spring 2012 academic semester, I enrolled in a seminar course on using ethnographic methods. As part of the course, I had the opportunity to engage with a Taiwanese American student organization on campus. My experiences with this informal class project led me to consider this same Taiwanese American student organization as a preliminary participation recruitment site for this formal dissertation

study. The data and findings from the informal study cannot be cited due to a lack of institutional review, but the experience helped me build rapport with potential participants and informants for this study.

Participant Recruitment

For participant recruitment, I followed the idea of "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Patton stated, "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases" (p. 169). I explored connections to Taiwanese culture among Taiwanese American students; thus, I had a strong interest in seeking insiders and "*information-rich cases*" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). First, I used my networks and connections with the Taiwanese American student organization and Asian American Studies. I asked organizers of the Taiwanese American student organization and Asian American Studies to distribute an email inviting students to complete an online form (Appendix A). In this formal invitation, students were provided a hyperlink to an online form that gathered preliminary demographic and information on students' sense of ethnic identity salience (Appendix B). Unfortunately, connecting with the Taiwanese American student group and Asian American Studies program did not produce much interest. As a result, the next step was the use of "network or snowball selection" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 73) method. This method was based on referrals, I asked participants who in their network of friends, classmates, or other social connections meet my selection criteria and may have an interest in this study. Fortunately, this method garnered more interested students.

Participant Selection

Overall, 10 students completed the preliminary demographic and information form. I looked at which interested participant(s) best meet my participation selection criteria. First, I looked for students who self-identify with a strong sense of their Taiwanese American ethnic identity and group membership, based on students' responses to identity and group membership experiences adapted from Phinney and Ong (2007). The statements related to students' sense of belonging or connectedness to their ethnic identity and group membership, rated on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and in this first level of selection, I sought students who consistently rated themselves as agree or strongly agree to the statements asked (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Students were asked about their time spent learning more about their ethnic group, understanding of what their ethnic group membership means to them, engagement with others to learn more about their ethnic group, attachment towards their ethnic group, and ultimate sense of pride in the achievements of their ethnic group. On average, students who participated in this study rated themselves as agree and/or strongly agree to these statements.

Second, I used an ethnographic participation selection technique, I looked at "boundedness" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 61). LeCompte and Preissle wrote "Naturally bounded groups who share a common geographic location – villages, schools, factories – offer the advantage of being finite and discrete" (p. 62). The "natural boundary" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 61) for this study was the affiliation participants had with the selected PWI that I am calling Pearl University.

Using a pseudonym for the site allowed me to better ensure the anonymity of the selected participants.

Site

Similar to participant selection, site selection was also based on a criterion-based form and relied on where I already had rapport with informants and networks (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). I selected a site that has a notable number of Asian Americans, international students, and active Taiwanese cultural organizations. Based on this criterion, the site for this study, as mentioned, was Pearl University. Pearl University was a research-intensive institution with approximately 37,000 undergraduate and graduate students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). The selection of this institution was based on several factors. First, Pearl University was previously designated as an Asian American and Pacific Islander serving-institution (AAPISI). To be designated as an AAPISI, Pearl University needed an Asian American community that was at least 10 percent of the student population and meets "a specified threshold of low-income students" (Park & Chang, 2010, p. 111). The undergraduate population at Pearl University was approximately 15 percent Asian American (National Institute of Education, 2012). Unfortunately, as aforementioned, the National Center for Educational Statistics and Pearl University's institutional websites did not provide student demographic breakdowns by ethnicity within Asian American categories so without additional publicly available information it was unknown how many different Asian ethnicities were represented at Pearl University.

However, it was known that Pearl University had enrollment of approximately 3,500 international students and Taiwan was sixth among the top five places of origin for international students in the state where Pearl University was located (Institute of International Education, 2013). Moreover, Pearl University was situated in an urban area that had a nearby Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO). TECRO offices in the United States are only located in urban areas that have a concentrated Taiwanese American population (Taiwanese Economic and Cultural Representative Office, 2012). The presence of TECRO was an indicator that Pearl University had a suitable Taiwanese American student population.

During my interactions with Pearl University's Taiwanese American student organization, I observed that the Taiwanese American student organization had undergraduate and graduate and domestic and international Taiwanese students. This group met weekly to discuss and plan upcoming events and celebrations related to Taiwanese culture. This study was not a direct exploration of the Taiwanese American student organization at Pearl University, but the existence of the group was a useful resource and site for informants and participants. Thus, based on personal knowledge, experience, connections, approximate enrollment, nearby existence of TECRO, and the AAPISI designation, Pearl University was an ideal site for this study.

Interviews

Interviews were used to gain an in-depth reflection of participants' experience with Taiwanese culture at Pearl University. Spradley (1979) referred to interviews as a "particular kind of *speech event*" (p. 55). According to Spradley (1979), each

culture has its own "*speech event*" with "rules for beginning, ending, taking turns, asking questions, pausing, and even how close to stand to other people" (p. 55). The interviews conducted for this study attended to cultural cues, per original ethnographic interview methods, by seeking clarification on responses and asking participants how they understood the question (Spradley, 1979; Wolcott, 2008). Interviews, conversations, and dialogues between the participants and me were the main data collection methods for this study. This made understanding the complexities of interviews important and relevant to the design of this study.

The interview, according to Josselson (2007), was where "the participant is reading, not what has been made explicit, but rather the subtle interpersonal cues that reflect the researcher's capacity to be empathic, nonjudgmental, concerned, tolerant, and emotionally responsive as well as his/her ability to contain affect-laden material" (p. 539). I witnessed different ways in which participants read me as a Taiwanese American researcher and interviewer for this study. I paid attention to the way my identity and roles influenced the interviews and any level of rapport I had with the participants. Thus, I used a semi-structured interview format that allowed for clarifications or additional information-seeking responses (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Spradley, 1979). The practice of using semi-structured questions meant that I started with a few prescribed questions and provide space for additional questions to arise depending on participant's stories, comments, and responses (Creswell, 2007). This established the interview process as more of a conversation between the participants and me and provided participants an opportunity to get to know me, as a researcher and Taiwanese American (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Josselson, 2007;

Spradley, 1979). To create a dynamic, in which the interview was indeed more of a conversation, Madison (2012) suggested constructing questions based on categories, form, or type. For instance, Madison (2012) referred to interviews as "oral histories," "personal narrative," and "topical" (p. 28). Under these categorizes, I asked questions that searched for emotion, knowledge, and description (Madison, 2012). One interview was insufficient in capturing all there was to know about a participants' experiences; therefore, participants were invited to two interview sessions with the option for a third session, if necessary. In the end, each participant participated in two interviews.

The interviews followed a designed interview protocol (Appendices C and D). Fetterman (2010) described strategies for ethnographic interviews and suggested the first interview is focused on establishing a "respect for the culture of the group under study" (p. 46) and building rapport with each participant. The second interview "[was] an opportunity to learn from the interviewee" (Fetterman, 2010, p. 47). During this second interview, Fetterman (2010) suggested the interviewer observe participants' use of language, comfort, and their need for more structured or semi-structured questions. Unlike the first interview, in the second interview, I asked participants to bring-in an artifact that symbolized and represents their perception of and connection to Taiwanese culture. The hope was that the artifact would elicit a direct story from the participant (Cortazzi, 1993).

The interviews or "friendly conversations" (Spradley, 1979, p. 55) were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions took place following each interview. Participants were given their first interview transcripts prior to their second

interview, to provide room for clarity and any additional information. Participants were given their second interview transcripts following their second interview and asked if there was any need or interest to clarify and provide any additional information. Interviews started towards the end of Summer 2016 and continued throughout Fall 2016. Interviews ceased when an adequate depth of data was acquired. In narrative inquiry and qualitative research, researchers tend to refer to adequate depth of data as reaching saturation in the process of data collection (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003). Saturation of data may not be clear in the process of data collection, but once data was interpreted and analyzed, then it became more evident if saturation was met (Josselson & Lieblich). After data analysis and interpretation, it was evident that saturation was indeed met around participants' connections to Taiwanese culture and varied ways of holding pride as Taiwanese Americans. In the end, for this study, eight participants were selected and conducted two interviews were conducted per participant. At the end of two interviews, each participant received ten dollars to for their time and participation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

After data collection, I utilized strategies for analysis and interpretation of data which resonated with narrative methodology. Each method outlined in this chapter can have its own analysis and interpretation procedures, but the intent was to provide a complete narrative (Cortazzi, 2007). Cortazzi (2007) found narrating as "a major means of making sense of past experiences and sharing it with others" (p. 385). I contend narrating was not just about "past experiences," but also about current and future experiences in a cultural context.

Van Maanen (2011) suggested that the analysis and interpretation of ethnography is made up of four parts: the observed, observer, story, and audience. Borrowing and attending to these parts of an ethnographic account oriented this study and centers the interpretation on cultural experiences of Taiwanese Americans and their sense of Taiwanese culture, home, and even a Taiwanese diaspora at Pearl University (Wolcott, 2008). Similar to Van Maanen (2011), Creswell (2007) identified three components to the analysis and interpretation of qualitative studies: writing a description of the culture, finding themes and patterns, and turning to theory as a framework to make sense and meaning out of the data. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) wrote, "the basic goal…is to create a vivid reconstruction of the culture studied" (p. 235).

I sought to collect enough data to provide a holistic narrative of Taiwanese American students. To this end, I performed line-by-line coding to identify patterns and ultimately themes or categories within the data. I also produced a chronology of participants' stories from interviews throughout the time of the study (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Creswell, 2007). The line-by-line coding was compared to the initial categories that emerged from the interview protocols. The resulting categories varied from the initial protocols, to better represent what was found in the data. The analysis of this study was inductive and relied heavily on descriptions of culture, but based on the patterns, categories, and themes from coded data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Therefore, the analysis and interpretation were first, the process of coming to conclusions about what became part of the final account, and second, the actual writing and representation of the final account. After a final account of each

participants' narratives, I rendered a grand narrative that traced a collective account

of the participants' connection to Taiwanese culture (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003).

Thus, there was *thick description* for each participant and within the grand narrative

capturing an overall narrative.

Many authors of ethnographic methods cited the production and use of *thick*

*description*s (Creswell, 2009; Emerson, et. al, 2011; Van Maanen, 2011; Wolcott,

2008). Emerson (2001) wrote:

> A thick description is not simply a collection of events and activities, nor even
>
> a collection of the local meanings of such events and activities; rather, such a
>
> description is a complex interpretation of local meanings – the ethnographer's
>
> effortful, imaginative rendering of these meanings. (p. 33)

Emerson's (2001) ideas of *thick description* relied heavily on Geertz's (1973)

description of a *thick description*. Geertz (1973) focused on the social and contextual

nature of cultural interpretations and the proximity the researcher has to the cultural

experience. How close was the researcher to what was being described? How did the

researcher know what was happening had social and cultural meanings? These were

the types of questions I considered when I thought of Geertz's (1973) notions of

writing and crafting *thick descriptions*. Moreover, Geertz's (1973) suggested

ethnographic accounts intersect subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors with cultural

meanings. For instance, one example Geertz (1973) used was based on a previous

ethnographic account of eye twitches and winks. Geertz (1973) wrote, "Culture is

public because meaning is. You can't wink without knowing what counts as winking

or how…" (p. 14). Geertz (1973) continued and suggested a write-up of how to wink

by only describing the basic movements is "taking a thin description for thick" (p. 14). Therefore, in the process of analysis and interpretation I paid close attention to the craft and art of writing a *thick description*. After I identified and compared themes and categories, I drafted and wrote multiple descriptions of the account in attempt to capture the layers of explanation that thoughtfully represented the participants and the study.

Another part of data analysis and interpretation and the final written account is about the ways in which voice, representation, and experience (Cortazzi, 2001) are communicated to the readers. The literature on narrative inquiry methodology assisted to further describe important characteristics of voice, representation, and experience (Cortazzi, 2001). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) wrote, "In the beginning process of narrative inquiry, it is particularly important that all participants have voice within the relationship" (p. 4). Participants' voices were at the heart of conducting this critical-cultural qualitative inquiry. The ways in which participants communicated was largely through their voice. Voice happens between the researcher and participant relationship. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote: "voice may be thought of as belonging to participants, researchers, and other participants and other researchers for whom texts speak" (p. 146). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also wrote that,

> …as we try to capture the multiplicity [of voice], we need to consider the voices heard and the voices not heard...we may include the voice of a participant in such a way that the context of the research text obscures or silences important parts of that participant's voice. (p. 147)

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In this quotation, voice represents the verbal sounds that can be heard, but Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested nonverbal sounds such as silence may also be important.

Lincoln (2007) categorized voice as "resistance against silence, as resistance to disengagement, as resistance to marginalization" (p. 337). In this study, I viewed participants as sharing their voices and experiences as a potential point of liberation, as a minoritized population within a PWI.

Trustworthiness

To triangulate the data and ultimate *thick description* of Taiwanese American students' experiences, I engaged in a process of trustworthiness. There were several techniques I employed in this study to address issues of trustworthiness. Strategies for trustworthiness included triangulation of data, peer debriefing, researcher reflexivity, and member-checks (Creswell, 2009; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). The process of trustworthiness in qualitative research occurred throughout the study at various checkpoints and by checking or reflecting on my decisions as the researcher to assess how well I stayed focused on the central interest of study.

One method of trustworthiness was the triangulation of data. Creswell (2007) wrote that triangulation "involves corroborating evidence from different sources" (p. 208). Interviews and interview transcriptions served as a bulk of the data, but additional data sources included researcher memos and journals and exchange of messages between myself and the participants (member-checks), and peer debriefers, (Jones et al., 2014). Peer debriefers and member-checks corroborated the analysis and interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2007). A peer reviewer was someone that

has either familiarity with some aspect of the research and can act as an external source for process and review of data, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2007). Peer reviewers were outsiders who checked and evaluated my role, process, and findings with the study. The member-checks, on the other hand, were participants' reviews of transcripts, descriptions, and even interpretations of the study to check for "accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2007 p. 209). Creswell (2007) suggested, that during member-checks, researchers should have an interest "in their view of these written analyses as well as what was missing" (p. 209). I included and sent participants transcripts and narrative descriptions throughout the study to check if I was accurately describing and interpreting their experiences and the setting.

Conclusion

This inquiry produced an in-depth description and narrative of Taiwanese American students' experiences at Pearl University (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Maxwell, 2005). A total of ten students completed the participant interest form (Appendix B). Eight out of the ten respondents were selected as participants in this study (Appendices F and G). Out of the two respondents who were not selected as participants for this study, one never responded to email correspondences to schedule a first interview and another did not meet the selection criteria of strong sense of pride in their own ethnic group. Out of the eight participants who did participate in this study, one was born in Taiwan and seven were born in the United States. Five participants self-identified as female and three participants self-identified as male. Five participants were seniors, one participant was a junior, one participant was a sophomore, and one participant was in their first

year at Pearl University. By academic major, participants majored in the areas of engineering, health, criminology, sociology, linguistics, finance, and information systems. This study centered on the experiences, stories, and narratives participants offer about their lives (Glesne, 2006; Jones et al., 2006; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Maxwell, 2005) as Taiwanese American students at Pearl University and their connections to Taiwanese culture. Given the emphasis on personal experiences and narratives, this study was well situated as a qualitative study.

Chapters one, two, and three presented a roadmap and case for conducting this exploration. As articulated at the start of this chapter and in the previous chapters, as a critical-cultural narrative inquiry the study (1) brought attention to Taiwanese American students' preservation and celebration of Taiwanese culture, (2) expanded upon notions of home and experiences of bicultural integration, and (3) utilized diaspora as a theoretical perspective in a student development and higher education context. This purpose was embedded in the review or related literature and the methodology and methods of this study.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

The findings of the study are shared in this chapter first as individual

participant narratives and second as a grand narrative to trace a collective account of

participants' experiences and connections to Taiwanese culture. I present participants

in this chapter in alphabetical order by their selected pseudonyms. The stories and

experiences shared by individual participants are unique to each participant.

Staying true to narrative inquiry methodology there are long and thick

quotations direct from participants' interviews and transcripts. The use of long and

thick quotations seeks to perserve the voice and representation of participants in this

study. Any dimension of similarities and differences, between participants' stories, is

captured in the grand narrative which follows the individual participant profiles.

Together, participant profiles and the grand narrative highlight participants'

memories, experiences, and reflections on what it means to be Taiwanese American

and hold a connection to Taiwanese culture. Participant stories begin with their

identification as Taiwanese Americans, providing childhood connections to culture

and language, sharing memories of travels back to Taiwan, and reflections on

engaging with Taiwanese culture on campus. Sharing participants' stories in this

order establishes a level of familarity with participants' experiences, which leads into

the emergent themes that make up the grand narrative.

Alice: "I consider home America, but my entire family [is] from Taiwan"

Alice is third year Civil Engineering student at Pearl University. Alice's

parents emigrated from Taiwan to the United States for graduate studies. Alice and

her sister were born in the United States and throughout their upbringing they have

made numerous trips back to Taiwan. Alice's story is filled with context related to her family background, memories from Chinese school, and the realization that she has "taken for granted" her cultural background.

Alice provided as much information as she could recall related to her family's past and connection to Taiwan and China. She felt it was important to note that her parents were born in Taiwan, but there was a likelihood that her grandparents fled China to Taiwan during the war. Although her extended family is from Taiwan and China, for Alice, all she has known is Taiwan as the place where her parents are from and where many members of her extended family are currently located. Alice shared:

> I consider home America, but my entire family's from Taiwan, so I always considered that... I don't feel like I have any super strong connections to China because my whole family is from Taiwan, and whenever it's like, "Oh are you going back?" Whenever anyone from China still is there, like, "Oh are you going back?" They [are] always [referring to], "Are you going back to Taiwan," like when they were talking [to] my parents and stuff... Taiwan, that's where I've always gone to visit family, and stuff. It's where all my grandparents are, and things like that.

Alice has been back to Taiwan, from her recall, "maybe three or four times" and her parents each go back, in separate trips, once a year. However, Alice's parents have never been back to China, only Alice's sister has traveled to China. Alice said that her parents tell her, "[We] grew up in Taiwan, but they say a lot of... we're originally from China [and] their roots are all originally from China." In Alice's experience,

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Taiwan and China are different; however, there are also many similarities that it was difficult for her to separate and distinguish between the two cultures.

Alice questioned how Taiwanese and Chinese foods, celebrations, and values were actually different from one another. Alice stated, "I'm Chinese, but my parents are from Taiwan. That's how introduce myself... I've never been totally clear about it. I introduce myself as Taiwanese, I guess. I don't know." Alice interchanged Taiwanese and Chinese throughout her interviews, but made distinctions when she felt there was a strong difference between Taiwan and China. For example, when looking for a student organization on campus, Alice recognized that there is a Chinese American Student Organization and a Taiwanese American Student Organization (TASO) at Pearl University. Between these two groups, Alice shared that "I think [the Taiwanese American student organization], at least here, it's the place to go."

Alice admitted that she has not been to many TASO meetings, but felt a greater sense of community with Taiwanese American perspectives and people. Alice was unable to describe or explain why she held this opinion about TASO. She simply stated and restated, "I don't know how to differentiate Taiwanese and Chinese culture." Again, there was a back-and-forth interchange between considering herself Taiwanese and Chinese. To further emphasize how Taiwanese and Chinese experiences were interwoven for Alice, she offered a memory of when she was in Chinese school. Alice recalled a time when students were asked to make "a culture box." Alice shared "... I literally put a Taiwan flag on one side and a China flag on the other side..." She viewed having Taiwanese and/or Chinese heritage as distinguishing part of her Taiwanese American experience.

As a participant, Alice showed a strong interest in learning about culture, her own culture and the cultural experiences of others. Alice presented as someone who desired a deeper connection to her culture, but uncertain about the type of connection she was looking to foster. Alice also presented as someone who carried a certain degree of regret, regret for not recognizing the importance of her cultural background earlier in life. Numerous times throughout the interviews with Alice, she expressed that she has not "thought much about [her] Taiwanese identity" and she has "definitely taken it for granted."

When Alice was young, her parents enrolled her in Chinese school. Alice recalled that her parents enrolled her in a Chinese school that had a strong "Taiwanese community." Alice shared:

> My parents are both really involved in Chinese school. My dad was one of the organizers for [Chinese New Year] every year. Basically, [the Chinese school] would get every class [and] grade level to do some sort of performance. There will be a skit, or like a dance, or whatever. The older kids would emcee the event. There would be bingo, there would be a lion dance, an orchestra... some people would [sometimes] do a Chinese yo-yo thing.

This description of Chinese school and the events connected to Chinese school were vivid and clearly influential moments in Alice's upbringing. It was meaningful to Alice that Chinese school taught her about events such as Chinese New Year. Alice noted:

As a family, we do not go crazy on holidays [and] birthdays. We're pretty low key about holidays, because we are involved in our Chinese school stuff. The Chinese school would have Chinese New Year celebration, so we would all go to that.

During Chinese New Year, Alice stated that the Chinese school "would have this huge buffet of Chinese food." Alice also remembered that during Chinese New Year there were "those big firecracker things that you'd hang up for Chinese New Year" and at the Chinese school:

They would teach us how to knot things. They would give us a lot of string and you could learn how to make all these really intricate knots... My parents would get a lot of them from Taiwan when they visited.

In addition to learning about the multiple ways one can celebrate Chinese New Year, Alice also learned how to speak, read, and write Mandarin in Chinese school.

Alice stated, "I can speak [Mandarin] conversationally... I can't speak it well because I'm very out of practice. When I do try to speak it's very broken. The sentence structure is not there at all. It's really bad." However, being able to speak and understand Mandarin provided Alice with a means to connect with her extended family. Alice recalled, "When I was younger, my grandparents would visit all the time. In the summer, they'd visit for like four months of the year, and I was fluent with them." Related to her sentiments on taking her culture for granted, Alice shared that as she has grown older her skills in speaking and understanding Mandarin have faded. Alice reflected, "I love languages I feel so sad that my parents... I'm not blaming them completely, but I wish they'd made me speak it [more]." In recent

years, Alice recalled difficulties connecting with family members in Taiwan, Alice shared:

> There was a language barrier and I was very insecure about the fact that I couldn't speak it well. I was sort of trying. I would smile and nod. I wasn't being standoffish or anything. I tried to really communicate with them, but just not verbally, which is important obviously. I would try a little bit, but just not very hard because I was just so bad. It's like there is no point even trying.

Alice is fond of her relatives, those in Taiwan and other parts of the U.S., but admitted that the persistent language barrier was a challenge. Alice shared that there were times where she and her sister were invited into conversations with their relatives, but they were limited in their ability to speak and return thoughts or further the conversations. For example, in this recall, Alice shared that there is an aunt who would invite her and her sister to engage in discussions, but others would be more distant.

> I remember there was my one aunt would be like, "Oh, they can totally understand everything." She would be really impressed by the fact that we could even understand. I appreciated it because the rest of them just seemed very dismissive of, "Oh, they don't speak Chinese." It wasn't even like they were trying to be mean about it. They were just saying it like, "Oh, you don't speak Chinese," which was true.

With her parents, Alice commented that the communication from her end was often in English. Alice stated, "Sometimes they speak to me in Chinese or they speak to each other in Chinese and I just answer back in English." Despite Alice's experiences and

challenges with language, Alice had a strong longing to stay and remain connected to her relatives and culture.

Alice recalled, "When I was little, I used to go to potlucks [with the] entire community. They were so calming." Alice continued and reminisced:

I feel like we went to them [the people at the potlucks], all the time when I was little. We haven't gone [to a potluck] since I was in elementary school, which is really sad, actually. The families would have dinner parties all the time and everyone would bring a dish with all this Chinese food. All the kids go and watch a movie, and all the parents would just talk and stuff. I think that was a good way to stay in touch with people who were from the same background and stuff with them.

Being in community with other families like her own illustrated Alice's strong interest in cultural experiences and connections. This point was most emphasized in Alice's study abroad experience. While studying abroad in England, Alice witnessed the pride others expressed in their culture's customs and people. Alice mentioned that she desired a similar type of pride in her own cultural background and not take her background "for granted."

An area where Alice noted she has not taken her culture and background for granted was in her parents' support of her education. Alice suggested she was aware of how Asian American parents may pressure their children to do well in school and she was cognizant of how her parents were different with her. Alice shared:

[My parents] were very conscious of it [and] they never asked me for my grades, or anything. My dad would always say like, "oh, you should be doing

this," but more in a joking way. I kind of knew that they would be supportive no matter what. I didn't realize all the pressure that's on other kid's parents, or kids... I would hear it a lot. I know that they always talk about [it]... I feel like Chinese people are a lot more blunt about [it] than maybe American people.

Alice did not provide a lot of details about when she learned about the academic pressures placed on "other kid's parents or kids," but her statement acknowledged a degree of academic or educational pressures on Asian American parents and children, like herself. However, Alice felt fortunate to have parents who were able to support her in this arena.

Although Alice felt as if she did not have enough information about her cultural background, she demonstrated a clear interest and longing to be connected to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. She held fond memories of the different ways her cultural background brought together a community of family and friends, tied her to family abroad, and furthered her own perceptions of how people find a sense of pride in their cultural background.

