

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Generational Struggles and Identity Conflict among 1.5 Generation Vietnamese**

#### **Americans: Finding a Middle Ground**

By Bach Pham

Many post-war Vietnamese who immigrated to the United States at a young age have recently transitioned into parenthood. With this new position, these Vietnamese have begun to find themselves in the unexpected arrangement of becoming cultural brokers in their own homes, mediating relationships with older Vietnamese immigrants and Americans while also attempting to find a cultural balance for their children. Drawing from data generated from a filial piety scale and interviews conducted with Vietnamese immigrants in the Carolinas, this thesis explores the inner conflict faced by these individuals who are entrusted with maintaining some semblance of traditional Vietnamese identity within a contemporary Western context. The findings reveals that this group of 1.5 generation Vietnamese Americans continue to maintain filial piety in their daily lives, but in a contemporary, alternative mode where work and career success make up the essential elements of their filial relationship. Rather than submitting to the authority of elders in traditional filial piety, this generation instead looks at occupational success and family stability as the norm for filiality.

**Generational Struggles and Identity Conflict among 1.5 Generation  
Vietnamese Americans: Finding a Middle Ground**

**By Bach Pham**

Thesis Committee

Dr. Christine B. Avenarius – Chair

Dr. Holly F. Mathews

Dr. David Griffith

Dr. Robert L. Bunger

GENERATIONAL STRUGGLES AND IDENTITY CONFLICT AMONG 1.5 GENERATION  
VIETNAMESE AMERICANS: FINDING A MIDDLE GROUND

by

Bach Pham

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Christine Avenarius, PhD

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Holly Mathews, PhD

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. David Griffith, PhD

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Robert Bunger, PhD

CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
ANTHROPOLOGY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Linda Wolfe, PhD

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE  
SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_  
Paul J. Gemperline, PhD

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Christine Avenarius for helping make this study come together, and providing me with the valuable knowledge I needed to help complete this study. I would also like to thank Holly Mathews, David Griffith, and Robert Bunger for being a part of the committee process and providing wonderful insight and advice throughout the thesis process.

I would like to express my deep thanks and admiration to the respondents who participated in this study. I would also like to thank the Pham and Nguyen families for allowing me to stay in their homes during the duration of the study in Greenville, South Carolina and Raleigh, North Carolina. Their warmth and generosity exceeded all my expectations, and for that I am eternally grateful.

I would like to thank a group of remarkable people that have changed my life in these past two years. My deepest thanks goes out to Kim Fleming, Lauren Souther, Jennifer Gabriel, Jasmine and Jordan Patraw, Pablo Vvb, Chris Caynor, Joshua Cox, Patrick McCullough, Dondi Bethea, Kenny Mungin, and Kyle McCandless for being truly wonderful friends throughout the past two years. I would also like to sincerely thank Rebecca Shepherd, for being the most supportive and amazing person one could possibly be throughout this process. Truly the best friend one could ever have.

Finally I would like to thank my parents, Trien Pham and Thu Nguyen, for supporting my endeavors and being there for me every step of the way. My heart goes to out to everyone for their wonderful kindness and generosity, I will never forget it.

# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
History and Background .....	2
Overview of Vietnamese Immigration to the United States Post-Vietnam War .....	2
1.5 Generation Studies .....	3
Defining 1.5 Generation.....	3
Literary Ideas on the Representation of 1.5 Generation Vietnamese American .....	5
Unexplored Territory in the Scholarship of Vietnamese Americans.....	7
Research Significance and Goals.....	8
Significance of Studying Filial Piety .....	8
Research Goals.....	11
<b>Chapter 2 – Background and Methods.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Literature Review.....	13
Acculturation and Intergenerational Gaps Among Vietnamese .....	13
Filial Piety Studies .....	15
Brief History of the Filial Piety Scale.....	18
Urban vs. Rural: Case Studies .....	21
Methods.....	22
Site Information .....	23
Data Collection Tools.....	24
<b>Chapter 3 – Vietnamese, 1.5 and the Past.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Background.....	29
Methods.....	30

