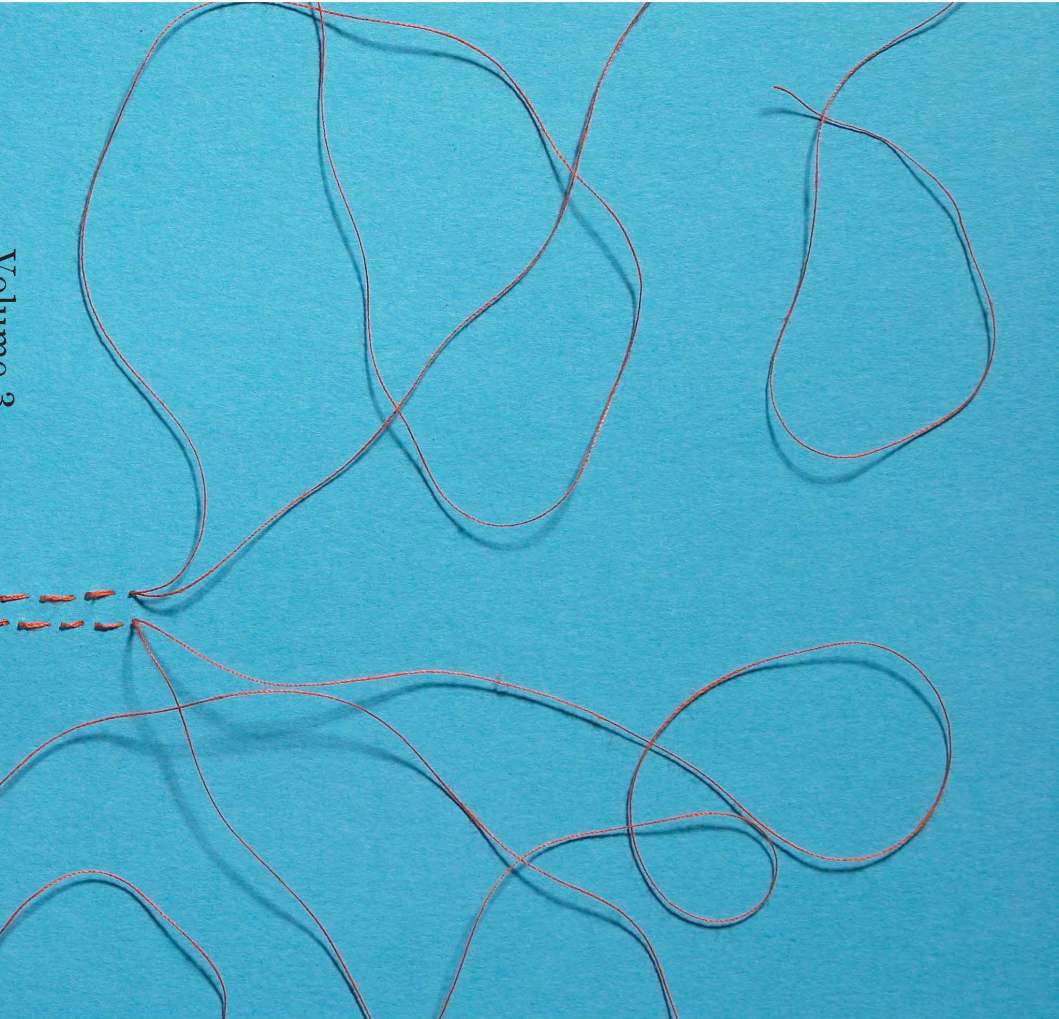


Eleven

The Undergraduate Journal of Sociology



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*“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways;
the point, however, is to change it.”*

—Karl Marx, “XI” from “Theses on Feuerbach”

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EDITOR'S NOTE

We are proud to introduce the third volume of *Eleven: The Undergraduate Journal of Sociology*. With generous support from the University of California, Berkeley Department of Sociology, *Eleven* continues its tradition of publishing excellent undergraduate papers in the social sciences and providing a much-needed forum for showcasing exceptional undergraduate scholarship.

In accordance with *Eleven's* namesake, we seek out papers which reflect a particular bent of the sociological imagination—a commitment to the perspective of civil society. Honest and serious intellectual inquiry, though too often relegated to the allegorical ivory tower, plays its part in engendering social change. As various philosophers remind us in sundry ways, the production and dissemination of knowledge unveil creative possibilities and frame pathways to action. Though we cannot presume to know in which direction our inquiries may refract, we hope to inspire critical dialogue as we, entwined in the fabric of civil society, hold a mirror to ourselves.

We see variations of this perspective reflected in all three of our featured articles published in this volume. Amanda Cheong explores the divergent strategies immigrant parents in her native Vancouver employ with regard to their children's linguistic education. In the process, she reveals the multitude of meanings and implications language can hold in our cultural sphere. Sophia Wang excavates the distinctive historical-cultural record of Chinese Americans in California to debunk the myth of Chinese Americans as politically inactive and civically disengaged. She finds instead that they do mobilize, not as an ethnic bloc, but largely for instrumental and individual reasons. In our final featured paper, Katie Egan masterfully delves into the biographies of mostly middle-class, pro-choice mothers and finds that though women may form normative conceptions of "good mothering" based on socioeconomic class, their lived experiences as mothers weigh more heavily in personal decision-making on reproductive issues.

We hope that you will read this journal cover to cover and immerse yourself in the diverse and rich perspectives each paper has to offer. The collection of articles is a testament to polished and provocative undergraduate scholarship, a body of work to be celebrated and which, we hope, inspires.

Parijat Chakrabarti,
Eleven Editor-in-Chief

Negotiating Linguistic Loyalties in a Multicultural Context: Immigrant Parents' Attitudes Towards Their Children's Heritage Language Acquisition

Amanda Cheong

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Abstract

Conducted in the multicultural context of Vancouver, this study explores immigrant parents' attitudes towards their children's heritage or dominant language acquisition, as well as perceived effects of language upon their children's ethnic identities. Data was gathered in the spring of 2010 from ethnographic fieldwork and ten semi-structured interviews conducted with immigrant mothers who frequented Gordon Neighbourhood House, a community-based organization located in Vancouver's West End. Adapting and expanding upon J.W. Berry's acculturation attitudes framework, three main stances were found to be held by respondents regarding issues of heritage language use, acculturation, and ethnic identity formation among their children. Mothers who adopted a more assimilationist approach observed an inevitable erosion of their children's fluency in their heritage language, due to lack of language use enforcement at home and constant exposure to English within Canadian society. Other respondents held a balanced integrationist or bicultural stance, and made conscious efforts to both uphold heritage language and cultural values, as well as actively participate in Canadian life. Building upon Berry's framework, this study proposes the addition of a "pragmatic" stance towards language acquisition. In this perspective, language is regarded as a practical skill believed to augment children's competitiveness in a globalized world. Multilingualism was encouraged by parents to prepare children for their future roles as global citizens by fostering cosmopolitan and culturally tolerant outlooks. Language was seen as a resource to help children mobilize across borders and take advantage of international educational or occupational opportunities. I argue that, in addition to traditional views of language as a vehicle for cultural transmission, immigrant parents are regarding language as a valuable form of human capital that provides many practical benefits within multicultural contexts.

Keywords

identity formation, language acquisition, multicultural, immigrant

INTRODUCTION

Parents living in pluralistic societies often face dilemmas with regards to what language(s) their children should learn, such as whether to encourage them to learn the dominant language of their adoptive society or maintain their heritage language. Such decisions are especially complex for immigrant and ethnic minority families, who face the challenge of reconciling their cultural backgrounds with the values of the dominant society. On one hand, language is the principle mechanism through which cultural knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation, which allows for shared meanings to be constructed and adapted within a culture or group (Krauss and Chiu 1984). This can be especially relevant to minority households who speak a language other than the dominant language. On the other hand, learning the dominant language aids in assimilating into domains of the greater society including school, work, and social life (Simmons & Plaza, 2006). Thus, language acquisition can be a primary concern for parents figuring out where to situate their children's upbringings within the multiple cultural and linguistic spheres they navigate on a daily basis.

Building on extant literature, I uncover a range of immigrant parent attitudes toward heritage language acquisition among their children and analyze the resulting implications. In particular, I borrow from and expand upon J.W. Berry's acculturation attitudes framework in order to make sense of qualitative interview data with ten immigrant mothers. Findings show that respondents most commonly adopted assimilationist, integrationist, and pragmatic stances. Throughout these divergent viewpoints, however, was the underlying idea that children use language to develop community ties to either the language's corresponding ethnic group, the dominant Canadian society, or both. This observation reinforces past literature that conceptualizes language as a medium that expresses identity. I argue that parents view language as a mechanism through which their children can gain access to ethnic or dominant community networks, and that language-mediated membership to these groups influences their cultural identities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several complex processes of attitudinal change take place when different groups come into contact with one another in a diverse setting. In order to better understand these processes of attitudinal change, J.W. Berry provides a seminal theorization of what he terms "acculturation attitudes" in pluralistic societies. He defines acculturation as a bidirectional process in

which different cultural groups come into close and chronic interaction and which mutually exert influences upon one another, resulting in changes in one or both groups (Berry et al. 1989). The nature and directionality of these interactions can result in assimilation, integration, segregation, or separation. Assimilation occurs when an individual eschews his or her ethnic values and identity in the interest of adjusting to the dominant society's culture (Berry et al. 1989). Alternatively, the integrationist, or bicultural, stance involves the adoption of characteristics from both the heritage and dominant cultures simultaneously traversed by immigrants. Rather than exclusively aligning with one linguistic group, many immigrant families construct dual cultural existences, maintaining transnational social fields that are "composed of various social connections and organizations that enable [them] to engage in activities in both worlds" (Levitt 2001:3). Segregation occurs when the dominant group excludes another from mainstream society, which may be motivated by the desire of maintaining dominance. On the other hand, groups may choose to separate themselves from the larger society to instead live by their own cultures and traditions.

This framework can be applied to matters of language, conceptualized by Tong et al. (1999) to be a "marker of ethnic identity" (p. 281), and by Chiu and Chen (2004) as the carrier of culture. Rather than suggesting a direct link between language and identity formation, scholars have taken a more nuanced approach to describing the relationship between the two. According to some works, language acts as a medium of expression, rather than as the primary shaper of identity. For example, in Mejia's (2007) study of second-generation Hispanic youth in Australia, she concluded that language does not itself affect identity, but is rather a means through which youth can express it. Similarly, Hatoss and Sheely (2009) found that Sudanese-Australian refugee background youth used their tribal mother tongue to express their identities.

Other scholars describe the importance of language by utilizing a network analysis approach. This approach argues that language fluency enables people to gain membership within various networks, and that interaction within these networks shapes people's loyalties and self-identification patterns. Language in this case acts as a gatekeeper that allows or denies access to important social and material resources. Gaudet and Clement (2009) argued that the use of a particular language allows people to take advantage of social support from members of that language group, which in turn influences identity formation and adjustment. Imbens-Bailey (1996) also found that by acquiring one's ancestral language, children found a sense of identification with their ethnic communities.

While the literature points to the importance of language in maintaining ties to a heritage culture or adjusting to the dominant society, the full scope of prevalent attitudes among immigrant parents living in contemporary cosmopolitan societies is not adequately discussed. In order to fill the gap in the available literature, I build upon Berry's framework by proposing what I call a "pragmatic" stance towards language acquisition. That is, rather than restricting themselves to choosing between the dominant or heritage language, some parents adopted a more instrumental approach to language learning. They saw language as a practical skill believed to augment children's competitiveness in a globalized world. Parents prepared their children for their future roles as global citizens by encouraging multilingualism. Language was seen as an advantageous resource that has the potential to enable international educational or occupational opportunities.

DATA AND METHODS

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with immigrant mothers who frequented Gordon Neighborhood House. Neighborhood houses are non-profit, community-driven organizations that provide various services to families, youth, and seniors. Many neighborhood houses also cater to new immigrants by providing language and resettlement services. Gordon Neighborhood House is located in Vancouver's diverse West End where themes of multilingualism and integration are especially salient. A globalized metropolis, Vancouver is home to one of the world's largest immigrant populations (Price and Short 2008).

Interviewees frequented either Gordon House's Creative Playtime (a drop-in daycare for babies and toddlers up to age five), the Out of School Care Program (for elementary school-aged children), or Family Place (during which families come together to socialize over a communal vegetarian dinner every Saturday evening). In-depth interviews were chosen in order to more fully understand the multifaceted complexities of parents' attitudes. Due to time and resource restraints, available respondents were approached and recruited on a voluntary basis. Unfortunately, fathers were not interviewed because only mothers were present at the neighborhood house - an unsurprising observation in light of the known gendered division of labor with regards to childcare. Therefore, because only one gender's perceptions on the issue of children's language acquisition are expressed, this study thus should not be regarded as representative of the greater population. In order to mitigate any misunderstandings between interviewer and interviewee, I made my position as a researcher, as well as the objectives

of my project, clear at the start of all interactions.

All interviews were conducted in English and lasted anywhere from twenty to ninety minutes. The respondents hailed from a range of different countries including China, Chile, Mexico, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovakia, Iran, and the Philippines. Our dialogue primarily focused on parents' attitudes towards and perceived effects of heritage and English language acquisition among their children, the nature of the linguistic dynamics within their households, the degree to which they value being connected to their home countries within a Canadian context, and how their children feel about the issue (do they themselves embrace their roots, or reject their non-Canadian sides in favor of assimilation?). The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed closely for common themes and patterns, and subsequently compared with existing literature on issues of language, immigration, and identity. These diverse attitudes were then coded manually after several close readings of the transcripts.

ASSIMILATION, INTEGRATION, OR PRAGMATISM?

To make sense of the diverse sentiments regarding children's language acquisition, I borrow from J.W. Berry's acculturation attitudes framework, which differentiates between assimilationist and integrationist approaches that immigrants adopt when adjusting to a new home (Berry et al. 1989). In addition to these two prevalent attitudes, I suggest for the introduction of the pragmatic approach, which was derived from an observed desire on behalf of some respondents for their children to be equipped with a second language in an increasingly globalized school and work environment. After exploring these three strains, this paper concludes with the argument that parents conceptualize language as the vehicle through which their children access ethnic and Canadian communities, and that membership to these groups may be the more salient influencer of identity.

Firstly, the assimilationist attitude was displayed by parents whose children were more wholly rooted in their Canadian identity as opposed to their ethnic backgrounds. In situations where children outpace their parents in English language acquisition, there may arise problems in intrafamilial communication. These problems might include less time spent together, less support and involvement on behalf of the parents, and overall "poorer youth academic and emotional adjustment" (Liu et al. 2009:573). Regarding the higher rate at which her son is learning English over Mandarin, one respondent expressed anxiety regarding the prospect of losing parent-child communicative ties. She also indicated that she was worried about her son's

ability to talk with or relate to fellow family members in China:

In order to communicate and understand well our background, knowing Chinese is very important. But he does not really want to learn, and replies only in English to me. He also not want to talk on phone with his grandparents in Beijing. He thinks that he is half Chinese, half Canadian! He doesn't understand. In school, he learns Canadian culture only. It is his home. His only memories of Beijing are of his grandmother buying him popsicles. It is very difficult.

Though the mother considers enrolling her son in Saturday Mandarin courses, she fears that his physical separation from Chinese cultural, familial, and linguistic spheres will preclude his ability to learn the language or develop a profound affinity for his roots.

For four of the respondents, the path towards assimilation was not deliberately embarked upon; rather, children's heritage language-speaking capabilities were gradually eroded by enrollment in English schools and access to English language media. One Russian mother, whose five-year-old daughter demonstrated a strong predilection for English over Russian, resigned to the monolingual future awaiting her child. She partly attributed the linguistic preference to her daughter's attendance in preschool and kindergarten, during which English was exclusively used. "She doesn't speak Russian at all—if I try to talk to her, she just looks at me like not understanding," she lamented, "But what can be done?" The respondent has "given up" on trying to force the use of Russian within their household, citing convenience and speediness of communication as reasons for favoring English. She claimed that her child identifies predominantly as a Canadian, and has only vague notions of Russian culture.

An Iranian respondent, in contrast, was open to the idea of assimilation. She spoke about her experiences as an immigrant who raised her now-fully-grown son split between "mixed" Ottawa and "divided" Vancouver:

If you want to live here and adjust to Canada, Ottawa is good, but not Vancouver. In Ottawa, we are all blended together, but Vancouver has all divided communities. The problem is that you don't want to get involved with other cultures, and it is hard to let go [of your own ethnic ties]. But you can't keep everything of Iranian culture. It would

be nice to keep some, but you are living here in Canada after all, right?

Her pro-assimilationist sentiments were made evident by her preference for Ottawa's more homogenous community and her denunciation of what she perceived to be Vancouver's "divisive" cultural mosaic makeup. The mother described her son's experience living amongst English- and French-speakers in Ottawa as "more comfortable" both linguistically and culturally:

He likes the country of Iran, but he doesn't want to go there. He doesn't have enough connections. He feels more accepted in Ottawa. He thinks he belongs more to Canada than to Iran because of connections. He speak English and French, works, studies, does everything in Ottawa. The reason he does not like Vancouver is lots of Iranian people here. He can't communicate—he holds back and does not enjoy it because he's not comfortable with speaking Farsi. Also he does not understand the Iranian way of acting to each other.

The above remark specifies language as both an avenue into Canadian culture, and as a barrier to her son's understanding of his fellow Iranian-Canadians. Due to his Canadian upbringing and inability to communicate fluently in Farsi, her son is actually more "at home" with people outside of his own ethnic group. Though she wished he were capable of speaking more Farsi, the mother was open to being immersed in Canadian culture and "new ways of thinking and living." Her satisfaction with Ottawa as a conducive place for acculturation contrasts with other parents' more integrationist attitudes towards child-rearing.

Secondly, parents who wanted their children to maintain both their heritage and dominant cultural loyalties exhibited the bicultural or integrationist attitude. The passing of cultural knowledge to their children was a high priority for many of the respondents, some of whom regarded language as a "carrier of culture" and thus a means through which ethnic loyalties could be forged (Gaudet and Clement 2009:213). One Mexican-Canadian mother expressed a desire to maintain her children's fluency in Spanish in the face of increasing English usage at school and within society:

The mother tongue...I consider we are in the risk of later on and say, "What you use it for anyway? And everybody

speaks here is English, so what would be the point of learning?" When we are in a very good time to correct them and say, "You know what? It's because of the way we are. It's part of you. They believe they are Mexican, or Canadian, how they feel, how they identify themselves. So if they lose that interest for the Spanish, I believe they will go more for being Canadian than anything else. When they have both, in their genes, Mexican-Canadian. So they have to have Spanish and English as their mother tongue.

In addition to thinking of Spanish as a key to self-knowledge, she also viewed it as integral to her children's ability to understand their Mexican background.

While the Mexican mother saw Spanish as a way to encourage her children to self-identify emotionally with their roots, other respondents viewed heritage language acquisition as a tangible mechanism through which social support networks in the form of ethnic communities can be accessed. One mother raised her daughter in an environment so deeply steeped in Chilean influences that the child wore a cap that had "Chile" emblazoned on the front and stated that her Barbie doll was from Chile. Despite having been born and raised in Vancouver, the daughter introduced herself at Family Place as Chilean. While her fluency in Spanish helps maintain ties to her Chilean family, her parents also hoped that being a "bilingual and bicultural individual" would facilitate her transition between the two worlds more easily in the future (Imbens-Bailey 2000:260).