Amber: "I'm a 1.5 generation Taiwanese American"

Amber was a senior Linguistics student at Pearl University. Amber was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States with her family when she was in elementary school. Amber described herself as "I'm a 1.5 generation Taiwanese American" and defined her generation status as "[moving] to another country before the age of 18, so before you are an adult. But, you were born in another country. It's that in-between stage where you are not one or two [generations]." Amber shared,

"The immigrant experience is different, if your parents are just immigrants, compared to you being also immigrant, as well. I feel like there's an experience that not a lot of people know about." One example Amber shared was her experience taking the United States citizenship exam. It took Amber and her family "10 years to get citizenship." To prepare for the exam, Amber reflected that she "just took a few hours and studied and then [she] passed." However, she contrasted her experience to the way in which her parents studied for the same exam. Amber shared, "my parents, like, they had to listen to the audio in the car for a month to study for [the exam]." Another example of where Amber noted a difference between herself and her parents was in how they separately viewed United States social constructs of race and gender through racism and sexism. Amber learned about racism and sexism in college, but her parents were influenced by Taiwanese immigrants of their same generation. Amber believed Taiwanese immigrants of her parents' generation "[try] to persuade the newer immigrants... convince people who are newer immigrants, because they trust you [different from] the older immigrants." Amber found this to be a negative pattern and divided immigrant generations. Amber shared, "so we get this pattern that just goes downhill, you know?" She shared, "my parents don't believe sexism exists." The differences between her Taiwanese immigrant experience and her parents' experiences was a definite subject of Amber's story. In addition, the experiences and challenges Amber has faced around her race and gender also shaped her experiences as a Taiwanese immigrant and Taiwanese American.

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Amber attributed college as a time when she has been able to truly identify and see negative and discriminatory experiences based on race or ethnicity and gender. Amber shared:

> I think college definitely changed my views almost 180 from what I [believed] before, and I think that's a good thing, but it also just feels [like] a lot, there's a lot of, kind of struggle... Because I did start talking about different stuff, like racism and sexism...

Amber provided greater context around the struggle of noticing racism and sexism. She found herself acknowledging that "[people] are nice, but then when [she would] think deeply about their view, it's not necessarily as nice as you would think..." For example, Amber talked about her friends from church. Amber offered:

> ...because I guess growing up in the church I always have church friends, and then now, I think our view are very spread out. [My church] friends are not as conservative, but there's still a huge range. [I] don't necessarily know [what] their views are now, and if you've experienced something to talk about with them, they might be totally opposite, then it's just really bad.

Amber suggested that her friends from church may hold "totally opposite" views from her own and it may be a "struggle" or challenge for Amber to continue or grow her relationships with these friends. From another perspective, Amber experienced her own intrapersonal "struggle" to understand her identities and experiences.

Amber was the only participant who was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States with her family. For Amber, this experience has left her "[feeling] scattered, in a way." The "scattered" feeling was evident in Amber's stories related

to Chinese school and her United States citizenship process. In addition, Amber's story includes experiences of microaggressions and engagement in activism on campus, which differs from the other participants in this study.

Once Amber and her family immigrated to the United States, Amber was enrolled in Chinese school. As a student in Chinese school, Amber was someone with greater Mandarin language proficiency than her peers. She shared, "A lot of people like to compliment me on my Mandarin." From Amber's perspective this happened because she had a different accent and exceled in writing, for her grade level. This was where and how Amber started with her experience in Chinese school. Amber recalled:

> Our Chinese school was not that great of a Chinese school. It's not one of those Chinese schools that make you memorize all these forms that you have to write so much. Ours was very laid-back, and so growing up I think I had too much pride, because I just came from Taiwan, so my Mandarin was great. I can write, you know, we learned in first grade and I think everything else... I was the best in the class and so everyone was like, "Oh, you're doing so great," but then I feel like they forget that I'm from Taiwan.

In Chinese school, Amber was also seen as "one of those teacher's pets." This was a label that Amber shared with some discontent. Amber was perceived to be a better student, but to Amber she was not necessarily a better student, she was a different student since she grew up in Taiwan. Amber shared:

> I think I'm one of those teacher's pets that are not really good at being a teacher's pet. I'm not a good student, but Chinese teachers love me and then

all the aunties and uncles think I'm great because I can speak Mandarin. I

don't think that's necessarily, I think, sure, it's nice that I can speak to them. I

can do that, but I don't like how they shame other people for not speaking it as

well.

Amber's dislike for comparing and judging one person with another, based on their

talent and skills, around language proficiency or otherwise was evident in many of the

experiences and memories Amber shared. She believed that, albeit her accent and

reading or writing skills may be better than others, it should not serve as a reason to

assume she knew more than her peers. Amber asserted:

...there's a lot of knowledge gaps that people might not know from talking

with me, because I don't know so many things, in terms of living and

vocabulary. I only know the stuff, talking in my home life. I can speak fine at

home, but there's only so many things I talk about at home. We talk about

food.

Amber reflected that there was a lot about Taiwan and Taiwanese culture she has yet

to learn and she clings to her memories of being in Taiwan to stay connected.

About her time in Taiwan, before and after immigrating to the United States,

Amber shared that "I just latch onto [it]. Sometimes, it feels like I'm really desperate

or pathetic, but I think these [memories] really matter." Since immigrating to the

United States, Amber has traveled back to Taiwan on multiple occasions. She

returned to Taiwan for family trips and as a participant in a Taiwanese exchange

program for college students. It was evident that these trips back to Taiwan were

highly influential in Amber's experience and connection to Taiwanese culture.

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Amber reflected that her trips back to Taiwan brought her fond and challenging memories of being "in-between" cultures.

One-way Amber shared her memories was by talking about a photo album that her school in Taiwan made for her, before she moved to the United States. Amber identified:

[The photo album] is one of my only objects that I've brought from Taiwan to America When I moved, when I was six. I feel a lot of my identity as a Taiwanese-American, the Taiwanese part is, being born in Taiwan, and having a tiny childhood there. Inside, there's pictures of me and my classmates. Having school in Taiwan, even though it was [grade school], it just felt like a big part of how I got the Taiwanese culture or experience that was different than Taiwanese-American friends.

It was clear that Amber remains connected and latched onto memories of being in Taiwan. Amber also shared another object that embodies her deep connection to her time in Taiwan, specifically, her time prior to immigrating to the United States. Amber talked about her baby blanket. Amber reflected:

I don't know why I still have it, but we brought it over. There's a couple things that we brought over in our suitcases. My name was on it, but you can't really see it anymore. It was somewhere here, but you only can see some ink. It's been years, since I'm twenty-some years old now. It's my baby blanket. It just reminds me of being born in Taiwan. Just one of the things that reminds me of everything.

Without question, being born and partly raised in Taiwan has profoundly shaped and influenced Amber's experiences. Amber holds strong curiosities about Taiwan and how her life would have been different if she were still in Taiwan. Amber shared that she often thinks "the past happened, and this is who I am right now," but what if it were different. Amber has imagined herself "saving up money and going back on vacation [to Taiwan]" and she "used to have this super idealistic idea that [she] could go back and live there." However, some of her more recent returns to Taiwan has "made me realize how impossible [it would be] to live there now." One example of how her life may be different, if she were still in Taiwan, related to her cousins. Amber shared that her cousins learn in English in school, "[Taiwan] forces you to know English, too, most of them hate it… I'd be a totally different person." Amber reflected that Taiwan does not have "enough accommodations for people like [her]." In her comment, it is possible that Amber implied that Taiwan, like the United States, is unprepared to support people who are "in-between" places and cultures.

When Amber became a United States citizen, she made the decision to legally change her name. Amber stated, "I changed my name... I think there's a lot of, I guess, politics behind name changing." Amber reflected, "I didn't really want to change it, but then I feel like [Amber] is what I've always gone by, in elementary school, middle school, and high school, and in college." Amber continued and offered, "it's true, I changed it to [Amber] partly because my aunt said that for jobs, it's easier if you have any American name, which I guess is technically true." About her given name, Amber had negative experiences of people attempting to pronounce her name. Amber recalled:

I have to remind myself, just don't tell them, just don't tell them, because

they're going to repeat it and it's just going to sound awful... It's not

necessarily about the American accent, but it's about the attitude... They can't

pronounce it right or even come close. [If] they can pronounce it closer, but

then they'll forget again and I don't want to go through all of the time and

stuff to correct everyone.

In addition, Amber reflected that the process of helping people through the

pronunciation of her name also led people to "a curiosity [about] what does [the

name] mean." Amber viewed that her name and names, in general, "are one of the

huge things that are part of your identity. Part of my identity."

Having to educate others about her name and identity related to Amber's

experiences with microaggressions and even connected back to Amber's learning of

racism and sexism in college. Amber shared:

I think sometimes and you think it's just these microaggressions, you have

this mentality that it's worse for someone else, because I think I read this

statistic that half of Asian American kids are bullied or something like that, or

just a lot of them. You're just like, "Oh, but I wasn't bullied," or you say, you

keep on thinking that what happens to you isn't as bad as everyone else. Like,

okay, I haven't been cat-called all the time, but you get these little things.

Amber thoughtfully shared her experiences with microaggressions and reflected that

typically after an incident has occurred she wished she would have done more for

herself. For example, Amber shared an incident that happened as she walked into a

dining hall on campus:

> ...the other day, I was going to the cafeteria... I was opening the door and I was walking through and then this guy behind me was like "thank you" because I had opened the door for him... I'm like "mm-hmm" and then he was like "okay," but then he started being like, "Xiè xiè bù kèqì." So, of course, I kept on walking and after I walked, I looked behind to see who it was of course, he was older than me and he was White. I just think it happens too much.

The comment made by the man who entered the dining hall behind Amber translates into "thank you, you're welcome (謝謝 不客氣)." Amber reflected on this incident and suggested:

> I'm just like, you know, you have this tendency to say "Oh, maybe I should have said XYZ to him," but then it's too late now, but there's kind of like there's no good reaction ever. You always think of the response that you wanted to do too late. I think there's always these little things.

After Amber recalled this negative experience, she was quick to assert that there were probably others with similar or even worse experiences than hers. Throughout the interviews with Amber she weaved in and out of her current experiences, reflections on her understanding of interpersonal dynamics around race and gender, and ideations around what would have happened if she and her family never moved from Taiwan to the United States. The way Amber transitioned from one story and experience to the next, through different subjects, demonstrated Amber has not fully reflected upon all her varied life experiences. She was still making sense of her identity as an immigrant and the degree to which negative racial incidents affect her.

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Amber's story and experience with Taiwan are centered on her experience as a "1.5 generation" immigrant. She shared how her language proficiency, in the United States, has cast her as someone who is well-informed about Taiwanese culture. However, in Taiwan, her skills are not on par with her peers or enough to truly be viewed as Taiwanese. Amber's story also captured her experiences with discrimination. Amber was clear and direct around how microaggressions have affected her. She has a strong sense of pride in being from and born in Taiwan, but she was unclear on how to communicate this to others without inviting a host of questions and moments where she feels as if she is put in a position to educate others on their lack of awareness.

Ami: "The most recent three generations were all immigrants"

Ami is a senior Mechanical Engineering student at Pearl University. Ami was born in the United States as the third of four children. Her parents were born in Taiwan and met in the United States. Ami shared:

> Both my parents were born in Taiwan, but all my grandparents were born in China. They left China during the political revolution. This is also kind of a thing for me like I say my parents are from Taiwan but they're not actually Taiwanese. They don't speak Taiwanese. They're not like indigenous.

Ami reflected that her parents were born in Taiwan and grew up in Taiwan, but they have a Chinese mindset. This was how Ami began her story. She described how her parents were connected to Taiwan but recognized that being from Taiwan may suggest an ability to speak Taiwanese, and not just Mandarin. She understood that there are also aboriginal or indigenous people in Taiwan. As such, Ami quickly

asserted that her parents were in Taiwan due to political strife between Taiwan and China, not because of any long family lineage or heritage in Taiwan. About her dad, Ami stated, "He's Chinese in Taiwan... I think it's really in his mind that he's not Taiwanese." Ami did not have a similar comment to share about her mom, but she offered:

> I've talked to my mom a lot about how the three generations, the most recent three generations were all immigrants. I think that has a lot to do with it because my grandparents immigrated. My parents immigrated to a different country.

Ami's story, embedded in her family's multiple immigration experiences, was interesting since she holds a strong identification with Taiwan as the place where her parents grew up. However, Ami recognized, her parents hold strong familiarity and affinity with China as the place where their parents grew up. Again, it was evident that her family's multiple immigration experiences have influenced where and how Ami has connected to Taiwan or Taiwanese culture. Ami's story was also connected to her participation in Chinese school and experience studying abroad which led her to a place of pride around her Taiwanese background.

Ami shared that much of what she has learned about her cultural background and heritage comes from her parents. Ami stated:

> I think at least from my parents' point of view they identify with China as their motherland, even though they were born in Taiwan. They keep saying, "You're not really Taiwanese. You're more Chinese."

Ami reflected, "It's really interesting how they have such a strong attachment to a country they've never been to," which is unlike Ami's connection to China. Ami has never been to China and cannot envision herself having a strong connection to China. Ami shared that she has a lot of pride in Taiwan. Ami said, "I think it's I feel that I want to support Taiwan. I don't really care to support China. I'll stick up for Taiwan." This sense of pride in Taiwan was more about knowing and recognizing Taiwan as a place where her parents grew up and her familiarity with Taiwanese food and cultural practices. Ami was not disparaging about China and Chinese culture, but she made it clear that she was "...not that interested [in] modern day Chinese culture...." She was more invested and interested in following "Taiwanese news." However, Ami shared that she has noticed that there are similarities in Taiwanese and Chinese culture and she cannot always separate the two.

Ami attended Chinese school when she was younger. This was her parents' way of encouraging her to learn Mandarin and engage with Taiwanese and Chinese communities. Ami recalled that in Chinese school it was a tradition to make "zong-zi" and she also made them at home as well. Ami shared:

> I went to Chinese school when I was young so we learned a lot of the stories and whatever from there too. That was based on like Taiwanese curriculum, but when we would make zong-zi at home my grandma makes them and she makes it from where she's from in China.

Ami also shared that zong-zi serves as an example of how Taiwanese and Chinese food and culture can be quite similar, but she had never truly thought about the similarities and differences. Referring back to the zong-zi, Ami shared:

We have like longer ones. We don't have like the mushroom and the peanuts

inside. That's like something different and I didn't know that. I asked my

mom. I was like, "Where are the peanuts?" She's like, "Oh no, that's

Taiwanese way." Like, this is the Northern China way. They don't put

peanuts in there. I'm like, "Oh, I didn't know that there was a difference."

By sharing this example and story, Ami questioned, how and where people celebrate

with zong-zi. Ami asked, "Are there also people who came from China like a long

time ago or like indigenous Taiwanese people who celebrate with zong-zi?" This is

an example of where Ami holds uncertainty about the intersections between Taiwan

and China. Nonetheless, Ami was aware that there are different accents that can

distinguish someone who speaks Mandarin.

Ami talked speaking Mandarin at home with her parents and English with her

siblings. She shared that her dad was "more strict about it, so [she] still speaks more

Chinese to him" but commented "it's really weird when we email each other because

it's all in English." Ami referred to her Mandarin skills as "mediocre," but shared

that she does what she can to stay proficient. Ami found that her Mandarin skills are

better when she is in Taiwan for a long period of time and speaking it every day:

...[L]iving in Taiwan for like 3 months where you have to go out every day

and speak Chinese, that really helped my Chinese become more fluent. I

think the reason why my Chinese didn't deteriorate as fast when I grew up was

because I watched a lot of Taiwanese dramas. Even just like listening to them

and then looking at the Chinese subtitles, that's how I kept up with my

reading.

Ami's proficiency in Mandarin kept her actively connected to Taiwanese culture, family, and current events. In addition, it also connected her to others in places where she least expected it. Ami talked about a time she stayed in a hostel in Denmark owned by Chinese people. She said:

> It's interesting because when I was in Denmark, I stayed at a hostel. It was run by Chinese people. When I got there, their English was pretty bad. I'm not going to speak Danish, so I would speak Chinese with them. They would talk to me a lot more. They would explain a lot more things. I think they were nicer to me too compared to other guests, who, they were struggling to communicate in Danish. There weren't as many Danish people there. I think they were treating me a lot nicer.

This example demonstrated how Ami has been connected to others through language and not national origin. At the same time, Ami shared experiences where she felt she was singled out by others in Denmark.

Ami reflected on a time she was uncertain why people were making assumptions about her:

> People come up to me in the street, I'll be just walking by myself, I'm not doing anything special and people walk up to me and say, "Are you Asian? Are you from China?" I'm literally just walking down the street. There's no reason for you to stop me to ask personal questions about me. There's no prejudice. It's not like I experience discrimination because of my race, but curiosity maybe like, "Who are you?"

Although Ami did not express a feeling of discrimination in this incidence, she shared that incidents like this give her pause. She was uncertain if "...it's because I'm a girl or it's because I'm Asian." For Ami, negative incidents like this have happened to her more often during her travels abroad than in the United States.

On campus, Ami was not actively connected to a Taiwanese American student organization, but knew that there was one available to her. Ami shared that she "...didn't want to seek out people who were like similar [to her] in background." Ami stated, "I wanted to seek out people who look different than me or like have different cultural backgrounds" and "I want to make friends that are different than who I am." Ami espoused a strong desire to learn about others since she has opportunities to learn about her own cultural background at home and in Taiwan, but she also communicated that she did not feel "entirely American" and at the same time not fully Taiwanese either. Ami expressed:

> I don't feel entirely American so when I'm in America, I'm like I'm not
> American [and] when I got back to Taiwan, I'm not Taiwanese. I don't have
> citizenship there or whatever so I'm like American, but I still identify so much
> with the place.

Like the other participants, Ami's story also communicated a sense of being "in-between" cultures and places and Ami was able to trace her sustained connection to Taiwanese culture through Chinese school and experiences abroad. However, unique to Ami were the ways in which she reflected on the differences between her and her parents' connection to Taiwan. She viewed herself as from Taiwan, but her parents

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identified her and their family to be Chinese and from China. Moreover, Ami was uncertain about great differences between Taiwanese and Chinese culture.

Brian: "I always had some exposure to Taiwan"

Like other participants, Brian was born in the United States and his parents emigrated from Taiwan to the United States. Brian said, "My mom's side was Taiwanese, but my dad's side, my grandparents, emigrated from China after the civil war." Brian's dad was drawn to the United States for his education. Brian is a senior Finance & Information Systems student at Pearl University. Brian shared that his dad attended and graduated from Pearl University, but he was unaware what brought his mom to the United States. Brian's story is centered on the experience of being able to choose and be in two cultures. Brian's story was also related to his language proficiency, experience studying abroad in Taiwan, and comparisons between what he can or cannot do in Taiwan and in the United States.

Growing up, Brian was enrolled in Chinese school, but it was engagement with his parents and studying abroad for one semester in Taiwan that helped him with his language and cultural proficiency. Brian shared that in Chinese school:

> We were taught traditional characters. A majority of the board and principals
> and staff were all from Taiwan. So, I guess that was unique that we have this
> gathering of Taiwanese American kids, and we kind of grew up together.

However, as a child, he only spoke Mandarin at home. Brian reflected, "I only speak Chinese at home growing up, and the Chinese went downhill as I learned English." Brian also offered, "I can write at maybe an elementary school level. My reading got a lot better when I was in Taiwan for the semester. I would say my reading is pretty

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decent now." In relation to language fluency, Brian reflected that over time he grew to see and realize the benefit of speaking Mandarin and English and even understanding some Taiwanese. Brian said:

> I try to speak Chinese whenever I can. There's like not too many opportunities once we're [in the United States], but I meet a lot of students [in the United States] who are from Taiwan and studying [at Pearl University]. I try to talk to them in Chinese.

Brian noted that he speaks Mandarin and Taiwanese with a distinct American English-Taiwanese Mandarin accent. Brian commented that his dad:

> ...complains my Chinese is this weird mix of my mom's Taiwanese Chinese and the American Chinese. He says it sounds really bad. My mom says it sounds normal because she doesn't hear the Taiwanese part, she just hears the Chinese part. I guess in Taiwan it's the same thing, they just hear this weird combination of accents.

While studying in Taiwan for a semester, Brian also experienced people questioning his U.S.-Taiwanese Mandarin accent. Brian suggested that the people in Taiwan, "...would be confused because of my accent, my Chinese was not quite Taiwanese, but it also wasn't not Taiwanese." Brian asserted that this was how people could tell that he was not from Taiwan and likely in Taiwan from the United States.

Brian decided to study abroad in Taiwan because it was an experience that would bring him to a familiar place and provide him an opportunity to learn more about Taiwan, from a different context. When he was in Taiwan, Brian enrolled in many classes, but his most memorable class was a Chinese language class. Brian

found this class to be memorable for the "friends [he] made in that class." The

friends he made and the experiences he shared with them furthered how he

understood Taiwanese and American cultures. Brian shared:

> It was interesting because I would hang out with a lot of the other exchange
>
> students. A lot of them were from Europe or America, and so they were
>
> commonly White. I thought it was kind of interesting in that we were both
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> friends, I was kind of the odd person out, but then when I was hanging out
>
> with the native Taiwanese people, I was still kind of the odd man out.

Brian found it hard to find a friend group where he was not the "odd person out."

The example of being the "odd person out" illustrated times when Brian unwillingly

felt out of place. During these times, Brian admitted, he struggled with his navigating

his identity and cultural contexts. However, Brian recognized that being the "odd

person out" also came with opportunities where he found himself as "unique." Brian

shared:

> It's kind of like this internal back and forth where depending on the situation
>
> one's stronger than the other. I always thought that's unique that I could kind
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> of based on the situation pick who I want to be. And it's kind of gotten me out
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> of a lot of stuff. Like when you're in Taiwan and you just don't want to talk to
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> someone you're like I just don't understand Chinese. Or if you're in America
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> and you just don't want to deal with someone you're like I don't speak English.
>
> But, I think that there's advantage but there's also a struggle that's associated
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> with it.

Incidents where Brian would ignore people and pretend to not understand them were times when Brian enacted his uniqueness. Brian found that being able to move in and out of different cultural contexts was a strength of his Taiwanese American experiences and identity. Returning to his experiences with the friends he made in Taiwan, Brian asserted, "It was interesting that I could co-exist in these two groups of friends while always being kind of the unique person." Brian reflected, "...I was the only person that was [with] that specific combination of culture and, I don't know what word I'm looking for here, but yeah. This person." For Brian, his study abroad experience in Taiwan played a pivotal role in shaping his sense of self as a Taiwanese American since it was a time when he explored being Taiwanese and American.

In addition, Brian suggested that his time in Taiwan was a time of independence for him. He represented his independence by sharing his yōuyóu card as an object that reminds him of Taiwan and his memories of being in Taiwan. Brian described the yōuyóu card as "my ticket to anywhere in the country. Anywhere you wanted to go, you just swiped the card, [and then] you were there." Brian reflected that the card gave him a sense of freedom:

> The whole time I was in Taiwan I was pretty much just traveling, and sightseeing, and eating, and that card felt like it enabled me to go everywhere. That felt like something I couldn't do in America.

Brian viewed traveling in the United States as more complicated. In the United States, Brian found that "you've got to buy tickets, you've got to hop on a train, hop on a plane, but in Taiwan you can just scan and go. Which is really convenient." Brian acknowledged that he frequently made comparisons between Taiwan and the

United States. For example, Brian said, "I guess it's interesting that Taiwan had its first female president before we did." The "we" in this context was his United States and American side. Brian reflected, "It's pretty like clear cut, you have these two forces and one's a little stronger when you're in America, the other's a little stronger in Taiwan." It was evident that Brian saw himself inside of two distinct cultures, or as he put it, "forces."

The experience of being in two cultures on campus, for Brian, meant surrounding himself with friends who have a background like him. Brian shared, "I would say I have a pretty diverse friend group. It's just that the closest ones happen to be Taiwanese American." Brian continued, "I would say my two closest friends I've grown up with are Taiwanese American. A lot of my close friends are Taiwanese American or Taiwanese." In addition to his friend group, Brian also discussed TASO at Pearl. Brian shared:

> I'm in the Taiwanese American student association here at [Pearl]. I also spend a lot of time with the Taiwanese students who are here studying, whether that's just hanging out or playing basketball or whatever.

Brian found that TASO was not all Taiwanese American students. Brian also found that the members of the organization had limited knowledge of Taiwan and Taiwanese events, beyond the basics. Brian offered:

> There's like a Taiwanese presence there for sure, it's just a lot of other cultures and races, and I think it's really interesting there. It's interesting that they kind of come together to throw all these Taiwanese events. Few people having new experiences with it.

Even though TASO did not have a lot of people with Taiwanese cultural experiences, beyond events and food, Brian still saw it as a place to connect with other Taiwanese American students. However, Brian felt most connected to the opportunities where he could discuss Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Brian shared, "I'm generally pretty surprised because there [is] really not that many Taiwanese people in the world, but I think it [is] nice talking to them about it. I guess talking about Taiwan is always nice." Brian presented and shared his experiences with a great deal of confidence in who he is as a Taiwanese American. He displayed pride in his background and suggested a strong interest to continue his relationships and connections to Taiwanese people and Taiwan. Brian's perspective was that being Taiwanese American was an asset that gives him the unique opportunity to decide when he brings forward his Taiwanese or United States' cultural context.

Daniel: "I am Taiwanese American, so Taiwan actually is a big part of my life"

Daniel is a senior student at Pearl University with an academic major in the sciences. Daniel's connection to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture came through in his ties to family, Buddhism, and service. Unlike the other participants, Daniel's story focused a great deal on his engagement with Tzu Chi. Daniel described Tzu Chi as:

an international nonprofit, humanitarian charity organization based in

Taiwan, founded in Taiwan, headquartered in Taiwan, but has done work in

like 92 different countries, offices in like 47, and in Taiwan specifically it is

such a cornerstone of Taiwanese daily living and Taiwanese culture, in the

sense that it is truly, probably like revolutionized, or altered the landscape of

civil society, in the sense that, it is as much a charity and a nonprofit secular in

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that manner, it's also a religious organization... I think Tzu Chi is a very effective platform in bringing together religion, bringing together kind of just wanting to do good and they have created a platform or a method to do so.