Data Analysis .....	31
1.5 and First Generation Relations.....	31
<i>Changing Associations</i> .....	31
<i>The Value of Relationships</i> .....	34
The Mother-in-Law Debate .....	35
Differences Between East and West .....	38
Discussion .....	39
<b>Chapter 4 – Vietnamese, 1.5 and the Future .....</b>	<b>43</b>
Background .....	44
Method .....	44
Quantitative Data .....	45
Data Analysis .....	49
Youth in Revolt .....	49
<i>Decision-Making Among the Second Generation</i> .....	49
<i>Obedience Here and There</i> .....	51
All for One and One for All: Career Choices for a 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Child .....	52
<i>Career Choices</i> .....	53
<i>Filial Considerations: Long Term Happiness vs. Success</i> .....	54
Caretaking vs. Individualism: Parental Concerns or Lack Thereof Regarding Filial Piety .....	55
<i>Concerns on Caretaking</i> .....	56
<i>Family vs. the Individual</i> .....	58
Marital Affairs.....	60

<i>Love and Marriage</i> .....	60
<i>Race Relations</i> .....	62
Here and There: Opinions of Youth .....	64
<i>Impressions of Youth</i> .....	64
Discussion.....	67
<b>Chapter 5 – Discussion</b> .....	70
Filial Piety in Contemporary Urban Society.....	71
Lost in Translation .....	73
A Tale of Two Cities .....	74
Analyzing the Utility of the Filial Piety Scale .....	78
Looking Ahead.....	80
<b>Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide</b> .....	82
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	84

## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 1: Filial Piety Scale Statements .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Table 2: Filial Piety Scale Percent Analysis .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Table 3: Filial Piety Scale Percent Analysis, by Gender .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Table 4: Filial Piety Scale Percent Analysis, by City.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Table 5: Filial Piety Scale, Factor Analysis by City .....</b>	<b>49</b>

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

*“You know, as weird as it sounds, Americans do the same thing [filial piety]. They have that very same concept. Like yesterday, or the day before, I went to lunch with my supervisor, my plant supervisor, the guy I share my office with and we had lunch with his son. Last year, the supervisor married the first lady and had him, and they separated. So he grew up, and he has his mom and his dad, and married a girl. So last year for Christmas, they had one day with his mom's side, one day with his dad's side, and one with the girl's. So, it's the commitment they had to do, for three different families. The child was like, “we had to waste the whole vacation for the family. “So to answer the question, yes, we'll do it to a certain extent. We worry a little bit, because sometimes we can't do it [laughs]. To the best of your ability.” - Participant #14, Male Informant*

In developing this study, I came to realize that mainstream Americans do not really have a concept equivalent to filial piety, despite how common this idea is across cultures. Though the idea exists within the United States, it is apparent from the lack of common terminology and presence in American culture that filial piety is not as significant in the US compared to other cultures. In a place where individuality and personal freedoms are two indispensable components of the culture, filiality appears to be downplayed.

Individuality has become significant marker of modernity for the western, developed nations and for those who have been assimilated into such nations through migration. Individuality stands out as one of the quintessential representations of cultural assimilation in contemporary US and western society. However, this assimilation happens for second generation members of an immigrant population, defined as those that are born and raised in the United States. The first generation is unlikely to assimilate to a large extent because they came here at an older age and have less ability to acculturate. There is another generation to consider though - the 1.5 generation, defined as those born and raised in Vietnam, who arrived in the United States at a young enough age to still be nurtured in American culture. Since they constitute a large proportion of the second generation's parents, they have the opportunity to shape and mold the population for the future, whether it is maintaining traditional ideas for the family or moving

towards a new way of life fit for the environment they now are a part of. This study is premised on the idea that the use of filial piety can be used as a viable measure for the assimilation of the 1.5 generation. This research investigates the extent to which the 1.5 generation has acculturated by examining which elements of filial ideology they retain and which they let go. The filial piety scale used in this study examines this variable from a variety of angles, ranging from people's relationships to the parent generation to their decisions on parenting a generation of Vietnamese Americans almost entirely unlike themselves.