Lastly, a more pragmatic attitude was displayed by parents who strategically approached their children's language learning. The pragmatically-minded parents did not limit their children to exclusively learning their heritage language. Instead, they believed that any additional language would be an asset in future academic or work-related endeavors. A mother from Bulgaria was indifferent about the second language that her son learned because she was confident that any multilingual abilities would lead to a greater capacity for tolerance and cross-cultural understanding. These respondents commonly cited their "cosmopolitan" outlooks as reasons for wanting their children to be similarly receptive to different linguistic and cultural influences. Another mother from Russia, who was a self-professed "citizen of the world," claimed that "any additional language is more practical. You get an extra advantage. That's how people should see it nowadays: extra skills. We are blurring the [state] lines." Similarly, a respondent from the Philippines, who enrolls her children in a French immersion school but

speaks to them in Tagalog at home, stated, “It gives them more opportunity in the future, right? My kids will be able to work for the government if they really wanted to. And they can relocate wherever, you know? English and French are pretty much language[s] that people understand all over the world.”

DISCUSSION

The ten mothers who participated in this project voiced unique attitudes about the issues of ancestral language use, acculturation, and self-identity formation among their children. While some relinquished ties to their home countries, others made conscious efforts to maintain both heritage and dominant language use within their households. These actions were motivated by the bid for assimilation or in the interest of keeping their children tied to the multiple facets of their hyphenated identities.

Building upon Berry’s framework, this study proposes the addition of a “pragmatic” stance towards language acquisition. This perspective suggests that language is regarded as a practical skill believed to augment children’s competitiveness in a globalized world. Multilingualism was encouraged by parents to prepare their children for future roles as global citizens by fostering cosmopolitan and culturally tolerant outlooks. Language was seen as a resource that helps children mobilize across borders and take advantage of international educational or occupational opportunities. I argue that, in addition to traditional views of language as a vehicle for cultural transmission, immigrant parents regard language as a valuable form of human capital that provides many practical benefits within multicultural contexts. Language is a practical skill that is integral to human existence that grants individuals access to ethnic support networks and thus develops a sense of collective cultural identity.

The ability to oscillate linguistically between one’s home and host countries is important not only for self-identity-building purposes, but also for practical reasons. Acknowledging the increasing permeability of national borders in an ever-globalizing world, some parents view language as a practical skill that they feel obligated to equip their children with in order to prepare them for their future roles as “global citizens” (Li 2002:3). Some parents saw language as not exclusively tied to the ethnicities to which they traditionally identify with, but as a capability that can be learned by any person who desires to do so. This alternative mindset might render ethnic community group-membership more open to those who may not necessarily share the same skin color or country of origin. This third, emerging pragmatic attitude

reflects the increasingly transnational and globalized world in which these children are growing up, where language is seen as a practical skill to be learned in order to prepare for future border-transcending academic and career-related endeavors.

According to Hiebert and Ley (2006), the ability to speak more than one language allowed for immigrants in Vancouver to “engage in more intensive transnationalism,” as manifested by increasingly frequent cross-border communication and property ownership (p. 84). In her “practical, modernistic assessment of bilingual and bicultural experiences,” Imbens-Bailey (2000) similarly reported that parents were keen to teach their children the Armenian language in the interest of greater economic and travel opportunities in the future. The emergence of this attitude may point to the changing class demographics of contemporary Canadian immigrants who are required by the government to possess increasingly high educational, occupational, and economic standards in order to become permanent residents. Such families might hold higher aspirations for their children, and may also possess the resources to be able to support them in the pursuit of these cosmopolitan goals.

While parents exhibited different perspectives on the perceived effects of language acquisition among their children, the idea that language provides access to social support networks cut across assimilationist, integrationist, and pragmatic attitudes. According to Mejia (2007), “Language does not determine identity, but provides a way to express it,” acting as an “intermediary determinant used to shape group social identity, which in turn may contribute to individuals self-identity construction” (p. 169). For the assimilationist respondents, mastering English signified acceptance within Canadian society even if the process entailed a loss of their ethnic language in the process. Integrationist parents sought to pass on the privilege of ethnic community membership via heritage language acquisition within the English-dominated environment of Vancouver. This preference was demonstrated by relationships with family members and co-ethnic peers, the ability to intimately understand and enjoy the significance of traditional rituals and festivities, and a shared sense of ethnic pride and group identity. Those exhibiting pragmatic attitudes re-conceptualized cultural identity as not solely determined by blood-ties or birthright, but as a resource that can be tapped into through the acquisition of an additional language. Instead of focusing on ethnic identity construction, respondents emphasized the development of social and community ties as one of the highest priorities for their children, and perceived language to be a prime facilitator of this type of relationship-building. Thus, language itself may not be a shaper of

immigrant children's ethnic identities, but more accurately acts as a medium through which identity-building membership to networks of social support and community ties can be established and sustained.

The turn towards pragmatism may be indicative of the increasing diversity of cities today, and the implications that these demographic shifts have on language in our global society. The acknowledgement of the emerging pragmatic attitude renders more flexible the ways in which we can approach the study of people's views towards the usefulness of language. However, the theory is still nascent in its development. More extensive research must be conducted in order to test the validity of this claim.

Language is essential to the human experience. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the language that one speaks actually structures the way he or she interprets, organizes, and understands his or her subjective reality (Kay and Kempton 1984). Given its importance in shaping people's perceptions of their extrinsic environments, future research should investigate the effects of language on individuals' self-identities. Deeper knowledge of families' attitudes towards language acquisition will more clearly elucidate how to better facilitate immigrant incorporation through the avenue of language, especially in pluralistic societies. This study, however, is limited only towards the perspectives and wishes of the parents—specifically, mothers in heterosexual couples. Future research should include the perspectives of fathers, as well as the dynamics of more diverse household arrangements. More research must be conducted in order to explain the acculturation outcomes of youth growing up in an increasingly globalized community, as well as the interaction—and possible tensions and challenges that may arise—between children and parents.

CONCLUSION

Linguistic and cultural heritage loyalty-negotiation is an ever-present issue for immigrant families living in the multicultural context of Vancouver. The increasingly pluralistic character of urban Canadian communities has profound implications upon immigrant families' changing approaches to language acquisition. Commonly found across these three attitudes that were identified—assimilation, integration, and pragmatism—was the idea that language acts as a mechanism through which immigrant children can gain access to their ethnic communities, the dominant culture, or other groups. I argue that, in addition to traditional views of language as a vehicle for cultural transmission, immigrant parents are regarding language as a valuable form of human capital that provides many practical benefits within multicultural

contexts. By contributing the new theoretical dimension of pragmatism to Berry et al.'s (1989) acculturation attitudes framework, this research expands upon our understanding of immigrant families' experiences of and attitudes towards linguistic adaptation.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me a little bit about your background.
2. What was your life like before you immigrated?
3. Why did you decide to immigrate to Canada?
4. What was the biggest difference between Canadian culture and the culture of your homeland?
5. Where were your children born?
6. Do you uphold any rules for language use in your home?
7. Does your household lean more towards one culture as opposed to another?
8. What language do you speak to your children in? Why? What language do they primarily use to communicate?
9. What are the challenges of raising your children here in Canada as an immigrant?
10. What are the challenges of maintaining your heritage language (if applicable)?
11. Do you think there is anything your children are missing by being brought up in Canada as opposed to your home country?
12. How do you feel about the potential lack of your children's connection to their culture (if applicable)?
13. How important do you think knowing (language) is to be able to understand your culture?
14. What kinds of media do your children consume?
15. How do your children view your country of origin?
16. What ethnicity or nationality do your children identify with?
17. How do your children express their heritage?
18. How would you evaluate Canada's job at helping immigrants maintain their own languages, or at helping immigrants adjust to Canada through language services?
19. Do you believe that multiculturalism exists truly here in Canada? Why or why not?
20. What is the biggest challenge in balancing between English and other languages in your household?
21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWEES' COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Country	Number
Bulgaria	1
Chile	1
China	1
Iran	1
Mexico	2
Philippines	1
Russia	2
Slovakia	1

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Civic and Political Engagement of Chinese Americans in Ethnic Suburbs

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Abstract

This project explores the motivations and expression of Chinese American civic and political engagement in ethnic suburbs. Ethnic suburbs with a large percentage of middle and upper class Chinese Americans are at the center of this investigation, but Chinese Americans from less diverse suburbs are interviewed as well in order to provide a point of comparison. Contrary to popular belief that Chinese Americans under-participate in American civil society, this study finds that Chinese Americans are in fact very established in civil society and politically expressive, but their participation is unconventional. Even in locations with a high concentration of Chinese Americans, they lack a sense of group consciousness and communal motivations. Instead, these suburban Chinese Americans become politically mobilized or civically engaged for instrumental and individual reasons.

Keywords

ethnic suburbs, Chinese American, politics, civic engagement

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to understand Chinese American identity and civic assimilation in California by focusing on communal and political engagement of Chinese Americans in suburban neighborhoods. It explores, firstly, how Chinese Americans perceive themselves in their neighborhood communities and, secondly, how and why they choose to participate within this context. Furthermore, I aim to understand how forms of civic and political engagement relate to Chinese Americans' perceptions of their cross-cultural identity. The reasoning and methods by which Chinese Americans interact with their community provide an intimate view of their core values and priorities. By exploring the meaning of civic and political participation, we can gain insight to how Chinese Americans adapt or have adapted to their American home and culture.

My research also addresses the stereotype of Chinese American

under-participation in politics and community affairs. In particular, I focus on middle to upper-class ethnic suburbs, racially diverse suburban cities with high concentration of Chinese and Asian residents. I would like to find out to what extent the ethnic resources and support from ethnic suburbs will stimulate participation in their communities, and to what extent the ethnic communities provide enough familiarity and social comfort that it reduces the interest in political expression. Conversely, does living as a minority in a suburb create a greater interest in participation?

Studying the motives behind Chinese Americans' civic and political engagement is important because, despite having a long history and large presence in the United States and especially California, Chinese Americans are underrepresented in both academic research and political representation. By understanding how Chinese-Americans view civic duty and why they choose to be involved, we can utilize their views and cultural frameworks to better understand and address issues within the Chinese American community. This information can additionally be used to mobilize the growing population of Chinese Americans towards greater political action and better representation of their interests.

BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

Population Change

The first wave of Chinese immigrants migrated to the United States from the 1800s until 1924. Most arrived after the California Gold Rush, and over 300,000 Chinese immigrated to the West Coast (Fong 2008). Many of these Chinese Americans worked on the Transcontinental Railroad, as merchants, or as laundry men, but they were not welcomed visitors. The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), Alien Land Laws (1913), and subsequent immigration quotas greatly limited the number of Chinese that could move and stay in America. It was only after the 1965 Immigration Reform Act that millions of more Chinese moved to the U.S.; this was the second wave of Asian immigration. Currently, Chinese immigrants and their descendants are an especially significant group in California. Of the thirteen percent of Asians in California, over a quarter identify as Chinese (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). California also has forty percent of all Chinese Americans in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2008).

In the past couple of decades, global economic restructuring has increased the demand for a more specialized and educated workforce so hundreds of thousands of Chinese students and professionals have been arriving in recent decades to obtain American higher education and to find

employment in mostly science and technology industries. Chinatowns, built up in cities such as San Francisco, were the primary destination for the vast majority of Chinese immigrants. By 1940, 91 percent of the Chinese population was classified by the Census Bureau as “urban” (Takaki 1998). The Chinatown ghettos did not provide favorable living conditions, but they were the rare place where Chinese could find employment and housing. Chinatown residents actively supported the ethnic economy, enabling even unskilled, non-English speaking immigrants to make a living in the city.

Starting in the late 20th century, however, more and more Chinese Americans began moving to the suburbs. Some immigrated directly to the suburbs, while others may have been raised in Chinatown but decided to start their own families away from the city. To most, the flight to the suburbs represents movement towards higher socioeconomic status (Lin 1998, Fong 1994, Fong 2008). Suburbs are understandably appealing to Chinese Americans, especially those looking to start families. Suburban communities are less densely populated, so they are considered to be quieter, safer, and a symbol of high socioeconomic status. All of the above qualities are highly prized by Chinese American parents and contribute to the attractiveness of suburbs. As one respondent, a parent of two, explains:

I think it's good to raise your children [in a suburb]. I think most people move there because there is less crime and better education and better environment... because urban areas probably have more crowded schools. (Interview 4)

As a result of ethnic suburbanization, many suburban cities are becoming dominated by Chinese Americans. Using suburbs of Los Angeles as a model, Wei Li coined the term “ethnoburb”, a contemporary ethnic suburb with a concentration of immigrants and immigrant businesses (Zhou and Lin 2005, Li 1998, Li 2009). Li writes that ethnoburbs are “multi-ethnic communities, in which one ethnic minority group has a significant concentration, but does not necessarily comprise a majority (Li 2009). Through their research in San Gabriel Valley, CA and Flushing, NY, Zhou and Lin (2005) show how ethnoburbs differ from traditional models of ethnic enclaves in four distinct ways: diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, mixed model of economy development driven by the market and globalization, multi-ethnic and unlikely to be dominated by a single national-origins group, and the maintenance of transnational ties.

In this project, however, I would like to focus on ethnic suburbs in general, rather than ethnoburbs. Li (2009)'s standards for ethnoburbs are

premised upon economic interpretations of ethnic enclaves. Research of ethnic enclaves has been dominated by theories of economics, assimilation, and ethnic capital, yet there lacks academic consensus on specific standards that define ethnic enclaves. Literature thus far has focused primarily on economic processes in ethnic enclaves that are facilitated by high concentrations of ethnic populations, with only limited discussion on population boundaries for ethnic enclaves or their qualitative aspects (Zhou and Lin 2005, Li 1998, Portes and Zhou 1993). It is clear that many Chinese and minorities tend to live near others with similar ethnicities, but it is more difficult to distinguish an ethnic neighborhood from an ethnic enclave without additional dialogue on the significance of concentration versus size of ethnic populations. Given these setbacks and the ambiguity in defining ethnoburbs, I intend to focus on ethnic suburbs without having the burden of proving it to be an ethnoburb. By studying suburban ethnic enclaves, I hope to gain a better understanding how geographic context can affect political engagement. Residential factors such as suburban space, ethnically diverse neighbors, and community bonds are among many of the forces that can shape civic and political activity.

With a population of 214, 089 that is 50.6 percent Asian and 18 percent Chinese (2010 U.S. Census Bureau), the city I will call “Freeville” is the ideal case study for an ethnic suburb. This particular location is especially interesting because of its rapid growth of Asian residents. In only twenty years, from 1980 to 2010, the Asian American population grew from 9,611 to 108,332. In addition, residents of Freeville are highly educated and tend to be financially secure. Around 49 percent of residents have their Bachelor's degree or higher, the average income is \$123,000, and around 46 percent of population has an income higher than \$100,000 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau). Based on these demographics, Freeville has less class stratification and factionalism than other suburbs yet, as I will later show, it is still far from having a unified populace.

Participation

Popular political science theory dictates that higher levels of socioeconomic status and educational attainment translate to higher levels of political participation. In this vein, because Chinese Americans have above average education levels and socioeconomic status, they should be very politically engaged. Yet, Chinese Americans, and Asian Americans in general, are infamous for seemingly having underwhelming levels of participation (Diaz 2012; Fong 2008; Lien 2004; Lien 2009; Ong and Scott 2009; Wong 2006). Much research has been conducted to prove, disprove, or

explain this gap, and there is a collection of literature that delves into factors that influence Asian American political participation.

Janelle Wong's analysis suggests that there is truth to the paradox (Wong 2006). Not only might the procedure of American democracy be unfamiliar and intimidating to immigrants, but Chinese Americans also share the feeling that their vote or contribution to the political system will not make a difference (Wong 2006). Furthermore, political parties rarely put in any effort into mobilizing potential or swing voters. By not valuing Asian voters, political parties alienate the Asian electorate, which consequently contributes to consistently low national voter turnout rates (Wong 2006).

However, studies that make generalizations from voting behavior can be misleading. Voter registration and voter turnout statistics usually neglect to situate their test population within the eligibility requirements for citizenship (Wong 2005, Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001). This is problematic because there is a constant influx of new immigrants who are ineligible for U.S. citizenship and thus unable to vote. About half of the contemporary Chinese population in the U.S. is made up of immigrants (Wong, et al 2011). After taking eligibility into consideration and not counting individuals ineligible to vote, voter turnout rates among Asian Americans who are naturalized are similar to the general U.S. population. Lien's analysis finds that over 75% of those Chinese Americans eligible to vote do (Lien, et al 2004). The failure to take eligibility requirements into account creates misleading statistics and limits focus to an unrepresentative fraction of all Chinese Americans. With proper measurement, Lien shows that the paradox may not necessarily be accurate.

Conventionally, ethnic political participation in America has been shaped by machine politics or feelings of kinship. White urban minorities organized in this way in the late 1880s and were effective in mobilizing their constituencies in order to form electoral blocks and clientele. African Americans, on the other hand, mobilize around their common history of slavery and a shared sense of linked fate (Dawson 1994). In this post-civil rights era, however, neither ethnic identity nor party politics has become as strong of a basis for political participation for Chinese Americans (Wang 1996).

Despite living among kin in a confined urban space, researchers show that ethnic solidarity is not a given among Chinese Americans. In *Reconstructing Chinatown*, Jan Lin (1998) shows how post-exclusion era collective action in New York's Chinatown has been shaped by organizational solidarity but hindered by class, personal, and organizational factionalism. Ling-chi Wang (1996) also uncovers definite factionalism within urban

Chinatowns as a consequence of the changing global forces that shape U.S. - China relations. In his new book *Asian American Political Action*, James Lai (2011) studies political and civic engagement in ten small-to-medium sized suburbs with Asian American majorities or pluralities. He argues that suburban contexts allow for greater Asian American political mobilization around Asian American candidates than in larger cities because these are places where group political mobilization and incorporation are taking place most rapidly. Furthermore, Lai (2011) contests that Asian American candidates are most successful when they focus on a two-tier campaign strategy that targets the mainstream (usually white) political base while also mobilizing a pan-ethnic coalition.

Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) further explore the relationship between geography and political participation, and they argue that high ethnic concentrations lower the per capita cost of participation, which should stimulate involvement. Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad's (2008) research supports this statement; they find a positive correlation between city size and political presence as well as between ethnic group size and political presence. In addition, data from the 2008 National Asian American survey allows Wong, Ramakrishnan, Lee, and Junn to analyze broader trends, which are presented in their recent book, *Asian American Political Participation*. They find that immigrant socialization, party identification, and religious and civic organizations are consistent indicators for political participation. On the other hand, their results show that racial identification and residential contexts are not associated with political participation. These factors confound and challenge the standard socioeconomic predictors of political involvement.

My research stems from this literature. I will examine the effect of on Chinese American engagement and social cohesion in order to shed light on ethnic factionalism, group solidarity, political mobilization, and incorporation.