Daniel's involvement in Tzu Chi was influenced by his mom and her connection to Buddhism and giving back to others, which was passed down to Daniel. Daniel presented as someone who is constantly connected to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture through grand gestures, like his service experience with Tzu Chi, to subtle and everyday practices such as deciding to use chopsticks in the dining hall. It is evident that Taiwanese experiences and influences are deeply embedded in Daniel's life.

Daniel learned to read, write, and speak Mandarin in Chinese school, but it was his family's religion that activated his involvement in Tzu Chi and service. Daniel articulated that Tzu Chi made sense because "...I grew up in a Buddhist household." Daniel reflected, "I grew up with my grandma. She prayed every single day. I didn't pray with her, but I listened. Every once in a while, I would go to the monastery and pray as well." Daniel also suggested, "I learned things [through Buddhism]. I became woke." Daniel identified his mom as someone who has influenced his understanding of Buddhism. He reflected:

> My mom didn't focus on the superstitions or those traditions when I was younger. I wasn't accustomed, but I can see them. I can see their effect in the sense that my dad had, originally there had been a door in one place, and he had to move the door to a different [place] and attach it to a different hallway...

Daniel described his parents as encouraging him to find his own interests and path.

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Daniel's dad emigrated from Taiwan to the United States for school and work and his mom came years later to be with his dad. Daniel stated, "My dad came over when he was younger... He and I went to the same high school... and mom came over because she married my dad." Daniel indicated that his parents encouraged him to do what interests him. Around his academics, overall, Daniel felt his mom to be supportive of his interests. He expressed an interest in medicine and recognized medicine as a way to work with people around their suffering which connected to his interest in Tzu Chi. Daniel did not feel pressured from his mom to do well in school or a select academic interest, but rather noticed there were times she wanted him to do something in medicine. Daniel stated:

> So, it's challenging at times because I can tell that she really wants to push me
> to go to med school and be a physician. She's okay with me trying to explore
> my interests and learn new things, and learn kind of social sciences, and
> things that might not be the classical preferred professions. And so that's
> sometimes a challenge. But I think that my mom is very understanding [and]
> at the end of the day she just means the best for me and wants the best for me.
> So, I personally don't feel that much pressure, though it does kind of influence
> the way I think. And I still, personally, I am interested in medicine, and so I
> still think about it.

Daniel identified his involvement with Tzu Chi as finding something that interests him even though it was an organization he was introduced to by his mom. It was his decision to truly immerse himself in Tzu Chi's espoused Buddhist values and Tzu Chi's service to others. Daniel reflected:

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I think that my understanding of Tzu Chi's role in Buddhism and the role of

Buddhism in Taiwanese culture has definitely vastly grown within the last

year or two. Previously, I think when I was in the Chinese school, I knew that

Tzu Chi was a Buddhist organization, but I didn't know they were that into

Buddhism. I've always considered oh, this isn't Buddhism, I'm doing service

work, right, and I volunteer with this organization. It's not necessarily an

organization that espouses Buddhist principles or anything, and it's only

recently that I've found out, the idea with any faith-based organization,

Catholic charities, Salvation Army, Save the Children, there are values and

principles that underlie and guide the organization and Tzu Chi is the same

with Buddhist values and principles. So, the idea behind Tzu Chi is simply

it's Buddhism in action.

Daniel's description of Buddhism in action was further described as "...actively serve

the community around you..." Daniel shared:

Tzu Chi school of Buddhism is this idea that you can't just improve yourself

just by sitting there, right? You have to go out and you have to actively serve

the community around you, because that's how you understand truth and life.

That's how you understand suffering, and a lot of other things. That's one of

the core understandings of Tzu Chi and that's how Tzu Chi has shaped

Taiwanese Buddhism and Taiwanese culture as a whole, in the sense of this

idea you really need to, and they have really motivated citizens and the entire

country to really serve each other, and serve, serve the poor, serve the less

fortunate, not only in Taiwan but also overseas, that they have been able to

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marshal and gather these forces from Taiwanese companies, corporations,

regular folks, and be able to organize some way to distribute to those who

need it.

The ways in which Daniel spoke about Buddhism and Tzu Chi communicated a sense

of awareness or recognition of suffering and grief, beyond an observation of others'

in-need of service.

Towards the end of the first interview, Daniel shared that his family has faced

quite a bit of suffering through the loss of his dad. Daniel stated:

My dad passed away a few years ago. He worked in [a] kind of bio-research,

that whole science stuff, [and] my mom was a housewife for a while and now

she's doing part-time things, just to earn a little money.

Daniel did not say much about the loss of dad, but it was clearly a major event in his

life. After his dad passed away, he became more involved in Tzu Chi and spent more

time with his family. Daniel viewed Tzu Chi as an important service organization but

given Tzu Chi's Taiwanese origins and his own experience with suffering, Tzu Chi

was more than a service organization to Daniel. Potentially, Tzu Chi provided Daniel

an outlet to cope and connect with his family and culture. It was an outlet that was

embedded in his understanding of Taiwanese culture and spirituality.

In addition to his reflections on Tzu Chi, Buddhism, and family, Daniel also

talked about every day and simplistic ways of practicing his culture. For example,

Daniel discussed using chopsticks in the dining hall on campus and speaking

Mandarin with his friends. Chopsticks are an iconic Asian symbol and were a major

artifact of Daniel's experiences. As Daniel put it, "[The chopsticks] are a testament

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of my Asian-ness." Daniel talked about a pair of chopsticks that he carries with him around campus:

> ...I carry [chopsticks] around because I focus on sustainability and I try to reduce my waste, and that's something that Tzu Chi tries to tell people to do on the island of Taiwan, as well as here. And for me, this is something that I always try to carry around with me. It's always in my backpack.

Daniel frequently used his chopsticks to reduce waste, but he also reflected that it takes courage to use and carry his chopsticks. Daniel stated:

> But I think in terms of having the courage to carry them around and actually use them when I saw fit, I think it started in high school, and mom would start bringing her own sets of reusable chopsticks for the entire family whenever we ate out.

On campus, Daniel shared that he uses his chopsticks in the dining hall. Daniel mentioned, "late night, when all of the metal stuff disappears, and they start cleaning up, then there's only plastic forks, then I will whip [the chopsticks] out." He continued:

> Whenever I have the opportunity to use them, then I would use them. I remember my aunt was chuckling one time, or commenting one time that she didn't believe that I would have the guts to use these, just whip them out in the middle of a dining hall or something.

Daniel was elated to share that he indeed uses his chopsticks in the dining hall on campus:

I think moving into college, as I started learning about sustainability more, and about kind of just the effects of usable utensils in the environment, that really motivated me to start using reusable chopsticks. And it's chopsticks because I'm Taiwanese, I'm Asian. I think that's something that I'm proud of doing, the fact that I have these reusable chopsticks, and it's very convenient as well.

However, Daniel also recalled that he was not always confident about using his chopsticks. Daniel lamented, "I feel like there were times where I was uncertain about the reaction I would get when I pulled them out. There were definitely times where people kind of look at them." To help him get through times of uncertainty, Daniel said that he tends to surround himself with "the people that I often eat with where I'm comfortable with the fact that I'm Taiwanese American." Daniel shared that his closest friends are Asian American or Taiwanese American. Daniel found that having friends who shared his culture and ethnicity made it easier for him to use chopsticks or speak Mandarin in public. Daniel said, "I was at dinner with a couple of my friends and someone recently told me that I have this tendency, and it's just between me and a good friend of mine, to start randomly speaking in Mandarin to each other." Daniel offered this to show that he uses Mandarin with his friends "once in a while" because "it's easier to say something in Mandarin or it's we don't want someone else to understand what we're saying." Daniel was clear to share, "I speak Mandarin. I'm not going to hide the fact that I speak Mandarin." Like how Daniel spoke about his use of chopsticks, he has a lot of pride in being able to speak Mandarin. Using chopsticks and speaking Mandarin with his friends were symbolic

and illustrative of how Daniel's experience of culture played out in every day practices.

Another example of his cultural background and his own practice of culture was a wok. Daniel reflected chopsticks and a wok alone would not "...be specifically Taiwanese." However, Daniel stated, "I think... a wok, it's found in every single Taiwanese American household." The function of a wok, for Daniel, is something he uses every day. Daniel stated:

> That's how we cook things, mix things together, and stir-fry everything in a wok. And, it's something that I know I will take with me to whenever I move or whenever I have a kitchen. Even small things, I always do in the wok. Fry an egg, I just do it in the wok, I don't need to have a pan. And so, yes, I think it would be that.

Daniel viewed chopsticks and a wok as expected items in Taiwanese American and Asian American households. In his perspective, Daniel saw these items as normal for any Taiwanese American and Asian American household.

Daniel asserted, "I think the essence of any insert ethnicity here in an American story is the idea that there is this White America, there's this American norm, that's just simply American." Daniel continued and said there was "the struggle to be cool, or to be normal." The realization that there was this "struggle to fit the norm" did not came to Daniel during college. Daniel shared that he does not feel that he has struggled to "fit the norm" because he finds that "the norm was very accepting of different cultures and different beliefs." Nonetheless, Daniel also shared he came to realize that he was "proud to be Taiwanese" and not just someone who

was American. Daniel felt, "that some people, they would rather not associate with being Taiwanese. They would say 'I'm American,' even though their parents are from Taiwan or something like that. And, that's perfectly okay." In college, the norm that Daniel created for himself was one where he surrounded himself in communities that supported his Taiwanese American ethnicity, culture, and background.

Daniel viewed that his connections to Taiwanese culture and Taiwan were different from his Taiwanese American peers. Daniel shared, "I connect with Taiwan, but I don't connect with Taiwan to the point that I need... invest myself in the various movements that are for independence, or against independence, or whatever it is." Daniel noted, "I've never assumed that most of my Taiwanese American peers are actively engaged in Taiwanese politics. Rather, I think my point was to contrast that there were some that do, but I do not." Daniel suggested that he was "interested in the concept of Taiwanese independence and its previous relationship with China, but it's not number one on my list of things to do here, list of things to get involved with." He viewed that politics, food, and cultural celebrations and events were areas where people assume Taiwanese Americans have connections to Taiwan. For Daniel, it was about food and celebrations like Chinese New Year, and he was aware of political events and tensions, but his connection rested more in nuanced experiences. For example, Daniel shared a memory about his mom:

> I remember a moment back when I was younger, my mom, she would mop
> and sweep and clean the floor by hand. I was always [like] mom, why do you
> do that? Why don't you just use the mop or the vacuum? And I went [back]

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to Taiwan [for] service and they were like okay clean the floor now. Here's some rags, and a brush, start cleaning. I was like... this is why my mom always gets down on her knees when she wants to clean the floor and doesn't use a mop or something. So, it's the little things.

Daniel asserted that he cleans his own floors the same way he witnessed his mom doing it. Because of this view on culture and his focus on "the little things," which were actually big things for Daniel, he was not connected to the Taiwanese American student organization at Pearl. Daniel shared that he "participate[d] in Asian American activities, but [he was] not super enthralled by the Taiwanese American [student organization] or the Asian American Student Union" on campus. Daniel said that he appreciated how these organizations shared culture, but "sharing culture isn't just we're going to host one event, the entire semester." Daniel referenced the Night Market event that the TASO sponsors. For Daniel, Taiwanese culture is more than a Night Market and the sharing of food.

Daniel explained that he searches for a greater sense of purpose and meaning. Daniel offered that "I love to learn, so I'm always asking these tough, deep questions and trying to find those answers." In his experience, Daniel has found that other Taiwanese Americans and Asian Americans are "reluctant" to engage in deeper dialogues about their culture and identity. Daniel suggested:

I may approach Taiwanese culture differently, and so my idea has always been having conversations, and I think that the Asian American and Taiwanese American community here specifically has been a bit reluctant to

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engage, faulting those conversations, so very few Taiwanese-American [are] willing... to challenge themselves.

Daniel proposed that "[he'd] like to see more people talk about their experiences, Taiwanese Americans talk about what it means to be Taiwanese American, and then just in the context of America." Moreover, Daniel asserted:

[Pearl University] did not do enough to engage fellow students in discussions on the Asian/Taiwanese American experience and/or the meaning and importance of diversity. I certainly believe that these discussions on Taiwanese American identity happen informally amongst students all the time. I've participated in many, but there is a lack of a structured, academic approach to engaging the entire community.

Daniel followed to share that he would like to serve as a "role model [to] reinforce the fact that Taiwanese Americans are welcome and that you should have pride, you shouldn't be afraid saying that you're Taiwanese." Daniel's story weaved in and out of his own points of pride in his ethnicity and his expectations and assumptions of other Taiwanese Americans. Daniel demonstrated a great deal of passion and commitment to his family, Tzu Chi, and complicating and deepening what it means to be Taiwanese American in the United States.

Ivy: "I'm Chinese Taiwanese"

Ivy was born in the United States and is a sophomore at Pearl University. Ivy's story involves parents who are from China and Taiwan. She shared that she identifies as "Chinese Taiwanese" because "I don't want to leave out my dad's side of the family or his side of the heritage." Ivy's mom is from China and her dad is from

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Taiwan. She insisted, "I just want to make it clear that my parents are from China and Taiwan. I just want to make that clear." The idea that Ivy has family from China and Taiwan is not uncommon, but Ivy's story is unique given the ways in which she actively connects with Taiwanese or Taiwanese American experiences on and off campus. Like the other participants, Ivy attended Chinese school and has found ways to connect with Taiwanese Americans on campus. In addition, Ivy identified how she balances being American, Asian American, Chinese, and Taiwanese. The Chinese school Ivy attended was heavily influenced and run by Taiwanese Americans and she feels that the Chinese school kept her connected to Taiwan more so than Chinese culture. Ivy reflected that the Chinese school is "where I learned my culture." As a commuter student, Ivy also shared that while in school at Pearl she must make additional steps to stay connected on campus. She developed a schedule and system that would put her on campus at nights to engage with the Taiwanese American student organization. Ivy's story is about staying connected, connected to Taiwan and China, translating her experiences from Chinese school to the Taiwanese American student organization on campus, and maintaining her own language skills.

Ivy proclaimed:

Definitely, I'm American, but I'm also just trying to connect back to my roots. I'm more American, just because I've been raised here. I was born here. I was raised on American values. At the same time, I do want to know more about my heritage as well. In the long run, I wouldn't identify myself as more Taiwanese or Chinese. It's more I'm just American, just trying to connect back to my roots.

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Ivy acknowledged that she knows more about being American, but has a desire to know her "roots." This was evident in the ways Ivy talked about her experiences in Chinese school. Ivy shared that Chinese school was an important way for her to learn about Taiwanese people. Ivy reflected:

> I went to a Chinese school that was predominantly Taiwanese people who went there... Over there [in Chinese school], I made a lot of friends and they would go back to Taiwan a lot and come back and tell me all about what they did. I'm like, "I'm so jealous." I want to go back, too, but with money issues and stuff it's just harder to go back.

In Chinese school, Ivy learned Chinese songs and developed her Mandarin reading, writing, and speaking skills. Ivy shared that she and her younger brother both participated in Chinese yo-yo, painting, and martial arts. As for her language skills, Ivy described her abilities:

> I can only read traditional, or at least recognize it more than simplified. Simplified usually doesn't look like traditional anymore, so I always get confused. All my friends who take Chinese in night school or something, they always learn simplified. Whenever I see their homework, I'm like, "I don't know what words these are."

Ivy has learned to recognize and read Chinese with traditional characters, the characters used in Taiwan. Ivy shared this as one of the ways Chinese school has helped her see some of the differences in Taiwanese and Chinese practices. However, Ivy also noted that the distinctions and differences between Chinese and Taiwanese practices can be hard to recognize. For instance, Ivy shared that she

enjoys "celebrating Chinese New Year [and] eating mooncakes," but it was unclear how Ivy viewed Chinese New Year or eating mooncakes as Chinese or Taiwanese. Ivy also shared that her parents suggested to her that the difference between Chinese and Taiwanese culture is "maybe language" and this led them to gifting her a dictionary.

Ivy showed her dictionary and said, "It's very tattered. It doesn't even have a cover anymore, because I've completely ruined it. This I got maybe [in] third grade. I think my parents bought this for me." Ivy continued, "I don't know where they bought it, but they gave it to me because in Chinese school we have to use it." Ivy recalled using her dictionary all the time on her homework and looking up the meaning of different words. Symbolically, Ivy's dictionary illustrated the importance of keeping up with her Mandarin proficiency as a connection with her cultural background and communication with her parents. Ivy shared, "My mom, she knows more simplified, and my dad knows more traditional. Whenever I use Google Translate to help them translate something, I usually switch between traditional and simplified depending on who's asking." Although this was not an example of using her tattered dictionary, the idea that Ivy can decipher the translations she makes for her parents, if they are simplified or traditional, relates to where she views differences between Taiwanese and Chinese practices.

Ivy suggested her mom was unlike stereotypes of Asian American parents. Ivy shared, "My mom's kind of pushy about the personal stuff, like relationships, but other than that, I don't think she's pushy. She can get pretty pushy, but in terms of school, she's not as pushy." Ivy went further:

I was grateful that my parents were just not like that, that they didn't pressure

me to make me go to med school or become a doctor. As long as I was happy,

they were okay with it. There's not very much of a high expectation... to get

straight A's. I was expected to get decent grades, maybe not fail anything or

get a C, but get decent grades. I didn't have to get straight A's. That took off

a lot of stress that could have occurred.

Ivy also shared, "I was grateful that my parents were just not like that, that they didn't

pressure me or make me go to med school or become a doctor. As long as I was

happy, they were okay with it." Ivy recognized her assumptions of Asian American

parents and was thankful her parents differed from those assumptions.

In learning more about her cultural background, Ivy shared that she is

connected to the Taiwanese American student organization on campus. As a

commuter student, Ivy was able to arrange regular overnight stays with a friend so

that she could attend the evening Taiwanese American student organization meetings

once a week. Ivy shared that TASO is "literally the only thing I go to" on campus.

She decided to join TASO because "it's more just being around people like me. The

Taiwanese culture part and learning more [was] learned at Chinese school." And for

her, TASO's functions "reiterate what I already know." Being a commuter student,

Ivy was limited in how much time she can invest in TASO. Nonetheless, Ivy

demonstrated a clear commitment and dedication to TASO. Ivy shared that she had

an interest in becoming an officer of the organization, but she reflected "I didn't think

I'd be able to handle commuting plus [an] officer position. You have to be really

involved in order to do that, since I'm commuting, I wouldn't be able to be as

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involved as I would like to be." For Ivy, TASO "provide[d] a nice place where I can make friends that understand where I come from and what I've experienced. That's pretty much it, just a nice family to get to know." Ivy shared that it took some time for her to feel bonded to TASO. Ivy reflected that it was participation in TASO events that truly helped her bond and connect with other members. Ivy said:

> It was very awkward at first, because I was the only one going that I knew, so I mostly just sat there very quiet. Eventually, I broke out of my shell and started making more friends that were in [TASO], but in the beginning, it was very awkward. A normal person would probably leave and not go anymore, but I just kept going, mostly because I had nothing else to do.

It was TASO's sponsored Night Market event that brought people together. Although Ivy reflected that TASO was a place where she was simply reminded of what she learned in Chinese school, it appeared that TASO was also a place where Ivy could learn more about Taiwanese specific events that she could not remember from when she was young or repeatedly heard people talk about in their time in Taiwan. Ivy remembered:

> Night Market was a big one. I remember people telling me about Night Market when they went back to Taiwan. I'd be like, what's Night Market? Then you come to [TASO] and they're like, oh, we're going to have a Night Market. That was interesting to learn about more because I don't remember anything from when I was younger and small.

At Pearl University, TASO replicated a Night Market event each spring semester. Ivy described the Night Market as:

the biggest event TASO has [and] you do a lot of bonding because of that.

There's a lot of volunteers. You start volunteering for the event, and we were

just starting to frantically get it together, and that's how we all bonded.

At the Night Market event, Ivy shared that TASO offered games and foods to simulate a Night Market in Taiwan. Specifically, Ivy talked about chòudòufu and how well known "stinky tofu" is in Taiwan. The last time Ivy was in Taiwan, she was five years old, but she shared that "I heard the food is really good" and it is something that makes her want to go back to Taiwan.

Ivy was clear in her desire to return to Taiwan to create new memories, now that she is older and understands more about the unique differences between China and Taiwan. Ivy compared China and Taiwan:

I know that [Taiwan's] not communist and [Taiwan's] more democratic. I also know that because of those politics you don't have to get a visa to go to Taiwan. You have to get a visa to go to China. That's the extent of how much I know.

Ivy knows more than what she shared and described, but she reflected that she would have more clarity if she could go back to Taiwan. Ivy purported, "maybe my viewpoint will change once I go back to Taiwan, but for now, I have this good memory of Taiwan, and China's just more negative... I'm not very fond of it. I always hear good things about Taiwan." Ivy said, "I want to go back to Taiwan to just compare." Nonetheless, Ivy's story rests in this place of embracing her cultural background with a preference for Taiwan.

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Lucy: "I want Taiwan to be a country. I don't want it to be part of China"

Lucy was a senior Sociology & Information Systems student at Pearl University. Lucy strongly identified as Taiwanese American. Lucy was proud to call herself Taiwanese American and her story involved experiences traveling back to Taiwan, understanding Taiwanese history and politics, and supporting others in finding their own connection to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Lucy was born in the United States., but both her parents were born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States as students. Lucy suggested many Taiwanese Americans who immigrated to the U.S. were "highly, highly educated" and this shaped the experience Taiwanese Americans. Lucy shared:

> My mom came here as a graduate student. [And,] my Dad came here actually
>
> as a high school student. I guess he would be considered 1.5 or whatever.
>
> They both strongly identify as Taiwanese American.

Much of Lucy's initial pride and identity as Asian American and Taiwanese American came from her parents' encouragement. Lucy and her younger brother both attended Chinese school and grew up in communities heavily populated by Asian Americans. Lucy shared, "I think going to high school there was an Asian American club [and] I was like 'cool, more people who are also Asian' [and] of course [in Chinese school] there were also mainly Asians." Lucy continued, "I've always been surrounded by a lot of people who look like me." In addition, Lucy grew up with Mandarin Chinese. Lucy shared:

> I can type. I can write some. I can read some. I can write some, but not
>
> enough, not nearly fluently. I'm more fluent I think in speaking and listening

[and] my reading and writing is probably like fifth grader level. I can type

pretty well I think because typing is a lot easier for me because since I can say

it, I can just type. I occasionally get a couple of words wrong here or there

and my Mom laughs at me, but she understands what I'm talking about.

Lucy recalled that there was a period when she was younger where her mom

expressed that she and her brother were not speaking Mandarin at home. Lucy

remembered:

There was a while where I spoke more English than Mandarin at home.

Maybe like middle school, early high school. Then, my Mom was like, "You

don't speak Chinese with me anymore." Both my brother [and I] spoke

Chinese at home after that.

Lucy went further and shared a time when she understood her mom speaking

Taiwanese to her. Lucy was not the only participant who spoke about understanding

Taiwanese, but was the only participant that spoke about it in a way that

demonstrated her desire to hold onto her minimal Taiwanese proficiency. Lucy

reflected:

...this one time when she told me like, "Go do your homework" in Taiwanese.

It sounds so similar to how you say it in Mandarin that I actually understood

her. I was like, "Yeah okay." She's like, "Really?" I know a couple of

phrases here and there, not enough to understand what people are saying.

Lucy also reflected, "I do speak Mandarin, not like fluently, but decently well, that if

you're talking to me in Mandarin I can talk back to you. I'm pretty in touch with my

Taiwanese heritage. I've gone back to Taiwan a lot." The ability to share and

communicate her experiences and memories of Taiwan was a point of pride for Lucy. It demonstrated the pride Lucy has in her cultural background and identity as a Taiwanese American.

Lucy shared that one of the great benefits of going back to Taiwan with her parents was that they were open to more things. For instance, Lucy shared a memory of going to a candy shop with her mom during one of their many trips back to Taiwan. Lucy recalled:

> One of my favorite places, when I was little going back to Taiwan, was the fact that my Mom would basically let me buy anything in terms of candy, sweets, just snacks because you couldn't get them in the U.S. Whenever we were in Taiwan, she'd be like, "Yeah. Go ahead. Buy this snack. Buy that snack." I'd be like, "Oh my gosh, this is great." Because when we're in the U.S., she's like, "Don't buy chips. Don't buy candy." Then we go out to Taiwan she's like, "Yeah, anything you want." That was always great.

Lucy's parents would take Lucy and her brother back to Taiwan every other year. Lucy offered several memories and experiences related to her trips and return to Taiwan:

> When I go back there, we go out to eat a lot. I usually end up staying with family. When I was younger, we would still, occasionally they would take me, "Let's go do Taipei 101 and go right to the top." We very rarely do touristy things. Every once in a while, at least once, whenever I'm there with my parents, my Mom will take me to the temple.

Given the number of times Lucy went back with her family, she wanted the experience of returning to Taiwan on her own and experiencing it from a different perspective. During a summer of her college experience, Lucy participated in a three-month internship program in Taiwan. Lucy saw this opportunity as "first time in Taiwan without my parents hovering over me the entire time. It was less visiting relatives and more of getting to know Taiwan in a different sense." On this experience and return to Taiwan, Lucy reflected that she was able to spend her time with people who were not necessarily from Taiwan but still in her peer group. Lucy suggested, "I think going with other people who are my age and a lot them actually probably haven't been to Taiwan before, they would look up stuff and be like... this is so cool." Lucy felt that this gave her an opportunity to see a "not like traditional" side of Taiwan. It is a side that Lucy said, "I necessarily wouldn't have gone when I was with my parents."