## **History and Background**

### **Overview of Vietnamese Immigration to the United States Post-Vietnam War**

In 1975, a large numbers of Vietnamese fled Saigon after the North Vietnamese army invaded the Southern capital of Saigon and ended the war. Immediately following the fall of South Vietnam, the US government rapidly created a program known as Operation New Life, which moved refugees to American military bases to prepare them for temporary resettlement (Bankston and Dao, 2010:129), triggering the first wave of migrants to the USA. Most of the individuals in this first wave were upper or middle class, well-educated, Catholic, and English speaking (Egawa & Tashima, 1982). These refugees were move to refugee camps in Southeast Asia before coming to the United States where they were resettled across the country. A second wave began in the early 1980s, bringing “boat people” to the US. These “boat people” had less education and less financial capital than the first wave of emigrants, and an estimated half perished in transit (Trueba, Cheng, & Ima, 1993; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). The United States passed the Refugee Act in 1980 which provided assistance to the new wave and protection from the persecution going on back home. The late-80s to mid-90s saw the initiation of the third and

final wave, ushering over 200,000 more Vietnamese into the country. Many members of this wave were children. The Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1988 allowed the children of Vietnamese civilians and American soldiers to immigrate with their families to the United States (Huer 2001: 28), bringing an additional wave of children that would become part of the 1.5 generation that also includes children of the first and second group of Vietnamese refugees. Vietnamese Americans currently form one of the largest groups- of refugees ever to settle in the United States (Wong, 2011:314). In 2006, almost 1.7 million Vietnamese Americans were reported to be residing in the United States, constituting the fourth largest Asian American ethnic group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Initially, American policy makers attempted to scatter the deluge of new arrivals from Vietnam around the nation in order to encourage assimilation and provide manageable numbers for social service agencies charged with service and support for refugees (Bankston and Dao, 2010: 129). However, organized refugee programs found it easier to deal with Vietnamese in groups, and most Vietnamese found it to be more comfortable settling in clusters rather than small groups as proposed by the government. Communities thus formed around the United States, forming concentrated pockets of Vietnamese in various metropolitan areas and regions where work was available for the Vietnamese refugees. Migration still occurs to this day with family members in the United States continuing to find ways to bring family members who were unable to migrate during the three waves.

## **1.5 Generation Studies**

### **Defining 1.5**

The term “1.5 generation” has commonly been used to describe immigrants who were

born in the same country as their parents but spent a large portion of their developmental years in the country they migrated to, unlike second generation who were born and raised in the host country. The designation of an immigrant of the 1.5 generation highlights a potentially different adaptation experiences that these individuals may have in comparison with either the first or second generation immigrants. Studies, such as Park's (1999) work with 1.5 generation Korean Americans or S. J. Lee's (2001) with 1.5 generation Hmong, have shown that this particular generation has been able to build bridges between native and American cultures. While these participants were adept in working in both cultural scenarios, researchers have found that they still have their own personal battles, particularly in dealing with proper cultural responses. In Bryan Kim's (2003) study of a set of students who were Asian American 1.5 generation members, one of his respondents noted, "To go back and forth between these two cultures is actually quite hard because the idea of which culture's traditions to use at the time is difficult. I sometimes don't know what would be appropriate" (Kim 2003: 164). Because of their ability to communicate with the first generation and operate at a similar skill level as a second generation in the United States, these students found themselves working as "cultural brokers" – people who help mediate between two groups of different cultural backgrounds. The 1.5 generation varies in vulnerability in regards to these particular issues. Factors such as years spent in Vietnam and in the United States, social groups formed within the United States, cultural influence of the first generation, and more all play a major role in shaping the 1.5 generation's identity. The influence and responsibility that the generation carries is a subject that has not yet been fully-developed in studies of Vietnamese Americans as most have just now reached the age of either young adult or parenthood, a time where these factors have only just begun to come into play. This is where they differ from the second generation, who will have been born and raised in the United States and

will have a more Americanized perspective from the very beginning, and are likely to have different perspectives on family and the importance of filial piety.

### **Literary Ideas on the Representation of 1.5 Generation Vietnamese American**

Though the subject of Vietnamese American and 1.5 generation has only begun to be researched from a scientific, methodological approach, from a literary standpoint a few Vietnamese American fiction writers have been bringing their own ideas and theories to the discussion since the beginning of their arrival to the United States. Of the few publications focusing on the 1.5 generation of Vietnamese Americans by Vietnamese American writers, three that stand out are Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge* (1997), one of the first Vietnamese American authors to talk about the 1.5 generation experience, Le Thi Diem Thuy's awarding winning first person narrative *The Gangsters We Are All Looking For* (2003), and Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt* (2004), which boldly takes homosexuality into consideration through a Vietnamese narrative.

Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge* follows the story of Mai and Thanh, a daughter and mother who migrated to the United States after the collapse of Southern Vietnam in 1975, but end up having completely different lives from one another despite living under the same roof. As Claire Scott (2004) discusses in her article on the novel, *Monkey Bridge* focuses “on the cultural negotiations Mai and Thanh must undertake in order to make a future in America” (Scott 2004:83). The story takes into consideration the emotional resonance associated with post-war drama and looks at the complications that comes with memory, contrasting Mai's desire to find out about her family's past from Thanh, who wishes to keep the trauma associated with the family's challenging past veiled from her daughter. *Monkey Bridge* is significant in terms of 1.5 generation studies for its relationship between Mai and Thanh, highlighting the challenging

relation between 1.5 and first generation Vietnamese Americans, and the difficulties faced by both sides. We see the generation gap being displayed between the mother and daughter with Thanh's struggles to adapt and Mai's disgruntlement about her mother's inability to do so. There is also a discussion concerning role reversal; how Mai finds her mother more of an adolescent in the United States rather than elder because of her inability to exist without Mai's aid. Mai often has to do much translating for her mother, and also manipulate misunderstandings between her mother and American employers in order to satisfy both parties. For Mai, translating becomes her own version of the monkey bridge as she recognizes that "translation is a highly manipulative activity that involves all kinds of stages in that process of transfer across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (Bassnett and Trivedi 99:2). The foundation for many 1.5 generation related discussions can be found in this early Vietnamese American writing, one that explores the inner conflict of not just the 1.5, but the first generation and the challenges they face in acculturation and assimilation.

Le Thi Diem Thuy's *The Gangsters We Are All Looking For* takes a different approach from Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge*, using a first person narrative built on several short stories recollecting events in the life of the narrator from back in Vietnam to living in the United States, frequently jumping back-and-forth between multiple time lines. The stories of this Vietnamese American focus on the memories of first arriving to the United States and the challenges as a 1.5 generation youth. Unlike *Monkey Bridge's* more traditional writing, however, *The Gangsters We Are All Looking For* is written in a more poetic form that speaks to the inner complexity of the writer Le Thi Diem Thuy herself as both a refugee and 1.5 generation Vietnamese American. Her writing in this novel displays the more rebellious side of her generation, one example being when the narrator suddenly runs away from home and abandons her family on the West Coast, for a

life of independent from the troubles that plague her and her family's past. Integrated into the vignettes are the cultural values that have are challenged by the assimilation process into American culture, which has a great effect on the narrator's mental state as she tries to find a place for herself in her American life and put her conflicted past behind her.

While *Monkey Bridge* and *The Gangsters We Are All Looking For* touch on the acculturation experience and memoirs of childhood in Vietnam and the United States, Monique Truong's *Book of Salt* focuses more on contemporary 1.5 generation Vietnamese, examining their narrative from an adult perspective. Though Monique is Vietnamese American, her main character, Binh, in the novel is French Vietnamese, residing in Paris and working as a Vietnamese chef. The story is unique in that it deals with both 1.5 generation Vietnamese diaspora from an adult perspective, examining Binh's personal struggles with language, acculturation challenges, and his quest to create a new identity for himself. It is also unique in that it explores queerness, and the difficulties associated with it for Vietnamese people by making Binh's homosexual relationship with an American man and the trials that he faces with his own family and friends in response as the central focus of the latter half of the novel.

### **Unexplored Territory in the Scholarship of Vietnamese Americans**

The emergence of Vietnamese American fiction in recent years in conjunction with the social science studies on 1.5 generation Vietnamese has unveiled a variety of challenges and personal conflict that members of this generation have had after the arrival in the United States in their quest to develop their identities both in and out of their homes. Both fiction and social science continue to build toward explaining and understanding challenges that are faced by this transitional generation. While works of fiction have begun to examine some of these dynamics

through personal vignettes and memoirs under a fictional lens, academic research has only begun to start exploring these issues. Studies on 1.5 generation Vietnamese in the 90s such as Min Zhou's (1998) *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States* touched on the acculturation process of 1.5 generation Vietnamese children that arrived in the United States. However it ultimately made a bigger contribution to our understanding of the livelihoods of second generation Vietnamese Americans. The 1.5 generation as a whole is still a largely unexplored group who has lost much of its presence amid more popular studies of first and second generation. They are a bridge between first and second generation Vietnamese in the United States, playing a significant role in adapting and adjusting the mindset of second generation members through their parenting decisions. Though they share similarities with both groups, they also have their own challenges that need to be examined. The struggle with aligning themselves in values more centralized in individual autonomy while also existing in the collective, filial-oriented household that their first generation parents create is one of the major considerations to be considered. Understanding the significance of filial piety in the daily lives of the 1.5 generation is therefore significant as a marker of how acculturated this generation is, representing a predictor in the development of Vietnamese in the United States.