METHODOLOGY

My data comes from twenty in-depth interviews with Chinese Americans throughout Northern California. The interviews ranged from thirty to ninety minutes long. Every interview but two were conducted in person; the exceptions were completed through email. The majority of the interviews were in English, but two were in Mandarin and later translated into English. All interview excerpts in this paper have been edited for grammar and readability. Respondents ranged from 40 to 81 years old, and

they all reside in a Northern Californian suburb. Sixty five percent of the respondents live in the same city, what I will call Freeville. Freeville is an ethnic suburb with a particularly large Chinese American population. The remaining respondents hail from three suburbs that are located from fifteen miles to 125 miles from Freeville. Each locale is about as racially diverse as Freeville, with the exception of one, white-dominated suburb. Every respondent is a parent, has completed at least some college education and is part of the middle to upper-middle class. The sample was consistent in terms of ethnic background, education level, socioeconomic status, and suburban residence. These parameters frame the subject of my argument.

I also interviewed four former or current Chinese American elected officials in Freeville in order to gain additional insight on the participation patterns of Chinese Americans in that city. Interviews with this group focused on their personal background, their motives for seeking public office, as well as their experiences mobilizing Chinese American constituents, campaigning, and interacting with the public as a community leader. Their insight was paramount in allowing me to gain a closer and more in-depth understanding of ethnic politics in Freeville.

The sample was obtained through snowball sampling and personal networking, which consisted of local organizations, elected officials, and informants. Many respondents also referred to people within their own networks that would be interested in an interview. The interviews followed the same format. I asked respondents about their background, current location, geographic and cultural community, participation, voting motivations and habits, and lastly, their American and Chinese identity. Elected officials and community leaders were also asked about their experiences with the Chinese American community. The breadth of the interview topics was an attempt to obtain a holistic picture of my respondents in order to best understand the circumstances and conditions that shape their civic and political behavior. The full list of interview questions can be found in the Appendix.

DISCUSSION

Debunking the Myth

Despite the pervasive and widely acknowledged stereotype that Chinese Americans do not have a predisposition to become politically active and community-minded individuals, I argue that Chinese Americans are in fact very involved and expressive. Contrary to conventional modes of ethnic political participation such as machine politics and group consciousness, suburban Chinese Americans demonstrate active forms of instrumental

engagement. When motivated by personal values and interests, Chinese Americans become politically and civically active.

I find that although Chinese American residents and political candidates are well established in civil society and politically expressive, they lack political consciousness as a group. Suburban Chinese Americans, even in large ethnic suburbs such as Freeville, are instead motivated by the potential for personal benefit or by their individual value standards. This kind of personal and instrumental engagement represents a political identity that is shaped by factionalism, diversity, suburbanization, and social status among Chinese Americans rather than a commitment to group solidarity or communal motivations.

Independent Political Identities

My research suggests that suburban Chinese Americans tend to have independent political identities that are dominated by personal values and goals rather than by collective or ethnic interests. Even those who live among a high concentration of Chinese Americans do not develop a sense of political solidarity with their other ethnic neighbors, and they maintain distinct political identities from each other instead.

Respondents identify strongly with common values and their ethnic identities, showing a strong sense of ethnic consciousness and cultural identity. This ethnic identity, however, remains distinct from their civic and political identities and a sense of group solidarity premised on a communal Chinese American vision, agenda or goals. Suburban Chinese Americans lack a sense of linked fate, and it appears to me that this is an outcome of suburbanization and high levels of social comfort, in addition to diversity and factionalism among Chinese Americans.

Suburbanization

A defining characteristic of suburban areas in comparison with urban areas is a greater distance from one house to another. Suburbs tend to be more spread out, and at the same time, each housing unit is more self-enclosed. Although white picket fences are no longer in style, property boundaries are mutually understood if not physically acknowledged. The spatial distance and distinct property units make organic, social interaction among neighborhoods less likely. When interaction does occur, it is not often and more superficial. As one respondent describes: "Sometimes when I see my neighbors we'll chat but nothing too deep" (Interview 7). Because social camaraderie may not come naturally in suburban spaces, it takes a greater effort to build community and relationships within suburban

neighborhoods. As a result, it is common for neighbors to only barely know each other. For most Chinese American immigrants, for whom English is their second language, language barriers along with time constraints of working parents can increase social distance between next-door neighbors. This respondent describes how she rarely has time to build a relationship with her neighbors:

We know our neighbors but it's just like on the surface... Everybody's so busy. They're doing their own stuff... So when we go get out and go get mail or come back after work, we just chat for a bit like that. (Interview 4)

Another respondent elaborates: "We talk to each other but not deeply. I know them... but if there's a community it's a very loose community" (Interview 1). Though they all felt like they belonged within the neighborhood, the social and environmental factors such as language barriers and time constraints caused many respondents to feel like they do not share a strong social bond with their neighbors.

Social Comfort

Experiences or perceptions of discrimination are known to be a predictor of ethnic solidarity as well as feelings of linked fate (Lin 1998; Junn and Masuoka 2008). Rim (2009) further emphasizes how social, political, and economic context, in addition to racial hierarchy, influence linked fate. Ninety percent of my respondents, however, did not experience any discrimination where they are living now, and all of them felt like they belong in their neighborhood. Despite feeling distant with their neighbors, everyone I interviewed said they felt comfortable where they lived.

Even if they live in a predominately Caucasian community, Chinese Americans do not feel like they are treated any differently than other Americans. One such resident explains how race is not an issue in her white majority neighborhood:

Everyone minds their own business. You don't feel like someone wants to exclude you. I never heard about my kids being bullied because they're Chinese. Never heard of it.... We never experience discrimination because usually you experience that through work, through schools, through neighbors, but we never experience that. At least I don't experience that. (Interview 4)

This feeling of belonging is often contextualized geographically. Respondents attribute their high levels of social comfort to being in a diverse state like California:

In California I never feel that way. In California, I definitely don't have that feeling [of a minority]... Because in California the population is very diversified. It's just you see every kind of different people everywhere. (Interview 2)

The growing diversity within ethnic suburbs contributes to an even greater sense of social comfort. This was especially true for residents of Freeville, who live in a particularly ethnically diverse area.

A respondent, who has been a resident of Freeville for almost 40 years, said that as demographics changed, so did his social status:

When I moved to [Freeville], [Chinese] were only 3 percent. And so the demographic has changed over the past few years where there is so much of a mix now so that being different is not different now... It's different than before when you're always going to be subservient. When Chinese were a numerical minority, it also felt like there was hierarchy. I feel like that's changed. Doesn't mean that it's always going to be changed.... But at least in this area the field is more level. If you were to travel to throughout the country, you will not find it like this. (Interview 8)

As more Chinese immigrated to California, the rise in the Chinese American population led to a growth of Chinese businesses, services, and native-language speakers, all of which made it easier and more comfortable to live in this area. One respondent describes how easy it is to be Chinese in her area:

There's a lot of Asians here, lots of your own kind, so you don't feel like you're an outsider... Don't feel like a minority. There are so many Asians... There are so many Chinese things around here. Chinese food or Chinese doctors... You don't have to speak English here. You can find anything in Chinese to help you; you don't have to speak English in order to get around.... I just feel a little

more comfortable in California. All these days in America, I like California the best. (Interview 5)

These feelings of increased social comfort and assimilation is also positively linked to the length of residency in the United States (Wong, et al 2011). A resident of another city who has been in the United States for almost 30 years echoes this growing sense of belonging, no longer feeling like a minority:

I feel like there aren't any issues and I don't feel anything different. No one bothers us, and I don't feel like we're not welcome.... Yeah I think now I don't really feel [like a minority]. Those feelings have gotten smaller and smaller. When I first came to America, when I did things I would be really careful, or when I did stuff I was scared and didn't want to do anything. But now, when I travel and go out and eat out in the restaurant, I just feel like they treat me with courtesy and respect.... It's like I don't feel like an outsider. (Interview 7)

As members of these well-off suburban communities, Chinese Americans no longer feel like a minority or discriminated against in society, and it creates a favorable social context. These high levels of social integration overshadow any feeling of stigma attached to race or ethnicity. To many, race is no longer a distinguishing factor or a reason to feel insecure or inferior. The lack of perceived racism is without a doubt a good thing, but as a side effect, without a common enemy there is less motivation for Chinese Americans to unite and fight for a common ethnic cause (Wang 1996; Lai and Arguelles 2003; Ong and Scott 2009). Without a sense of group threat or competition, there is less of a push to organize based on racial identity (Diaz 2012). This feeling of equality and lack of discrimination contribute greatly to the lack of political solidarity among Chinese Americans in the suburbs. As a result, political mobilization and civic involvement is dominated by individual-level motivations.

Diversity and Factionalism

We are probably one of the most diverse communities there are. I see this as a plus and a minus. Well, a plus because of the richness of the diversity, [and] a minus

because there is not one political mass to keep up the rallying. It's not the same way everywhere. (Interview 8)

Contemporary immigrants are distinctly heterogeneous, but diversity among Chinese Americans is extraordinarily heterogeneous (Zhou 2001; Wang 1995; Wang 1996; Lin 1998). The diversity among suburban Chinese Americans creates additional factors that contribute to disaggregated political identities. This complexity creates additional barriers that may inhibit the formation of a unified Chinese American constituency.

Though the Chinese American population shares Chinese descent and represents the Chinese diaspora as a whole, the distinct histories and experiences from each generation and homeland of Chinese Americans create more well-defined and smaller Chinese American diasporas. The smaller diasporas share different spatial characteristics and have porous boundaries based on their context (Ma 2003). Each diaspora comes from distinct times, places, and experiences, which adds to the diversity of the Chinese Americans.

Place of origin. Chinese Americans have immigrated from a variety of places. Mainland China is comprised of 22 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, and 4 municipalities, each which has a distinct cultural profile. In addition to people from Mainland China, people from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau also identify themselves as Chinese and Chinese American when they come to the United States. These geographic differences contribute to the diversity of the Chinese American community.

Even in America, Chinese Americans still identify with their geographic origins and differentiate themselves from Chinese who have roots in places other than theirs (Zhao 2010). One Cantonese respondent describes how she feels different from Mandarin Chinese Americans: "As Cantonese, I feel like we are more lower class than Mandarin people. We are working class people.... And I feel that it is different" (Interview 12).

Another respondent describes how the different personal backgrounds of Chinese Americans affect her understanding of Chinese American history and identity:

Guangdong, Cantonese history [is] different than Chinese immigrants now from China and Taiwanese. Because my ancestors were from Southern China, the Guangdong province, and because I think that the majority of new Chinese immigrants are from either China or Taiwan, they don't share that history with me because they don't know

about it of course, and I think the focus is very different, it's on like the education, the business. (Interview 9)

In addition, these different homelands can shape an individual's entire perception and adaptation to their new home. One immigrant from mainland China elaborates on how her life in mainland China affected the way she has adjusted to America and how she imagines her experience contrasts with that of Chinese Americans of other origins:

Because Mainland China at that time was Communist and isolated, our generation was isolated.... We were not familiar with this society, and our English was limited, and our knowledge and understanding about this society was naive. Compared with people from Hong Kong and Taiwan, their society is more open, more close to Western countries, and they have a greater understanding about society so their understanding of this country is more mature (Interview 19)

Though the Chinese diaspora has long shared one ethnic label of "Chinese" in the U.S., it is important to note that this category represents a population with a range of national and ethnic backgrounds and drastically different life experiences.

Generational differences. The Chinese have been immigrating to the United States for over almost two centuries, and Chinese Americans today share a wide range of immigration histories and experiences in America. American political and social order during each time period gives Chinese Americans unique experiences adapting and living in America based on their historical location.

Each generation and nationality is distinct because different forces from their homeland and the United States have influenced them. These experiences of dual domination are directly linked to one's time period and location (Wang 1995). Domestic and global social, historical, and political forces, such as the Cold War, China's Communist Revolution, xenophobia, and racism have all shaped the Chinese American experience. Chinese Americans have been subject to various degrees of exclusion, ranging from overt forms like the Chinese Exclusion Act to subtle expressions such as the consistent lack of political representation of Chinese Americans. Extraterritorial domination varies as well, from pressures to reproduce Communist cultural values and remain loyal to the homeland to

assimilation and capitalizing on American business and technology. As one respondent bluntly said: "So many people who have grown up today have never experienced what it's like before" (Interview 8). This is particularly relevant to the experiences of several of the American-born Chinese that I interviewed, whose parents grew up during the Exclusion Era, a time when America was much less diverse and much more race sensitive than today. Their upbringing was distinctly shaped by their family's experiences during this period. As a second-generation immigrant said: "My parents, having suffered through the Chinese Exclusion era, wanted me to be an American first" (Interview 18).

Another respondent shared similar sentiments of how her parents tried to repress their Chinese identity. Consequently, she never had the opportunity to know or embrace her cultural heritage until she was an adult:

There's a whole village of history here and a whole generation of my ancestors that I don't know anything about... Because of the fire and because of probably the fears that people had those days, that next generation, my mother, then, didn't learn the stories, and because of that I didn't learn the stories. And because of the kind of treatment, I believe that was why my parents didn't teach us Chinese, to speak Chinese. We spoke English. Grandma only spoke Chinese. My parents spoke both, but they only spoke Chinese to grandparents and English to us. And sometimes when people say to me, do you speak Chinese and I say no, especially Chinese people will say, 'shame on you' and so then when I was interviewed once and I looked straight in the camera and said no, not shame on me, shame on the social climate that caused my parents not to teach us Chinese... Because at that time there were not a lot of Chinese left, and so that was the safest thing for my generation. We already look different, and they didn't want us to sound different like when they were growing up when the Chinese Exclusion was still in effect. (Interview 9)

This respondent is civically engaged in a response to her upbringing and is motivated by a desire to have a better representation and understanding of Chinese Americans and their history. She, however, notes that because of their generational differences, many recent Chinese immigrants have

a harder time relating to and joining her cause. Immigrants that came to America a generation after this respondent looked down on her inability to speak Chinese and did not understand that her monolingualism was not a choice but rather a necessity.

Antagonism against other Asian groups – a consistent theme in American history to date – impacts Chinese Americans as well. During World War II, for example, Chinese Americans were commonly mistaken as enemy Japanese. Animosity towards East Asians in the post-Vietnam War period heavily influenced this respondent's childhood:

When I was growing up I told you I was the only Chinese kid, but I haven't told you some other things. I have been stuffed in a locker, I have been stuffed in a closet, I had apples beamed at my head, I've had my mailbox blown up, my window shot out with eggs.... Unfortunately during the time period I grew up in...was post-Vietnam War and so people did not know if I was Chinese, Vietnamese or what, so I definitely had my fair share of racism. (Interview 10)

Chinese Americans who have grown up or lived in the United States for several have been exposed to distinct brands of discrimination, racism, and alienation that may seem anachronistic to our contemporaries.

Contemporary Chinese American suburbanites are those who came to the United States as scholars in the 1980s. These are among the newest diaspora communities, and they, too, have their own unique American experience. One former visiting scholar who decided to stay in the U.S. very specifically distinguishes himself from prior immigrants:

For us, it's like a special group of people because we were people that came to study. And back in China, that meant your grades and studies had to be really good. So in China your studies had to be strong, you had to go to a good school, et cetera, and not everyone had this opportunity. And for some reason or another, they decide to stay, so it means their studies are good or their abilities are strong and could work in America at U.S. companies. I know friends who get laid off in these times, and they're able to find new jobs really quickly. So this is really different from the immigrants before. Before the immigrants came

because of family, or the people in Chinatowns they came from like Guangdong and mostly its family-based, but our people are like former students and then settle down here, and it's mostly in suburbs. So the education is typically very high. (Interview 7)

In his answer, this respondent not only distances himself from past generations of immigrants, but also distinguishes himself geographically from other Chinese Americans. This next respondent also feels like his immigration experience and transition to American life is distinct from current immigrants, who he feels adapt more easily:

I think there is this special/distinct experience of us who came to the U.S. and then decided to stay. Even though coming to America is simple, there are a lot of lifestyle changes. Coming to America was a big change in life. Like now, it's probably not. Now people come for a while, and then they'll go back, there's not a lot of change. (Interview 7)

The expansive Chinese Americans population is the result of multiple generations and decades. Each immigration story and experience reflects a different time and place in history. These distinctions create additional differences among Chinese Americans, differences that will build up and grow as time passes.

Factionalism

The diversity among such a high concentration of Chinese Americans seems to relate to political factionalism among Chinese Americans. Despite having such a large population of Chinese, Freeville does not seem to have a politically cohesive group of Chinese Americans. Two elected officials in the city have noticed this and commented:

We have much more Chinese now and when you have more people you have more opinion... it's natural. We are not that cohesive as we were before. (Interview 16)

A more recent change: As you get more people involved, the pyramid closes up. And well because there's only so many avenues.... with a number of issues you don't have

agreement. And you can expect that because decisions and things that come about, people take different views or sides of the issue. (Interview 8)

This shows that areas with higher-densities of Chinese Americans do not necessarily have greater levels of ethnic solidarity and political unity. Factionalism observed in Freeville is correlated with the independent political identities of Chinese American suburbanites.

Mobilization

Mobilization describes the types of external influences that may promote or prevent someone from taking political or civic action. By interviewing former and current elected officials, I hoped to gain insight into how Chinese Americans are mobilized and how they respond to mobilization. Attitudes and strategies towards mobilization is yet another factor in ethnic and political cohesiveness. My respondents described how attitudes and mobilization strategies toward Chinese Americans have changed within the past decade.

Elected Officials - Past

Two former elected officials in Freeville said the support of the Chinese American community in Freeville was instrumental to their election. When asked how much Chinese support he had during his campaign, one former elected official said: “It was almost I would say 100%. It was very high profile... So yes there was wholesale support from the Asian community” (Interview 8). At that time, Freeville’s Chinese population had not yet grown to current size. Nonetheless, these officials made a concerted effort to target, mobilize, and advocate on behalf of their fellow Chinese Americans. The smaller size of the Chinese American community may have aided political organizers in diminishing the diversity and factionalism discussed in the prior section. They made significant campaign efforts that focused intentionally on Freeville’s Chinese Americans as a whole, and it paid off:

I was the highest vote getter. That really changed the whole. That shows that we can work together as Chinese people if we put our efforts together we can make it happen...The whole Chinese community was involved and people poured in support and I didn’t even know them. ... Just because I’m Chinese. We drew out

lots of Chinese Americans to come out and vote. Usually the Chinese Americans have issues with politics, we didn’t participate that much, so the Caucasians didn’t look at us seriously.... well it’s changed a lot. It’s much better.

The whole Chinese community all came out. I was very touched but also felt like there’s so much responsibility on my shoulder. So much weight. I felt like I had to answer to my Chinese American constituents. They had so much expectation because we never had any elected officials before. ...After you got elected you kind of are representing the entire Chinese American community” (Interview 16)

Because of the overwhelming Chinese support, this elected official felt like she was obligated to represent the Chinese American community and interests. Unlike many Chinese Americans in Freeville today, she carried a strong sense of group political consciousness. This consciousness and her motivation to represent the collective Chinese American interest were formed and motivated in response to institutional discrimination she experienced from the city government, something that has been reduced and felt less since more Chinese have moved into Freeville. As she recalls:

Twenty years ago, we were a minority, so [the school district] didn’t take us seriously and... well they did whatever they want. For example, they would increase rent at any time, they would charge us outrageous custodial fees, and eventually we were like that’s enough. We have to stand up for ourselves.... There were a lot of instances... They were not friendly to the community... I felt like we were discriminated. (Interview 16)

Since this elected official was committed to improving treatment and conditions of her fellow Chinese Americans, there was a potential for the community to develop a strong Chinese American political group consciousness. But because of changes in leadership, commitments, and mobilization strategies, this inclination towards political solidarity was unable to be sustained.