As for the actual internship portion of her return to Taiwan, Lucy did not have a positive experience with the program that sponsored the experience. Lucy recalled, "they took us around Taiwan for a week or two and there was like two hundred and fifty of us in these buses, nine buses. I hated it. The actual trip itself because they treated us like children." The part of the experience that Lucy disliked the most was the enforcement of a curfew for the participants in the internship program. Lucy said, "curfews is the one thing that really got to me. They would come [and] check on us in bed, in the hotel at night." Lucy recalled that she shared with her mom these negative experiences and her mom replied, "this is how they treat you in Taiwan." Albeit, this did not diminish Lucy's Taiwanese American pride. Lucy confidently

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stated, "I'm very comfortable with my Taiwanese American identity. I advocate, I definitely advocate for it."

For Lucy, understanding her Taiwanese American identity involves learning more about Taiwanese history and politics. Lucy learned a lot about Taiwanese politics and history and found herself to be more activist-oriented than most of her Taiwanese American peers. Lucy shared, "I think a lot of what I know about Taiwanese politics and even Taiwanese history is most of the time what I learned on my own." Lucy suggested that her interest in learning more came from her parents, but it was not until later in life that she decided to learn more about historic events and politics. Lucy offered:

> When I was growing up, my parents actually really encouraged me to learn a
>
> lot about the news and get involved in politics. I didn't, just because I don't
>
> know, I was a little kid. I'm like, "I don't want to read the news or anything."
>
> It wasn't until maybe like late middle school when the Obama Presidential
>
> Campaign and everything. Then in high school when my classmates were
>
> really politically involved that I was like, maybe I should learn. Then, I think
>
> maybe like late high school, early college, I was like, I don't know anything
>
> about Taiwanese politics. I do a lot of Wikipedia research for the most part.
>
> My parents occasionally talk Taiwanese politics but very rarely. When they
>
> do, I'm like, barely understand this.

Lucy shared that she learned on her own about the following events:

> I learned a little bit about the Nationals Government coming to Taiwan. Then,
>
> was the White Terror, and a lot of this oppression and the actual military rule

basically. Then, the transfer of power in that one election. They finally let an

election happen and the transfer. There's still a lot of bad feelings all around

between different populations in Taiwan.

This reflection led Lucy to share what she has also learned about more recent student

activism in Taiwan. Lucy connected the activism she learned about in Taiwan to the

activism she engages in around advocating for Asian Americans here in the United

States. Lucy was also the only participant who overtly identified herself as an

activist. More specifically, Lucy was the only participant who talked about the recent

Sunflower movement in Taiwan and the Black Lives Matter movement in the United

States.

Lucy shared a memory of learning about student activism while she was in

Taiwan, during her internship experience. She recalled being in a museum and

listening to how student activism has changed over time in Taiwan:

They had an exhibit that they created on student activism in Taiwan. The lady

who was walking us through the exhibit didn't really not speak English that

well because she got to the point where I could understand a lot of the

students were really, really involved and really active in trying to push for

democracy or push against China sometimes. There's a lot of different

student activist movements. That was briefly after the Sunflower Movement

happened in Taiwan, and also just a lot of like activism happening on campus

with Black Lives Matter and all that.

Being engaged and active around supporting her cultural background, identity, and

the experiences of other minoritized students was important to Lucy.

On campus, Lucy became active and involved in the Asian Pacific American academic studies program, the campus cultural center, and Taiwanese American student organization. Lucy reflected that her interest in being involved and engaged started in high school:

> I've always thought, in high school, because a lot of my friends were also politically aware, I also just knew a little bit [about] stereotypes, that's a thing. I understand how some are formed. I think college has been pretty big for me. Second semester, I became an intern in an Asian Pacific American [studies] and intern at the [campus cultural center].

About her time in the cultural center, Lucy said that it was "where I met a lot of people who, not that I didn't know people who weren't Taiwanese before, but people who were other Asian Americans who also felt really strongly about their own cultures and about activism." Lucy appreciated how the campus cultural center connected her to other Asian American students and groups on campus.

With TASO, Lucy worked to host a Taiwanese American student conference. Lucy referred to her participation in conference planning as:

> ...my biggest impact on people in terms of Taiwanese influence. I remember for the conference I hosted, I organized an identity workshop... because Pearl has some great resources for Asian Americans. We have some of the best resources, and getting to share those resources with people of other schools. These couple of kids... were like, "Wow, we've never had this kind of experience. We never heard about these things." They're like, "We want to bring these kind of activities, identity activities back to [campus]."

Lucy reflected, "I want to belong" and her involvement with TASO through conference planning or otherwise was her way to build her own community where she could be Taiwanese American on campus. Lucy reflected a deep connection to her Taiwanese American identity and culture. Lucy's story was about her activist-orientation that was illustrated in her knowledge of Taiwan's Sunflower movement and mention of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States.

Oliver: "I love Taiwan so much"

Oliver was a first year Computer Science student at Pearl University. He was born in the United States, but his parents were born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States for graduate studies. Oliver came to his interviews with a great deal of pride and excitement. He was eager to answer questions and talk about his Taiwanese background and connections. Oliver's story centered on the influence of his parents, engagement in cultural events, and wholehearted pride in being Taiwanese American.

Oliver attributed his knowledge of Taiwan and Taiwanese culture to his parents. He suggested that he has a natural inclination and connection to different cultures and it is simply happenstance that he has a strong interest in Taiwanese culture because his parents are from Taiwan. Oliver stated:

> I feel like I'm pretty much interested in all cultures just because my parents are Taiwanese I have more information about Taiwan culture. If my parents were from, I don't know, Saudi Arabia, I think I would then be a fan of Saudi Arabia and stuff.

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When Oliver was younger his parents enrolled him and his two sisters in Chinese school. By sending Oliver and his sisters to Chinese school, Oliver's parents encouraged language skills, knowledge of cultural events, and imparted an importance in his academics. Oliver shared that he learned to read and write "traditional [characters]" and reflected that his "reading and writing is a lot worse than [his] speaking and listening." In addition to learning Mandarin, Oliver said that he "found bits and pieces of things that [he] found interest, like Lion Dance." Oliver said that he became captain of his Lion Dance group and they performed "at Chinese New Year" and it was something he continued after his time in Chinese school. Oliver shared that the Lion Dance group continued to "perform[s] at Chinese New Year, but [they] get other gigs as well just like [he] performed for a Chinese Ambassador once."

Oliver was not only enrolled in Chinese school in the United States, but his parents also enrolled him in a Taiwanese camp during one of his many trips back to Taiwan. Oliver recalled that when he was younger and participating in a Taiwanese campus in Taiwan many of his peers called him "měiguó rén" which translates into English as "American person." Oliver shared:

> I found out that Americans were really popular in Taiwan. So, everyone would be like, "Oh you're a foreigner. Měiguó rén help me out with this," or like, "měiguó rén, do this." Yeah, I got called "měiguó rén" a lot.

For Oliver, he did not find this to be disparaging. Oliver reflected:

> I liked it. It's kind of like an endearment thing, I would say. It felt like an endearment thing. It wasn't derogatory. Everyone looked up to me.

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Everyone was like, "Oh you're so amazing," so I thought like a good title, like a badge I would wear, it symbolized. It's kind of how like I view about my Taiwanese culture now.

Oliver also shared that although he was different from the people he interacted with in Taiwan he appreciated it because he viewed it as "a good feeling to know people care about you and stuff." His time in the Taiwanese camp was a time when he felt cared for by others. Oliver offered that he tries to share the feelings he gets from Taiwan and Taiwanese culture with others. He suggested, "I think you have to try to simulate Taiwan. You have to like emanate [it]. When I go to Taiwan I feel all good feelings and stuff so I try to put good feelings into other people."

It was clear and evident that Oliver has a deep passion and care for Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Oliver shared "I love Taiwan so much" and felt that "[he] should [return] to Taiwan more often." Oliver even suggested that he "really would like Taiwan to be recognized in the [United Nations]." However, Oliver communicated that the political tensions around Taiwan's independence may not be for him. Oliver offered:

There's a lot of political heat between people who think Taiwan should be a part of China and Taiwan to be separate. I think Taiwan should be separate, but I don't want to get involved in that political heat.

Oliver showed that although he does not want to get involved in the "political heat" of Taiwan's relationship with China, he "[feels] like Taiwan is a lot like America" and this "fits [him] perfectly so like the lifestyle of people in Taiwan is like, the character of people in Taiwan is a lot like people in America." This rendered the

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character of people in China to be either too different or distant for Oliver. Oliver shared "I just don't feel as strong a connection to China, I guess, as [I do] to Taiwan."

Oliver carried his enthusiasm for Taiwan into his on and off campus involvements. As mentioned earlier, Oliver continued to participate in a Lion Dancing group with a club unaffiliated with Pearl University. He was also involved in a martial arts club on and off campus, in addition to his membership in Tzu Chi off campus and TASO on campus.

Oliver found his fondness for martial arts through a relative in Taiwan and his parents. Oliver shared:

> When I was young, we just went to visit family and stuff. I really liked
> visiting my aunt on my dad's side because mainly she could speak English
> pretty well and she was really fun and stuff. She was my inspiration for
> martial arts because she was, I think she won like second place in like a Tai
> Chi competition.

The form of martial arts that Oliver was involved with was not Tai Chi, but Wushu. Oliver spoke about being involved with Wushu with his siblings since he was five years old: "I think it was originally my parents forcing my sister to exercise and get acquainted through a cultural thing. Then, I just kind of did whatever my older sister did at the time..." In describing Wushu, Oliver suggested, "Wushu's like gymnastics and punching, but you don't really get it until you see it, experience it." Oliver went further and reflected, "It's something I wear proudly and I think it's really beautiful and special." Oliver also found that Wushu "sets [him] apart from most other people." Oliver shared his Wushu silks during his second interview. He looked at

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them and commented "it's really pretty." Like the way Oliver appreciated how he was referred to as "měiguó rén" in his Taiwanese camp, Oliver valued Wushu for how it "sets [him] apart" from others.

Another involvement that Oliver spoke about was his involvement in the community service organization Tzu Chi. Like Daniel, Oliver shared that he was involved with Tzu Chi because "I like helping people." Oliver shared, "you don't have to be Buddhist to join the club. You can just like helping people. They're not going to turn down you for not being Buddhist." Oliver contrasted his involvement with Tzu Chi with his participation with TASO on campus. Oliver referred to Tzu Chi "like a smaller [TASO]." He also suggested the membership of Tzu Chi had "like similar people, but [TASO's] more like a party club, but Tzu Chi actually having a purpose, they're actually doing something." Oliver's involvement in these different organizations signaled that he was someone who became involved in organizations and clubs with a purpose. The purpose of Lion Dance was the continue and carry forward a cultural expression, Wushu was to stay active and involved with his interest in martial arts, Tzu Chi was to stay engaged in giving back to others, and TASO was to remain connected to his friends.

Oliver's involvement in TASO was social. Multiple times, Oliver referred to TASO as "the pseudo-frat because it's so cliquey." Oliver suggested that many of his friends were also involved in TASO and came from his previous Chinese school experience. The importance of this friend group became clearer in Oliver's second interview. Oliver said:

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A lot of the kids from all of the Chinese schools I went to go to [Pearl University] so I see a lot of them here. As they put it, it's like 13th grade. It's pretty much a continuation of high school.

Having friends and people he recognized at Pearl was a big part of Oliver's decision to attend Pearl. In addition, Oliver found it easier to have friends who also shared his cultural background. Oliver shared, "it easier to connect with people of my own culture" and this mattered in the context of his depression and anxiety. Oliver suggested that having his community of friends from Chinese school at Pearl was helpful because it meant people around him who were familiar with his struggles. Oliver shared:

I have a few friends who know my situation. I can actually pour out feelings to like talk about if I'm crying or something. So far it hasn't come to that, which is good because of the other reason. I don't know. I have friends. It's nice to be around them.

Oliver also shared that his parents supported him around his depression and anxiety as well. He stated, "yeah, my parents are pretty Americanized so when I discovered I was depressed they were pretty accepting like we should get you help." He went further and stated, "I hear a lot of my Asian friends talking about how their parents are like stuck up." Oliver suggested that his parents differed from his Asian friends because "[they] have learned a lot from me going to therapy, too. They've been part of that..." Oliver shared information about his depression and anxiety towards the end of his interviews. He was nonchalant and brief with this topic. Albeit, Oliver's remarks suggested he recognizes addressing mental health concerns such as

depression and anxiety may not be an expected or normal practice amongst Asian American students and their families.

As a first year student at Pearl, Oliver has not had an opportunity to study abroad, but talked about his interest in studying abroad. Oliver shared, "I was thinking China, but now that I think about it, Taiwan might be more fun." Oliver demonstrated a great deal of pride in his cultural background, actively engaged in organizations connected to his identity, and consciously made decisions that would keep him connected to Taiwanese American communities.

Grand Narrative

The stories and experiences shared by the participants suggested themes that describe meaningful and significant connections to Taiwanese culture, but in different ways. Each theme resembles an overarching experience espoused by the participants. The participants spoke about recognizing their parents' influence, navigating multiple cultural contexts, finding meaningful connections in non-Taiwanese American settings, and making decisions that move them closer to Taiwanese culture. These themes suggest that participants engage and relate to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture in unique and diverse ways. The themes are described using select participant stories, the stories that best relate and illuminate the nuances of what participants communicated.

Recognizing Their Parents' Influence: "I Appreciate My Parents More"

Participants discussed the influence their parents had on them in relation to language skills, celebration of cultural events, and encouragement to do well in

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school. Participants' parents served as a pivotal point of connection to participants' cultural background. Participants shared that their parents were instrumental in enrolling them in Chinese school where they were able to learn and practice Mandarin and cultural events. Participants also noted that their parents did not pressure them to succeed academically in the ways Asian Americans may be stereotyped to succeed. For example, as a point of reference, Daniel spoke about assumed expectations between Asian Americans and education and stated:

> I think that, this may be [for] Asian Americans in general, or Taiwanese Americans in particular... there is this focus that above all education comes first. And there are particular subjects... that are preferred. And that's it education first and then everything else second whether that's social life, mental health, or extra-curricular.

Daniel went further and asserted, for his parents' generation, "I think it's still evident that they viewed education as a way of finding a job here." These generalizations made by Daniel served as a backdrop to how participants spoke about their own parents' position with education.

Participants considered their parents to be more supportive and encouraging with school, instead of conforming to ideologies that "education first and then everything else second" as suggested by Daniel. Participants also recognized that their parents were influential in initiating their cultural connections. All the participants named ways in which their parents engaged them in cultural activities related to their cultural heritage. This was particularly true around language, cultural events, and education.

Brian appreciated his parents for sending him to Chinese school because it "was a way to meet people" and "there was a kind of shared identity... especially for the one I went to, it was predominantly a Taiwanese-Chinese school." Brian shared that, at the time, he was dismayed by having extra schooling, but Brian also shared "I guess [it] was unique that we have this gathering of Taiwanese American kids, and we kind of grew up together." Brian also shared that he appreciated his parents for supporting his language skills. Brian communicated, "The majority of the Chinese I've learned is, I think, just from talking to my mom." He went further and noted, "I only [spoke] Chinese at home growing up, and the Chinese went downhill as I learned English." Brian reflected that he mostly spoke Mandarin with one parent over another, "yeah with my mom, always Mandarin. With my dad it's like 50-50 [Mandarin and English]." Brian suggested that his Mandarin skills, learned in Chinese school and from his parents, were useful during his study abroad trip back to Taiwan.

Alice shared that she mostly communicated with her parents in English. Alice noted, "sometimes, they speak to me in Chinese or they speak to each other in Chinese, and I just answer back in English." Alice went further and shared, "I love languages and I feel so sad that my parents, I'm not blaming them completely, but I wish they [would have] just made me speak it." The influence Alice's parents had was unlike Brian's story, but demonstrated a place where Alice's parents were still influential in her language skills.

Language skills, albeit not comprehensive or fluent for participants, provided participants with a means of communication with their parents, relatives, and friends.

Participants' Mandarin speaking skills ranged from understanding words to being able to form and communicate simple sentences and ideas. Similarly, participants' Mandarin listening and comprehension skills also ranged from recognizing words or phrases to understanding complete sentences. Participants' reading and writing skills were more varied. Participants ranged from no writing or reading skills to be able to read and write or even type and text traditional characters. There was no one participant who was confidently fluent in Mandarin and only three participants who shared recognition of Taiwanese words and phrases. However, all participants attributed their language skills to enrollment in Chinese school and communication with their parents at home. Ami referred to her parents' encouragement of Mandarin in the following way:

> Besides like the usual food that we eat, the language that we speak at home, it's kind of like a nice celebration of like "oh we are not Caucasian American." We're from somewhere else and this is a good way to celebrate where we're from and who we are.

Participants found learning and speaking Mandarin was one way their parents instilled a practice of culture and identity. This was also the way participants viewed cultural celebrations.

For Alice, Chinese school was a place where she noticed her parents' influence since they were heavily involved in school activities. Alice shared:

> My parents are both really involved in Chinese school. My dad was one of the organizers for [Chinese New Year] every year. Basically, they would get every class, grade level, to do some sort of performance. There will be a skit,

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or like a dance, or whatever. The older kids would emcee the event. There

would be bingo, there would be a lion dance, an orchestra. Some people in

the community would do sometimes... a Chinese aerial thing [with string].

Even though her parents were involved with Chinese school events like the

celebration of Chinese New Year at the school, Alice still commented that she

"[wished] that my family was more like we celebrated things" since "we don't really

have these big fun customs besides Chinese New Year..." Alice shared that her

parents could have done more for her in terms of encouraging her to speak or

understand Mandarin and cultural celebrations. For Ami, she did not express

reflections on what her parents could have done for her. She simply shared a great

deal of enthusiasm around the celebration of Chinese New Year. Ami remembered

that her parents, "they were like preparing for Chinese New Year like buying

everything, all the snacks and everything. That's probably like one of my favorite

holidays of everything."

Similarly, Oliver was thankful for his parents' influence related to celebration

of cultural events. Oliver, like all participants, attended Chinese school and referred

to it as a situation where his parents "were like, just go." Oliver suggested that he

was too young, at the time, to understand the relevance of Chinese school. He shared:

It was probably too complicated for me to understand the cultural importance

of this. But as I got older [my parents] were like "yeah you need to go

because it's good for your cultural heritage, your understanding of who you

are."

Oliver appreciated his parents for sending him and his sisters to Chinese school. It was the place where he learned about Lion Dance and Wushu, two activities that he continued to be involved with while in college. In relation to Lion Dance and Wushu, Oliver shared, "this is my Taiwanese culture. I still do them. I guess I stay connected by these activities."

Participants focused largely on the celebration of Chinese New Year except for Oliver who spoke more about his involvement with Lion Dance and Wushu. Participants' memories of celebrating cultural events started with celebration of Chinese New Year in Chinese school. Ivy shared that Chinese New Year celebrations involved Lion Dance, painting, display of martial arts, and mooncake. Ami reflected, "I really love Chinese New Year. I love the festivities. I love that everyone is so festive... celebrating Chinese New Year [was] kind of [a] special event." The excitement and energy that was shared in remembering and describing Chinese New Year signaled that participants viewed Chinese New Year as a major cultural event for their family and other Taiwanese Americans. The celebration of Chinese New Year was the only traditional and significant cultural event brought up by all participants. Moreover, it was raised as an event that was celebrated with family and friends in Chinese school and at home. Participants, like Oliver, attributed his knowledge of how to celebrate Chinese New Year to his parents. Oliver appreciated his parents for enrolling him in Chinese school and engaging him in cultural events. Oliver acknowledged, "I appreciate my parents more... I'm like thank you for amending, not rejecting your culture, but amending your life policy." Oliver

suggested that how his parents adapted to their environment influenced him in a positive way.

All participants had immigrant parents. Participants shared that their parents, as immigrants, contributed to experiences around language, culture, or school. This was most evident for Alice and Oliver. They suggested that their parents' immigration status affected the influence their parents had on their experience with Chinese school. In Alice's case, her parents did not expect language proficiency at home. She wished they would have done more with her around language and even cultural competency. For Oliver, he suggested his parents' diligence to provide him with cultural engagement activities supported him around his mental health; which happened in ways that were a result of his parents adjusting to life in the United States. Amber's experience with her parents differed from the other participants. Amber was the only participant to immigrate with her parents.

Amber shared that her parents decided to immigrate to the United States because "my mom and dad, they thought life was better, in a sense that it's less intense, maybe in terms of academics [and] more free to do other things than academics and I just think the environment." Amber continued, "[my parents] wanted to have a, whatever, good environment. So, we moved to the U.S." Amber found that her experience as an immigrant differed from her parents' experience. She offered a story on how her family became United States' citizens as an example:

> I had to go take the test... it's 100 questions and you have to guess and get all of them right. There's a lot of things I don't know, like who's my person in the Senate. Yeah, representative or something. I think it's relatively easy,

like I just took a few hours and studied and then I passed, because they give

you the easy questions. You can only can take it twice, but my parents, like,

they had to listen to the audio in the car for a month to study for it. The 100

question test that took me only a couple of hours.

Nonetheless, the decision to move Amber and her family to the United States was one

clear way in which Amber recognized a difference in academic pressures. Amber

reflected that if she were still in Taiwan, like her cousins, "[Taiwan] forces you to

know English, too, and most of them hate it... I'd be a totally different person." A

similar sentiment was held by other participants as well.

Ivy, Alice, and Daniel reflected in their individual narratives that their parents

were different from stereotypical archetypes of Asian American parents. Ivy, Alice,

and Daniel each shared examples of times when their parents asserted positive

support, as opposed to negative pressure on them to succeed in their academic

interests. Ivy shared her mom can get "pretty pushy" with her personal life, "but in

terms of school, she's not as pushy." With her academics, Ivy shared:

I was grateful that my parents were just not like that, that they didn't pressure

me to make me go to med school or become a doctor. As long as I was happy,

they were okay with it. There's not very much of a high expectation... to get

straight A's. I was expected to get decent grades, maybe not fail anything or

get a C, but get decent grades. I didn't have to get straight A's. That took off

a lot of stress that could have occurred.

Daniel stated:

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I think my mom is very understanding that at the end of the day she just

means the best for me and wants the best for me. So, I personally don't feel

that much pressure, though it does kind of influence the way I think. And I

still, personally I am interested in medicine...

Similarly, Alice suggested:

[My parents] were very conscious of it [and] they never asked me for my

grades, or anything. My dad would always say like, "oh, you should be doing

this," but more in a joking way. I kind of knew that they would be supportive

no matter what. I didn't realize all the pressure that's on other kid's parents,

or kids... I would hear it a lot. I know that they always talk about [it]... I feel

like Chinese people are a lot more blunt about [it] than maybe American

people.

Ivy, Daniel, and Alice shared reflections and thoughts related to how their parents

encouraged and supported them around grades and academic interests. None of the

participants shared any messages of their parents pressuring them to succeed with

high and exceptional grade point averages or test scores. This was simply not an

emergent theme or storyline from participants. On the contrary, participants

emphasized their parents' encouragement and support.

Participants preferred their parents' support and encouragement versus high

expectations and pressure around education. This provided participants a sense of

freedom and independence to pursue their desired academic interests, even if the

interest conformed to stereotyped expectations, as was the case for Daniel.

Participants attributed their immigration status as one rationale as to why their parents

were more encouraging and supportive around education. Daniel suggested the expectations around academic success were higher for his parents' generation because it translated into a job. Somewhat similarly, Lucy suggested expectations were different based on "a Taiwanese American community shaped I think because a lot of our parents who came [to the U.S.] were highly, highly educated." Nonetheless, as Ivy indicated, "I was grateful that my parents were just not like that, that they didn't pressure me or make me go to med school or become a doctor. As long as I was happy, they were okay with it." This was the resounding sentiment shared by the participants around their parents' influence with education.

Participants saw where and how their parents influenced them. Participants recognized that their parents' actions around Chinese school, Chinese New Year, and encouragement in education all led to some form of cultural connections and an understanding of their Taiwanese heritage. As Daniel purported, "the things that happen in your life are the result of your previous actions." This was a Buddhist belief that Daniel shared in relation to the ways in which he has come to understand his culture. He has come to understand his culture because of his previous experiences. As such, this emergent theme highlighted how past enrollment in Chinese school led participants to language skills, cultural events, and ultimately a recognition of how their parents differed from racial and ethnic stereotypes.

Navigating Multiple Cultural Contexts: "Where I am Unique"

Participants discussed their experiences as Taiwanese Americans as a process of moving between Taiwanese and American culture. As a Taiwanese American, Brian shared, "Like you're American, but you're not American. Like you're

Taiwanese, but you're not Taiwanese." Brian continued, "you have these two forces and one's a little stronger when you're in America, the other's a little stronger [when you're] in Taiwan." Participants offered incidents where navigating multiple cultural contexts or being in-between cultures was felt through barriers and experiences of discrimination. The barriers appeared as stories that limited participants' connection to people or places whereas the experiences of discrimination were negative encounters around others' perceptions of participants' race or ethnicity. At the same time, there were also illustrations of holding multiple cultural contexts as an asset and point of pride. As Daniel put it, being Taiwanese American is "where I am unique." Therefore, this theme illustrated the ways in which participants negotiated conflicting and multiple results from navigating multiple cultural contexts.

Alice discussed being at a place where she has "taken [her culture] for granted," but at the same time she was still able to compare her cultural experiences from "a normal American" experience. For instance, Alice shared that when she was younger she had dinner at her friends' homes, friends who were not Taiwanese American or Asian American, and the practice of passing plates around was "the strangest thing" to her. Alice recalled:

> I thought that was the strangest thing ever. I didn't understand it all. They were like, can you pass me the entire plate? Just to get a couple things. I was like, why couldn't we just like, just like take it off the plate and put it in your bowl? Yeah, it's just different.