## **Research Significance and Goals**

### **Significance of Studying Filial Piety**

Extensive research (Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Pyke 2000; Rosenthal et al., 1996; Ying & Chao, 1996; Zhou & Bankston, 1994) has been conducted on filial piety among Asian American populations within the past twenty years. A central value of Confucianism, the core concept of filial piety is fundamentally respect and devotion toward parents and ancestors. It also

includes the rules for various social relationships such as student and teacher and sibling relations. Originated in China approximately 500 BC, Confucianism and its concepts spread across Asia over the years. Vietnam experienced several centuries of Chinese political and cultural influence around this time, and adopted the teachings of Confucius in the process. The philosophy has served as a central principle within Vietnamese culture. However, recent migration of Vietnamese to America due to the war has sparked uncertainty in its stability as a central ideology among younger Vietnamese Americans.

Research regarding perceptions of filial piety among Vietnamese Americans has been limited due to the relatively short amount of time they have spent in the United States compared to other immigrant groups (Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Pyke 2000; Rosenthal et al., 1996; Zhou & Bankston, 1994). Though Vietnamese are the emphasis of this study, filial piety is also has cultural value in other cultures which have been examined. Studies concerning the process of immigrant adaptation from several ethnic groups such as Chinese, Japanese, or Mexican Americans have shown signs of acculturation in regards to filial piety. This study aims to understand current perceptions of filial piety among a specific set of Vietnamese parents in the United States – the 1.5 generation. Members of the 1.5 generation face many questions in terms of the maintenance of filial piety. Not only do they face the challenge of carrying out traditional filial care and responsibility for their parents, but they also have difficult decisions to make in regards to the future of filiality among their children.

Research concerning filial piety has mainly been carried out among large immigrant groups and in urban areas such as Los Angeles and San Francisco (Lieber 2004, Fuligni and Tseng 2008). In the southeast United States, however, work has only just begun on the subject of filial piety among Asian Americans in the region. Studies have been conducted in the larger

urban areas of the south, including Atlanta (Diwan 2010) and New Orleans (Zhou and Bankston 1994), but smaller ethnic communities such as Greenville, South Carolina and other similar, less-populated locations across the United States have sorely been neglected in terms of studies related to Asian Americans. Studies conducted by researchers such as Norris (2009) in New Orleans and Diwan (2010) in Atlanta, Georgia have made moves to study communities more towards central and eastern United States, but the focus has been on adolescents and young adults. To gain a greater understanding of changing expressions of filial piety among Asian American populations in the United States, a more in-depth perspective must be considered. The decision to collect data in the two cities stems from the lack of available research on smaller Vietnamese communities, particularly on the east coast.

Studies of Asian culture related to the shifting perceptions of filial piety in American culture due to immigration have been conducted in several different disciplines, ranging from anthropology to sociology and psychology. While methodology has changed over time, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, the basic questions being studied have not seen much development. Though recent research has slowly-progressed towards a more holistic approach, the lack of more comparative research and prevalence of studies outside of major Asian populations within the United States has left much room for study in both filial and acculturation studies in various US contexts. How do immigrants outside of the larger known communities fit into the United States and adapt to their environments? There is the question of how those smaller pockets of immigrant communities maintain tradition, and what, if anything, they maintain. The complicated questions that are forced upon them make the 1.5 generation a significant group to study since they hold potential answers for which direction the new immigrant population goes and dictate some of the challenges that lay ahead for future

generations.

## **Research Goals**

Focusing on the question of “what are the 1.5 generation of Vietnamese American parent's perceptions of filial piety?”, I employed qualitative and quantitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews and a filial piety scale, to explore concerns that the 1.5 generation of Vietnamese have regarding raising family in a setting greatly contrasting to their own upbringing. The study had three research goals. The first objective of the study was to determine whether or not the 1.5 generation places an emphasis on the importance of filial piety: essentially, what are their perceptions of it and how significant of a part does it play in their lives today. The second objective is related, inquiring how parents intend to raise their children in American society in terms of filial piety, and in terms of their relations with their own parents. Do they maintain traditional relationships with their parents, or rebel against the norm? Would they like to maintain the same kind of relationship that they have with their parents with their own children, or negotiate alternative methods of parenting to fit their American context? These are just a few of the many questions that were explored within the boundaries of these research goals.