Elected Officials - Present

Current elected officials are shying away from the ethnocentric efforts

and successes of their predecessors. They adamantly claim to represent the entire population of Freeville and make it clear that they are not serving the special interests of Chinese Americans.

This mentality is especially prominent in voter mobilization efforts during election seasons. Often times the Chinese electorate is not strong enough for a candidate to win an election, and thus, candidates need to appeal to a broad selection of voters (Fong 1994; Fong 2008; Lai 2011). Working with broad coalitions, however, does not preclude candidates from Chinese-specific advocacy.

This elected official describes the deracialization of her campaign, saying how she did not feel as if her race should be significant to the election:

During campaigning, I never felt more Chinese. People said, we don't need you we already have one yellow... It was worrisome for me that some people might associate me with thinking, 'oh she is only for the [heavily Asian populated] district, only for the Chinese people, only for the Asian people'.... I am really proud of my heritage, but I don't want someone to vote for me because I'm Chinese only, and I don't want someone to not vote for me because I'm Chinese. (Interview 10)

Another respondent, a former elected official, shows a change in mentality that is similar to the above respondent, though he has successfully mobilized Chinese constituents in the past. He now emphasizes his commitment towards staying out of racial or geographic subjectivity: "My job is to take things and look at what is the best interest of [Freeville], and that's all I do. I stay out of that" (Interview 8). But considering the successful experiences of former candidates and the significantly larger population of Chinese Americans, this recent trend seems counterintuitive. James Lai points out, however, as ethnic minorities gain power and reach the tipping point, candidates often need to appeal more to mainstream base and pan-ethnic coalitions in order to reduce the appearance of threat (Fong 1994; Fong 2008; Lai 2011). This conscious and strategic effort of candidates to colorblind their campaigns and appeal to mainstream voters may benefit the Chinese American candidates' chances of election and increase the likelihood of Chinese political representation, but by de-emphasizing pan-ethnic ties, it could have the consequence of further reinforcing a lack of ethnic solidarity and political identity among Chinese Americans in Freeville. The benefit to individual candidates comes at a cost to the ethnic

community, as weak ethnic cohesion undermines the community's ability to achieve a collective voice and representation to serve their interest. The lack of ethnic mobilization is moreover heightened by political parties, which also focus more on mobilizing reliable mainstream voters rather than Asians (Diaz 2012; Wong 2006).

Civic Organizations

Civic organizations can not only promote community solidarity but also be an important force in mobilizing community members to become politically engaged (Diaz 2012; Lin 1998; Lai 2011; Wong 2006). Local organizations provide an accessible gateway into civil society and greater community engagement. There are several civic organizations in Freeville that are specifically dedicated to promoting Chinese American interests and involvement, though respondents who are members in these organizations did not speak favorably about their efficacy.

One respondent, a former officer in the organization says: "I like the people, I enjoy myself, but I don't feel like we're doing anything really major for the community" (Interview 13). Another respondent who is heavily involved in these civic organizations also shared frustration over the lack of agenda of these groups. As he says: "[they] want to encourage people to come out, but without specific demands, it was difficult" (Interview 8). Despite having potential to create a more stimulating environment to increase Chinese American involvement, these Chinese American civic organizations can only sustain a weak amount support for Chinese candidates and electorate. This, unfortunately, furthermore contributes to the lack of collective action and solidarity among Chinese Americans in Freeville.

All in all, factions and internal divisions within the Chinese American community are also to be related to decline in specialized Chinese American political mobilization. Because the Chinese American population is continuing to grow and diversify, it becomes more worthwhile for candidates to spend their efforts outreaching to the general population instead of trying to unify Chinese Americans. It would not be surprising that the conscious effort of candidates to colorblind their campaigns reinforces the lack of ethnic solidarity and political identity among Chinese Americans in Freeville. The size of Freeville, with a population of over 200,000 residents, makes it a city more susceptible to factionalism than large urban Chinatowns and less similar to the politically conscious Asian Americans in small-to-middle-sized suburbs that Lai studied (Wang 1996; Lin 1998; Lai 2011). Political organization and mobilization in large ethnic suburbs have a wholly distinct character.

Cultural Inhibitions

Asian Americans are stereotypically perceived to be passive and uninvolved by political parties and scholars and mainstream institutions, which translates into low Asian American political participation (Hing 1993; Diaz 2012). The vast majority of my respondents also understood, identified, and agreed with the stereotype that Chinese Americans are less likely to participate and be active in their communities. There was undeniably a general consensus among respondents from all nationalities and generations that there is a part of Chinese culture that discourages political participation and civic engagement.

Eighty percent of the respondents agreed that the voting paradox phenomenon exists and that Chinese Americans tend to under-participate in politics and civil society. In contrast to scholars' empirical analyses, the respondents viewed the under-participation as a cultural problem, as something that is inherent to Chinese heritage. Though some people did not personally identify with this issue, they were all still aware of this stereotype. Respondents offered slightly different variations of Chinese culture, but they all shared the same main idea. The sentiments brought up by the following four respondents were reiterated in almost all the other interviews.

As one respondent says, the root of the issue is with Chinese culture:

The culture of Chinese... is to take care of their own stuff, their things, their families, their kids. They don't want to touch other people's area. That's why they don't want to vote. (Interview 6)

This respondent describes how in Chinese culture, Chinese only mind their own business so they do not care about public affairs or voting. A different respondent relates this to an old Chinese saying, a kind of Chinese cultural artifact:

It has certain truths to it.... The Chinese have this saying: you just clean up the snow in front of your house, you don't care about other people's ice on the roof. It's just like you take care of yourself, make sure your family is self-sustaining, make sure your family is excelling, but you tend not to care about other people that much. That is Chinese always. (Interview 16)

Looking at it from a different perspective, the following respondent refers to a Chinese mentality of not getting into trouble and avoiding trouble. This person says:

People aren't involved in much. I think it's a cultural thing that people in China are accustomed to: don't get in trouble, take care of yourself, and their family values. All these reasons just caused them to be not involved too much. And if you like protesting and that kind of thing, that might get you in trouble, and we are group of people, we're more thinking that I have a family, I have a responsibility, I don't want to do that. (Interview 1)

This mentality of laying-low, staying out of trouble, and prioritizing personal interests came up often in my interviews. While this respondent refers to it as a "cultural thing", there are also practical reasons why Chinese needed to keep a low profile. Another respondent mentioned that during volatile political times in China, there was a lot at risk for those who dared to express their individual political view or overstep their personal responsibilities. Other respondents, who grew up as token Asian children, describe a fear of sticking out as another reason to stay out of trouble and lay low. Though culture is cited as a common explanation, social and political contexts clearly play a role as well.

According to another respondent, it is complacency and lack of initiative that prevents Chinese from being active:

I think it's because there isn't a lot of initiative that they don't want to do anything for change. Things are the way they are, so it's like accepting it. Especially if things are okay, then there's not a lot of things to be dissatisfied with, so there's not really a purpose to it... Chinese people, I think, they think that living like this every day is pretty good, and there's not a need to change things. And things like voting it's like an active thing to change something or a belief that we should move in a certain direction. (Interview 7)

This idea of needing to have something specific to change in the face of dissatisfaction becomes much more apparent when respondents began discussing their political and community activities. In a later section, I will

expand on this idea and propose that suburban Chinese Americans are motivated instrumentally to be involved and politically active.

The widespread perception of this cultural trait can demobilize the Chinese American community and adversely affect actual Chinese American involvement. By using culture to explain Chinese American behavior, my respondents make it seem as if low participation is inherent to all Chinese or unavoidable for those who still hold on to Chinese values. In this way, this explanation can act as a mental roadblock and prevent Chinese Americans from taking action and engaging within civil society. In addition, Chinese Americans as a convenient excuse to justify apathy or unwillingness to get involved can also use it. This stereotype thus has the potential to generate several negative effects, and yet, it does not seem to prevent Chinese Americans from being active neighbors and citizens. Many scholars have begun to comprehensively examine Chinese American political participation, and in contrary to the voting paradox, they are documenting many different forms and types of Chinese American political and civic participation.

Chinese American Civic and Political Participation

Chinese American suburbanites are an active group of people, and they participate through voting and non-electoral activities. It is especially important to acknowledge their non-electoral forms of involvement because of continuous Chinese immigration; a significant portion of the population is not eligible to vote, but they are still politically active in their communities. Also, individuals who are able to vote may prefer to express themselves non-electorally, such as through volunteering, donating money, attending community meetings, or other forms of civic engagement. Every single respondent who was eligible to vote said that he or she voted regularly. Each respondent also showed at least one form of civic engagement, and many showed much more involvements beyond simply voting.

Church attendance is one of the leading indicators of voting participation across ethnic and racial groups, especially for churches with mostly homogenous memberships (Lien, et al 2004 and Liu 2011). Results from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Surveys (SCCBS) show that Catholic and Protestant Asian Americans volunteer more in their communities than those who are not religious (Ecklund and Park 2007). My results support these findings. Exactly half of my respondents regularly attend church, and they are all Protestant or Catholic. They all report a strong connection with their church and social community. Most attend to church activities more than once a week, as well as dedicate additional time or resources to other community events and charities.

An overwhelming majority of respondents are active donors as well. Ninety-five percent of respondents used their financial liberties to support a wide range of recipients that include church missionaries, their children's schools, charities such as the American Heart Association, and organizations like alumni associations and the Girl Scouts. Interestingly, only three respondents said they donated to Chinese or Asian organizations.

Many respondents, both church-goers and non-churchgoers, also volunteer by assisting senior citizens, helping out in the classroom, being an in-home assistant, serving on community Board of Directors, and much more. Volunteering seemed to be a popular form of engagement because respondents had the flexibility to choose to participate in only the opportunities that personally interested them.

Respondents all participated in a wide range of activities, and the common thread of their involvement is highly instrumental and representative of individual, not collective, values. Results from the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS) show that the most common form of participation beyond voting for Chinese Americans is working with a community to solve a problem (Lien, et al. 2004). The responses from my respondents highly support this PNAAPS result; respondents only became engaged when they had a clear goal or interest in mind.

Instrumental Engagement

Instrumental engagement describes purpose-driven political or civic involvement that is motivated by personal interests or the potential for personal gain. This type of involvement is closely linked to individual's personal values and goals. These values are what are translated into actions. My interviews found that suburban Chinese Americans tend to become involved for instrumental reasons. This is unsurprisingly considering that their individualized political identities are easily translated into individual motives and goals. Without ethnic solidarity and Chinese American political agenda, civic and political engagement is solely an avenue to advance personal interests. Suburban Chinese Americans are particularly motivated by these two priorities: education and property.

Education. Chinese American parents become extremely involved when their children's education is at stake. Education is extremely important value for Chinese Americans, and it was mentioned by 95 percent of my respondents as being an important issue in their community. One parent blatantly says: "The most important thing I think is education for our children" (Interview 4). Higher education is especially valued, so parents want to make sure their children receive the best secondary education in

order to prepare them for a top college education.

Historically, education has been highly instrumental to Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. Both in China and in America, education was the most reliable way to break class barriers and achieve socioeconomic or geographic mobility (Kwong 1996, Fong 2008). Many immigrants were only able to leave China because of their strong academic abilities. Because of this, education is closely related to personal success and opportunity, and since so many generations of Chinese have gained from educational opportunities, it has become a core value that is passed down from generation to generation (Zhao 2010). As one parent summarizes: “We still believe we do the best for our children to give them the opportunity. We still believe in education. Our basic core values are still the same” (Interview 16).

In many cases, housing decisions are determined based on school districts and education quality. This is an experience that one respondent related with very well:

School is obviously the first. I mean, one of the reasons we moved here... We found out the school district is really good so we're happy. School is important. If you ask many Chinese families, school is one of the first criteria to pick where to live. (Interview 3)

The link between education and success drives Chinese American parents to volunteer and participate in extracurricular activities or community events that would enhance their children's academic experiences and opportunities. In this regard, involvement is instrumental for the sake of education. As a former elected official and community leader for over 15 years, this respondent shares his experience with instrumental educational engagement:

Trying to encourage people to get involved is easy to do at the school level because what a normal priority for Asians? Education. ...Parents and children are very often motivated to do things to increase their chances for a top college admission, and if this requires civil or political involvement, then Chinese Americans will gladly participate....Every time we go out to an event, do you know who always volunteers there? Not just high school students but Asians. Why? Well I would say that the

interest of fulfilling the requirement, first of all, and then having participating in a club that they're involved with looks good on applications... Parents are always at recitals and functions that their kids are involved, but beyond that it's nothing... it's getting their kid into the position to get into the best. Well, sometimes, but the general rule is that the scope is very narrow. (Interview 8)

This respondent's experience shows that involvement motivated by education has clear goals, such as admittance into a top college. Without a goal or otherwise relevant benefit, it is unlikely that participation will be as high. Likewise, parents are unlikely to participate above and beyond what is necessary to reap the benefits. This type of proactive participation is highly instrumental.

A strong commitment to education can moreover cause intense reactive participation in response to stimuli that threatens educational access and quality. This is motivated by instrumental reasons. This is best exemplified through Freeville's school district re-boundary debate in the late 2000s, when the district discussed redrawing school boundaries. This would have changed the school placements of hundreds of students, an extremely undesirable outcome for most parents who made the calculated choice of moving into and residing within this particular school boundary. Each school moreover has a distinct status and ranking, which parents cared very deeply about. Therefore, in order to maintain their children's quality of education, thousands of parents became extremely involved and invested in the redistricting process. The political activism and grassroots organization of Chinese and Asian American parents was nearly unprecedented. The former PTA President of a local elementary school and current school board member said that parents organized amongst themselves to form coalitions, online communities, and even hired lawyers to defend their interest. She reflects on that hectic time:

So when that happened my phone rang I kid you not from 7 AM to midnight. I had people knocking on my doors, coming to my house... So we wake up at 4 AM... then I get a home call saying some parents want to talk to you, can you come back from your [camping] trip, come to school. The parents had hired lawyers and I'm thinking like 15-20 parents, and I get to school and there's 500 parents waiting for me. ...Technology was booming so parents

had Yahoo! groups and we had 5 different Yahoo! Groups at that time. We combined it into one and it still exists, so we have parents submit questions... We decided to have a town hall meeting and invite the board, the sitting board at that time. And so we passed out fliers to parents, the community, like everything single house in the attendance area. And on the day of the meeting, I always joke with my fellow board members now, we had 1500 people come so the entire multipurpose room was packed... My board members still joke with me about it now, the ones that came, you know I feel like if we didn't agree we weren't going to make it out of there alive. (Interview 10)

This example shows when there is a need or reason to become involved, suburban Chinese American parents will not hesitate to mobilize and act.

Property. Property is another sensitive issue for suburban Chinese Americans. Home ownership is a top priority for many Chinese American families because it represents economic stability and well being, and it is an asset that can be passed down to future generations. Property is also a symbol of social status, which is especially important for immigrants trying to start a successful life in a new country. Many respondents affirm this notion:

People care about, especially homeowners, the value of the house. (Interview 3)

Issues? The housing market. The market is still bad and the listing prices are going down so that's a big concern. (Interview 6)

I think housing market isn't that good so sometimes I worry. When buying the house you want the prices to be low, but now we don't want it to be low. (Interview 7)

Chinese American suburbanites therefore will also become heavily involved when their property or property value is threatened. Even during the school redistricting talks, many parents expressed concern over what would happen to their property values if the district changed. Part of the intense political activism in response to the boundary changes was motivated by concerns over property values.

There is an on-going controversy in Freeville right now over the fate of a community park that a developer is planning to turn into housing. Residents, most of them Chinese, who lived in the area surrounding the park are strongly opposed to the proposed residential development and were able to mobilize and stop the plan. One respondent who remained neutral on the issue reflects on the controversy:

Honestly for the Chinese, money is a big issue, and Chinese will turn out to City Hall if it affects their pocket books or property.... I just recently remember that a developer wanted to build on [the local] Park. There was a huge uproar down that way, by the shopping center near the swim and tennis clubs. She wanted to develop, but the people in that area said no. (Interview 12)

Property and education are two extremely significant catalysts for political and civic engagement of suburban Chinese Americans. As illustrated through these two examples, Chinese Americans will become seriously involved if something they value is threatened or in jeopardy. The potential to gain or lose is a motivating factor, and thus, this is what makes their participation instrumental.

Value-based Political Participation

The section above describes how Chinese Americans self-organize and intervene in community affairs to advance their personal interests. The benefits to be gained by instrumental engagement derive their worth from individual values and standards. Personal values, in addition to perceptions of citizenship, are also motivating factors Chinese American political participation, particularly voting. Political participation encompasses activities that directly or indirectly influence the electoral process, such as voting, volunteering for a campaign, or donating to candidates. This study focuses directly on voting behavior. An overwhelming majority of respondents cited reasons such as civic duty, being a good citizen, obligation to the community, privilege and responsibility as motivations for electoral participation.

Respondents all echoed each other's sentiments:

I vote every year. I believe you have to. It's a responsibility. To be a good citizen; that's a part of the good citizen definition. You have to vote. (Interview 1)

I should do that because I'm part of the country, part of the community. First, it's my right. Second, it's my responsibility... You have to voice yourself... it makes a difference sometimes. (Interview 6)

It's more like obligation, so I pretty much vote every time.... I mean really it's a privilege to vote. As a citizen I think it's a privilege and a responsibility. (Interview 3)

This type of motivation is premised upon individual belief systems and standards rather than collective goals. Ideas of what comprises good citizenship and feelings of personal responsibility are personally determined and do not form a collective agenda. These motivations are only meaningful in a collective setting, but because they rely on individually constructed value systems, this is another example of how Chinese Americans lack group political consciousness.

This rhetoric and value framework is also supported by campaign workers and elected officials. As one says:

It's getting the word out and doing your best to keep a constant message and conveying that your vote does count.... You need to exercise that privilege in order to make whatever it is you want to make. You're in this country, and this is part of the responsibility to be here. (Interview 8)

By pushing this message, community leaders are reinforcing this type value-based participation.

CONCLUSION

There is a general consensus among respondents that Chinese culture can inhibit political participation in the United States, yet suburban Chinese Americans continue to voice their opinions, vote in elections, and actively participate within their communities. This study shows that even in large ethnic suburbs like Freeville, Chinese Americans are unable to develop group consciousness and political solidarity. Rather, their civic and political engagement is based on individual values and instrumental reasons. Based on these findings, I believe suburban Chinese Americans lack power and force to create political improvements for their ethnic group, such as increasing

political representation in government or eliminating discriminatory practices. Their political and civic goals revolve around their personal values and interests, so suburban Chinese Americans are more likely to be able to mobilize and advocate for their socioeconomic advantage, such as issues related to education, property, or taxes.

The suburban environment and ethnic diversity among Asian Americans heightens the difficulty of creating and maintaining group consciousness. The experience of suburban Chinese Americans is clearly different from that of urban Chinese Americans, particularly those who reside in Chinatowns. Suburban political incorporation shows more individualistic form of civic engagement in contrast to the entrenched informal political structures found in Chinatowns. Political mobilization of Chinatown residents tends to focus around community-based organizations, and political organization is informally dominated by the upper class Chinatown elite (Kwong 1996; Lin 1998).