In addition, Alice shared that there are challenges that come with being Taiwanese American in the United States. Alice named language as a barrier to connecting with

her extended family. Alice identified times when it was difficult to communicate and connect with her relatives. Alice stated, "It was hard to get to know them because [of] the language barrier which kind of sucked." Despite this language barrier, Alice shared that she will always be in connection with her family since she has a Taiwanese background.

Born in Taiwan, Amber's experience of navigating multiple cultural contexts differed from Alice's story. Amber reflected that she thinks about what it would have been like if she had been born and raised in Taiwan:

All your life in America, you have your parents, and you have all these aunties and uncles that you talk with in Mandarin, but then all the kids, you talk to them in English. Newly-immigrated people, they're trying to learn English, so you talk in English with them, too. It's very different, being in Taiwan, and talking with people my age in Mandarin. Sometimes they have slang, but it's a different life. Sometimes I look at them and wonder what it would be like if I grew up in Taiwan, instead of moving.

Amber quickly moved on from this thought since it was not her reality. Amber suggested:

[It is] something I often think about, but then I think, the past happened, and this is who I am right now. I don't think I would necessarily want to change that, if I grew up in Taiwan and expect my life would be better, or I'd connect more. This is a different experience.

Being in-between cultures was largely situated in Amber's immigration status. Amber stated:

The immigrant experience is different if your parents are just immigrants,

compared to you being also immigrant, as well. I feel like there's an

experience that not a lot of people know about. I also feel scattered, in a way.

Amber shared negative experiences she has had that contributed to feeling

"scattered." She referenced comments people make who may be unfamiliar with

Taiwan.

I mean, I don't necessarily fault people for not knowing where Taiwan is. I

mean, it's small and it doesn't get a lot of attention. I'm okay, but then some

things, like I was talking about how I was born in Taiwan, and then you get

people who ask me about Thai food. I'm like, I don't know, I don't know if I

had Thai food before. Maybe I have once or twice, but I can't tell you if it's

good or not.

Although Amber stated she cannot "fault people for not knowing where Taiwan is,"

this does not negate Amber's frustration with people equating Taiwan to Thailand.

This comparison further demonstrated Amber's ties to Taiwan. It was important to

Amber that people recognize she's from Taiwan. Amber suggested that it was easy to

dismiss other people's assumptions, but overtime the assumptions and negative

experiences become shared experiences by many. Amber spoke about how people

make assumptions, negative in nature:

I think people have this view that I am smart, for some reason, even though I

never had to necessarily prove it or anything. They're like, "Wow," I don't

know if they're sincere or not, but I think there's some assumptions there that

I'm a nice person. Even though I haven't necessarily done anything nice for

them, but yeah, I think they have a generally positive view.

Amber reflected that she may notice more of the "little things" or the ways in which

she is treated differently because she immigrated with her parents.

Like Amber, noticing cultural differences, Ami shared an incident where she

witnessed her sister being treated differently because of her identity. Ami recalled,

"There was like a little girl and she pointed at my sister and tells her mom, 'look,

there's a yellow one.'" Ami shared this negative experience in a manner that

suggested this was a common occurrence for her sister. Ami indicated that being

Asian American and Taiwanese American in the United States was difficult. Ami,

like Brian, shared:

I don't feel entirely American so when I'm in America I'm like, "I'm not

American." When I go back to Taiwan, I'm not Taiwanese. I don't have

citizenship there or whatever so I'm like, "I'm American," but still I identify so

much with the place.

The idea that Ami considers where and when she identifies as American or

Taiwanese embodies the theme of navigating multiple cultural contexts. Ami stated,

"We're like torn between two cultures."

Brian's story further described the experience of navigating multiple cultures.

Brian shared that being "torn between two cultures" has not been a negative

experience for him. Brian stated, "I guess I feel pretty fortunate in the area I grew up

in. I don't think I really had one of those moments when I felt like being Asian was

disliked." Brian compared his experience to celebrity chef and author Eddie Huang. Brian described Eddie Huang:

> That guy was like the first famous person that I really connected with. His story is kind of the same as [me], Taiwanese American first generation born in the United States. I thought it was really cool how he could be so American - he's so American - but what he does is, he uses Taiwanese food as a way of expressing his culture and also connecting the two parts of his life. Taking Taiwanese food and making it a little bit more American. I just like watching his shows. I don't know, it's something I discovered recently, like the last couple of years, and something that I've really tried to keep up with. I just like what he's doing.

Brian viewed Eddie Huang as someone who was actively trying to change how Taiwanese Americans belong in the United States. Even as Brian reflected that he finds his multiple cultural connections to be an asset, he still offered examples of when he has struggled to find his own sense of belonging. Brian offered the following example of when he was in a restaurant in Taiwan:

> We were at a restaurant and the waiter, near the end of the meal, was saying, we were just talking to him and having a conversation, and he goes "you two are really funny" because he said I looked Taiwanese, but as soon as I opened my mouth he knew I wasn't. But then, my other friend didn't look Taiwanese, but as soon as he opened his mouth he knew he was Taiwanese.

Brian shared this story and reflected that he did not understand what it means to look or sound American or Taiwanese. Brian shared that he "could never tell the

difference until [someone] spoke [to him]." Brian also offered, "My dad says that I just look American. I don't know what that means." For Brian, his experience of being in-between cultures was present while he was in the United States or in Taiwan. However, it was during his semester abroad in Taiwan when he truly realized how he "co-exists in these two groups." Brian suggested, "I hadn't really experienced [two cultures] until I left America, I was the only person that was that specific combination of culture and, I don't know what word I'm looking for here but, yeah. This person." This experience was one that Brian celebrated as "unique." He shared, "I could kind of... pick who I want to be."

In Lucy's story, the dynamic of multiple cultures was highlighted in Lucy's ability to articulate stereotypes and need for student activism. Lucy stated, "I think I've embraced a lot of the stereotypes that come with being Taiwanese American, Asian American. I've never felt the model minority myth has ever hurt me." Lucy shared that she did not feel negative effects of the model minority myth; however, she still saw how it may negatively affect her and others without knowing it. For Lucy, she saw herself as fitting the myth:

> I played an instrument. I play piano. I'm not bad at math... I wasn't very bad at school. I am good at school. I'm generally a pretty quiet person. I'm not super shy, but I'm also not super outgoing.

Lucy shared that when it was possible and feasible she would try to defy or go against the model minority myth. She tried to challenge narratives that she felt were affecting Asian Americans. For example, Lucy shared a story where she asked a sociology instructor to include Asian Americans. Lucy recalled:

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Actually, one of my sociology teachers, he was a grad student who taught

contemporary United States issues. He would just talk a lot about Blacks and

Whites. One day I asked him in class. I was like, "Hey, what about Asians?"

He was like, "Asians are pretty much the same statistics as whites." Like,

you're pretty much White. He didn't say you're pretty much White, but that

was the feeling I got from him. I struggled so much that day to figure out why

I was so upset, right?

When sharing this scenario, Lucy showed visible frustration towards the incident.

Lucy insisted that she has "strong American values" and it was also "super important

to [her]" that she keeps her "Taiwanese heritage." However, it was evident that Lucy

was challenged by her values and heritage.

Participants' experiences of multiple cultural contexts elicited a balance of

tensions. There were tensions around being Taiwanese American in Taiwan versus in

the United States and having negative experiences associated with their identity

versus pride and celebration of their cultural background. Navigating of multiple

cultural contexts appeared relative to participants' environment, as opposed to

participants' disconnect or disassociation with their Taiwanese American identity and

background. Rather, it was evident that through these examples of navigating

multiple cultural contexts participants have a strong sense of their Taiwanese

American connection.

Finding Meaningful Connections in Non-Taiwanese American Settings:

"Culturally Aware of People"

Participants reflected that their experiences as Taiwanese Americans have been shaped by people who do not identify as Taiwanese American and when participants were not in Taiwanese American or Taiwanese cultural contexts. This was the experience of Alice and Ami while studying abroad in Europe. For the other participants, it was traveling or learning more about China or Chinese culture that propelled them to look more towards Taiwanese culture.

For Alice, she reflected that going abroad was a way to develop a more global mindset and enrich her academic experiences. At the same time, going abroad also meant she had not thought about the meaningful experiences that connected her to Taiwanese culture. Alice stated, "Last semester, I went abroad [to] have a global mindset and interact with people of different cultures, and wishing that I hadn't taken it for granted." Alice continued:

> I feel like when I was traveling a lot I met people who were from different countries. I would see things about their culture and think that they were so cool, like customs they had and food things, parts of their life that were very specific to their culture. I was like, wow, that's so cool, so different, and so unique, and stuff. I'm like, I wish that I had something like that.

Alice found uniqueness in other cultures, but questioned if she had found this in her own cultural background. It was when she compared herself to "very American" people that she realized that she has her own uniqueness. Alice reflected, "I do kind of compare to people who are straight up, I guess, very American. They have no

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connections to anything outside of America, I guess I have more." Alice showed

excitement that she would have more than being "very American."

Similarly, Ami went abroad and shared:

I spent the last semester abroad, I was in Denmark and I kind of had an

identity crisis, that's why I was really interested. I couldn't really identify with

being an American. When you introduce yourself you're like, "Oh, I'm from

the U.S." but I don't identify fully with like the entire American culture, the

way I grew up.

Ami asserted that her experience in Denmark prompted her to think about the

complexities of her own cultural identities. For Ami, this was less about how she

would communicate to others that she was American and Taiwanese, but more about

does she see herself as American and Taiwanese. Ami shared that she interacted with

people abroad who had strong ties to their country, place, and people. Ami reflected:

I didn't realize that people are so attached to their own country. Like me, I'm

like, yes, I'm from America, but like eh, but they're like, yeah, I can't believe

like someone mistaking me for Italian. I'm obviously German. I'm like okay.

That was interesting to see that. Yeah, I think I would say not that many of my

friends are Taiwanese American.

Ami explored the reality that not many of her friends identified as Taiwanese

American and questioned what this means for her and the connections she has to

Taiwanese culture.

Different from Alice and Ami, the other participants reflected that they felt

more aligned with Taiwanese culture after learning more about China or experiencing

Chinese culture. Simplistically, Amber stated, "our [Taiwanese] system is different and the money is different." Daniel had similar reflections, "Taiwan is not geographically the same as China [in] that it is an island country with a different culture, there is a different feel of it." Daniel went further and explained his position through an example. Daniel suggested that Hong Kong differed from Chinese culture and he sees this when people say they are from Hong Kong, not China. Daniel asserted that people from Hong Kong "don't say I'm from China, because people recognize that those two cultures are very different." Daniel shared that this was like how he viewed Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Taiwan was distinct and different from China and Chinese culture. How participants understood the distinctions and differences between China and Taiwan varied, but there was a consistent return to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture.

Brian shared that speaking Mandarin has been a major part of his upbringing and was a skill and ability that he was proud to have as a Taiwanese American. Brian shared that because of his time studying abroad in Taiwan and speaking Mandarin at home with his family, he learned about different Mandarin accents. Brian offered that hearing Mandarin from someone who was from China was "one of the biggest shocks [in] his life." Brian went on and shared, "I was like whoa, that sounds weird." This made Brian think about his own Mandarin accent and if he speaks Mandarin like someone from Taiwan. Brian suggested that people may be "confused because [my] accent was not quite Taiwanese, but it also wasn't not Taiwanese." For Brian, learning about Mandarin accents, from hearing a mainland China speaker, prompted

Brian to consider his own Mandarin accent and question how it connected him to Taiwanese culture.

Oliver and Lucy shared nuances in Chinese culture. Oliver strongly differentiated Chinese and Taiwanese culture, but highlighted that he does not "think Chinese people are [as] culturally aware of people who are like not outside of their culture." Oliver suggested that this was a difference in "mindset" and based upon his experiences in China. Oliver shared that he has traveled "once or twice [to China] and didn't like it." During one of his trips to China, Oliver had a negative experience on public transportation. Oliver stated, "We got on the metro and this old lady knocked me out of my seat, onto the ground. I'm like, what just happened. It was not a pleasant experience." For Oliver, the "mindset" of being more "culturally aware of people" was a "more westernized" concept. Oliver reflected, "I like Taiwan better than China... Taiwanese was more westernized so I can identify with that a little bit more [and] I like Taiwan more." The experiences and reflections that Oliver shared about his knowledge and time in China were echoed by Lucy.

Lucy offered a memory of her first time in China. Lucy shared:

I went with my grandmother. She's really old. She needs to sit down. I had to run into the Metro and sit down and just like save her a seat in order for her to get a seat, because otherwise she's like, even though she's super old, she was like 80 at that point, no one would have given her a seat. In Taiwan, on the metro, I'm constantly worried that I'm going to see an old person and not give them my seat. You have to give up your seat in Taiwan.

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Lucy's memory and experience with her grandmother mirrored Oliver's reflection that there was a different "mindset" in Chinese culture. Although Lucy shared that understanding another cultural context has helped her to connect with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture, she also communicated that Taiwanese culture was not entirely separate from Chinese culture. Lucy shared that her parents are from Taiwan, but she "thinks [her] dad's grandfather [is] from China and moved to Taiwan." This was similar for Ivy.

Ivy shared that she identified as "Chinese Taiwanese [because] I don't want to leave out my dad's side of the family or his side of the heritage. I just want to be clear that my parents are from China and Taiwan. I just want to make that clear." Therefore, China and Chinese culture was not outside of Ivy's cultural context, but Ivy shared "I don't want to get rid of my dad's heritage [and] because I've been to China. I'm not very fond of it and I always hear good things about Taiwan." Ivy suggested that her experiences in China were "just more negative" and she needs to "go back to Taiwan to just compare." Even though Ivy's cultural context was not entirely separate from Taiwan and Taiwanese culture there was a pull towards Taiwan that comes because of a non-Taiwanese cultural experiences.

Participants struggled and wavered in their distinctions between Chinese and Taiwanese culture. This made sense given four participants had parents or grandparents with direct connections to China. As a theme, finding meaningful connection in non-Taiwanese American settings was not about the distinctions and differences between China and Taiwan or Chinese and Taiwanese culture. This theme was guided by participants' stories that were not defined as specifically

Taiwanese or Taiwanese American centered. Participants identified experiences that were not centered on Taiwanese culture, but propelled them to consider their relationship and connection to Taiwanese culture. This happened through study and experiences abroad, not in Taiwan, for each of the participants highlighted in this theme. Participants were led to the conclusions that preferred and desired connections to Taiwan and their Taiwanese heritage.

Making Decisions to Move Closer to Taiwanese Culture: "A Period of Time Where I Probably Felt the Closest to Taiwanese Culture"

Participants actively engaged in Taiwanese cultural experiences separate from their family and parents to intentionally learn more about their cultural background, be around people who share similar experiences, or develop their own sense of Taiwanese culture. Every participant shared information on how their parents encouraged and engaged them in meaningful cultural connections. This was most evident in participants' stories of Chinese school, as indicated in another emergent theme. Alice shared that her parents "enrolled [her] in a Chinese school and it was a very Taiwanese community" and "pretty much all of the [families] were from Taiwan, which was nice." Chinese school was a place where participants learned, practiced, and maintained their Mandarin and became involved in different cultural celebrations and practices. Another point of exposure to their cultural background came in the form of family trips and vacations to visit extended family and friends in Taiwan. Chinese school and trips back to Taiwan were experiences led and directed by participants' parents and not guided by participants' self-interest. However, participants demonstrated self-interest and independent engagement through studying

abroad in Taiwan and becoming involved with Taiwanese American organizations on and off campus.

Amber, Ami, Brian, and Lucy each participated in study abroad opportunities in Taiwan. Brian reflected that studying abroad in Taiwan was an opportunity to be in Taiwan on his own. Brian shared, "I just didn't see myself having a lot of chances to go back. I saw that I had this really great opportunity to do this through school, so I took it." Brian reflected that "when you grow up in a Taiwanese household, nothing in Taiwan felt too foreign to [him]. It felt kind of like home, away from home." Brian studied in Taiwan for an entire semester; whereas Amber, Ami, and Lucy participated in Taiwanese exchange or internship programs. Ami described her internship program as the "Taiwanese government's [way] to bring back a lot of the Taiwanese talent." Ami found the program useful because it connected her to other people with parents from Taiwan, but living in other countries. Ami shared:

 [It] was really interesting to see how they want to bring back young Taiwanese people from overseas. I met a lot of people there who are similar to me, who grew up in the United States or like other [places] in the world where their parents are Taiwanese or something like that.

Amber shared that her program "brought [people] around Taiwan for six days" to see major tourist sites and also reflected that the internship portion of her program "wasn't' the most the most exciting [experience]." Similarly, Lucy reflected that the program she participated in "took us around Taiwan for a week or two and there were like 250 of us in these buses, nine buses." Lucy disliked this and the internship portion of her experience. Lucy shared:

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The internship itself, there were like three of us at the department I was

working at [and] they were nice. They didn't really speak any English.

Sometimes they spoke [Mandarin] that was a little above my level in terms of

the words they were using. I'm like I totally don't get what you're saying

right now. We didn't really get much work to do. We just goofed off with the

time mostly... They [didn't] really know what to do [with] us.

Even though Amber, Ami, and Lucy had parts of their programs that they either liked

or disliked, it was evident that they learned more about Taiwan and aspects of

Taiwanese culture through the process.

Amber reflected that she found "really interesting things in Taipei." Amber

shared:

They don't have public trash cans. They don't have that along the streets, but

they're still so clean. There's no trash in the streets. Overall, it was a good

way for me to immerse myself in the culture, then step back at the same time

and see where I fit in.

Amber suggested that at the start of her experience people assumed her to be someone

from outside of Taiwan. However, by the end, people accepted her as someone from

Taiwan. Amber shared, "In the beginning, they thought I was a foreigner and now

they think I'm from Taiwan!" In addition, Amber reflected that her participation in

the exchange program was "a period of time where I probably felt the closest to

Taiwanese culture." It was a time when Amber did not have family to guide her

around the country. Amber stated, "I could only observe and follow what others were

doing."

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Similarly, Ami shared that participating in her Taiwanese internship program afforded her an opportunity to connect with people who were also from Taiwan, but living in other countries. Ami recalled that when she was not at her internship she was spending time with the other participants. Ami shared, "we had a lot of mutual understanding or mutual non-understanding of things. It was like bonding. That was pretty nice." Ami reflected that she was "really thankful for [this] trip" and "it would be nice to go back once a year."

For Lucy, although she did not get a lot from her internship site, she recalled learning a lot about the history of Taiwanese student activism.

> [There was] an exhibit created on student activism in Taiwan... I could
>
> understand a lot of the students were really, really involved and really active
>
> in trying to push for democracy or push against China sometimes. There's a
>
> lot of different student activist movements. [This] was briefly after the
>
> Sunflower Movement happened in Taiwan, and also just a lot of like activism
>
> happening on campus with Black Lives Matter and all that.

Lucy reflected that learning about Taiwanese student activism encouraged her to be more of an activist herself. Lucy shared that she likes that there was a student activist-oriented past in Taiwan's history. Lucy stated, "This is really cool. This is my history. This is my past."

Alice, Daniel, Ivy, and Oliver also found their own engagement with Taiwanese culture in the form of involvement with Taiwanese and Taiwanese American organizations on and off campus. For a short period of time, Alice joined the TASO at Pearl University. Alice shared, "I went to three meetings or four

meetings my freshman year, like fall semester of freshman year." Alice discussed

going to TASO to "make friends with people who share similar interests to me..." but

she reflected that "I didn't really make as many friends in [TASO], so I fell out of it."

Although Alice did not continue her involvement with TASO, she acknowledged that

based on the "couple of their general board meetings and stuff it was fun [and] it's a

place to go." However, Alice considered that in her first year at Pearl she "never

really prioritized [her] culture" and more recently has a stronger desire to not "take

[her culture] for granted." This was part of what Alice realized when she studied

abroad in her senior year at Pearl.

Ivy also joined TASO. Ivy shared that joining and participating in TASO was

the only on campus cocurricular engagement she has at Pearl. Ivy stated, "It's

literally the only thing I go to." As a commuter student, Ivy discussed making special

arrangements to spend one night a week on campus with a friend so that she could

attend evening TASO meetings. Ivy began joining TASO in her freshman year. Ivy

shared, "I go to the general body meetings and I help with Night Market [event]." Ivy

reflected, "I haven't really learned anything that I haven't learned before [TASO].

It's mostly a refresher" of Taiwanese information. For Ivy, she sees TASO as a place

where she can connect with people with her similar background. Ivy stated, "I guess

it just provides a nice place where I can make friends that understand where I come

from and what I've experienced. That's pretty much it. Just a nice family to get to

know."

Oliver was one of more the involved and active participants. Oliver looked

for ways to connect through friendships and off campus organizations that carried

over from his time in Chinese school. Oliver discussed his participation with a Lion Dance club, Wushu, Tzu Chi, and TASO. Lion Dance and Wushu were involvements that Oliver carried over from Chinese school. Tzu Chi was Oliver's service and volunteer related engagement. Finally, TASO was Oliver's on campus social engagement. Oliver stated:

> I guess I stay connected [to] these activities. This is how I interact with a lot of people. My activities are how I interact with a lot of people. I stay connected by keeping Taiwanese activities under my belt. So, I like can like interact with Taiwanese culture.

Like Oliver, Daniel has kept active in organizations off campus as well.

Daniel shared, "I participate in Asian American activities, but I'm not super enthralled by [TASO] or the Asian Student Union" on campus. Daniel has self-selected to remain connected to his cultural background through Tzu Chi. Daniel referred to his participation in Tzu Chi as a "holistic experience of Taiwan and really understanding culture." Daniel suggested that working with an organization that participates in service and was founded in Taiwan intersected his interest in serving others and upholding his culture. Daniel shared that Tzu Chi "it's an intersection" of service and culture that has "shaped my experiences." Daniel became involved in Tzu Chi through his family, but made his own independent decision to stay with it. Daniel referred to Tzu Chi as "that's my deepest connection into the Asian American community."

The multiple ways in which participants developed their own sense of meaningful cultural experiences and connections may have started through their

parents, Chinese school, or visits to Taiwan; however, it was clear that participants'

interests and decisions to engage in cultural experiences were completely their own.

The interests and decisions to connect ranged from traveling to Taiwan to

involvement with Taiwanese American and Taiwanese organizations on and off

campus. Moreover, their engagement was motivated by forming their own

experiences, learning more information, and continuing practices and engagements

they found useful and meaningful from past experiences with family or friends.

Summary of Findings

The first portion of this chapter provided individual participant narratives that

present all participants in their own life experiences, as Taiwanese Americans. Their

individual profiles and stories involved varied experiences with negotiating their

connection or disconnection with Taiwanese culture, history, and family. There were

no two participants that shared the same story. However, there were themes that were

present and interwoven throughout their individual stories. These themes were

presented in the second portion of this chapter, the grand narrative.

The grand narrative focused on the ways participants spoke about recognizing

their parents' influence, navigating multiple cultural contexts, finding meaningful

connections in non-Taiwanese American settings, and making decisions that move

them closer to Taiwanese culture. This grand narrative placed participants in relation

and connection with one another to see the connections and even disconnections of

where and how participants have experienced their cultural background. Building on

participants' narratives, participants' stories were further elaborated in this grand

narrative.

Participants viewed their parents' or their own immigration from Taiwan to the United States as a pivotal experience that has affected their identity as Taiwanese Americans. This was notable in participants' reflection of Chinese school, language skills, celebration of cultural events, and their parents' encouragement with education. Participants suggested that their parents adapted as immigrants in ways that were expected and contrary to the experiences of Taiwanese immigrants. All participants attended Chinese school and recalled the experience as if it was a universal experience for Taiwanese Americans. Whereas, participants reflected their parents' supportiveness around school and grades as a deviation from what was normal or expected of Asian American parents. As Ivy suggested, "as long as I was happy, they were okay with it."

Participants described experiences of navigating multiple cultural contexts as Taiwanese Americans. Ami and Brian reflected that being Taiwanese American has meant moving back and forth between being Taiwanese or American depending on their context, but the participants are both Taiwanese and American. As Ami shared:

I don't feel entirely American so when I'm in America I'm like, "I'm not American." When I go back to Taiwan, I'm not Taiwanese. I don't have citizenship there or whatever so I'm like, "I'm American," but still I identify so much with the place.

Therefore, navigating multiple contexts was a state of being in-between cultures and participants shared times when it was evident to them that their multiple and bicultural contexts was the reason for their experience. One the one hand, participants described incidents in which they faced barriers and discrimination. The

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barriers were experiences that limited participants' connection to people or places whereas the experiences of discrimination were negative encounters around others' perceptions of participants' race or ethnicity. On the other hand, participants also identified a great deal of pride in their bicultural identity. As Daniel put it, being Taiwanese American is "where I am unique."

Participants elaborated on what it means to be Taiwanese American by identifying events that led them to consider a closer connection to Taiwanese culture. The experiences that guided them to consider their identity and culture were reflections and memories in non-Taiwanese American contexts. This was apparent in Alice and Ami's experiences studying abroad in Europe and Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver's experiences visiting China. Alice and Ami reflected on their Taiwanese American pride and Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver found "mindset" differences between Chinese and Taiwanese cultures.

Finally, participants identified their own interests in expanding and continuing a connection to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Participants acknowledged that their parents were influential in introducing them to their Taiwanese heritage at a young age. However, participants emphasized that they wanted to develop their own sense of Taiwanese culture. This was developed through internship, exchange, and study abroad experiences in Taiwan and through involvement in Taiwanese American organizations on and off campus. Through these experiences and stories, participants demonstrated a strong commitment to their Taiwanese American heritage, identity, and culture. Participants also illustrated that they have connections to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture developed through their family and independently for themselves.