The final objective of the study aimed to find if the size of the urban city and population effects the 1.5 generation's perceptions of filial piety. This was done by comparing data from participants from two locations, Greenville, South Carolina and Raleigh, North Carolina. I investigated the various differences between the respondents from both cities to determine whether or not locality and factors related to it were essential to our understanding of the 1.5 generation as a whole.

In the next chapter, I will discuss some background on filial piety and acculturation studies, exploring the work that has been done on filiality, and also discuss the methods used in this study. In Chapter 3, I will explore the relationship between the 1.5 and first generation, looking at how the relationship has evolved since moving to the United States. I will also examine how acculturation has changed some aspects of the relationship, such as the relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter. Chapter 4 transitions to the relationship between the 1.5 and second generation. There, I explore various aspects of parenting and how they have changed, if at all, from the perspective of the 1.5 generation since moving to the United States. The significance that filiality has on their parenting decisions is examined through the informants responses. Finally in Chapter 5, I look at the 1.5 generation as a whole and present their significance as a transitory generation, using their take on filiality between the first and second generation as a marker how much they have changed as a whole since living in the United States.

## **Chapter 2 – Background and Methods**

The meaningfulness of filial piety to those of Confucian ancestry is pervasive, encompassing aspects of the self and well-being as well as the more familiar associations to family and societal behavior (Chao and Tseng 2002; Hwang 1999; Lu and Lin 1998). It is a central principle in Confucian societies that forms the foundation of their livelihoods. Since moving to the United States, however, parents are uncertain about their hopes and expectations regarding filial behavior by contemporary youth being raised in the United States (Lieber et al. 2004: 325). There is concern about not only how to revise traditional approaches for their children, but also for themselves as they act as cultural brokers for the first and second generation. There is also the question of the necessity of filial piety in general, or whether the 1.5 generation feels it is an important piece of culture that Vietnamese in the United States need to maintain. The significance of filial studies in the everyday life of various generations is thus essential in both examining the acculturation and adaptation of Confucian societies in the United States and Western countries.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Acculturation and Intergenerational Gaps Among Vietnamese**

Acculturation can broadly be defined as a process of behavioral and attitudinal change that results when individuals make contact with a new culture (Phinney, Horenczyk, Leibkind et. Vedder, 2001), and has been noted as an important predictor of adaptation for immigrants (LaFromboise, Coleman et. Gerton, 1993). Many Vietnamese left Vietnam at the end of the war, completely unprepared for the challenges ahead of them in the United States. This first generation of Vietnamese was forced to quickly adapt to conditions and do the best they can to

incorporate themselves in the United States. However, younger children and those born in the United States have had the opportunity to fully adapt and inherit traits related to American culture unlike their parents. Studies of Vietnamese immigrant families have reported family relationship challenges, especially intergenerational conflict between parents and their adolescents as a result (Boehnlein et al., 1995; Dinh, Sarason & Sarason, 1994); Nguyen and Williams 1989). Vietnamese adolescents are expected to maintain family connectedness, valued in Asian cultures, while dealing with the tasks of acculturation and individuation (Ho, 2010:24), which have encouraged these intergenerational conflicts.

A few studies have focused on the acculturation of Vietnamese adults, particularly looking at parental attitudes. Peter Nguyen (2008) conducted a study on the acculturation of Vietnamese father's parenting styles in the United States. Unlike most studies of acculturation where change is found, Nguyen's findings revealed that first-generation Vietnamese fathers had not acculturated at all and continued to practice a traditional authoritarian parenting style. Joyce Ho's (2009) study of acculturation gaps between parents and adolescents in a Vietnamese community in Maryland found that there was a “substantial number of parents scored higher on American identity than their adolescents, and a substantial number of adolescents reported a higher Vietnamese identity than their parents” (Joyce 2009: 427). Vietnamese groups that are more acculturated to the United States show similar practices of adjustment to the changing attitude and behaviors of second generation children, as described by Lieber et al. (2004) in their study of changing attitudes towards filial piety among Chinese immigrants.