The political integration within urban Chinatowns appears to be more similar with past forms of Western European immigrant incorporation than with that of their suburban Chinese American counterparts. Nineteenth century white ethnic immigrants, such as the Irish and Italian, organized political machines in order to gain power and a voice in American politics. The spoils system has been long gone from American politics, but it paved the way for historical white ethnics to become fully incorporated into the American political system. African Americans, on the other hand, have been able to consistently mobilize around a shared linked fate mentality (Dawson 1994). The unified African American political coalition is driven by a recognition of a shared past experience, namely American slavery and centuries of institutionalized discrimination. In contrast, suburban Chinese Americans have very diverse generational backgrounds that resulted in varying immigration and integration experiences in the United States. As a result, I did not find a strong sense of ethnic solidarity and group consciousness among suburban Chinese Americans. Dalton (2006; 2008) observes that the meaning of citizenship has shifted from duty-based norms to engaged citizenship norms. The transformation shows a decline in normative and obligation-based participation and a rise in engaged citizenship, which involves self-expressive values, stimulates activity in civil society, and allows participants to exercise more influence and say. Under this framework, citizens have more control in how they want to participate and define their own issue interests. These trends are exemplified by suburban Chinese Americans. As model engaged citizens, suburban Chinese Americans tend to express themselves through informal

political structures and civic organizations and autonomously decide what issues to become involved with. Their engagement is, in addition, highly instrumental and aimed at exercising political influence and utility. The only exception is Chinese American's electoral participation, which I found to be heavily motivated by duty and values. This coincides with Dalton's findings that voting is the single activity that positively correlates with citizen duty for mainstream Americans. As a contemporary American group, suburban Chinese Americans are incorporating well into modern American political participation trends.

Suburban Chinese Americans share similarities to recently studied Latino political behavior as well. Latinos and suburban Chinese Americans both have high levels and similar forms of civic engagement: organizational activity, charitable activities, and school-based activities (DeSipio 2006). Most Latinos also do not identify ethnic-specific issues as a top political issue (DeSipio 2006). Likewise, politics for many upper class suburban Chinese Americans is not dominated by ethnicity or race-based issues because of their relatively high levels of social comfort and few experiences with racial discrimination.

Suburban Chinese Americans of medium to high socioeconomic status show a distinct expression of political and civic activity. Despite living among their ethnic counterparts, these Chinese Americans lack group political consciousness and a sense for a common political agenda. Nonetheless, they express their political interests through instrumental engagement and value-based electoral participation, somewhat similar to mainstream American political behavior.

The civic and political engagement of Chinese Americans, whether it is be volunteering or voting, shows how Chinese Americans are progressively adapting and reconciling their perceived cultural roadblocks with American civil society. Though they are all at different points in their lives and represent different generations of Chinese American heritage, each of my respondents is still struggling to find a place for their Chinese identity while living in America. Though often misperceived and overlooked by mainstream American society, suburban Chinese Americans are a significant and less foreign group within American politics.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Section 1: Warm-up Questions

1. Where were you born?

2. When did you come to the United States?
3. How were you able to enter the US?
[relative, applied/waited for immigrant visa, work-visa, student to work visa]
4. When you came to the US, where did you move it?
5. How did you choose [that place]? How long did you live there?
6. Did you move anywhere after before you arrived to where you are now?
1) Where/How long/Why?
7. Are you a US citizen?
1) If yes, when? and why did you decide to?
2) If no, why not?
8. Who do you live with?

Section 2: Neighborhood/Community Questions

1. How long have you been living in this neighborhood?
2. Why did you decide to move here?
3. How do you like your neighborhood?
4. Do you feel safe and comfortable living there?
5. Do you feel like you belong?
6. Do you know your neighbors?
7. Is there a sense of community?
8. Are there many Chinese people that live around here? Do you feel like you know them?
9. What are some important issues in your area?
[schools, housing, jobs, transportation, diversity, economy, safety]
10. What are issues others find important, but you don't really care or know about?
11. Do you often shopping, run errands, visit friends, or go to events outside of your city/vicinity?
1) If so, how often and for what?
12. What is your relationship or involvement like with the Chinese community?

Section 3: Participation/Involvement

1. Where do you work?
2. Can you tell me about your job?
1) If no, what do you do in your free time?
3. Do you attend church?
1) Can you tell me more about your church and what it does?
2) How often do you go?

- 3) Are you involved in [any non worship activities]?
- 4) When did you join? How did you hear about it?
5. Are you a member of other organizations? [ex, Rotary, professional orgs, etc.]
 - 1) Can you tell me about what the organization does?
 - 2) When did you join? How did you hear about it?
6. Do you volunteer for any organizations?
 - 1) Could you tell me more about this org and how you are involved?
 - 2) When did you get involved? (why?)
7. Do you donate to any charities or causes?
 - 1) What was it for?
 - 2) How do you hear about it?
 - 3) How often do you donate?
8. Have you heard about the neighborhood association or community meetings?
 - 1) Have you attended any of them?
 - 2) If no, have you thought about attending?
9. [if children still in school] Have you been to any school meetings?
 - 1) What were they like? Do you attend regularly?
10. [if citizen] A lot of people don't have time to go to the voting booth or keep up with elections, so they choose not to vote. Do you vote in elections? Which elections? Why or why not?
 - 1) Any other forms of political participation?
 - 2) What do you do to stay informed?
11. [for any of the above] What motivates you to do this?
12. Do you feel like you need to be involved for greater society/greater good or is it just personal?
13. Many studies find Chinese voters to be a paradox, since they tend to have higher incomes and education than other immigrants, but with significantly lower voting rates.
 - 1) Do you think this is true?
 - 2) Why do you think Chinese people do not vote?

Section 4: Identity

1. Do you feel American? Why or why not?
2. What are some things you do that make you feel American?
3. What are some things you do that make you feel Chinese?
4. Do you feel like a minority in your neighborhood? Why or why not?
 - 1) Are there any specific experiences that make you feel that way?
5. Do you feel like a minority in the United States?

- 1) Are there any specific experiences that make you feel that way?
6. What race/ethnicity do you identify yourself as?

[Chinese American, Chinese, Asian American, Cantonese, Taiwanese, etc.]

Section 5: Demographic

1. How old are you? (What is your age range?)
2. What is the highest level of education you've attained?
 - 1) Was it in the US or abroad?
3. Do you own or rent your home?
4. Would you consider yourself in the low, working, middle, upper-middle, or upper class?

Section 6: Closing Questions

1. Is there anything you would like to add or emphasize that you haven't mentioned yet?
2. Do you have any questions about this interview or my research?
3. What is the most important thing you want me to take away?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Section 1: Warm-up Questions

1. Where were you born and raised?
2. How did you end up in [location]? Do you still live here now?

Section 2: Neighborhood/Community Questions

1. How do you like your neighborhood?
2. How long have you been living in this neighborhood?
3. Do you feel safe and comfortable living there?
 - 1) Do you feel like you belong?
4. Do you know your neighbors?
 - 1) Is there a sense of community?
5. Which part of [location] do you live in now?
6. Are there many Chinese people that live there? Do you feel like you know them?
7. Do you feel like there is a sense of community among the Chinese here?
8. What about in the greater [city] area?
9. What are some important issues in your area?

[schools, housing, jobs, transportation, diversity, economy, safety]

10. Are there issues others find important, but you don't really care or know about?

Section 3: Participation/Involvement

1. When did you start becoming involved in your community?
 - 1) What was the first organization that you joined? How did you hear about it?
 - 2) Was it before moving to [location] (young age?)? What was the first thing in [location]?
2. What motivated you to take that first step and become active in your community?
3. Do you feel like you need to be involved for greater society/greater good or is it just personal?
4. Has your motivations changed at all?
5. When did you notice that you were becoming a community leader?
 - 1) When did that translate to running for office?
6. How has being Chinese influence the organization you join and the leaderships you pursue?
7. How has being a [city] resident influence the type of organizations/activities you're involved in?
8. What has been your experience to mobilize Chinese to volunteer time or donate money?
 - 1) Any memorable victories or challenges?
9. Many studies find Chinese voters to be a paradox, since they tend to have higher incomes and education than other immigrants, but with significantly lower voting rates.
10. Is the paradox true?
11. Do you have any specific examples?
12. What has been your experience with mobilizing the Chinese electorate to vote?
 - 1) Any memorable victories or challenges?
13. What do you think mobilizes Chinese to be active in their community?
14. What is your relationship/involvement like with the Chinese community?
15. How does it compare to other communities?
16. Do you attend church?
 - 1) Can you tell me more about your church and what it does?
 - 2) How often do you go? Are you involved in [any non worship activities]?
 - 3) When did you join? How did you hear about it?
17. Can you tell me about your job?

Section 4: Identity

1. Do you feel American? Why or why not?
2. What are some things you do that make you feel American?
3. What are some things you do that make you feel Chinese?
4. Do you feel like a minority in your neighborhood? Why or why not?
 - 1) Are there any specific experiences that make you feel that way?
5. Do you feel like a minority in the United States?
 - 1) Are there any specific experiences that make you feel that way?
6. What race/ethnicity do you identify yourself as?

[Chinese American, Chinese, Asian American, Cantonese, Taiwanese, etc.]

Section 5: Demographic

1. How old are you? (What is your age range?)
2. What generation Chinese are you?
3. Do you own or rent your home?
4. Would you consider yourself in the low, working, middle, upper-middle, or upper class?

Section 6: Closing Questions

1. Is there anything you would like to add or emphasize that you haven't mentioned yet?
2. Do you have any questions about this interview or my research?
3. What is the most important thing you want me to take away?

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‘Compared To So Many People We Have So Many Advantages’: The Intersection of Class, Gender Ideology, and Motherhood in Determining Women’s Reproductive Attitudes and Decisions

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Abstract

Using a qualitative approach, this study investigates how issues surrounding motherhood influence women’s reproductive attitudes and decisions. Twenty in-depth interviews with women who gave birth between 2007 and 2012 were conducted to examine how recent experiences with pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting influenced their beliefs and decisions concerning contraception, abortion, and adoption. The data suggests that women form normative conceptions of “good” mothering based on their socioeconomic class and that these conceptions in turn influence their views on reproductive issues. Middle-class, pro-choice mothers drew on their experiences to reinforce previous attitudes, intensifying their belief in family planning and reaffirming positive associations with contraception, abortion, and adoption as alternatives to motherhood for women who are unprepared to start their families. Although this belief translated into more fervent use of contraception, respondents personally rejected abortion and adoption as viable options for themselves if they experienced an unplanned pregnancy. However, resistance to abortion was contingent on respondents’ ability to maintain the economic and marital stability they believed necessary to provide adequate care to their already existing children. This finding provides further evidence that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is circumstantial and often motivated by the desire to be a good mother.

Keywords

class, gender, motherhood, reproductive attitudes, family planning

INTRODUCTION

How women attempt to prevent, plan for, and respond to pregnancy remains a contentious issue in the United States. Since 2010, both federal and state legislatures across the country have fought to eliminate public funding for Planned Parenthood, the largest reproductive health provider in the country. Although Planned Parenthood provides numerous services, including the provision of contraceptives, cancer screenings, and testing for sexually transmitted diseases and infections, its abortion services have made it a target for pro-life activists. Abortion, however, is not the only controversial issue concerning reproductive health. The Affordable Healthcare Act's mandate requiring insurance companies to cover the co-pay on contraception has led to a deluge of outrage. Sandra Fluke, a 30-year old law student who argued in favor of the mandate at a meeting held by the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, made national headlines in 2012 after she was labeled a "slut" and a "prostitute" by conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh. This ignited a media firestorm that resulted in 22 companies pulling their advertising from Limbaugh's program in protest. Both of these cases illustrate the vitality of the reproductive debate in the contemporary United States.

With the constant conflict that surrounds the national conversation on family planning, it is surprising that little research has been done to examine what mothers themselves actually think about these issues. Only mothers grapple with these reproductive decisions and experience the full effects of pregnancy. Yet, sociological research thus far has failed to examine how women view reproductive decisions in light of becoming mothers themselves. The contemporary literature in this area provides a comprehensive theoretical framework on normative conceptions of "good" mothering, the experience of pregnancy, the transition into the social role of motherhood, and how reproductive decisions are contemplated and determined. This literature is useful in framing the hypothetical perspectives of mothers, but it needs specific application to contraception, abortion, and adoption.

This research fills in that gap by testing two different, yet consistently overlapping, conceptions of "good" mothering drawn from the literature and using those conceptions to analyze how pro-choice, middle class women determine their reproductive attitudes and decisions. Using Kristin Luker's (1985) analysis of pro-choice and pro-life ideology as a guide, I examine the role of gender ideology in determining middle-class, pro-choice women's conceptions of "good" mothering. At the same time, I analyze the data

through a socioeconomic lens, using the work of Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas (2007), as well as Annette Lareau (2003), to examine the role of socioeconomic status in determining respondents' conceptions of "good" mothering. By drawing a direct connection between the conceptions of "good" mothering presented by Luker and those discussed by Edin, Kefalas, and Lareau, I analyze how gender ideologies and socioeconomic influences simultaneously affect respondents' conceptions of "good" mothering and how these conceptions in turn influence middle-class women's reproductive attitudes and decisions.

This study uses information from in-depth interviews with 20 pro-choice, middle-class women who gave birth between 2007 and 2012 to examine how recent experiences with pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting influenced their beliefs and decisions concerning contraception, abortion, and adoption. An analysis of the data collected demonstrates how social class and gender ideology influence women's normative conceptions of "good" mothering and how those conceptions in turn impact their reproductive attitudes and decisions. A comprehensive examination of these interviews also illustrates how experiencing the physical and social roles of motherhood reaffirms pro-choice, middle-class women's belief that contraception should be legal and affordable in order to create the best circumstances for raising a child. Pro-choice, middle-class women in the study maintained their views after becoming mothers, arguing that women should be able to choose what's best for them and their children when an unplanned pregnancy occurs. Therefore, this study substantially supplements the current sociological literature on motherhood and reproductive decisions by illustrating the way pro-choice, middle-class women draw on their private experiences as mothers to reaffirm their previous beliefs about public access to contraception, abortion, and adoption.

On an individual level, this reaffirmed belief in family planning led to a more fervid use of contraception by respondents. However, as a group of largely middle-class women with access to a vast amount of social and economic resources, respondents felt they could not personally justify having an abortion or giving a child up for adoption, even if they experienced an unplanned pregnancy. Respondent resistance to abortion, however, proved to be largely situational, as mothers were much more likely to consider terminating a pregnancy if the stability of their relationship or finances deteriorated. What's more, this disconnect between respondents' public and personal attitudes toward abortion demonstrates a need for more detailed analyses of reproductive attitudes and decisions within socioeconomic groups to supplement comparative studies across classes.

By exclusively examining middle-class women, this study reveals the vast complexity of reproductive attitudes and decisions, demonstrating how the role of motherhood and socioeconomic class can affect women's public attitudes and personal decisions regarding contraception, abortion, and adoption differently.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The sociological literature on motherhood and reproductive decisions is vast. Therefore, in order to focus my research, I divide the current academic literature from which I base my analysis into three main categories: normative conceptions of "good" mothering, entering the social role of motherhood, and making reproductive decisions.

Normative Conceptions of "Good" Mothering

Motherhood can be conceptualized as an ideological topic surrounding different expectations for women as parents. These ideas of "good" mothering appear repeatedly in motherhood research, demonstrating the diverse ways in which mothering expectations are shaped (Edin and Kefalas 2007; Lareau 2003; Luker 1985). Such studies show that although other factors contribute to the way women conceptualize "good" mothering, a woman's access to both social and economic resources play a significant role in shaping her beliefs and practices regarding childbearing (Edin and Kefalas 2007; Lareau 2003; Luker 1985).

Kristin Luker (1985) examines how different conceptions of "good" motherhood shape women's beliefs and attitudes about abortion. Through in-depth interviews with activists on both sides of the abortion debate, Luker argues that pro-life and pro-choice individuals hold two completely opposing worldviews, each based on distinct gender ideologies. This makes it extraordinarily difficult for them to understand the other side's perspective. According to Luker, activists who oppose abortion maintain a more traditional worldview in which motherhood is the most important role a woman can fulfill. Thus, when women become pregnant, pro-life individuals believe that it is their duty to not only have children, but to center their entire lives around their families, committing fully to a woman's role as wife and mother. In contrast, women who support abortion perceive motherhood as a choice rather than a calling. Unlike their pro-life counterparts, pro-choice activists downplay traditional gender roles in favor of more egalitarian ones, in which women often commit to work outside of the home. For these reasons, they talk about family planning as something that allows women

to make reproductive decisions around other life goals, such as career advancement and educational achievement.

Despite their differences, both sides use child-centered conceptions of "good" mothering to justify their positions. For individuals who oppose abortion, motherhood is a blessing that can come at any time, whether a pregnancy is anticipated or not. They believe that choosing to carry a pregnancy to term is always the best decision for both mothers and children, not only because they believe abortion ends children's lives, but also because motherhood is such a central part of a woman's identity. Meanwhile, those who support abortion believe whole-heartedly in family planning. In waiting until they are emotionally and financially ready to have children, and having the option of abortion in case they become pregnant unexpectedly, pro-choice mothers believe they are providing their children with educational, social, and economic advantages that are considered vital for their future success. In these ways, both pro-choice and pro-life women feel their decisions to either terminate or keep a pregnancy make them "good" mothers.

According to Luker, the values that pro-life and pro-choice women employ to form their attitudes toward abortion and conceptions of "good" mothering are the same values that determine women's lifestyle choices. Pro-life women who develop a value for traditional family forms make life decisions that align with that value. Consequently, the pro-life activists within Luker's study were not only more likely to be religious, but were also much more likely to marry younger, maintain larger families, obtain lower levels of educational attainment, and work within the home. Similarly, pro-choice women who value success outside of the domestic sphere chose to pursue skills that assist them in their career goals. For that reason they were more likely to postpone or avoid marriage until later in life, achieve higher levels of education and professional achievement, and maintain smaller families.

Depending on the lifestyles they choose, both pro-life and pro-choice women gain and lose access to certain social resources. After committing to full-time motherhood, pro-life women lack the social resources needed to enter the public sphere of paid labor. Similarly, pro-choice women who have acquired the necessary resources – education, prior work experience, and socioeconomic status – have done so by postponing motherhood. As older women with fewer children, they lack the ability to make their familial roles as mothers and wives central to their lives. "Thus," explains Luker, "activists on both sides of the issue are women who have a given set of values about what are the most satisfying and appropriate roles for women, and they have made life commitments that now limit their ability to change their minds"

(1985:199; emphasis in the original). That is to say, in choosing a domestic or public lifestyle, women lose access to the resources that would allow them to adopt the other lifestyle.