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The findings in this chapter illuminated content for the following chapter. The next chapter focuses on relating the findings to the research questions, discussing implications for literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and implications for higher education and student affairs practice and research.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

The previous chapter shared findings from Taiwanese American participants in this study. This chapter explores *how* and *where* the findings relate to the research questions, review of literature, and implications for future practice and research. This chapter also presents limitations and strengths of the study and concluding reflections. As a Taiwanese American conducting this study, my concluding reflections focused on changes in my assumptions and perspectives of Taiwanese American students and the Taiwanese diaspora.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Research Questions

As identified in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to conduct a critical-cultural inquiry that will (a) bring attention to Taiwanese American students' preservation, creation, and celebration of Taiwanese culture, (b) expand upon notions of home and experiences of bicultural integration, and (c) utilize diaspora as a theoretical perspective in student development and higher education contexts. This purpose was guided by three research questions:

1. What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture?

2. How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture on campus?

3. In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of Taiwanese diaspora?

The following looks at each research question in relation to the findings.

What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture?

Participants shared experiences related their sense of Taiwanese culture through cultural influences embedded in cultural artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1984). In his early and seminal work on organizational culture, Edgar Schein developed a model of culture that involved three main categories: artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. The first level of Schein's model was artifacts, which he defined as visible patterns and behaviors, but "this level of [cultural] analysis is tricky because the data are easy obtain but hard to interpret" (p. 3). The second level was espoused values and this area "[focuses] on what people say is the reason for their behaviors... yet, the underlying reasons for their behavior remain unconcealed or unconscious" (p. 3). Basic assumptions were at the third level of Schein's model and he suggested culture at this level was "typically unconscious but... determines how group members perceive, think, and feel" (p. 3). Schein's categories of culture served as a useful way to identify and describe participants' significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture. The findings suggested that the culturally meaningful and significant experiences were embedded in a cultural mindset, Chinese school, language, and immigration and family. These experiences appeared in stories related to participants' upbringing, connections to Taiwan, and ongoing engagement with Taiwanese culture.

Initially, participants struggled to define Taiwanese culture. The students in this sample struggled to describe Taiwanese culture in two ways: distinguishing Taiwanese and Chinese culture and defining Taiwanese culture to someone who was

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either familiar or unfamiliar with Taiwan. The ways in which participants wrestled with what was Taiwanese culture resembled Schein's basic assumptions level of culture. Participants' thoughts on the differences between Taiwanese and Chinese culture and the different ways one describes Taiwanese culture suggested a conditional understanding of Taiwanese culture that could only come from the Taiwanese American students in this sample. For example, participants who had parent(s) from China asserted that Taiwanese and Chinese cultures have similar foods, language, and celebrated the same cultural events; therefore, there were minimal differences between Taiwanese and Chinese culture. However, Brian, Daniel, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver suggested there were mindset differences between Taiwanese and Chinese culture. Brian, Daniel, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver recalled scenarios where mindset differences led to visible behavioral differences. For example, when riding public transportation, Lucy shared she never had issues saving a seat for her grandmother in Taiwan, but this was a concern of hers in China. Based on her experience, Lucy suggested that there was a different mindset in Taiwan and Taiwanese culture where it was an expectation to give up or leave a seat open for someone who was older than you. Lucy found that this was not the expected practice in China.

Brian, Daniel, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver all asserted that Taiwanese culture was more westernized and comparable to the United States. As indicated by Brian, Taiwan's first elected-female president was one example of how and where Taiwanese culture compares to the United States and contributed to a westernized or democratic values-oriented mindset. Similarly, Oliver reflected, "Taiwanese [culture]

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was more westernized so I can identify with that a little bit more [and] I like Taiwan more." Oliver, like the other participants, was attracted to Taiwanese culture because it was unlike Chinese culture and like the United States. The similarities to United States culture and differences in cultural mindset from Chinese culture were a noted influence in participants' narratives. Here, participants' significant and meaningful element of Taiwanese culture was embedded in the basic assumptions of where participants viewed and experienced Taiwanese people, in relation to Chinese and United States cultural contexts. This made it easier for participants to connect and relate to Taiwanese culture, which may explain some the hesitancy participants displayed in locating themselves as Chinese, even if they had parent(s) from China.

Alice, Ami, Brian, and Lucy had parents or grandparents who left China for Taiwan. Ami referred to move from China to Taiwan as part of the "political revolution" and beyond this type of statement Alice, Ami, Brian, and Lucy did not provide more information about what was behind the "political revolution." The comparison between Taiwan and United states in cultural mindset likely connects to what Brian referred to as the "civil war" between China and Taiwan. At Schein's (2004) basic assumptions level of culture, participants held a mindset of Taiwanese culture to be different from Chinese culture and like U.S. culture, but with minimal information on how differences and similarities came to be. As Schein put it, this level of culture happens at "unconscious thoughts and ideologies" (p. 31) and can be "taken-for-granted" (p. 31). Nonetheless, there was a prevalence in distinguishing Taiwan from China.

All eight participants spoke about Chinese school and viewed Chinese school as their early or initial exposure to their cultural background. Chinese school was the place where they learned and worked on their Mandarin skills, celebrated Chinese New Year, and engaged in culturally-oriented arts and crafts. Chinese school, itself, was not significant to participants, it was the memories they had of Chinese school that held meaning for them. The students in this sample spoke of Chinese school as if it was an expected or normal experience for Taiwanese Americans. This made Chinese school a cultural artifact of participants' Taiwanese American experience. Interestingly, none of the students questioned the name of Chinese school. The students never referred to it as Taiwanese school. Rather, participants emphasized they attended a Taiwanese influenced or led Chinese school. Participants found that Chinese school was part of their introduction to language skills, cultural celebrations, and friends who also identified as Taiwanese American or Asian American.

Students in this study each had their own story with speaking, reading, or writing Mandarin. They also had language skills that ranged from some to minimal Mandarin fluency. In addition, students viewed Mandarin as a gateway to communicate and build relationships with their parents, relatives, or the people they met on while traveling abroad, in Taiwan or otherwise. Being able to speak and comprehend Mandarin was one indicator that participants had a connection and relationship with Taiwanese culture. For example, Brian shared that he learned about "Taiwanese Mandarin accents" and suggested that for Taiwanese Americans, like himself, there was a "weird combination of accents" on top of the "Taiwanese Mandarin." It was a Taiwanese American Mandarin accent that "was not quite

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Taiwanese, but it also wasn't not Taiwanese either." Brian's ability to speak

Mandarin gave him access to Taiwanese culture, but his Mandarin accent as a

Taiwanese American speaking Mandarin rendered him as an insider-outsider to

Taiwanese culture. Participants who had some degree of Mandarin language

proficiency can be viewed as insiders with language as their point of cultural

connection. However, like Brian mentioned with his accent, at the point of speaking

and Mandarin, participants may be viewed as outsiders to Taiwanese culture since

their accents may signal they did not have an upbringing in Taiwan. This insider-

outsider relationship to Taiwanese culture suggested that participants had significant

connections to a Taiwanese American version of Taiwanese culture through cultural

artifacts such as Chinese school and Mandarin. As referenced by Tse (2000),

"language matters" (p. 156) and in the context of Taiwan, language has been a way to

trace Taiwan's occupation by other countries. Participants did not connect or relate

their language skills to Taiwan's past with Japanese and Chinese rule which had

major influence on Taiwan's national language. Participants viewed language in

more immediate terms for the purposes of communication and connection to their

parents, extended relatives, and friends. Therefore, like Chinese school, participants'

Mandarin proficiency was a meaningful component of their access to Taiwanese

culture.

Another contribution to participants' Taiwanese American version of

Taiwanese culture was the influence of immigration and family. All participants had

parents who emigrated from Taiwan to the United States, except for Amber who was

born in Taiwan and emigrated with her parents at a young age. Students in this

sample learned about Taiwanese culture at home and from their parents. As such, participants adopted their parents' espoused values. Over the course of the interviews, participants demonstrated that their parents were major influencers around Chinese school, speaking Mandarin at home, supported educational pursuits and continued independent Taiwanese involvement on and off campus. In addition, for Alice, Ami, Brian, and Ivy, their families were part of generations of immigrants. They each spoke about their grandparents' or one parent's emigration from China to Taiwan. Being from families with multiple generations of immigrants, Alice, Ami, Brian, and Ivy all shared an interesting cultural consideration which was how culture was passed down from one generation to the next. In general, participants demonstrated a clear yearning to maintain some form of connection to their Taiwanese heritage and part of that was related to their parents and another part their extended family and relatives. It was also evident that participants desired deeper relationships with their family and to some degree greater depth and understanding around their cultural background which included fostering greater connections with their extended families. Participants spoke about experiences of language barriers with relatives and the ways in which this affected the time spent with relatives. For the most part, participants spoke about their family with a great deal of fondness and illustrated family to be their constant connector to their cultural background and heritage. This affirmed family as an important and significant espoused value of participants' Taiwanese cultural experiences.

Participants defined a version of Taiwanese culture through their experiences as Taiwanese Americans. In turn, students in this sample identified culturally

meaningful and influential experiences that connected them to Taiwanese culture.

Significant and meaningful components of culture were found in basic assumptions,

artifacts, and espoused values (Schein, 1984). These were Taiwanese culture-

oriented mindsets, Chinese school and language, and within the value of family.

Participants did not holistically define Taiwanese culture through these categories.

Rather, Taiwanese culture-oriented mindsets, Chinese school and language, and the

value of family were the leading influencers in participants' sense of Taiwanese

culture.

How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture

on campus?

Participants were mixed in their engagement and involvement with Taiwanese

related organizations, events, and experiences on campus. All participants in this

study were aware of the Taiwanese American student organization (TASO) on

campus. However, not all of them found TASO to be the organization that best fit

their desired connection to Taiwanese culture. Students in this sample were also

varied in their purpose or reason for connecting with Taiwanese-oriented

organizations, on and off campus. In general, participants were connected to

organizations and friends to learn more about their cultural background, stay

connected to people with similar identities, continued activities learned in Chinese

school, and participated in service and volunteer work. The organizations

participants were involved with were TASO, Lion Dance, Wushu, and Tzu Chi.

At Pearl, Brian suggested that TASO was able to bring together students who

identified as Taiwanese American or who had an interest in Taiwanese culture, but

the issue with TASO was that the organization did not offer anything new or illuminating for its members. Brian asserted, there were "few people having new experiences with it." Ivy affirmed Brian's critique of TASO. As a commuter student, Ivy went to great lengths to attend TASO meetings and she also found TASO be an organization that "reiterate[s] what I already know" about Taiwanese culture and being Taiwanese American. Yet, despite this critique participants like Brian, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver remained active in TASO to maintain a Taiwanese American friend group and connection to Taiwanese culture. As Ivy described it, TASO was a place where "I can make friends that understand where I come from and what I've experienced." Oliver shared a similar sentiment and found most of his friend group in TASO because he felt "it [was] easier to connect with people of my own culture." As the main student organization at Pearl for bringing together Taiwanese Americans on campus, TASO was effective in providing participants with friends and community. Moreover, according to participants, TASO was limited in its ability to share new knowledge and information on Taiwanese culture to TASO members. Participants like Brian, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver went to TASO to connect with friends and perhaps gain new insights on their cultural background, but instead participants found themselves with others also searching for new knowledge about Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. However, despite this limitation, Brian, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver maintained a firm commitment to TASO. TASO, as an organization, was the main sponsor of Taiwanese cultural events on campus such as TASO's annual Night Market and the Taiwanese American student conference on campus. Brian, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver found these events to be meaningful ways to engage and expose the

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campus community to aspects of Taiwanese culture. Brian, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver found friends who understood their Taiwanese American experiences and components of Taiwanese culture in TASO and this was the primary reason for their continued involvement in TASO.

Having Taiwanese American or Asian American friends on campus was an important way for participants to connect with their culture and perform cultural practices or behaviors. For example, Daniel found that having friends who shared his culture and ethnicity made it easier for him to use chopsticks or speak Mandarin in public. Daniel also shared, "I was at dinner with a couple of my friends and someone recently told me that I have this tendency, and it's just between me and a good friend of mine, to start randomly speaking in Mandarin to each other." Daniel viewed using chopsticks or speaking Mandarin in public as acts of his identity and culture which were easier to do with Taiwanese American or Asian American friends. Oliver found that having friends on campus who he knew from Chinese school and high school made it easier for him to decide on Pearl University for college and adjust to the college environment. Taiwanese American friends played a pivotal role in participants' engagement with Taiwanese culture. Daniel found being around his Asian American and Taiwanese American friends made it easier for him to practice speaking Mandarin people outside of his family and using chopsticks in public. Oliver found his friends aided in his transition to college and participation in TASO. As individuals with shared ethnic and cultural experiences, friends were instrumental in supporting the students in this sample as Taiwanese Americans. Support from friends on campus did not emerge as a way participants connected with Taiwanese

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culture; however, it was evident that participants' wanted friend groups who could understand their cultural background.

Daniel and Oliver highlighted select off campus engagements. Daniel and Oliver were both involved with the service organization Tzu Chi. Daniel spoke at length about Tzu Chi and its connection to Buddhism and Taiwanese origins. Oliver spoke about Tzu Chi as an organization that provides him with an opportunity to engage in service and volunteer work. Daniel asserted that Tzu Chi was founded and headquartered in Taiwan under Buddhist and even Taiwanese ethos, but Tzu Chi was truly an international and global organization. Daniel and Oliver viewed Tzu Chi as a great opportunity to merge their interest in service and Taiwanese culture. In addition to his involvement in TASO and Tzu Chi, Oliver was also involved in Lion Dance and Wushu. Oliver found that Lion Dance and Wushu were clubs that allowed him an opportunity to practice an aspect of his cultural background. It was also a way to hold shared interests with his relatives and family in Taiwan. Oliver recalled that his introduction to martial arts came from an aunt in Taiwan who competed in Tai Chi competitions. Instead of Tai Chi, Oliver practiced Wushu and felt it gave him a sense of connection to his aunt.

Participants also found other sources of Taiwanese cultural connections, not on campus, but by way of their status as college students. Ami, Amber, Brian, and Lucy each participated in some form of study abroad, exchange, or internship programs in Taiwan. Their respective programs required them to be enrolled United States college students. Although Ami, Amber, Brian, and Lucy's experiences were not on campus, their affiliation with Pearl University enabled them to participate in a

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program that connected them to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Therefore, Ami, Amber, Brian, and Lucy's study abroad, exchange, or internship programs in Taiwan were an extension of their collegiate and extended-campus experiences.

Students in this sample illustrated involvement in Taiwanese culture through on and off campus organizations or experiences. On campus, participants found TASO as an opportunity to connect with Taiwanese American friends and non-Taiwanese Americans with an interest in Taiwanese culture. In addition, participants found their Taiwanese American or Asian American friend groups to be an important support network on campus that provided them with opportunities to explore and practices aspects of Taiwanese culture. By identifying Ami, Amber, Brian, and Lucy's educational experiences in Taiwan as an extension of the campus environment, then their respective in-country experiences were a natural and evident way participants connected with Taiwanese culture. Overall, Taiwanese American participants in this sample had limited opportunities for cultural engagement on campus. It was difficult for participants to identify locations on campus where they could learn more about their Taiwanese background. On campus, participants found groups and friends who understood their cultural background and experiences, more than opportunities to learn more about Taiwan and Taiwanese culture.

In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of a Taiwanese diaspora?

Diasporas uncover *how* and *where* individuals have ongoing relationships with their country of origin, sense of home, and home culture (Butler, 2001). This study's conceptual framework utilized diasporas as an organizing tool to explore

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Taiwanese American students' experience with Taiwanese culture. According to Butler (2001), diasporas hold constant several primary conditions: dispersal of two or more locations, connection to original culture, and sustained cultural connections over multiple generations. In this study, the separate locations were Taiwan and the United States. As such, participants in this study had to identify as Taiwanese American to participate. Individually, participants in this study demonstrated how they remain connected to their original culture. Namely, participants shared experiences where they were caught in-between two cultures, traveled back and forth between Taiwan and the United States, and illustrated individual ways in which they have had sustained connections with Taiwanese culture throughout their lives. In relation to Butler, experiences such as the ones that connect participants to Taiwanese culture may lead individuals to "...form this bond, it provides the foundation from which diasporan identity may develop [and] binds dispersed peoples not only to the homeland but each other as well" (p. 192). In other words, although participants shared their individual experiences with Taiwanese culture, there were elements of their individual stories that potentially brought them together as a community of Taiwanese Americans within a Taiwanese diaspora. This leads into Butler's condition that diasporas span multiple generations.

Each of the Taiwanese American students in this study had parents who emigrated from Taiwan to the United States. Seven of the eight participants shared that an introduction to their cultural background stemmed from their parents' engagement with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Amber was born in Taiwan and emigrated from Taiwan to the United States with her parents which meant she did not

need an introduction to Taiwanese culture since she was already embedded in her original cultural context. However, once Amber was in the United States, Amber was exposed to her cultural background through her parents and Chinese school. Therefore, participants' parents served as a major point of introduction and bridge to participants' interactions with Taiwanese culture, but Alice, Ami, Brian, and Ivy also shared stories that suggested their parents were entangled within their own complex cultural pasts. For example, Alice and Ami mentioned their grandparents fled China for Taiwan. As Ami put it, her grandparents left China during "the political revolution" and her parents, because of her grandparents' past in China, have a "strong attachment to a country they've never been to." Brian and Ivy both mentioned having one parent who was originally from China but grew up in Taiwan before immigrating to the United States. Therefore, participants each had parents with knowledge and experience of Taiwanese culture, but there were notable influences on their parents' past with Taiwan. Despite the notable differences with Alice, Ami, Brian, and Ivy's parents, participants presented a greater interest in Taiwanese culture. Although Alice, Ami, Brian, and Lucy have all visited Taiwan, they have never lived in Taiwan, but maintained active engagement in TASO and other Taiwanese activities on and off campus. Ivy has traveled to China and returned to Taiwan once when she was five years old, but has no memories of Taiwan and maintained a strong desire to return to Taiwan one day.

As a constant for participants, there was a clear sense of being, as Ami articulated, "torn between two cultures." This was a definite part of participants' experience within a Taiwanese diaspora. For example, Amber has imagined herself

"saving up money and going back on vacation [to Taiwan]" and she "used to have this super idealistic idea that [she] could go back and live there." However, some of her more recent returns to Taiwan have "made [her] realize how impossible [it would be] to live there now." Amber reflected that Taiwan does not have "enough accommodations for people like [her]." Seven of the eight participants recalled trips and visits back to Taiwan. These trips were to visit family or participate in educational experiences in Taiwan. Even though these trips and returns to Taiwan were meaningful, participants' return to Taiwan was never what they had anticipated. In reflection of these trips, participants noted they learned more about Taiwan and their Taiwanese relatives, but found being in Taiwan did not change their sense of being in-between two cultures. In Taiwan, participants were still strongly affiliated as Taiwanese Americans. For example, Brian spoke about a waiter in Taiwan who "said I looked Taiwanese, but as soon as I opened my mouth he knew I wasn't." Brian also shared that "My dad says that I just look American." In comparison, in the United States, Lucy spoke about an incident in her sociology class where the instructor refused to see Asian Americans as students of color. Brian's and Lucy's experiences illustrated incidents where participants found themselves in-between cultures. Moreover, they found themselves in cultural contexts that othered them. This was most clear in Lucy's example that located Asian Americans as an invisible racially minoritized population in society and on her college campus. Lucy's experience in this example is highly problematic and reiterates issues in race and racism in the U.S.

Participants in this study all spent most of their upbringing in the United States and they shared stories which illustrated some form of displacement and lack

of belonging, based on the determination of people who hold privilege in that place. For example, Amber told a story of an older White man entering the dining hall and speaking Mandarin to her. Amber recalled this story as an example of where she was viewed as not being American or understanding English. Amber went further and stated,

> I don't feel entirely American so when I'm in America, I'm like I'm not American [and] when I got back to Taiwan. I'm not Taiwanese. I don't have citizenship there or whatever so I'm like American, but I still identify so much with the place.

Despite how much Amber may identify with a certain place, she still held a sense of being in-between places and was viewed as not belonging in the campus dining hall or on campus. This example speaks to the perpetual foreigner concept. Museus and Park (2015) stated, "…despite the fact that they grew up in the United States or immigrated as young children" (p. 562) many Asian Americans are viewed as perpetual foreigners. Similarly, Kim (1999) also touched on this concept and referred to it in relation to pegging Asian Americans as "permanently foreign and unassimilable with Whites" (p. 109). Participants' experiences that related to this concept reinforced the existence of a Taiwanese diaspora. According to Parreñas and Siu (2007), "To be part of a diaspora is to reference one's relationship and belonging to some larger historical cultural-political formation... It seems to redefine the terms of belonging" (p. 13). Participants shared stories that come as examples and results of "…larger historical cultural-political formations…" (Parreñas & Siu, 2007, p. 13). This *re*defines participants' sense of belonging as Taiwanese Americans by locating

participants as Taiwanese Americans with a strong sense of desired cultural connections in the face of circumstances that render them invisible or othered.

Participants expressed a significant amount of affection for Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Taiwan and Taiwanese culture were viewed as a form of home. Brian shared "when you grow up in a Taiwanese household, nothing in Taiwan felt too foreign to [him]. It felt kind of like home away from home." As referenced earlier, Parreñas and Siu (2007) identified home as, "it is both a place one left behind and a place one currently inhabits" (p. 15). Moreover, Parreñas and Siu (2007) stated that home was also "somewhere in between" (p. 15). Participants in this study demonstrated a complexity in their affinity with Taiwan. On the one hand, Taiwan and Taiwanese culture represented their ethnic cultural background, but when Alice, Ami, Brian, and Lucy visited Taiwan they felt a sense of otherness. On the other hand, participants displayed a great deal of affection for Taiwan. Amber idealized the notion that one day she can return to Taiwan. Ami stated, "I think it's I feel that I want to support Taiwan... I'll stick up for Taiwan." Oliver shared, "I love Taiwan so much." Daniel asserted that he was "proud to be Taiwanese." In either case, participants described active engagement with Taiwan. Amber, Ami, Brian, and Lucy decided to have their own independent experiences through cultural exchange and study abroad programs in Taiwan. Aside from independent trips to Taiwan, Brian, Daniel, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver became members of TASO, Lion Dance, Wushu, and Tzu Chi. These actions illustrated that participants made conscious decisions to engage with Taiwanese culture when possible on and off campus.

Overall, participants' holistic engagement with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture contributed to participants' experiences within a Taiwanese diaspora. Taiwanese American students in this study illustrated meaningful and complex relationships between being Taiwanese and American, in Taiwan and the United States. Participants, like Brian shared, despite some experiences of otherness in Taiwan, Taiwanese culture and Taiwan "felt kind of like home away from home." Backgrounded by their parents' and their own immigration experiences, participants' sentiments portrayed a longing and desire to remain connected to a place and culture. Participants made active and conscious decisions to establish and sustain association to Taiwanese culture and Taiwan.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Review of Literature

This section of the chapter focuses on relating the findings with the review of literature from Chapter 2. Chapter 2 presented background information on Taiwanese culture, history, and politics and offered literature related to culture, bicultural integration, diasporas, and home. The latter concepts were explored in relation to existing literature on Asian Americans in higher education. In addition, as a critical-cultural narrative inquiry, this section also highlights meaningful connections to power where and when it is relevant. As described in Chapter 3, power is a fundamental component of knowledge and experience and in many ways establishes norms and dominant ideologies (Brookfield, 2005; Johnson, 2001). Participants, as Taiwanese Americans, count as a minoritized population in the U.S. and on campus, but they did not explicitly or consistently name experiences as negative and discriminatory. Moreover, participants offered minimal perspectives on how their

individual experiences translate to greater systemic or social issues such as race and racism. A number of possibilities may play into participants' missing awareness and integration of historic, political, and social issues in their stories. First, participants identified their parents as their primary point of cultural connection; however, did not express their parents as a point of cultural learning around Chinese and Taiwanese historical and political strife or as a source of information related to race and racism in the U.S. Second, participants spoke about their engagement with Chinese school as another pivotal point of cultural connection, but Chinese school was limited to language proficiency, celebration of cultural events, and interactions with Asian American communities and not a source of learning related to race and racism. Third, short of Lucy's internship with the Asian American Studies program at Pearl University, there were limited mentions of opportunities for learning about race and racism. However, participants in this study shared stories in relation to their experience with dominant culture. At times, dependent upon their physical location, the dominant culture was either American or Taiwanese culture. In either case, a foundation to participants' stories and this section on findings in relation to the review of literature illustrate the "personal as political" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 102).

On the one hand, the word political can be taken literally and interpreted through the history and politics that surround Taiwan, China, and the United States. As referenced in Chapter 2, to identify and claim the existence of Taiwanese culture or a Taiwanese ethnic identity is a political and purposeful statement and "[taking] a stand" (Murray & Hong, 1991, p. 282) on Taiwan's place as a country. Participants

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in this study were mixed on their stance with Taiwan's independence from China.

For example, participants like Alice, Ami, and Brian, shared either their parents or

grandparents fled or left China for Taiwan. Ami stated, "both my parents were born

in Taiwan, but all my grandparents were born in China. They left China during the

political revolution." This statement and similar ones made by participants illustrated

some level of awareness for the political strife that exists between Taiwan and China.

Participants, like Daniel, Lucy, and Oliver, went further and offered desires for

Taiwan's independence, as a country and not as a Republic of China. Oliver stated,

> There's a lot of political heat between people who think Taiwan should be a
>
> part of China and Taiwan to be separate. I think Taiwan should be separate,
>
> but I don't want to get involved in that political heat.

There was a great deal of power elicited from these types of participant statements.

On the other hand, the "personal as political" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p.

102) illustrates how participants achieve their cultural connections despite dominant

norms. Participants' mixed stance with Taiwan's independence and relationship with

China is relevant; however, for the purposes of this section more focus is given to

findings in relations to the literature under context of higher education. Therefore,

the discussion of findings in relation to the review of literature is presented in the

following order: (a) culture and bicultural integration, (b) diasporas and home, and (c)

finally Asian Americans in higher education. By relating the findings to the literature

presented in Chapter 2, in this manner, the study becomes situated in the context of

higher education research and scholarship**.**

Culture and Bicultural Integration

Culture relates to persistent and shared patterns, assumptions, and belief systems (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Schein, 2004). Cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1990) described culture to be "a sort of collective 'one true self,' hiding inside the many... people with shared history and ancestry [held] in common" (p. 223). Organization management scholar Edgar Schein (2004) defined culture as artifacts, beliefs, and basic assumptions. Schein also viewed culture as sustained through "social validation" (p. 29), which was defined as "certain values... confirmed only by the shared social experience of the group." (p. 29). These descriptions of culture position culture as a concept very difficult to observe and interpret. If culture is "a sort of collective 'one true self,' hiding inside the many..." (Hall, 1990, p. 223), then how does one observe what is hidden within oneself and a community of people? Moreover, when culture is hidden and "confirmed only by the shared social experience of the group" (Schein, 2004, p. 29), then what does it look like to share where and how one person participates in culture? From another perspective, if culture is hidden and within oneself, then how does one change cultural practices to be more expansive and different from how one learned their culture? These questions and the complex nature of exploring culture, like Taiwanese culture, were ever-present in this study. It was evident in the findings that participants viewed themselves as navigating multiple cultural contexts, as Taiwanese Americans wrestling with where to find Taiwanese culture on and off campus. It was also evident that participants did not receive enough information about their cultural

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background in two fundamental areas: education around Taiwan's past and an understanding of Asian Americans in the context of race and racism.

There are few existing studies in higher education and student development journals that focus on the experiences of one ethnic group and how students of that ethnicity relate to their own ethnic cultural background. Given the dearth of research and scholarship in this arena, part of this critical-cultural narrative inquiry was to introduce the experiences of select Taiwanese Americans and explore how they interact with Taiwanese culture. In other words, like Museus and Maramba's (2011) quantitative study of Filipino American students' sense of belonging, one feature of this study was to explore "students' connection to their cultural heritages" (p. 240). Focused on Filipino American students, Museus and Maramba hypothesized a relationship between "students' connections to their cultural heritage, pressure to commit cultural suicide, and the ease or difficulty with which students adjust to their campus cultures shape the extent to which they feel a sense of belonging [on campus]" (p. 240). One research question in Museus and Maramba's study was "are connections of cultures of origin associated with a sense of belonging" (p. 239) and they found, "[the] direct relationship between connections to cultural heritage and sense of belonging to be statistically insignificant" (p. 247). However, they also found that "the more students maintained connections with their cultures of origin, the greater ease they experienced in adjusting to college" (Museus & Maramba, 2011, p. 248). Museus and Maramba's study was not on Filipino Americans' connections to Filipino culture, but the findings from their empirical research illustrated the

importance of supporting students in their connections to their cultural background, a major feature of this study.

Following an upbringing that integrated participants' cultural background, participants sought and initiated their own ways of maintaining cultural connections with Taiwanese culture on and off campus. Taiwanese American participants in this study made conscious decisions to engage in Taiwanese culture through continuous engagement with Taiwanese-affiliated organizations, travels back to Taiwan, and involvement in on campus student organizations. Overall, participants did not share engagement in these activities as a need or desire for sense of belonging on campus; however, they suggested that involvement in Taiwanese culture was one way of staying in touch with their ethnic and cultural background. It was also a means of helping participants learn more information about their cultural background. Given participants negotiation of more than one cultural context, participants stressed the challenges that exist in being able to remain connected to their ethnic and cultural background. These challenges were in part manifested in participants' varied definitions of culture and Taiwanese culture.

Participants shared reflections of being individuals within multiple cultural contexts. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) conducted a quantitative study with Chinese American students to explore their bicultural integration. Researchers categorized individuals as having either high or low levels of bicultural integration. Benet-Martinez and Haritatos found that individuals with high levels of integration can "integrate both cultures in everyday lives" (p. 1019) and "see themselves as part of a 'hyphenated culture'" (p. 1019). This contrasted with individuals who were

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identified as having low integration who "report[ed] difficulty in incorporating both cultures into a cohesive sense of identity" and "particularly sensitive to specific tensions between the two cultural orientations..." (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005, p. 1020). Participants in this study illustrated dimensions of bicultural integration. Their stories demonstrated a spectrum of high to low integration of their bicultural backgrounds. Participants expressed being in-between cultures and navigating spaces and circumstances where they were not fully Taiwanese or American, but at the same time still Taiwanese American. This type of scenario left Amber, for example, "[feeling] scattered, in a way" and in a place of uncertainty around her experience. However, this feeling did not preclude Amber from having a fondness for her Taiwanese background and American experiences. Based on participant stories, the Taiwanese American students in this sample appeared most aware of their bicultural identity when someone else called it out or when others noted something different about their language proficiency. These incidents happened while participants were in the United States and Taiwan. Therefore, as a result of this study, it is not a question of how well participants can integrate their cultural background, but a question of what ignites participants to notice their Taiwanese and/or American background. Torres, Jones, and Renn (2009) emphasized this idea in their review of student development theories and the relationship student development theories have to student affairs practice. Generally, student identity development theories operate under the premise that individuals come to understand their multiple identities through particular circumstances, environments, and interactions with others (Torres et al., 2009). Circumstances may be internally or externally motivated, but as Torres

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et al. concluded, similarities between student development theories included the "influence[s] of culture and societal norms" (p. 583). In relation to this study, the findings portrayed students as integrating their cultural backgrounds through multiple perspectives such as connecting with friends who understand and share their experiences, engaging in opportunities to learn more about their cultural heritage, or when possible practicing their language skills.

For instance, Brian described a scenario in Taiwan where a server at a restaurant recognized he was not Taiwanese by his Mandarin accent. Brian referred to his accent as "…this weird combination of accents" and identifies him as someone from a household with Taiwanese Mandarin, English, and some Chinese Mandarin. Without having to explain or describe their level of integration with their multiple cultures, participants' speech and accents serve as a product of their bicultural experiences. Ami also referenced being able to distinguish people based on their Mandarin accents. She identified differences between Chinese Mandarin and Taiwanese Mandarin. Participants shared that they each speak Mandarin to at least one parent at home. At the level that speaking Mandarin is a product of their bicultural integration, as it was practiced every day at home, participants have a high level of bicultural integration. However, outside of home life, participants showed more varied levels of bicultural integration.

The ways in which participants connected with others on campus relates to research on campus subcultures. Museus (2008), through a qualitative study on the role of ethnic student organizations, found that campus subcultures play an instrumental role in students' success on campus. As an identifiable campus

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subculture, the Taiwanese American Student Organization (TASO) played a role in the experiences of four of the Taiwanese American participants in this study. For participants who joined TASO, it was evident that TASO was a place where select participants maintained their community of Taiwanese American friends on campus. However, unlike prior studies that demonstrated the importance of campus subcultures, the results of this study illustrated that TASO was not a site where participants learned more about their cultural context (Gottlieb & Hodgkins, 1963; Magolda & Ebben, 2007; Museus, 2008; Museus et al., 2012). Rather, TASO was a place where select participants connected with others who also wanted to learn more about their cultural background. This does not negate the importance of campus subcultures, but based on the findings in this study, TASO presented as a campus subculture with limitations. Brian, Ivy, Lucy, and Oliver found TASO a place to make friends and express Taiwanese culture through sponsored events on campus, but not a place to learn more about Taiwanese culture.

Most of the cultural learning, expressed by participants within this study, originally stemmed from participants' parents. As described earlier, participants also found other sources of Taiwanese cultural connections, not on campus, but by way of their status as college students. However, it is problematic that students, participants in this study, struggled to find on campus opportunities and sites for cultural learning. This begs questions related to participants' sense of belonging on campus. In an early study on sense of belonging, Hurtado and Carter (1997) explored the experiences of Latino students and found that "for Latino students who attended predominantly White universities, feeling at 'home' in campus community is associated with

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maintaining interactions both within and outside the college community" (p. 338).

This work on sense of belonging introduced the idea that students' racial and ethnic

cultural experiences on campus, as a way of "feeling at 'home'" (Hurtado & Carter,

p. 338), may be connected to their overall perceptions of the campus environment and

student success. In more recent scholarship, Museus, Yi, and Saelua (2017) explored

sense of belonging through a framework entitled The Culturally Engaging Campus

Environments (CECE) Model. Museus et al. came to several conclusions on the role

of sense of belonging on campus environments. Namely, Museus et al. found the

CECE Model can be utilized as a framework to better interpret and understand

students' diverse experiences on campus.

> Museus et al. defined the CECE Model as:
>
> ...[emphasizing] that college students' access to culturally engaging campus
>
> environments... is positively correlated with individual influences (e.g., sense
>
> of belonging, academic self-efficacy, motivation, intent to persist, and
>
> performance) on success and ultimately an increased probability of
>
> succeeding in college (p. 192).

The CECE Model involves "two categories: cultural relevance and cultural

responsiveness" (Museus et al., 2017, p. 192) with nine different indicators, five

under cultural relevance and four under cultural responsiveness. For the purposes of

this discussion, focus is placed on two indicators under cultural relevance: cultural

familiarity and culturally relevant knowledge. Museus et al. defined cultural

familiarity as "the extent to which college students have opportunities to physically

connect with faculty, staff, and peers who understand their backgrounds and

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experiences" (p. 192) and culturally relevant knowledge as "the degree to which students have opportunities to learn and exchange knowledge about their own cultural communities" (p. 192).

The findings in this study, using terms from the CECE Model, provide an alternate way of articulating the challenges faced by participants. Participants in this study illustrated a lack of opportunities on campus for cultural familiarity and culturally relevant knowledge at Pearl University. The only mention of participants interacting with faculty came through Lucy's negative interaction with a sociology instructor. Likewise, the only mention of participants interacting with staff came through Lucy's interaction with staff members at Pearl University's cultural center. In addition, as already mentioned, participants desired opportunities to learn more about their cultural background, but did not find the opportunity through TASO.

Understanding where and how students interact with their own cultural experiences on campus is difficult. This is complicated by multiple definitions of culture. To what extent is campus culture defined in terms of the overall campus environment or through the perspective of specific student subpopulations on campus? Furthermore, the diverse ways in which students engage in their cultural background on campus also complicates how culture is viewed as a pivotal component of students' experiences on campus. Through this study, four participants sought out the Taiwanese American student group on campus and four participants knew about the student group but sought alternative ways of interacting with their cultural background. Either way, participants in this study demonstrated that their

ethnic cultural background mattered, and they engaged their cultural heritage as part of their collegiate experience.

Diasporas and Home

Incorporating diasporas into the conceptual framework of this study provided an alternative perspective to culture and bicultural integration and contributed to the critical nature of the study. Diasporas allowed for an incorporation of culture with the ideas and ideations of home. Espiritu (2003) described home as "*imagined* and *actual* geography" (p. 2) and "*literal* and *symbolic*" (p. 11). Adopting a sense of home through this abstract description offered a different look at identity and experiences of culture. It also fostered a way to engage in the idea and existence of a Taiwanese diaspora.

Without asking participants to identify their sense of home, participants organically shared a strong affinity for Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Participants' affinity was exemplified in their connection to family, relatives, desire to further their experiences with Taiwanese culture, and overall involvement with Taiwanese-oriented organizations on and off campus. This affinity for their cultural background was in some ways a proxy for alternative descriptors of home. For example, Alice shared "I consider home America, but my entire family's from Taiwan..." and Brian shared that Taiwan "felt like home, away from home." Participants described home to be the place they lived with their parents and siblings and where they would speak Mandarin with their parents or celebrate Chinese New Year as a family, but participants also described home in the geographic and symbolic sense as where their parents and family originated. Alice reminisced about how her family celebrated

holidays and came together with family and friends. Alice shared, "The families would have dinner parties all of the time and everyone would bring a dish with all of this Chinese food. All the kids go and watch a movie, and all the parents would just talk and stuff." Symbolically, this memory for Alice represented her sense of home and culture. Alice was also a participant who stressed that she's taken her background "for granted." Nonetheless, Alice and participants like Amber, Ami, Daniel, and Lucy all shared narratives that involved a great deal of nostalgia for their past upbringing and cultural backgrounds.

In this study a Taiwanese diaspora became defined as the dispersal of two locations (i.e., Taiwan and the United States), collective mythology of Taiwan, alienation or experiences of invisibility in the United States and Taiwan, idealization of returning to Taiwan, and continued connection with Taiwanese culture (Butler, 2001). Participants' stories signaled clear geographic connections between Taiwan and the United States. Again, this was largely evidenced by immigration and travels between the two locations. As such, the criterion of dispersal between two locations was easily met by participants, as was the collective mythology of Taiwan. The mythology of Taiwan related to participants' consciousness of Taiwan and Taiwanese experiences. Safran (1991) described this in terms of an "ethnic consciousness and solidarity" (p. 91) in the forms of shared stories, memories, and beliefs of home that created a bond amongst the members in the experience (Butler, 2001). The grand narrative pointed to participants' collective mythology of Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. Moreover, the grand narrative and the theme of navigating multiple cultural contexts addressed participants' experiences of invisibility. This was most clear in

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Lucy's classroom experience with a sociology instructor, where the instructor refused to consider Asian American students as minoritized. This form of alienation marked a sense of belonging to the diaspora because it signaled the existence of an exclusionary dominant culture (Butler, 2001; Clifford, 1994; Safran, 1991). As for the idealization of returning to Taiwan, participants spoke about Taiwan as "more westernized" and "more fun," but Taiwan was also the place where they experienced a great deal of bicultural negotiations. Taiwan was a location where their sense of being in-between multiple cultures and backgrounds was reinforced by others' view of their belonging in-country (Butler, 2001; Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Ong et al., 1996). This was exemplified through Brian's account of being in a restaurant in Taiwan and a server labeling him as not from Taiwan because of his Mandarin accent. However, these types of experiences did not preclude participants from maintaining a sense of idealization or nostalgia for Taiwan. For example, Amber shared that she often thinks about "saving up money and going back on vacation [to Taiwan]" and she "used to have this super idealistic idea that [she] could go back and live there." However, Amber also reflected, "how impossible [it would be] to live there now." In relation to diasporas, participants, like Amber, purported that their idealized version of Taiwan and Taiwanese culture will likely never fit their actual experiences, on return to Taiwan. This aligns featured characteristics of diasporas (Butler, 2001).

Nonetheless, participants desired to learn more and maintain their ties or involvements with Taiwanese related organizations and experiences. Participants continued engagement through on and off campus involvement and study abroad

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experiences in Taiwan. Participants' stories suggested and confirmed the existence of a Taiwanese diaspora. Overall, the findings reiterated that the experiences of the Taiwanese American participants in this study were within a Taiwanese diaspora and participants' relationship with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture as a sense of home.

Asian Americans in Higher Education

Findings suggested that participants shared some of the same experiences found in literature on Asian Americans in higher education. Higher education scholarship present and refute Asian Americans as monolithic, the model minority, perpetual foreigner, and invisible (Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Museus & Park, 2015; Museus, 2009; Museus & Kiang, 2009). In this study, participant narratives and emergent themes displayed a great deal of diversity within one ethnic-specific group of students

By categorizing Asian Americans as a monolithic group, researchers and administrators wrongly assume Asian American students hold shared experiences and devalue the diversity of Asian American student populations on campus (Alvarez, 2002; Hune, 2002; Inkelas, 2003; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Museus, 2008; Nadal et al., 2010; Suzuki, 2002). Moreover, stereotypes of Asian Americans dismiss how diverse Asian Americans are by country of origin, culture, language, history, political structures, and many more characteristics. Findings in this study suggested that even in the context of an ethnic-specific identity group there were still layers of diverse experiences. Participants were not monolithic. Hence, despite stereotypes, Taiwanese American participants in this sample were diverse in their language

proficiency, cultural involvement on and off campus, immigration experiences, and thoughts on the relationship between China and Taiwan.

Similarly, findings suggested that the participants did not conform to the model minority stereotype. The model minority stereotype portrays Asian Americans as high-academic achievers, reserved, quiet, hardworking, and accommodating (Museus & Kiang, 2009; Poon et al., 2016; Suzuki, 1977). Unfortunately, embedded within participants' narratives were stories of comparing themselves to stereotypes. For example, Lucy saw herself as fitting the model minority myth because she said:

> I played an instrument. I play piano. I'm not bad at math. I'm not bad at... I wasn't very bad at school. I am good at school. I'm generally a pretty quiet person. I'm not super shy, but I'm also not super outgoing.

In addition, Lucy stated, "I think I've embraced a lot of the stereotypes that come with being Taiwanese American, Asian American. I've never felt the model minority myth has ever hurt me." Despite this statement, Lucy recognized that she did not need to feel negative effects of the model minority myth to know how it may negatively affect her and others without knowing it. Poon et al. (2016) critiqued this form of understanding with the model minority myth. In their review of how and where the model minority myth appeared in higher education scholarship, Poon et al. suggested many scholars and Asian American students refer to the model minority myth with an "ahistorical understanding of the myth" (p. 20), which was true for the participants in this study. Every participant shared a story which related to stereotypes and racism in some way, but it was only Amber and Lucy who engaged in the topic of racism. Amber referred to racism in the context of microaggressions and

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her knowledge of Asian American children being bullied. Lucy recognized the Black Lives Matters movement was about an issue of race and racism in the United States. However, Amber and Lucy did not present a complex understanding of racism. Lucy's statement on embracing stereotypes and feeling unhurt by the model minority myth illustrates a basic interpretation of racism. Amber, Lucy, and the other participants did not speak about the consequences and root causes of racial assumptions and biases. Participants only had a partial realization of how Asian American stereotypes, like the model minority myth, work to collectively minimize racially minoritized groups. Amber and Lucy were the only two participants to mention racism and attributed their learning to their time in college which indicates participants have limited exposure to the concept of race and racism and race and racism as it includes Asian Americans. Osajima (2007) explored what lead Asian Americans to develop a critical consciousness in Asian American issues and activism. Osajima found enrollment and participation in Asian American studies courses to be a major factor in students' sense of critical consciousness. For participants of this study, their partial understanding of stereotypes and misconceptions of Asian Americans may be attributed to limited of exposure and education around race and racism. Participants partial realization of how Asian American stereotypes work was reflected in how participants compared themselves to assumptions about Asian Americans. As a result, participants offered little to combat or address the discriminatory experiences they did name.

Participants, like Amber and Lucy, also noted that college was a time when they noticed differences within how their parents encouraged them as students.

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Samura (2015) studied Asian American college students and how they interpret their Asian American collegiate experiences through a qualitative study of 36 participants with one self-identified as Taiwanese and remaining from multiple different Asian countries. In her study, Samura categorized the experiences of her Asian American participants into internal and external expectations. Under external expectations, Samura found that parents played an influential role in her participants' behavior and academics in college. Samura stated,

> Before entering college, parents were by far the most significant influence on these students; throughout their time in college, it seemed as though parental influence continued, albeit it in different forms and to differing extents (p. 614).

The results of Samura's study paralleled the findings of this study. Participants in this sample shared stories of how their parents have been relevant and influential in their upbringing and connections to Taiwanese culture.

First, Taiwanese American participants in this sample emphasized their parents did not place unreasonable expectations on them to, as Ivy suggested, "get straight A's," or achieve academic success. Ivy went further and stated, "I was expected to get decent grades, maybe not fail anything or get a C, but get decent grades. I didn't have to get straight A's. That took off a lot of stress that could have occurred." Similarly, Daniel stated, "I think my mom is very understanding that at the end of the day she just means the best for me and wants the best for me." Here, participants experienced their parents as encouraging and supportive of their academic interests. This contrasts with findings that suggest Asian American parents

place more emphasis and stressors on Asian American students to achieve high-academic success (Maramba, 2008; Samura, 2015, 2016).

Second, Taiwanese American students in this sample emphasized their parents were meaningful and significant components of their cultural knowledge and involvement. For example, Oliver noted that as he has become more independent in college "I appreciate my parents more... I'm like thank you for amending, not rejecting your culture, but amending your life policy." Participants viewed their parents as their initial gateway and access to cultural knowledge and practice from language skills to celebration of cultural events. This situated parents as an essential component of students' cultural connections, in participants' upbringing and while in college. Maramba (2008), in her qualitative study of Filipina Americans, found family and parents were an integral part of Filipina American students' experience in college. Maramba asserted that her "findings point to the need to link parents with their children's college experiences. Instead of 'cutting the cord,' the findings show separating from one's family is not a viable option" (pp. 346-347). Therefore, findings in this study further assert and reaffirm parents as an influential part of students' collegiate experiences.

The review of literature and conceptual framework as it related to culture and bicultural integration, diasporas and home, and Asians Americans in higher education offers a way to understand and view the experiences of Taiwanese American participants in this study. By contextualizing participants' experiences and stories in these ways, this study was able to explore and uncover the experiences of an ethnic-

specific student population through underutilized perspectives in higher education research and scholarship.

Implications for Future Practice

Findings in this study suggest that higher education administrators and student affairs practitioners need to attend to students' ethnic and culturally specific experiences in greater depth. Much of the research on minoritized student populations encourages student affairs practitioners to direct minoritized students to their ethnic subcultures (i.e., identity specific student organizations or resource centers) (Gottlieb & Hodgkins, 1963; Museus, 2008; Museus et al., 2012). However, an ethnic-specific subculture may not be enough. Supported by the findings of this study, students found ethnic and culturally specific experiences in multiple ways. Participants found their cultural connections through family, friends, study abroad, service, and martial arts. These cultural engagement opportunities occurred on and off campus. Participants also suggested spaces like TASO cannot holistically meet students' interests. Hence, there are multiple considerations for higher education administrators and practitioners. Namely, how do administrators and practitioners facilitate spaces on campus where students can receive cultural familiarity and culturally relevant knowledge (Museus et al., 2017)? Or, how do administrators and practitioners create conditions for Taiwanese American students to thrive in their ethnic-cultural connections and contexts? Moreover, how can culturally relevant programs not be left up to students as members of ethnic organizations (Museus & Maramba, 2011)?

Findings in this study suggested that the Taiwanese American participants more readily relate and identify their Taiwanese culture when provided opportunities to engage, practice, and experience Taiwanese culture when given opportunities to use cultural artifacts on campus. For example, Daniel shared that he actively used chopsticks in the dining hall. Daniel recommended, if chopsticks were more readily available in the dining hall, then it may encourage other students to use chopsticks. Daniel also recommended dining halls ought always to have chopsticks available and not only for special cultural nights. This normalizes the use of chopsticks. Another example that was also suggested by Daniel was a wok in the residence halls. Daniel shared that there are multiple uses for a wok and it served as a cultural artifact that would signal an institution's level of inclusion with communities that predominately use woks for cooking. Daniel's suggestions may appear simplistic, but given the lack of opportunities to engage in cultural practices on campus, students may benefit from even the subtlest examples of culture. Therefore, an implication for practice, as a result of this study, is greater awareness and recognition of culturally relevant and responsive practices and thinking around serving Taiwanese American students (Museus et al., 2017). Furthermore, implementing strategies such as making chopsticks and woks available to students on campus serve students, beyond Taiwanese American students. It serves student subpopulations who resonate with these items as cultural artifacts and may also stand as an example of an institutions' values around diversity for all students.

Another implication for future practice involves bridging the gaps between students' on and off campus cultural engagement. Maramba (2008), in her study on

immigrant families and their role in college students' lives, suggested, "practitioners need to address and recognize the vital link between family and college" (p. 346). Taiwanese American participants in this sample have parents who play an influential role in their language proficiency and overall cultural knowledge. Therefore, administrators and practitioners must think carefully about ways to encourage and enhance opportunities to maintain or advance cultural learning and knowledge found at home. In what ways are institutions of higher education engaging parents as key actors in students' culturally relevant and culturally responsive experiences on campus (Museus et al., 2017)? In addition to parents, as an off campus entity, how can administrators and practitioners further engage students' past cultural experiences and off campus experiences such as study and family trips abroad as an extension of students' collegiate experiences?

All participants in this study attended Chinese school and suggested that many of their friend networks in TASO also attended Chinese school. Participants identified their Chinese schools as having a strong Taiwanese influence. Oliver shared that many of his friends throughout high school and in TASO came from his Chinese school. As a meaningful experience for participants in terms of language, friends, and cultural community celebrations, institutions of higher education ought to consider new ways of partnering with local organizations and language schools. Ultimately, institutions of higher education need to further exploring ways of bringing meaningful and significant opportunities for students to engage in their cultural background to campus.

Alice and Ami both participated in study abroad experiences in Europe and found meaningful takeaways related to their own cultural background. Alice discovered that she has "taken her culture for granted" and Ami reflected upon her sense of pride in Taiwanese culture. Alice and Ami's stories serve as an example of making meaningful cultural connections not within the context of one's own cultural background. Alice and Ami did not name any specific exercises or guided reflection activities that led them to consider their cultural background and ethnicity. Alice and Ami simply emphasized how they came to reflect upon their own cultural background while they were immersed in a new cultural context. However, as administrators and practitioners wrestle with ways of being culturally relevant and culturally responsive, it is evident that students may engage their cultural backgrounds within and outside of their own cultural contexts (Museus et al., 2017).