Abortion is given different meanings within these opposing lifestyles. For pro-choice women, the ability to become unintentionally pregnant is considered a very serious detriment to their goals as career professionals. An unplanned pregnancy presents the possibility of having to subordinate their careers to their responsibility as mothers, effectively devaluing the social resources they accumulated. Abortion ensures that pro-choice women can avoid unintended pregnancy, giving them the opportunity to prioritize other life goals until they feel prepared for motherhood. In contrast, according to Luker, women who oppose abortion believe that the reproductive roles of women should be given “social primacy” (1985:200). For pro-life women whose lives revolve around their roles as mothers, abortion essentially devalues the reproductive role of women and consequently devalues the social resources that they possess. In this way, women on both sides of the debate shape their attitudes toward abortion, and consequently their conceptions of what constitutes “good” mothering, through complex value systems that reflect a given set of social resources.

Outside of social resources, research shows that social class and access to economic resources also impact women’s conceptions of “good” mothering and consequently their personal reproductive decisions. Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas (2007) highlight the importance of economic resources in explaining the high rates of non-marital childbirth among low-income women. Like their middle-class counterparts, poor women prefer to postpone marriage until their ideal social and economic conditions for marriage are met in order to ensure a successful relationship. However, their lack of social and economic support make it much more difficult to ensure such stability prior to marriage. What’s more, poverty and its associated social problems cause women to feel as though their lives are constantly in a state of instability: work is often low paying and sporadic, violence is widespread, and incarceration rates are high within low-income communities. These issues make poor and working class women less likely to marry as a group. However, unlike middle-class women, Edin and Kefalas’ respondents did not view this as a reason to also delay childbirth. Thus, despite fully embracing middle-class marriage norms, poor women maintain completely different standards for childrearing and parenting.

Annette Lareau has also highlighted the differences between poor and middle-class women’s conceptions of “good” mothering. In contrast with middle-class women, poor and working class women do not believe they need

a great deal of social and economic resources in order to parent successfully. Rather, they emphasize the “accomplishment of natural growth” (2003). Within this conception of “good” mothering, women measure their success as mothers by their ability to “be there” for their children and provide them with the basic necessities they require to grow naturally (Edin and Kefalas 2007; Lareau 2003). Thus, if they are able to supply adequate food, housing, clean clothing, and a basic education to their children, poor and working class women consider themselves to be “good” mothers (Edin and Kefalas 2007; Lareau 2003). For that reason, poor and working class women do not feel the need to postpone motherhood until they achieve marital and economic security, demonstrating a direct connection between class-based mothering ideologies and reproductive decisions.

Middle-class women, on the other hand, have a very different understanding of “good mothering” and as a result, raise their children quite differently. They do not believe in the accomplishment of natural growth, engaging instead in the “concerted cultivation” of their children (Lareau 2003). Women who abide by this conception of “good” mothering measure their ability to mother by their children’s future success in society (Edin and Kefalas 2007; Lareau 2003). To ensure that success, middle-class mothers utilize their social and economic resources to invest in their children’s futures, enrolling them in a variety of organized activities that provide them with the skills they need to navigate society’s institutions successfully (Lareau 2003). For that reason, middle-class women tend to delay childbirth until later in life, waiting until they have established a stable relationship and achieved a certain level of economic security before deciding to become mothers. Thus, middle-class women, much like poor and working class women, base their reproductive decisions on class-based conceptions of how they can best mother their children.

In many ways, these different conceptions of “good” mothering overlap. Indeed, there are significant similarities between the characteristics of Luker’s pro-choice and pro-life activists and the class distinctions presented by Edin, Kefalas, and Lareau. Both pro-choice and middle-class women, for example, are more likely to have high levels of educational achievement, work outside the home in higher paying, professional jobs, marry equally well paid and educated men, have fewer children, and be less religious. Pro-life women and poor women, on the other hand, are both more likely to have lower levels of educational achievement, work in lower-paid occupations, marry men with equally low levels of education and income, have a larger family, and be more religious (Luker 1985). The conceptions of “good” mothering held by pro-choice and pro-

life women in Luker's book are also very similar to Lareau's concepts of concerted cultivation and the accomplishment of natural growth. Pro-choice and middle-class women both measure their success as mothers by their ability to provide their children with educational, social, and economic advantages that will ensure their future success. Motherhood for these women requires a certain amount of social and economic resources. Pro-life and poor women have limited access to such resources and therefore see the provision of basic necessities such as food and shelter as a more important part of being a "good" mother.

These similarities illustrate how gender ideology, social class, and women's access to certain economic and social resources influence their conceptions of "good" mothering and consequently their reproductive attitudes and decisions. This study attempts to take a closer look at that relationship, examining how access to resources, in combination with motherhood experiences, may influence women's public attitudes and personal choices about pregnancy and childbirth.

Entering the Social Role of Motherhood

Sociological research has shown that experiencing motherhood, in itself, has a significant impact on the gender ideologies of women. Davis and Moore (2010) found that although the physical and social experiences of pregnancy and childbirth do not necessarily influence the gender ideologies of women, the social practice of mothering in fact has a traditionalizing effect. Bonnie Fox (2009) supplements this finding, arguing, "parenthood creates gender more thoroughly than any other experience in most people's lives...[through] the strengthening of gender identity and...the intensification of divisions of work and responsibility based on gender" (2009:6). In other words, gender is reaffirmed through the social process of parenting as women are forced to take on the most traditionally feminine role of all, that of the mother. Because women have an intensified awareness and identification with traditional gender roles through their transition into motherhood, they develop a more traditionalized gender ideology (Davis and Moore 2010; Fox 2009).

In accordance with Luker's findings, Wang and Buffalo (2004) found that individuals who hold more traditional attitudes toward gender roles are more likely to maintain pro-life attitudes. Together, these findings imply that the experience of becoming a mother not only has a traditionalizing effect on women's gender ideologies, but could also cause women's reproductive attitudes and beliefs to reflect a more pro-life view. This study examines that implication in an effort to understand how the transition into the social

role of motherhood shapes women's attitudes and beliefs about different reproductive decisions, including abortion.

Making Reproductive Decisions

Prior research on women's reproductive decisions has focused on why women choose to terminate their pregnancies (Finer et al. 2005; Jones, Frohworth, and Moore 2008; Torres and Forrest 1988). This research suggests that the decision to end a pregnancy is often circumstantial and based on women's desires to be good mothers. Women who obtain abortions often cite economic hardship and relationship instability (or a combination of the two) as the motivating factors behind their decision, claiming that they doubt their ability to provide adequately for a child without economic security or support from a partner (Finer et al. 2005; Torres and Forrest 1988). The issues of responsibility and care for already existing children – and especially infants – also influence women's abortion decisions for similar reasons: women choose abortion because they feel that having another child will compromise their ability to provide acceptable care for their existing children (Jones, Frohworth and Moore 2008). It is thought that the intersection of economics, relationship stability, and motherhood can be used to explain why 61% of women who obtain abortions are already mothers of one or more children (Finer and Zolna 2011; Jones, Frohworth and Moore 2008).

Acknowledging that class, in combination with the responsibilities of motherhood, has an impact on abortion decisions, an additional goal of this project is to examine how the intersections of class and motherhood influence women's other reproductive decisions. Specifically, this study analyzes women's contraception decisions and questions their resistance to adoption as a solution to unplanned pregnancy.

METHODOLOGY

First, it is important to define the term "motherhood" as it is used in this study. I focus on women's transitions into their roles as mothers, analyzing their experiences as they go from childless women to having and caring for children. To analyze the ways in which pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting impact women's attitudes, beliefs, and future decisions surrounding reproductive issues, this study analyzes the experiences of women who became mothers through pregnancy (whether through heterosexual intercourse or assisted reproduction), childbirth, and subsequent parenting. This is a decidedly narrow definition of motherhood, and future research

should focus on alternative forms of motherhood and how they might influence women's reproductive attitudes and decisions in different ways.

The data used in this study comes from 20 in-depth interviews conducted with largely middle-class women who experienced pregnancy and childbirth between 2007 and 2012. This limited time frame for childbirth was implemented in order to gain access to women who recently transitioned into the role of motherhood and were still likely to have young children living with them in the home, often ensuring that respondents were involved in a great deal of care giving for their children. This increased responsibility for children was important in examining the ways caring for existing children may or may not influence women's reproductive attitudes and decisions.

Institutional review board approval was obtained for the recruitment protocol and the interview guide. A large number of respondents were recruited through snowball sampling; flyers and recruitment letters that informed potential respondents of the study's purpose and interview content were distributed to personal friends, family members, and colleagues. These acquaintances then volunteered to pass the information along to other women they knew who might be interested in participating. Mothers who met the study parameters were then able to contact me directly, usually via email, to express their interest in the project and set up an interview. Respondents were also recruited through a student parent center located at a large, public university in Northern California. The director of the group distributed flyers and recruitment letters on my behalf and subsequently provided me with a list of student mothers who expressed interest in the study. I contacted those mothers via email to ensure that they had a desire to participate, allowing them to determine when and where interviews would be carried out. I also posted a public ad in an online newsletter for parents in a medium sized city in Northern California. However, only one subject was recruited through that process.

Consenting respondents participated in semi-structured, in-depth interviews that lasted an hour on average. Because of the open-ended nature of the interview questions, respondents provided rich, detailed responses to my questions, often discussing topics that were not asked about explicitly and highlighting issues that they found most salient. In addition, the use of probes and follow-up questions insured that respondents gave full, clear responses to the interview questions. These interviews provided me with an abundance of rich data that allowed me to identify and analyze themes that may not have easily been uncovered had I conducted a survey or an ethnography.

All 20 interviews took place between early February and mid-March

2012 and were conducted at a time and location of the respondents' choice in order to ensure their utmost comfort. For women living in Northern California, interviews usually took place either in their homes or at a nearby café. For those not living in the Northern California, I conducted both phone and Skype interviews, depending on the subject's preference. Interview questions generally fell into four main categories: daily life, experiences with pregnancy and motherhood, personal attitudes and beliefs, and wrap up questions that asked about respondents' demographics and final thoughts.

To begin our dialogue, I questioned participants about their daily lives; inquiring into their household composition and their typical weekday. I then transitioned into the next section of the interview, in which respondents told me about their experiences with pregnancy and motherhood. In order to highlight their transitions into motherhood and the different reproductive decisions they made in the past, I asked respondents to walk me through each one of their pregnancies and child birthing experiences. After discussing their most recent pregnancy, I then questioned respondents about their interpretations of motherhood and how becoming a mother had changed or shaped their lives. Next, I asked respondents about their personal attitudes and beliefs concerning reproductive decisions. Questions focused on respondents' thoughts about contraception, abortion, and adoption, but also covered their opinions about ideal family size and the age at which they had originally expected to start their families. In particular, questions in this section investigated how motherhood changed or reinforced respondents' original ideas about reproductive decisions and family planning. I then asked how they would respond if they were to become unexpectedly pregnant, gauging their willingness to have an abortion or give a child up for adoption if a pregnancy was unintended or unwanted. I wrapped up the interview by obtaining simple demographic information and asking about their final thoughts.

Upon finishing the interviews, I transcribed all audio recordings and removed all identifying information present in the text. I then read the interview transcripts multiple times, identifying analytical categories based on the primary themes of the research project as well as the themes that emerged from the reviewed transcripts.

As a result of using my own social networks to gain access to a majority of my sample, most of the women who finally participated in the study were very similar to me demographically. 70% of respondents identified as white or Caucasian, with nearly 50% maintaining an annual household income of over \$100,000. Eighty percent of women from the sample were married to the fathers of their children and in stable, committed relationships. Every

woman I interviewed graduated from high school and completed at least her Associate's degree or some college. All respondents who had not completed their Bachelor's degree – a mere 25% of all respondents – were in the process of obtaining it.

Respondents ranged in age from 20 to 38, with an average age of 31. As a group, these women tended to delay motherhood into their late 20s and early 30s. On average, respondents experienced their first pregnancy around the age of 26. However, due to miscarriage, abortion, and the nine-month gestational period of pregnancy, respondents' average age at first childbirth was later, at about 28 years old. In addition to their delayed transition into motherhood, women within the sample also maintained smaller family sizes. Only one respondent had more than two biological children and only two cared for more than two children on a daily basis. The majority of my respondents worked or studied outside of the home, although three worked full time as stay at home mothers and one worked from home in order to simultaneously provide childcare to her children.

As a group, the 20 women in my study experienced 39 pregnancies total. Of those 39 pregnancies, respondents characterized 69% of them as planned, 5% as in between planned and unplanned (meaning they were neither actively trying to get pregnant nor avoiding pregnancy), and 26% as unplanned. This is an extremely low percentage of unintended pregnancies, bearing in mind that nearly 50% of all pregnancies in the US are considered unplanned (Finer and Zolna 2011). Respondents in this sample also had an extremely low rate of abortion. Out of all their unintended pregnancies, only 25% ended in abortion. By comparison, about 40% of all unplanned pregnancies in the United States are terminated (Finer and Zolna 2011). However, considering the socioeconomic status of the majority of respondents, these figures make sense. Highly educated, middle-income women are much less likely to experience unplanned pregnancy than women of low socioeconomic status (Finer and Zolna 2011). Not surprisingly, none of the women in this sample had ever relinquished a child for adoption. Unlike their rates of abortion, these figures were very similar to national levels, which remain extremely low (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2005).

Although the original goal of the study was to include women from all socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, using snowball methods to recruit respondents has obviously biased my sample. Not only are the majority of respondents white, but as a group they are also highly educated and largely middle-class. The variance that does appear within my data comes largely from respondents that were recruited through the university student parent

group. Student mothers were much more likely to have children at a younger age, be unmarried, and fall within the lowest income bracket. In addition, they were also some of the only respondents to not have completed their college degree.

Respondents not only came from homogeneous demographic backgrounds, but also shared very similar political views about abortion and contraception. Despite differences in the details of their beliefs, every woman in the study identified as pro-choice and held extremely positive views of contraception. Although this skewed sample was unexpected, it presented me with the opportunity to focus on a very specific population of women. By investigating the reproductive attitudes and decisions of pro-choice, middle-class women specifically, this study provides unique insight into the complexities and nuances that characterize this population's beliefs surrounding contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. From these findings emerge common patterns in the reproductive attitudes and decisions of middle-class, pro-choice women that might have been more difficult to capture if this were a comparative study. However, variance amongst this group also underscores how women with similar socioeconomic backgrounds and reproductive attitudes can view their personal circumstances in distinct ways and consequently make different reproductive decisions.

FINDINGS

Despite previous research suggesting a relationship between the transition into the role of motherhood and a shift to more pro-life attitudes toward abortion, respondents largely used their motherhood experiences to reaffirm their existing pro-choice beliefs. After undergoing tremendous amounts of physical and emotional labor to bear and raise their children, pro-choice mothers felt validated in their beliefs that pregnancy should be planned in order to ensure that women are fully prepared, both emotionally and financially, before becoming mothers. In this way, respondents use the challenges of motherhood to argue that contraception and abortion are vital resources for women who are unprepared to take on the enormous burden of motherhood.

However, my research revealed an interesting delineation between women's beliefs about the types of reproductive choices that should be available to the public and the reproductive options they felt comfortable choosing themselves. Although motherhood reinforced their pro-choice ideologies, respondents felt they would personally be less likely

to terminate an unintended pregnancy after becoming mothers. This also held true with adoption; however, women were much more likely to report having considered abortion before becoming mothers than having ever contemplated relinquishing a child for adoption. After experiencing motherhood and maintaining access to the social and economic resources they deemed necessary for parenting, respondents felt they could no longer justify either having an abortion or giving a child up for adoption, even if they experienced an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy.

Intersections of Class, Gender Ideology, and Normative Conceptions of “Good” Mothering

A correlation between respondents’ socioeconomic class and their conceptions of “good” mothering became immediately apparent. Respondents’ high levels of educational attainment and participation in the workforce not only demonstrate their middle-class status, but also reveal their belief in more egalitarian gender roles, in which women take on responsibilities outside of the domestic sphere. Although motherhood became central to the lives of all those interviewed, respondents did not describe it as a calling, nor did they express any desire to exit their public lives or forgo future educational or career goals in order to commit fully to their roles as wives and mothers. Even those working within the home highlighted their desire to someday return to their careers.

Because of their commitment to educational and career development, respondents’ often reported struggling with their decisions to become mothers. Some respondents, like Ashley, felt resistant to starting their families for fear that it would interfere with their lives outside of domesticity:

If I could have waited ten more years, I would have. My husband and I had a really fun life. We went out a lot, we traveled a lot, and we were enjoying that. So we kind of had this idea: ‘Yes, we want to have a family,’ but we were working a lot ... [Eventually] we got to the point where we thought: ‘We’re old enough now that if we’re gonna do it we better just do it now.’ I wouldn’t say I felt like I was really ready and excited to have a baby at that point ... [but] we both decided we do want to have a family so we’re just gonna give it a try. (Ashley, 36, married, mother of one, \$100,000+)

Ashley’s ambivalence toward motherhood and her fear of how it would

change her life demonstrates her adherence to the pro-choice, middle-class conception of motherhood. Unlike the poor and pro-life women described in *Promises I Can Keep* (Edin and Kefalas 2007) and *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Luker 1985), Ashley’s social and economic resources allow her to pursue other goals, apart from motherhood, that give her life meaning (things like her career, her ability to travel, etc.). After putting it off into her mid-30s, Ashley feels pressured to transition into motherhood before reaching an age where biological motherhood becomes more difficult to achieve. Many women reported similar feelings of ambivalence towards motherhood, revealing that as a group they were more likely to prioritize marriage as well as educational and career related goals before attempting to incorporate motherhood into their lives.

Although it was fairly easy to identify whether respondents acted in accordance with middle-class marriage and childbearing norms, it was sometimes more difficult to recognize whether they adhered to middle-class parenting styles. Since some women had children that were too young to play independently, how kids spent time away from their parents was not a common topic of discussion. This sometimes made it difficult to determine whether respondents practiced concerted cultivation or the accomplishment of natural growth. However, their intentions for the future often made it clear:

Where I live it’s like there’s no way you could have a family of five without making half a million or something. It’s just not feasible. Good god. Especially if you put them in activities and all this other stuff and you want the best for them. And you’re planning on private school ‘cause there’s no way they’re gonna go to New York City schools, ‘cause that’s not an option. So, yeah. Before [having children I wanted] four kids. Now, two at most. (Celia, 29, married, mother of one, \$100,000+).

You just want to have the best for your child. ... I want her to do everything. So if she wants to do dance or soccer or you know, whatever it may be, I want her to have all those experiences to make her a better person. I want her to be able to go to college, or I want her to travel the world, or any of those types of things. So, you just really want the best for your kids. (Heather, 33, married, mother of one, unsure)

Not only does Celia cite her limited resources as a reason why she would not want more than two children, but she also talks about “good” mothering in a way that clearly reflects her subscription to Lareau’s concept of concerted cultivation. Both she and Heather imply that “what’s best” for children is to enlist them in a series of activities (and according to Celia, private schools), which poor and working class women clearly cannot afford. In this way, Celia and Heather make clear that the resources needed to provide natural growth are not enough. In order for them to succeed as mothers, Celia and Heather believe they need to not only provide basic necessities for their children, but also invest in their future success through activities and education.

Understanding the role motherhood plays in respondents’ lives as well as their normative conceptions of “good” mothering (and how they relate to class) provides a framework for understanding their reproductive attitudes and beliefs. Knowing how they incorporate motherhood into their lives and what they expect of themselves as mothers gives us insight into the way they perceive different reproductive decisions regarding contraception and abortion and the standards on which they may base their reproductive decisions.