Interestingly, none of the participants in this study spoke about cultural learning through enrollment in Asian American studies courses. Lucy spoke about her experience working as an intern for the Asian American studies program and with the campus cultural center, but did not speak about any Asian American studies classes. How can practitioners and administrators encourage students to enroll in Asian American studies courses that can provide learning about race and racism and be sites for culturally relevant and engaging experiences on campus? Alvarez and Liu (2002) defined Asian American studies programs as "focused on the culture and experiences of the Asian diaspora, Asians in America, and the process of racialization that transformed [Asian American ethnicities] into a unified racial group" (p. 74). Participants in this study shared stories that intersected stereotypes and assumptions

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of Asian American students. However, participants offered a limited understanding of racism and other systems of oppression. Museus and Park (2015), in their article on the influence of racism in the lives of Asian American students, asserted "higher education scholars [need] to increase current levels of understanding regarding ways in which racism shapes Asian American experiences in higher education" (p. 567). Participants offered numerous examples of racism in their lives but did not tie their individual experiences to larger systemic issues affecting Asian Americans. To support participants and students in developing their own critical consciousness around Asian American issues and activism, as Osajima (2007) suggested, it would behoove educators and students' peer groups to encourage Asian American studies courses, hold constant discussions about social issues, and engage in some form of action related to race and racism to effectively make meaning and sense of experiences with race and culture. It is important to recognize that participants in this study demonstrated a clear commitment in sustained cultural connections to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture, but as Asian Americans they had limited exposure to information that would help them make more meaning of their identities as Asian Americans in the United States.

Overall, administrators and practitioners need to consider innovative strategies for supporting and encouraging students who want to engage in their ethnic-specific cultural background. These strategies can range from subtle everyday practices, like including chopsticks and woks in on campus spaces and enrolling in Asian American studies classes, to larger opportunities and partnerships with parents and local organizations or schools to further engage students in language proficiency and other

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cultural engagement activities. Strategies can also be greater resources and support given to student subcultures so that there are more than spaces for connection, but also sites for cultural learning. There are many possibilities that do not require administrators and practitioners to have a greater sense of cultural competency around Taiwanese culture. In most cases, culturally relevant or responsive actions are translatable beyond one specific ethnic identity. These implications for future practice call for administrators and practitioners to consider strategies that will forefront students as individuals wanting to utilize skills they learned from their previous educational experiences to learn more about their cultural backgrounds, and engage in their cultural context.

Implications for Future Research

Like implications for practice, findings in this study also suggest implications for future research. Namely, future research should expand upon existing studies related to family and parental influences on students' cultural backgrounds, further explore students' ethnic-specific experiences in relation to their ethnic-specific cultural background, deepen the knowledge on differences between specific identities like Taiwanese Americans and Chinese Americans or Taiwanese and Chinese students, and discover differences between Taiwanese American and Taiwanese students' relation to Taiwanese culture on campus. The purpose of this inquiry was to bring attention to Taiwanese American students and their connection to Taiwanese culture through perspectives and frameworks underutilized in higher education scholarship. As a result of this study, it is evident that there are possibilities for future research around this topic and others like it.

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In relation to family and parental influences on students' cultural backgrounds, Winkle-Wagner (2009a), Maramba (2008), and Samura (2015, 2016), based on their research, asserted that college students' lives at home and family matter to their transition and adjustment to the college environment. Findings from this study affirm that students' family and life at home also matters in maintaining students' cultural connections to their cultural background. In other words, where do students find cultural connections to their cultural backgrounds on campus? Findings in this study illustrated the importance of family and parents, as sources of cultural knowledge. As a source of cultural knowledge, family and parents do not stop being sources once students arrive on campus. Rather, students refine how their families and parents are sources of cultural knowledge (Maramba, 2008; Samura, 2015; Winkle-Wagner, 2009a). As such, future research needs to explore further the role parents' and families play in students' experiences on and off campus and provide more information on how to include parents' and families into students' collegiate experiences, as a crucial sustainer of students' cultural background.

In addition, future research should delve more deeply into the processes of how students from one ethnic-specific identity group engage with their ethnic-specific culture on campus and what implications are there to students' sense of belonging and success on campus. As findings from this study suggested, Taiwanese American students within this sample wanted and found meaningful connections to Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. It was unclear how these connections tied into their individual success on campus, in terms of academic achievement and sense of belonging. However, future research should continue to expand upon the works of Museus et al.

(2017) and Museus and Maramba (2011) by looking at more ethnic-specific student populations and their connections to their ethnic and cultural background.

Moreover, as future research expands into ethnic-specific populations, then more comparisons can be made between ethnic-specific groups. At least three participants in this study had parents or grandparents from Taiwan and China. Depending on an individual's political views, upbringing, or familial ties to China, Taiwanese American students in this study were aware, at least minimally, of historical, political, and social differences between Taiwan and China. Therefore, future research specific to Taiwanese Americans should focus more on comparisons between specific identities like Taiwanese American and Chinese American students and/or Taiwanese and Chinese students. Participants in this study identified their family and parents as meaningful points of cultural connection. How is the value of family and culture vary between Taiwanese and Chinese students? Situated as a qualitative narrative inquiry, this study does not propose a theory related to the ways in which Taiwanese American students come to understand Taiwanese culture, but future research can do this and explore how Taiwanese American students interact with Taiwan's complicated relationship with China.

Finally, future research should look at differences, if any, between Taiwanese American and Taiwanese students' relation to Taiwanese culture on campus. As institutions of higher education continue to engage in the internationalization and even globalization of higher education, then future research on the experiences of specific ethnic-identities must also look at cultural experiences for students who are from the United States, those who recently immigrated, or those who come to the

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United States as international students. Purposefully, the sample for this study was limited to those who strongly identified as Taiwanese American. However, immigration and migration to the United States was a featured part of participants' stories and part of an emergent theme in this study. As such, how might the results of this study look different if it included recently immigrated Taiwanese and Taiwanese international students? How do ethnic-specific cultural connections for recently immigrated and international students look different from students who share the same ethnic-specific identity on campus?

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of noteworthy limitations in this study. First, as a qualitative study, the results of this study was never intended to be externally generalizable across the experiences of Taiwanese American students (Maxwell, 2005). Creswell (2007) suggested that qualitative research takes into consideration "internal" and "external" forms of generalizability (p. 115). Creswell stated, "Internal generalizability refers to the generalizability of a conclusion *within* the setting or group studied, while external generalizability refers to its generalizability beyond that setting or group" (p. 115). In this study, there were within group themes and shared narratives, but the results and conclusions were relative to the participants in this sample and not applicable to other Taiwanese American students or those with connections to Taiwanese culture.

Second, as a paradigm, I adopted the use of a blended critical-cultural approach to this inquiry and found there were limitations to this approach. I described this approach as the phenomenon of interest starts at a "cultural

perspective" (Guido et al, 2010, p. 12) and is critiqued for some form of "creative action for social justice" (Guido et al, 2010, p. 12). This was further articulated in Chapter 3 as a paradigm that will bring change in participants to bring them a greater sense of self, consciousness around culture, and a willingness to engage in a cultural dialogue (Guido et al., 2010; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Tierney, 1993). A few participants acknowledged a greater sense of self came because of their participation, but it is unclear to what degree greater consciousness around culture and a willingness to engage in cultural dialogue came from this study. In addition, participants shared a wide range of stories and experiences with me, but there were limited examples of privilege and oppression that would contribute to some form of "creative action for social justice" (Guido et al, 2010, p. 12). In other words, there were limitations to this inquiry's ability to be critical.

Third, participants' participation in two semi-structured interviews limits the scope of the data that were collected for this study (Chase, 2005). Participants' narratives were bounded by their memory and recall of experiences and not inclusive of additional people or environmental factors that may have influenced their experiences. For example, participants recalled memories of Chinese school and how their experiences in Chinese school held Taiwanese cultural connections. What participants learned from Chinese school was from the perspective of Taiwanese American students in this sample and not their Chinese school peers, teachers, or parents. Therefore, there was not a comprehensive portrayal of Chinese school represented in this study.

Fourth, the focus of the study was centered on participants' connections to Taiwanese culture as Taiwanese Americans. However, was this a diverse sample of Taiwanese American students? Jones et al. (2014) suggested the intent and aspiration of diverse sampling is complicated by many factors, one being "researching within – or outside – the researcher's own community" (p. 123) and another being the ways in which diversity is "exacerbated in many qualitative studies because of a relatively small sample size" (p. 123). As the researcher, I identify with the participants as a Taiwanese American who emigrated from Taiwan to the United States, but this positionality was a limitation and strength of this study. In terms of limitations, as the researcher I am left questioning what aspects of culture may have been overlooked or missed in each stage of the research process based on my preexisting knowledge and experience with Taiwan and Taiwanese culture. What would this study have looked like guided by a researcher with no exposure or personal sense of Taiwanese culture? What would have been the make-up of the sample, semi-structured interview questions, findings, and final conclusions in the study? There are no clear answers to these questions, but it is nonetheless important to acknowledge that "researching within… [my] own community" (Jones et al., p. 123) likely influenced the research process.

In addition, as for the diversification of the sample, there were multiple factors considered. I selected participants based on their gender, birthplace, parents' birthplace, year in school, and sense of pride in Taiwanese culture. This information was collected in the initial interest form (Appendix B). However, there were minimal considerations made around social identities such as socioeconomic status, sexual

identity, citizenship and immigration status, religion and spirituality, or ability status. How participants' stories intersected these social identities came to mind during interviews and data analysis and interpretation processes, but only if it was first mentioned or brought to light by the participant themselves. This brings limitations in sampling as a fifth limitation to this study. Participants in this study were quite similar in their upbringing, general level of language proficiency, and familiarity with Taiwan as a country. To diversify the sample, greater efforts to recruit and select participants with differing levels of exposure to Asian American studies courses could have been an alternative strategy especially given the degree to which participants illustrated a partial understanding of race and racism. In the end, the social identity categories that appeared to influence participants' narratives were citizenship and immigration status and religion or spirituality. For example, participants shared stories about their parents' and their own immigration experiences. In addition, Daniel discussed his connection to Buddhism through service with Tzu Chi. If participants made clear indication that a social or personal identity was relevant to them, then it was reflected in their participant profile. Nonetheless, there was minimal outreach around participants Taiwanese American ethnicity as intersected with other social identity group membership.

Strengths of the Study

Despite limitations, there are a few noteworthy strengths of this study. First, as I introduced in Chapter 1, research on Asian American students in higher education can expand to include more ethnic-specific experiences. With this focus on Taiwanese American students, a strength of this study is its specificity with an ethnic-

specific experience. Taiwanese American students in this sample were mixed in their affiliation with China, but as Taiwanese Americans, they remained steadfast in their identification with Taiwan. Participants specifically viewed themselves as part of a larger Taiwanese or Taiwanese American culture. This goes unknown if participants are treated and seen only as part of a larger Asian American community. Moreover, I was most interested in exploring *how* and *where* Taiwanese Americans, as an ethnic-specific group, find their own ethnic-specific cultural connections. This was referred to in Chapter 1 as exploring Taiwanese American students and their sense of home through stories of their Taiwanese cultural experiences. Therefore, a featured strength of the study was the focus on one ethnic-specific student population and its corresponding ethnic-specific culture.

Second, in Chapter 1 suggested that an area for growth in higher education and student development scholarship was students' experience with bicultural integration (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). This study was able to intertwine bicultural integration by framing bicultural integration as part of diasporas. I found no previous study in higher education and student development scholarship that has considered the presence of students' experiences with a Taiwanese diaspora. This study suggested ways of including bicultural integration and diaspora frameworks into the study of students' ethnic and cultural experiences.

Third, connected to the inclusion of diasporas as an organizing framework, a strength of this study was viewing students' experiences as inclusive of prior to college, home life, and during college activities that were not experiences on campus. Participants in this study shared that their past experiences, home life, and travels

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back to Taiwan influenced cultural experiences. Therefore, this study encourages a holistic perspective on cultural experiences. As culture is complex so are students' experiences around culture. By learning more about students' upbringing and current connections with their cultural background, then practitioners and scholars can more readily view the diversity of participants' experiences.

Fourth, in recent years, there has been an increase in research on Asian Americans in higher education (Museus & Park, 2015; Poon et al., 2016; Samura, 2015, 2016). Emergent research has become more nuanced in deconstructing assumptions of Asian American students. For example, researchers have become more persistent in exploring Asian American students' racial and ethnic identity experiences through decentering the model minority myth (Poon et al., 2016; Samura, 2016). As such, recent research on Asian American students generally does not explore Asian American students through the lens of socio-cultural assumptions, expectations, and stereotypes; albeit, current practices and research are not beyond perpetuating Asian American stereotypes. Therefore, as a strength, this study did not center socio-cultural assumptions of Asian American students. Participants were not asked to share how they have persisted or succeeded in the face of socio-cultural stressors. Quite the opposite, participants were asked to share aspects of themselves through a cultural lens that sought to uplift and foreground their cultural connection and experiences.

Fifth, as previously discussed in the limitations, my ethnicity and Taiwanese cultural experiences can be identified as a limitation and strength in this study. As a strength, my identity as a Taiwanese American immigrant assisted in building quick

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rapport with participants. My ethnicity provided access and cultural knowledge that proved to be useful and relevant with participants. For example, participants were able to describe foods and experiences using Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese words without having to figure out alternative descriptors. At the same time, my *insider* perspective also meant that participants did not spend too much time with basic observations of culture (Van Maanen, 2011). This meant that participants were able to provide more depth and unique stories that may not have been available to someone who did not look like the participants themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was a journey. It was a journey in foregrounding Taiwanese American students and Taiwanese culture. Throughout this process, I had to acknowledge and set aside my own biases about Taiwanese Americans and their perspectives on Taiwanese history, politics, and society. As a Taiwanese immigrant, I hold a great deal of my own pride in Taiwan and Taiwanese culture, but to what extent was this relevant in the development of a research study in higher education? It was evident to me throughout my own studies in higher education and more specifically the research on Asian Americans in higher education that Taiwanese Americans and Taiwanese culture are erased by monolithic assumptions of Asian Americans and historic and political strife between Taiwan and China. Taiwan and China's ongoing battle over land and governance holds a great deal of consequence to words, identities, and overall cultural connections for Taiwanese and Taiwanese American people. Findings in this study tiptoed around these consequences.

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Alice, Ami, Brian, and Ivy all had parents or grandparents from China which, at times, translated into participants referring to themselves as Chinese or Chinese American. Amber, Daniel, Lucy, and Oliver all had parents and to their knowledge grandparents from Taiwan. They were unwavering in labeling themselves as Taiwanese Americans. This subtle difference between participants was difficult to capture in this study. On the one hand, the subtleties around how participants negotiated Taiwanese and Chinese culture have nothing to do with higher education. On the other hand, it has everything to do with how Taiwanese American students in this sample relate and view their cultural connections on and off campus.

During the interviews with participants, there were several times when I was struck by the similarities among participants' experiences. For instance, I was surprised to learn that all eight participants attended Chinese school. As someone who did not attend Chinese school as a child, hearing participants talk about their Chinese school experiences made me feel as if I was an outsider to a Taiwanese American upbringing. However, the feelings of being an outsider were short lived because there were more instances of being able to relate to participants' past experiences. Namely, I felt most connected to participants in their experiences with discrimination and desires to connect more with Taiwanese culture and relatives. At one point, Amber referenced people confusing Taiwan for Thailand by commenting on Thai food. Unfortunately, this type of reference has been all too real in my own life. I have countless memories of the multiple ways people have made assumptions about my cultural background, interests, and skills simply based off my racial and ethnic identity. It was hard to hear participants share their experiences in this arena,

but each of their stories emphasized the importance of doing more ethnic-specific research in higher education.

Despite participants' experiences with race and ethnicity based prejudice, participants were steadfast in the importance of staying connected to their cultural background. I remember Alice starting her first interview by sharing how much she has "taken for granted" her cultural background. By the end of this first interview, Alice shared that she was hoping her participation in this study would provide her more information on how she can learn more about herself. While communicating with participants between interviews, over the phone, and by email, I asked each participant what drew them to participate in this study. The primary response was about an interest to learn more about Taiwanese culture and share Taiwanese culture with others. As I reflect on the process of this study, I am drawn to why participants engaged in this study. Two reasons stood out to me: to learn more about their cultural background and to share Taiwanese culture with others. This was a strong statement in co-learning what it means to be Taiwanese American. When sending participants their individual narratives, one positive response that resonated with me was "looks good." This was a simplistic and yet affirming response that something for this one participant captured that student's Taiwanese American story. In the end, I sincerely hope I represented and reflected participants and their stories in a way that celebrates them as Taiwanese Americans and they felt a sense of co-learning from the experience.

Appendix A: Participant Invitation

Hello!

My name is Stephanie Chang. I am a Taiwanese American Ph.D. student in the College of Education. I am seeking participants for my dissertation research on Taiwanese American's connection to Taiwanese culture. If you identify as an undergraduate Taiwanese American with a connection to Taiwanese culture in some form, then I am interested in hearing your story! Through this study, I hope to understand how and where Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture.

If you are interested, then please visit this interest form (hyperlink to google form). Those selected will be asked to participate in two interviews and engage in a process of reviewing transcripts and interpretations of experiences. Each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. At the completion of each interview, you will be given $5 for your participation and time. All participation in this study is voluntary and will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

It is important that higher education researchers, educators, and administrators hear the stories of Taiwanese American students and their connection to Taiwanese culture. If you are an undergraduate Taiwanese American with some form of connection to Taiwanese culture, then please complete this interest form (hyperlink to google form) to support this research.

Thank you for considering this request.

For questions or further information, please contact:

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Appendix B: Interest Form

Hello, and thank you for expressing your interest in this study!

About me and this study: My name is Stephanie Chang. I am a Taiwanese American Ph.D. student in the College of Education's Student Affairs Concentration. I am seeking participants for my qualitative dissertation research on Taiwanese American students' connection to Taiwanese culture. Through this study, I hope to understand how and where Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture. If you identify as an undergraduate Taiwanese American with a connection to Taiwanese culture in some form, then I am interested in hearing your story!

This form: The purpose of this form is to collect preliminary information about you. I will use the information you and others provide to select participants for this study. Given this study is qualitative inquiry with a strong emphasis on stories, I will select only a small number of participants. This form will help me determine who to select.

If selected: If you are selected to participate, then I will schedule with you two face-to-face interviews that last approximately 60-90 minutes each. At the end of each interview, I will give you $20 for your participation and time. Each interview will be audio recorded and transcribed and I will share with you full and summarized transcripts of our conversations.

Informed consent: This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Maryland, College Park. Your completion of this form and participation of this study are completely voluntary. If you are selected for the study and agree, then you will receive a printed copy of a consent form to sign. Information you enter on this form and share in interviews will not connect to your actual name or other identifying information. A pseudonym will be created and I will keep all information strictly confidential. To learn more about the institutional approval of this research, please visit this document (link to IRB approval letter). I will provide more information on informed consent when we have our first face-to-face interview session.

For any questions or clarification on this form or any aspect of this study, please feel free to email me at chang@umd.edu.

Thank you,
Stephanie

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Year in School:
- o First Year (freshman)
- o Second Year (sophomore)
- o Third Year (junior)
- o Fourth Year (senior)
- o Fifth Year and above

Hometown:

On a 1 (strong disagree) to 5 (strong agree) scale, please answer the following:

I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as history, traditions, and customs

I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group

I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me

I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic group background better

I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group

I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group

I feel a lot of pride in the achievements of my ethnic group

Where were you born?
- o Taiwan
- o United States
- o Another country
- o

Where were your parents or legal guardians born?
- o Taiwan
- o United States
- o Another country

Do you see yourself as Taiwanese American?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Sometimes

Thank you for completing this form and expressing your interest to participate in this study! If you are selected to participate, then I will contact you to set-up our first face-to-face interview.

Thank You,

Stephanie
chang@terpmail.umd.edu

Appendix C: First Interview Guide & Protocol

Date of Interview:
Location:
Name of Participant:

Research Questions:

1. What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture?
2. How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture on campus?
3. In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of Taiwanese diaspora?

Sample Interview Questions

- Tell me a little bit about yourself and what prompted your interest in this study?
- How would you describe yourself?
  - Prompts, if needed:
    - How would others describe you?
    - How do you answer the question, where are you from?
    - Do you ever get the question, *where are you really from*, if so, how do you answer this question?
- What does being Taiwanese American mean to you?
- What kind of things do you do that are Taiwanese American?
- When you think about Taiwanese culture what is the first thing that comes to mind?
- How would you describe Taiwanese culture to someone that is not Taiwanese American?
- How would you talk about Taiwanese culture to someone that is Taiwanese American?
- What is your earliest memory of a Taiwanese related experience? What happened in this memory? Who was with you? What makes this memory stick out over other memories?
- What keeps you connected to Taiwanese culture?

Appendix D: Second Interview Guide & Protocol

Date of Interview:
Location:
Name of Participant:

Research Questions:

1. What do Taiwanese American students identify as significant and meaningful components of Taiwanese culture?
2. How and where do Taiwanese American students connect to Taiwanese culture on campus?
3. In what ways do the experiences of Taiwanese American students contribute to the existence of Taiwanese diaspora?

Sample Interview Questions

- What thoughts have you had related to our first conversation?
- This time, I asked if you would bring-in an object or something that you relate to Taiwanese culture, what did you bring with you?
- When did you get this? Who gave it to you? How old where you when you got this? What aspect of this object is Taiwanese related?
- If I asked you to bring in a second object related to your experience with Taiwanese culture, what would you have brought?
- If someone saw your object, would they know it relates to Taiwanese culture? What are some things you've seen on campus that relate to Taiwanese culture?
- What do you look for if you are looking for Taiwanese culture on or off campus?
- What aspects of Taiwanese culture are important to you?

Appendix E: Resources

<u>On Campus</u>

Asian American Studies Program and Resource Center - www.aast.umd.edu/
Multicultural Involvement & Community Advocacy (MICA) –
www.thestamp.umd.edu/multicultural_involvement_community_advocacy/
Taiwanese American Student Association (TASA) - www.studentorg.umd.edu/tasa/
UMD Exchange: National Taiwan University -
https://globalmaryland.umd.edu/offices/education-abroad/program/10328

<u>Local & National Organizations</u>

Highlighting Taiwanese American - www.taiwaneseamerican.org/
Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association (ITASA) -
http://www.itasa.org/
Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) –
www.taiwanembassy.org
Taiwanese American Professionals (TAP) – www.tap.tacl.org/

Appendix F: Participant Demographics

Table 1

Demographic Information on Participants

Pseudonyms	Class	Sex	Academic Major	Place of Birth
Alice	Junior	Female	Civil Engineering	United States
Amber	Senior	Female	Linguistics	Taiwan
Ami	Senior	Female	Mechanical Engineering	United States
Brian	Senior	Male	Finance & Information Systems	United States
Daniel	Senior	Male	Global Health & Biology	United States
Ivy	Sophomore	Female	Criminology & Criminal Justice	United States
Lucy	Senior	Female	Sociology & Information Systems	United States
Oliver	First Year	Male	Computer Science	United States

Appendix G: Participant Summaries

Table 2

Summary of Participant Stories

Pseudonyms	Featured aspects of participant stories
Alice	Grandparents fled China to Taiwan; parents were born in Taiwan; parents immigrated from Taiwan to the U.S. for graduate studies; attended Chinese school; fondly remembers celebrating Chinese New Year and family potlucks; studied abroad in Europe; has traveled back to Taiwan to visit family; strongly expressed how she has "definitely taken [her culture] for granted"
Amber	Born in Taiwan and immigrated to the U.S. with her immediately family at a young age; defined herself as "I'm 1.5 generation Taiwanese American;" attended Chinese school; noted differences between her immigrant experience to her parents; found that college taught her a lot around issues of race and gender; has returned to Taiwan many times with her family and on her own as a participant of Taiwanese exchange program; referred to her experience as "scattered, in a way"
Ami	Grandparents were born in China and left China for Taiwan during "the political revolution;" parents were born in Taiwan and met in the U.S.; attended Chinese school; has visited Taiwan on multiple occasions with her family; studied abroad in Denmark; participated in Taiwan internship program; found her parents attachment to China "really interesting how they have such a strong attachment to a country they've never been to" while she will "stick up for Taiwan"
Brian	Parents immigrated from Taiwan to the U.S.; his dad's side left China for Taiwan "after the civil war;" his mom's side is Taiwanese; attended Chinese school; he studied abroad in Taiwan; practiced Mandarin Chinese whenever possible; engaged with the Taiwanese American student organization on campus; found being Taiwanese American makes him a "unique person;"
Daniel	Parents immigrated from Taiwan to the U.S.; attended Chinese school; actively involved in Tzu Chi; identified as Buddhist; has traveled back to Taiwan many times with family or with Tzu Chi to perform service; close with his family; strongly believed "you shouldn't be afraid [to say] that you're Taiwanese;"

Ivy	Parents immigrated from Taiwan to the U.S.; her parents are from China and Taiwan; attended Chinese school; identified as a commuter student; actively engaged with the Taiwanese American student organization as "literally the only thing [she goes] to" on campus; has visited China and expressed a strong desire to visit Taiwan
Lucy	Parents immigrated from Taiwan to the U.S.; attended Chinese school; frequented Taiwan every summer with her family and on her own as a participant of a Taiwanese exchange program; discussed and followed Taiwanese politics and current events; engaged in activism; involved with Asian American and TASO on campus because "I want to belong;" invested in making a place for herself and other Taiwanese Americans
Oliver	Parents immigrated from Taiwan to the U.S. for graduate studies; attended Chinese school; has traveled back to Taiwan many times with his family; involved with Lion Dance, Wushu, Tzu Chi, and TASO; struggled with anxiety and depression and decided to attend Pearl to be around familiar faces and friends; expressed "I love Taiwan so much" and wanted to share this with others

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