Contraception

Although all respondents viewed contraception positively both before and after they started their families, this view was intensified after becoming mothers. As mothers, respondents experienced the immense difficulties of pregnancy and parenting and thus felt strongly that pregnancies should be planned and women should be fully prepared for children before starting their families. This belief manifested itself in an even stronger promotion of the benefits of contraception and family planning:

As someone who ardently wanted this, was a mature person, was completely financially secure, in a really good marriage and stuff, I found it really hard. And the ways in which I found it hard has affected my mothering. When you are tired and exhausted and frustrated you’re not as good a parent as you would like to be [and] you’re not as good a wife as you’d like to be. And, you know, the idea of people who are not wanting this, having it happen to them is just terrible for everybody involved. And so I’m like, ‘Contraception!’ I mean, it’s like a no brainer. (Chloe, 36, married, mother of two, \$100,000+)

The above quotation demonstrates how the motherhood experiences of respondents influence their beliefs about the importance of contraception for the public at large. The immense amount of labor Chloe put into mothering reaffirmed the importance of family planning and solidified her belief that contraception should be widely available in order to ensure that women become mothers only once they have become fully prepared, both financially and emotionally.

In addition to influencing the way respondents thought about public accessibility to contraception, motherhood also affected respondents’ personal use of contraception:

Well, I guess for me motherhood has just increased my view that already existed that pregnancies are best when they’re planned. ... That’s really important. So...it’d be great if we could all be more responsible. And there are lots of different things that influence one’s ability to do that. But for me, I feel like I want to make sure that we are consistent about birth control. Like, if we wanna have another baby it’s because I want to and not because I want to leave it up to chance. (Emily, 36, married, mother of two, \$100,000+)

Clearly, Emily’s belief in family planning intensified once she became a mother. This has not only caused her to promote the use of contraception among women who are financially or emotionally unprepared for motherhood, but also led her to be consistent with her personal use of contraception.

Abortion

As with contraception, respondents used the challenges of motherhood to reaffirm their pro-choice ideology. Grace, a 32-year old mother of one, explains, “I’m pretty staunchly pro-choice and having a child has made me even more so. Again, like with...contraception, it’s such a big deal having a child that I really believe that women should have the right to choose whether or not it’s the right time” (Grace, 32, married, mother of one, \$50,000-\$75,000). Lily, a 36-year old mother of two, agrees: “I’ve always been pro-choice, but I’d have to say my pregnancies made those beliefs even stronger. Because if you don’t have a plan or support, you can’t do it” (Lily, 36, married, mother of two, \$100,000+). These women cite the enormous responsibilities associated with motherhood as reasons why

women should have the choice to choose abortion if they experience an unintended pregnancy before they feel ready to bear such responsibilities.

Despite motherhood's reaffirming effect on their pro-choice beliefs, 80% of respondents felt that they would not choose to have an abortion if they were to experience an unplanned pregnancy. Although many women made it explicitly clear that they had no desire for more children, they cited their economic and marital stability and past experiences with pregnancy as reasons why they would carry an unintended pregnancy to term. In this way, many respondents used their experiences as mothers to reaffirm their belief that women at large should have the "right to choose" when it comes to contraception and abortion, while at the same time altering their own ideas about what they may choose as individuals.

As a group of largely middle-class women with access to a vast amount of social and economic resources, respondents felt they could not deny motherhood, even if it was unplanned or unwanted. When asked if she could consider having an abortion in her current circumstances, Emily replied,

I wouldn't now. I mean in my current circumstance because I feel like we're married, stable. Like I [said,] children are expensive, but we could do it. We have a big enough house, we have this great life so, compared to so many people, we have so many advantages. And so we could totally do it and it would be unexpected and I'd probably [be] disappointed. ... But yeah, if I was pregnant now I wouldn't consider abortion. Or adoption. (Emily, 36, married, mother of two, \$100,000+)

Emily makes it clear that despite not wanting to have another child (and expressing her disappointment were that to happen), she feels obligated to carry an unplanned pregnancy to term. Her socioeconomic status, stable relationship, and access to resources place her in a position to parent according to her normative conception of "good" mothering. Emily feels that it would be wrong of her to choose abortion, regardless of whether she wants a third child or not, because she believes that she could mother a child successfully under concerted cultivation without having to alter the level of care she is already providing her first two children.

Respondents also claimed that becoming mothers altered their personal comfort with abortion by making pregnancy and childbirth less abstract than they had been previously. Specific moments during pregnancy

were highlighted as experiences that made childbearing and motherhood much more tangible and the idea of ending a pregnancy more difficult for respondents. Of those moments, witnessing the ultrasound, feeling their children move, and actually giving birth were mentioned most often. What's more, respondents claimed that raising their existing children gave them a much more vivid sense of the experiences they would be denying if they chose to terminate their pregnancy.

Consequently, many women explained their resistance to abortion by citing both their socioeconomic status and their vivid sense of what pregnancy and childbirth entail:

Unless there were health risks, I think it would be very hard for us to do that. Simply because I don't have a good reason why I [would terminate a pregnancy]. Because we're very lucky in terms of being financially secure [and] secure in our marriage...It would be a combination of feeling like I didn't have a really good reason for making that decision and secondly, having a much more vivid sense of what that baby would be like. That would feel wrong. (Chloe, 36, married, mother of two, \$100,000+)

I do think [my views on abortion have] changed in some ways. Like, before [becoming a mother] abortion had always felt like a really abstract thing. ... Not that I have become one of those 'life begins at conception' people. But I think it really sort of changed my feelings about what I would be comfortable with – so long as I continued to be in circumstances where I feel like I'd be able to handle having another child. (Grace, 32, married, mother of one, \$50,000-\$75,000)

Chloe and Grace are emblematic of other respondents who also cited this loss of abstraction and the attachment they felt toward their children during pregnancy and after giving birth as reasons why they felt less comfortable with the idea of choosing abortion for themselves. What they say is interesting, however, because it makes clear that this perceived inability or unwillingness to undergo an abortion is contingent on her ability to maintain financial and marital stability, a sentiment shared by multiple respondents.

Despite the majority of respondents claiming they would not consider abortion if they became unexpectedly pregnant, there were four women

(known as Celia, Danielle, Jamie, and Lily within the study) who reported that they would. For Celia and Jamie, this decision was based on the high levels of care they were required to provide for their already existing children: both women had just recently given birth and were caring for an infant at the time of their interview. The constant care giving that their infants required caused both women to feel less confident about their abilities to provide the same level of care for their children if another baby were to join the family. This finding coincides with previous research that has highlighted women's responsibilities for other dependents and desire to maintain a high level of care for existing and/or future children as influencing women's decisions to obtain abortions (Jones, Frohwirth, and Moore 2008). Danielle, on the other hand, was no longer involved in infant care, as her son was five years old when the interview was conducted. However, she was one of the only respondents outside of the group of student mothers who was not in a stable, marital relationship. Although this was not cited explicitly as her reason for considering abortion, it is worth noting since past research shows it is a common factor in abortion decisions (Finer et al. 2005; Torres and Forrest 1988). Lily was the only respondent of the four who was married and without an infant in the home.

That is not to say that Celia and Jamie were the only respondents caring for infant children, nor was Danielle the only single mother within the sample. Women in similar situations made up a significant portion of those that reported feeling personally uncomfortable with abortion for reasons discussed previously. However, this variance demonstrates how women in similar conditions and with comparable reproductive attitudes can view their personal circumstances in distinct ways and consequently make vastly different reproductive decisions. Despite the existence of common patterns, it is important to note that there is no definitive characteristic that determines women's reproductive attitudes and decisions.

Adoption

In the same way as abortion, respondents viewed adoption as a positive, although difficult, choice for other women while feeling strongly that it could never be a realistic option for them personally. Again, respondents' economic and marital stability in combination with their full understanding of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood prevented them from feeling as though they could ever decide to give a child up for adoption.

Unlike abortion, however, more women revealed that they never viewed adoption as a realistic option, even before becoming mothers. Instead of shifting the way they felt about their personal ability to relinquish

a child for adoption, motherhood seemed to only validate past concerns. Respondents often claimed that if they had become unexpectedly pregnant, before getting married or becoming economically secure, they would have chosen abortion well before they ever considered adoption:

I can't imagine the circumstances under which I carried a baby and then gave it up for adoption. I think that my emotional attachment to the life is already so great. I think that if I knew that I couldn't give a child the life that I think every child deserves to have a shot at that I would sooner have an abortion early, early on than go full term with a pregnancy. I mean, especially with the experience of actually giving birth I think is what really solidifies that feeling of attachment to [a child]... And so, it's just such a powerful experience and I can't imagine relinquishing that relationship for anything. (Danielle, 33, unmarried, mother of one, \$50,000 - \$75,000)

If I had ever gotten pregnant, you know, before I was married or before I was ready to have a child I would not have had the child, I would have had an abortion. So, I never considered adoption [as] something that I wanted to do or that would have worked for me 'cause I wouldn't have had the pregnancy continue [because] if I wasn't ready to have a child, then I wouldn't have felt I was ready to be pregnant either. (Ashley, 36, married, mother of one, \$100,000+)

In this way, Danielle and Ashley argue that adoption was never a realistic option for them for two reasons: (1) they believe after forming a bond with their child through pregnancy and childbirth they would struggle emotionally to relinquish their child and (2) they feel that if they were not ready for the responsibilities of raising a child, they would not be ready for the challenges of pregnancy.

By highlighting the difficulties of pregnancy, Ashley demonstrates how carrying and bearing a child for adoption constitutes a form of motherhood that middle-class, pro-choice women feel they should be emotionally, physically, and financially prepared for. Although adoption may relieve a woman of her parenting responsibilities, it does require that she become a biological mother. The responsibility of nine months of pregnancy and

childbirth is often a very physically and emotionally demanding process for women that can be extremely disruptive to their personal and professional goals, forcing them to take time off from work or school in order to prepare for and recover from childbirth. This defeats the purpose of family planning for many middle-class, pro-choice women, who utilize contraception and other family planning techniques in order to plan their entrance into motherhood around their physical and emotional preparedness, as well as other life goals, such as career advancement and educational achievement, which can contribute significantly to their economic security. Thus, for women like Ashley, carrying and bearing a child – even if one does not intend to raise it – is a form of motherhood that women must be emotionally, financially, and physically prepared for. Therefore, middle class, pro-choice women reject adoption not only because of their belief that relinquishing a child would be emotionally challenging, but also because it limits their ability to control when they enter the role of motherhood.

Student/Young Mothers

As previously discussed, a group of four student mothers and one non-student respondent differed greatly from the majority of women interviewed for this study. These five women (known within the study as Cora, Crystal, Kelly, Marcella, and Nicole) all had their first pregnancies and child birthing experiences in their late teens and early twenties, significantly earlier than the rest of the sample. Unlike participants Chloe and Nora, who both experienced pregnancy at a young age and decided to have abortions, these women chose to carry their pregnancies to term and raise their children themselves, despite facing marital and economic instability.

Two things distinguished these young mothers from other respondents. First, they were much more likely to report growing up in a religious or strictly pro-life household and often cited this background as a contributing factor in their decision to carry their unplanned pregnancies to term. Second, they were also much more likely to report coming from poor or working class families. Statistically, women in lower socioeconomic classes are more likely to experience unplanned pregnancy, which could explain why they were more likely than other respondents to become unexpectedly pregnant at earlier ages (Finer and Zolna 2011). More significantly, their religious and pro-life backgrounds likely played a major role in their decision to break from middle-class childbearing norms and become mothers at earlier ages than other respondents.

Although these women came from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds, their statuses as students (or graduates, in Nicole's case) signified an upward

trajectory toward a higher socioeconomic class. Despite coming from a traditionally lower class, pro-life background, as students at a large public university these mothers inhabited a space dominated by middle-class norms and ideals. By investing time and money into their undergraduate degree, university students acquire the social resources needed in order to establish a professional career outside of the domestic sphere. This makes them more likely to adhere to middle-class marriage and child birthing practices. Student mothers stand directly in contrast with this norm by choosing to carry their unplanned pregnancies to term and beginning their families well before having established themselves economically or professionally. This sometimes caused student mothers to feel self-conscious about their reproductive decisions when they deviated from the norm on campus:

I was never in a situation where I had to make that decision, and once I was in that position...I strongly thought about it and I never thought I would have to think about it that hard. But...because I was in the circumstances that I was, abortion honestly did make more sense than not. But because I couldn't go through with it that proved to me that was something that was definitely in my values and beliefs that I couldn't change. (Cora, 21, unmarried, mother of one, \$0 - \$25,000)

Cora is confident that she made the right decision by carrying her daughter to term and choosing not to relinquish her for adoption, but her discussion of what makes the most "sense" exposes a tension between the ideology she was raised with and the norms she is surrounded by at the university.

Although Cora and the other student mothers desired to be both in a stable relationship and financially secure before starting their families, they disagreed with the middle-class view that motherhood should be postponed until such requirements are met. While they aspired to provide their children with the same social and economic resources that their middle-class counterparts maintained, student mothers did not believe that it was necessary for their success as mothers. Thus, by choosing to enter the role of motherhood at an earlier age than their middle-class peers, student mothers like Cora expose a tension between the motherhood ideology of their lower-class, religious, pro-life family backgrounds and the normative conceptions of motherhood held by mostly middle-class, pro-choice women at the university.

CONCLUSION

As members of the middle-class, the majority of women in this study adhered to middle-class marriage, childbearing, and parenting norms. They tended to postpone motherhood until they were both married and financially stable, believing that these preconditions were necessary for successful mothering. This pattern vividly illustrates the normative conception of “good” mothering that informs decision-making processes of many middle-class and pro-choice women (Edin and Kefalas 2007; Lareau 2003; Luker 1985). Those that deviated from middle-class normative behavior were younger mothers who consistently came from religious or pro-life families with poor and working class backgrounds. Despite reporting similar desires for economic and marital stability, these mothers rejected the idea that either criterion is necessary for successful mothering. This discrepancy between middle-class mothers and mothers with poor and working class backgrounds further demonstrates the impact that socioeconomic position has on one’s definitions of “good” mothering, and how this definition consequently informs a mother’s reproductive attitudes and decisions.

Respondents spoke of the immense emotional and physical labor associated with motherhood and discussed how those experiences reinforced their belief in family planning. After taking on the responsibility and care of children, middle-class, pro-choice mothers held an intensified belief that all women should have public access to contraception and abortion in order to ensure that when they decide to start a family, they are fully prepared – financially and emotionally – to do so. Middle-class mothers viewed these resources as imperative to ensuring that women were able to fulfill their normative conceptions of “good” mothering, in which women provide the social, economic, and educational resources necessary to give their children the best possible chances of future success. These findings imply that women employ their personal experiences as mothers to reinforce their political attitudes toward different reproductive options. Future research on this topic might explore the effects of motherhood on the reproductive attitudes of pro-life women in order to provide a deeper understanding of how women draw upon their personal experiences in order to shape and cement their opinions surrounding reproductive issues.

After becoming mothers, respondents also became more fervent about their own contraception use, while their willingness to consider abortion decreased. Although motherhood strengthened their conviction that abortion and contraception should be available to all women, mothers claimed that if they became unexpectedly pregnant they would be much less

likely to personally choose to have an abortion. Attachments made to children during pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting gave women a much more vivid concept of the experience they would be foregoing if they terminated a pregnancy. Because the transition into motherhood became much less abstract, women felt reluctant to consider abortion as an alternative to an unwanted pregnancy. However, this reluctance often remained contingent on their economic and marital stability. Middle-class mothers claimed that if their marital or economic stability diminished, they would consider abortion more seriously.

Although abortion was considered a situational possibility, women soundly rejected the possibility of giving a child up for adoption under almost any circumstance, arguing that becoming mothers had only intensified that feeling. Again, respondents cited prenatal attachment and attachments made during childbirth to explain their resistance to adoption. However, they also argued that if they were not ready for the responsibilities of raising a child, they felt they would not be ready for the challenges of pregnancy. This explanation in particular highlights middle-class, pro-choice women’s belief that carrying and bearing a child constitutes a form of motherhood that women should be financially, physically, and emotionally prepared for. Pro-choice women advocate for family planning so that they can be ready for the demands of pregnancy and parenthood before entering into the social role of motherhood. Although adoption allows women to forfeit the parental responsibilities of motherhood, it still forces women to commit to the role of birthmother and carry a pregnancy to term before they feel ready. On top of experiencing an emotional or physical unpreparedness, women who are pregnant frequently have to take time off from school or work in order to carry out and recover from their pregnancies. This defeats the purpose of family planning for many pro-choice, middle class women who have attempted to stave off motherhood in order to achieve career and educational goals that can help them to maintain greater economic security. Therefore, although middle class, pro-choice women consistently rejected adoption because of the attachments made to their already existing children, they also refused adoption because it limited their ability to control when they took on the emotional, physical, and financial responsibilities of birthmothers.

Because middle-class women found themselves in situations where they had the economic and social resources necessary to practice concerted cultivation and provide what they considered “good” mothering to their children, they felt they could not deny a child, even if a pregnancy was unexpected or unwanted. However, they also used the difficulties of

motherhood to argue that women who lack the same access to resources, and are unable to provide a comparable level of care, should maintain the option to terminate their pregnancies or relinquish their children for adoption. It could be suggested from these findings that the middle-class, pro-choice women within this study want to keep access to contraception, abortion, and adoption open not necessarily for themselves, but for poorer women with less resources to put towards mothering. That is not to say, however, that middle-class women want to restrict poor and working class women's reproduction by promoting their use of abortion and adoption. Rather, they argue that family planning resources should be available and affordable so that women with fewer resources to care for children can make their own individual choices about becoming mothers.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

In accordance with the research of Kristin Luker, Kathryn Edin, Maria Kefalas, and Annette Lareau, this exploratory study demonstrates how social class and gender ideology influence women's normative conceptions of "good" mothering and how those conceptions in turn impact their reproductive attitudes and decisions. Although previous research has found that motherhood has a traditionalizing effect on women's gender ideologies (Davis and Moore 2010; Fox 2009) and that more traditional gender ideologies often result in more pro-life political leanings (Luker 1985; Wang and Buffalo 2004), this study found that middle-class, pro-choice women draw on their experiences as mothers to reaffirm their previously held beliefs about contraception, abortion, and adoption and become more fervent in their pro-choice beliefs. However, although motherhood reinforced their pro-choice ideologies, respondents simultaneously felt that they would be less likely to terminate an unintended pregnancy after becoming mothers.

These results add to the current sociological literature on motherhood and reproductive decisions, revealing a major discrepancy between middle-class, pro-choice mother's political attitudes regarding reproductive issues and their own personal reproductive decisions. Despite feeling increasingly adamant about their pro-choice ideologies upon becoming mothers themselves, respondents claimed that the attachments they made with their children during their transition into motherhood caused them to feel less comfortable with the idea of terminating their own unplanned pregnancy. However, respondents also reported that this reluctance remained contingent on their ability to maintain economic and marital stability. Were they to lose their economic or marital stability, middle-class mothers stated that they

would consider abortion more seriously.

This is not to say, however, that the attachment respondents felt towards their children during pregnancy, childbirth, and onwards was not legitimate. Previous research suggests that modern technology has dramatically influenced the way women understand and perceive their pregnancies. Specifically, this research revealed that ultrasound imaging, which many respondents cited in these discussions, plays a significant role in facilitating women's acceptance of their pregnancy as real and increasing feelings of attachment to the unborn (Duden 1993; Harpel 2004). However, this finding does imply that if respondents found themselves in a less stable situation their desire to better provide for their existing children would outweigh the emotional attachment they felt toward the unborn.

It could be suggested that poor and working class women are already playing out this scenario: 42 percent of women obtaining abortions have incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level (\$10,830 for a single woman with no children) and 27 percent of women obtaining abortions have incomes between 100–199% of the federal poverty level (Finer and Zolna 2011). As previously discussed, a large number of women who terminate their pregnancies cite economic hardship, relationship problems, their responsibilities for already existing children, or some combination of these three issues as the reason why they are choosing abortion (Finer and Zolna 2011; Jones, Frohwirth, and Moore 2008). These findings reject the notion that there is a population of women who have a propensity to terminate unintended pregnancies. Instead, they bolster previous research that suggests the decision to have an abortion is largely circumstantial and based on women's desires to be good mothers (Finer and Zolna 2011; Jones, Frohwirth, and Moore 2008; Torres and Forrest 1988).

This study gives a much-needed voice to women and mothers in the debate surrounding reproductive issues – an arena that is often dominated by male voices. In February 2012, for example, a House Oversight and Government Reform hearing on religious liberty and the birth control mandate within President Obama's Affordable Healthcare Act consisted of an exclusively male panel of religious leaders. It was because Sandra Fluke was denied a seat on this panel that she was forced to address only the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. Four months later in Michigan, State Representatives Lisa Brown and Barb Byrum were banned from speaking on the House floor after Assemblywoman Brown made an impassioned speech against a bill that sought to put new regulations on abortion providers and ban all abortions after 20 weeks. "Finally Mr. Speaker," stated Brown as she concluded her speech, "I'm flattered that

you're all so interested in my vagina, but 'no' means 'no.'" Brown contends that it was her use of the word "vagina" that caused her to be silenced on the House floor.

By giving a voice to women and mothers, this study reveals that reproductive attitudes and decisions are much more dynamic than our current political discourse might suggest. Through this examination of middle-class, pro-choice women, this study discredits the idea that certain women are more inclined to choose abortion over others (Finer and Zolna 2011; Jones, Frohwirth, and Moore 2008; Torres and Forrest 1988). Although women may identify in terms of pro-life or pro-choice, the results of this study strengthen the previously made argument that abortion decisions are largely based on circumstance and reflect women's desires to mother their children successfully (Finer and Zolna 2011; Jones, Frohwirth, and Moore 2008; Torres and Forrest 1988).

These findings have several policy implications. The significant role that economic security and relationship stability play in determining women's willingness to obtain an abortion suggests that the United States' current focus should shift from determining when "life" begins to preventing the underlying circumstances that make abortion necessary for some women. Implementing policies that work to alleviate poverty and create more stable lives for poor and working class women and their families could lower the abortion rate significantly, without further limiting women's access to abortion.

APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1.1
Respondent pseudonyms and demographics

	RESPONDENT	AGE	RACE/ETHNICITY	EDUCATION
1	ASHLEY	36	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE
2	CELIA	29	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	BACHELOR'S DEGREE
3	CHLOE	35	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
4	CORA	20	MULTIRACIAL: BLACK/FILIPINA	SOME COLLEGE
5	CRYSTAL	23	MULTIRACIAL	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
6	DANIELLE	33	MULTIRACIAL	MASTER'S DEGREE
7	EMILY	36	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	DOCTORAL DEGREE
8	GRACE	32	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	MASTER'S DEGREE
9	HEATHER	33	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE
10	JAMIE	32	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE
11	KARINA	31	NONHISPANIC WHITE	SOME COLLEGE
12	KELLY	32	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
13	LILY	36	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
14	MADELINE	38	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	DOCTORAL DEGREE
15	MARCELLA	21	LATINA	SOME COLLEGE
16	MELANIE	31	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	MASTER'S DEGREE
17	NICOLE	28	LATINA	BACHELOR'S DEGREE
18	NORA	31	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	MASTER'S DEGREE
19	TARA	29	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE
20	TONI	28	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	MASTER'S DEGREE

	ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION
1	\$100,000+	MARRIED	FULL TIME INVESTMENT BANKER
2	\$100,000+	MARRIED	FULL TIME RECRUITING COORDINATOR AT A LAW FIRM
3	\$100,000+	MARRIED	STAY AT HOME MOTHER
4	\$0 - \$25,000	UNMARRIED	FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
5	\$0 - \$25,000	MARRIED	FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
6	\$50,000 - \$75,000	UNMARRIED	FULL TIME AT PUBLIC POLICY ORGANIZATION
7	\$100,000+	MARRIED	PART TIME UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR
8	\$50,000 - \$75,000	MARRIED	PHD CANDIDATE
9	UNSURE	MARRIED	STAY AT HOME MOTHER
10	\$100,000+	MARRIED	FULL TIME AT INTERNET CORPORATION
11	\$100,000+	MARRIED	FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
12	\$0 - \$25,000	UNMARRIED	FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
13	\$100,000+	MARRIED	FULL TIME ATTORNEY
14	\$100,000+	MARRIED	WORKS FROM HOME AS A PSYCHOLOGIST
15	\$0 - \$25,000	UNMARRIED	FULL TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
16	\$100,000+	MARRIED	PART TIME TEACHER
17	\$50,000 - \$75,000	MARRIED	PART TIME HAIRDRESSER
18	\$50,000 - \$75,000	MARRIED	PHD CANDIDATE
19	\$25,000 - \$50,000	MARRIED	STAY AT HOME MOTHER
20	\$75,000 - \$100,000	MARRIED	STUDYING TO BE AN EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST

Table 1.2
Respondent pregnancy experience

RESPONDENT	AGE AT FIRST PREGNANCY	AGE AT FIRST CHILDBIRTH	CHILDREN	PLANNED PREGNANCIES	UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES	"IN BETWEEN" PREGNANCIES	MISCARRIAGES
1 ASHLEY	35	36	1	1	0	0	0
2 CELIA	27	28	1	1	0	0	0
3 CHLOE	23	32	2	3	1	1	2
4 CORA	19	20	1	0	1	0	0
5 CRYSTAL	18	18	3	1	2	0	0
6 DANIELLE	27	28	1	0	1	1	1
7 EMILY	28	30	2	3	0	0	1
8 GRACE	31	31	1	1	0	0	0
9 HEATHER	27	28	1	2	0	0	1
10 JAMIE	29	30	2	2	0	0	0
11 KARINA	28	29	1	2	0	0	1
12 KELLY	24	24	2	0	2	0	0
13 LILY	29	30	2	2	0	0	0
14 MADELINE	33	34	2	3	0	0	1
15 MARCELLA	20	21	1	0	1	0	0
16 MELANIE	27	28	2	2	0	0	0
17 NICOLE	21	22	2	1	1	0	0
18 NORA	15	28	1	1	2	0	0
19 TARA	28	28	1	1	0	0	0
20 TONI	27	28	1	0	0	2	1

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWER: *Italicized text is note to interviewer.*

Nonitalicized text is a script like what will be said. Sections in caps explain pathing (before a question you only ask depending on answers to prior questions). Because this is in-depth qualitative interviewing, below is suggested wording, but interviewer should not read. Make interviews flow conversationally, eliciting detailed narratives of their experiences in their own words through probes. If the respondent moves to a topic via a story before the interview guide goes there, the interviewer is to follow the conversation and loop back later to ask what was missed.

In this study we want to hear about your experience as a mother along with how that experience has shaped or changed the way you think about reproduction and childbearing. If there's anything I ask that you don't feel like talking about, just tell me and I'll move on to the next topic—no big deal. I'll tape the interview so we can remember what you said, but if I quote you I won't ever identify you by name or include any details that could be used to identify you specifically. If there is any time during the interview where you would like me to stop recording, take a break, or end the interview all together, just let me know and it will be done.

Introduce consent form, answer any questions about it, and ask them to sign and initial re taping if they want to participate in the study. Once that is done, turn on recording device.

Section 1: Daily Life

Okay, we're recording now. Let's start with your everyday life.

1. First, why don't you tell me about whom you live with? Probe for each person's relationship to her, e.g. parents, siblings, boyfriend, husband, her children, other's children, roommate, if she cohabits and has kids ascertain if whether or not he is the father.
 - a. IF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: So you have X children living with you? Probe for sex and age of each child.
2. Do you have any kids that aren't living with you? Probe for age and sex of each child, where they live, if she is involved.
3. Do you work or go to school?
 - a. IF YES: Where? Doing what? / What are you studying?

4. Tell me about a typical day for you on a weekday. Why don't you pick one day this week as the example and tell me what you did from morning till when you went to bed.

Section 2: Pregnancy and Motherhood

Okay, now we are going to shift our conversation a bit and talk about your experiences with pregnancy and motherhood. What I'm going to ask you to do is to walk me through each of your pregnancies and child birthing experiences. Just to be clear, when I say "pregnancies" I am also including those that did not go to full term. So as we go through each pregnancy, if you are comfortable discussing those that may not have resulted in childbirth, please include them in your list. However, if you do not want to discuss those experiences with me that is totally fine and we can just move on to your next experience. Do you have any questions?

Basic order:

- 1) Start with first pregnancy
 - 2) Find out to what extent the pregnancy was planned or unplanned (Questions 6 – 10)
 - 3) Find out how pregnancy affected her (Questions 11 – 13)
 - 4) Ask relevant questions about pregnancy/ abortion/ miscarriage/ adoption (Questions 14 – 15)
 - 5) Find out the outcome
 - 6) If she kept the baby, find out about how she connected with and prepared for the baby. (Questions 16 – 18)
 - 7) Move on to the next pregnancy and repeat with preceding pregnancy until Question 19
 - 8) Finish with questions about general motherhood (Questions 20 – 23)
5. Tell me about your first (second/third/etc.) pregnancy. Probe for how old she was, if she went to term, miscarried or had an abortion.

PLANNED OR UNPLANNED

6. Before you got pregnant, what were your thoughts about whether you wanted to have a baby right then?
7. Would you call the pregnancy planned, unplanned or in between? Tell me more about that.
 - a. IF UNPLANNED: Were you using contraception of any kind when you conceived?
8. If you and your partner had ever talked about having a baby at that point, tell me about those conversations.
 - a. IF YES: How did those conversations go? Were there any points of contention?
 - i. Who initiated those conversations?
 - ii. Did you or your partner have any concerns about having a child at that point?
9. How did you react when you first found out about the pregnancy?
10. How did your baby's father react when you first told him you were pregnant?

HOW PREGNANCY AFFECTED HER

11. Was there ever a moment when "it hit you" that you truly were pregnant?
12. Did your lifestyle change in any way after you discovered that you were pregnant?
13. Did you ever feel emotionally attached or connected to the pregnancy in any way?

MISCARRIAGE/ABORTION/ADOPTION

14. Were there any complications or health concerns during the pregnancy?
 - a. IF MISCARRIED: Can you tell me a little bit more about that? Probe for at what month in the pregnancy it occurred, how she felt, what she thought.
15. Did you consider adoption or abortion?
 - a. IF HAD AN ABORTION: Tell me about it. Probe for where she went, how she felt about it, how far into the pregnancy she was when it happened, if her partner was at all involved.

- i. How did you come to make that decision?
 - ii. How did you feel before the procedure? What thoughts went through your head?
 - iii. How did you feel after it was over?
- b. IF ADOPTION: Tell me about it. Probe for adoption process, where she went, if she met the family beforehand.
- i. How did you come to make that decision?

IF PREGNANCY RESULTED IN CHILDBIRTH

15. Describe the day you gave birth. What was delivery like?
16. How did you feel after giving birth? What thoughts went through your head?

IF SHE KEPT THE BABY:

16. How did you prepare for the baby? When did the preparations begin? Probe for how far into the pregnancy it was.
17. When was the first time you felt attached or connected to the child? Was there a specific moment? Probe to see if it occurred before or after childbirth. If it happened before, probe for how far into the pregnancy it was.
18. Did you ever see the baby on an ultrasound? Tell me about that experience.

RETURN TO QUESTION 5

When she has told you of her last pregnancy:

19. So you've had X pregnancies total?

GENERAL MOTHERHOOD:

20. What does being a mother mean to you? What constitutes motherhood?
21. Has your current definition of motherhood changed since you have become a mother yourself?
22. When did you start to feel like a mom? Probe to see if it occurred before

or after childbirth. If it happened before, probe for how far into the pregnancy it was.

23. How has being a mother changed you?

Section 3: Personal Attitudes

Okay, now I'll ask you a few questions about your personal attitudes and beliefs.

24. Before you had your first child, when did you think the right time to start your family would be? Probe for financial circumstances required and what relationship with father has to be, find out if marriage or cohabitation is important to her.
25. Did those expectations match your reality once you started having kids?
26. Are you thinking about having more kids? When would be a good time for you to have another child?
27. Before you started your family, what did you believe your ideal family size was? How has being a mother changed or reinforced those original ideas?
28. How do you feel about contraception?
- a. IF FEELS POSITIVELY ABOUT CONTRACEPTION: Have you ever used contraception yourself? Probe for what types, when in her life it was used.
29. Do you think being a mom has changed or reinforced those ideas at all?
30. How do you feel about abortion? Do you think that you could consider abortion as an option if you were to become unexpectedly pregnant? If she is against it, probe for circumstances under which she may approve of it.
31. Do you think being a mom has changed or reinforced those ideas at all?
32. How do you feel about adoption? Do you think that you could consider adoption as an option if you were to become unexpectedly pregnant? Tell me more about that.
33. Do you think being a mom has changed or reinforced those ideas at all?
34. Do you know anyone who has given a child up for adoption? How do you perceive their experience?
35. Do you consider yourself religious or spiritual in any way?

a. IF YES: Do you think that your spirituality influences your views on abortion, adoption or motherhood? In what way(s)?

Section 4: Wrapping Up

FOR IN PERSON INTERVIEWS: Okay, we are almost done with the interview. But before I let you go, could I just ask you to fill out this short form asking basic demographic questions.

FOR PHONE INTERVIEWS: Okay, we are almost done with the interview. But before I let you go I want to ask you a few questions to wrap up. Keep in mind that if you do not want to answer a question for any reason at all you can let me know and we will move right on to the next question. The first few questions are just about your demographics:

Hand them sheet of paper and a pen. Questions will be listed as follows:

- How old are you now?
 - How would you describe your racial or ethnic background?
 - What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Less than high school High school/GED Some college
- 2-year college degree (Associates) 4-year college degree (BA,BS)
- Master's degree Doctoral degree Professional degree (MD,JD)
- About how much is your household's yearly income?
- \$ 0 - \$25,000 \$25,000 - \$50,000 \$50,000 - \$75,000
- \$75,000 - \$100,000 \$100,000 or more Unsure

Answer any questions about the form. Once it has been filled out and returned, continue with final interview questions.

Thank you so much! To finish, I always like to ask some questions about

your plans for the future and get your closing statements.

36. That being said, looking into the future, what do you hope for you and your children? Any goals for them or yourself that you'd like to see accomplished in the next ten years?
 37. To wrap up the interview, if there were one thing you wanted me to know about motherhood and making reproductive decisions, what would it be?
 38. Okay, thank you so much! Can I just ask you, if I needed to follow up or clarify some things that were said, would it be okay if I were to contact you again?
 39. Great! Do you have anything else to add or any questions for me?
- Okay, I believe that is it! Thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate your willingness to speak to me about such personal issues.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Cheong is a recent graduate of University of British Columbia (UBC), where she received her degree in Sociology with Honours. Her research interests center around issues of migration, transnationalism, citizenship, statelessness in Southeast Asia, and ethnography. She is currently writing her senior thesis on racialized citizenship policies in Brunei and their effects on the civic identities and political participation habits of stateless Chinese-Bruneian immigrants in Vancouver. As the youngest student to be accepted into UBC's inaugural Immigrant Vancouver Ethnographic Field School (IVEFS) in 2010, her exploration of immigrant parents' attitudes towards their children's heritage language acquisition was awarded the 2010 IVEFS Exemplary Paper Award, and was also well-received at the 2011 UBC Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Research Conference. Amanda currently serves as the President of the 2011-2012 UBC Sociology Students' Association, and as an Associate Editor of *Sojourners*, the only undergraduate journal of Sociology in Canada.

Sophia Wang graduated in May 2012 from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Political Science, Honors in Sociology, and Distinction in General Scholarship. During her undergraduate studies, Sophia lived in Cape Town, South Africa for six months where she studied at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and traveled along the Southern African coast. Sophia experienced her time abroad through a sociological lens, and this deepened her interest in studying race, culture, inequality. Back in Berkeley, Sophia supplemented these interests by taking courses on racial theory and ethnoracial classification, contemporary Apartheid, and the Asian American diaspora. Sophia is now working as a Paralegal and Nonprofit Specialist in Washington, DC. In her future, she plans on attending law school and would like to represent marginalized and under-resourced populations as a public interest lawyer.

Katie Egan is a recent graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology in May 2012. During her last year at UC Berkeley, Katie participated in the Sociology Senior Honors Program, receiving highest honors in the department for her final thesis, entitled "The Intersection of Class and Motherhood in Determining Women's Reproductive Attitudes and Decisions." As the title of her thesis suggests, Katie is interested in gender research, with a particular

focus on reproduction and family life and the ways in which they intersect with race and socioeconomic class.

GUIDE FOR FUTURE CONTRIBUTORS

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All manuscripts must be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides. The submission must include numbered pages. All text (including titles, headings, and footnotes) should be in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

In general, we recommend submissions not to have too complex a hierarchy of sections and subsections. In the case of a heading, the title should be separated from the preceding paragraph by two (2) lines and one (1) line from the proceeding paragraph. The heading should appear in 10-point boldface type, left justified. In the case of a sub-heading, the title should be separated from both preceding and proceeding paragraphs by a single (1) line. The sub-heading should appear in 12-point italicized type, left justified. Block quotes, used for long quotes, should be 12-point, full justified, and not indented. The block quote should be set off from the rest

of the article by a single line both before and after. The margins should be set in another half (1/2) inch on both the left and right sides.

Footnotes should be used for concise supplementary comments. Please consider only using footnotes for significant additions to the article. Any long or especially complicated supplementary material should be included in the appendices rather than footnotes or made available from the author on request. Table and figure titles should be normal text. Tables should also be numbered consecutively throughout the article and may be typed on separate sheets. In the latter case, insert a note at the appropriate place in the text. Each table must include a descriptive title and heading for each column.

Citation and Reference Format

Submissions should follow the American Sociological Association (ASA) *Style Guide* (Third Edition). All citations in the text should be identified by the author's last name, year of publication, and pagination (if necessary). Identify later citations in the same way as the first. If there are more than three authors of a single work, use "et al." Citations should follow the following format: (Author Year:Page number). If there are multiple citations, separate each citation with a semicolon (";") and a space: (Author Year:Page number; Author Year:Page number).

References should come at the end of the paper and should be prefaced with the heading "References" in 12-point boldface type, left justified. The reference entries themselves should be formatted according to the American Sociological Association (ASA) *Style Guide*.

*“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways;
the point, however, is to change it.”*

–Karl Marx, “XI” from “Theses on Feuerbach”