Several theorists have identified intergenerational cultural gaps as a salient cause of parent-child conflicts in Vietnamese American (and more broadly, Asian American) immigrant families (e.g., Cheung & Nguyen, 2001; Hwang, 2006; Kim, Ahn, & Lam, 2009; Wong & Poon,

2010). Through interactions with peers, schools, and the media, children of Vietnamese American immigrants are more likely to have had greater exposure to European American cultural norms than their parents (Zhou, 2001). Consequently, they tend to acculturate faster to European American culture and retain less of their culture of origin as compared with their parents (Kim et al., 2009). For example, immigrant parents may have limited English abilities, whereas their adolescent children may lose fluency in their native language and prefer to speak in English; this language barrier may result in a breakdown in parent–child communications and family cohesion (Hwang, 2006; Zhou, 2001). These intergenerational cultural gaps appear to be particularly prominent in the context of perceived parenting and family norms. Vietnamese American immigrant parents’ views on parenting tend to be influenced by collectivistic Vietnamese culture, whereas those of their children are likely influenced by European American norms (Pyke, 2000)

Similarly, Xiong and Detzner (2004) found a wide divergence between Southeast Asian adolescents’ perceptions of their parents’ ideal and actual parenting practices; specifically, these adolescents perceived that their parents did not understand their thoughts and feelings, were overly critical, controlling, and protective, and rarely showed overt affection for them. Instead, these adolescents wanted their parents to be warm, supportive, tell them that they loved them, and praise them when they had done something right. These findings align with the results of a study on Southeast Asian immigrant parents’ perception of their own parenting practices (Xiong et al., 2001).

### **Filial Piety Studies**

Arjun Appadurai (1996:27) defined the global movement of culture through the use of

“scapes” in his key article *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*. One of the key scapes discussed was that of ethnoscares, which constitutes the movement of people around the world and thus the reshaping of realities of the people moving and those affected by the move. Vietnamese coming to the United States fall into this scape with the challenge of trying to balance Vietnamese and American values. An example of this trial from a Vietnamese perspective can be seen in filial piety's placement of importance on successful careers to benefit the family. To fulfill this goal in the United States, however, children often adopt Western values as part of their education. Studies such as Ho (1996), Lieber et al. (2004), Chen (2006), Tajima (2010) and more have all suggested that various factors such as education and upward mobility have caused changes in the influence that filial piety has had on younger generations, both in the East and West. Lieber et al's (2004: 328) study in particular built on previous work, aiming to identify “how the traditional values of filial piety may continue to play an important role in the lives of Chinese immigrants.” His findings showed that there was “evidence of their [parents] efforts to develop and apply strategies that are consistent with their own values yet maximize an understanding and respect for their children's needs and unique challenges” (Lieber et al. 2004: 343). An examination of past studies in regards to the different aspects of filial piety have led to similar conclusions, showing a variety of adaptations that have been made to fit into America's social standards. Studies today continue to consider the shifting ideologies and adaptations parents have made in respect to both their heritage and progression in contemporary society.

Research on filial piety has shown correlation with time spent within the United States and the level of filial piety expected, though not as dramatically as one may believe. Kao's (2005) study on the expectations of filial piety among Hispanic groups found that while acculturation into US society changed some perceptions of filial piety among the participants, it

was not dramatic enough to change how they felt children should be obligated to be filial towards their parents. Lieber et al's study (2004) presented similar findings, revealing that members of the Chinese community in Los Angeles were expressing more openness to individuality for the children, but remained adamant that key filial responsibilities such as respect to elders should be maintained. Lieber and his research team presents an important quote concerning filial piety from one of his respondents:

*Originally [my daughter] grew up in China, so her values basically are still pretty similar to those of Chinese children. She would still assume the responsibility to look after her parents as we get old. But after coming to America, she feels that Americans are not quite the same. When they are grown, and if parents are not nice to them, they don't have to look after their parents. As for her, she still says to us, "I still have responsibility toward you." (father, 106) (Lieber et al. 2004: 342)*

Lieber et al. found that while filial piety still existed as a meaningful concept, the “conceptualization of the concept” (342) was changing for Chinese immigrant families. Parents' motivations for meeting this responsibility of socializing these values for their children are apparent, as are their efforts to develop strategies for negotiating the inconsistencies, and associated obstacles, between Chinese and US values and contexts (Dy Jr 1997; Hwang 1999; Yang 1998). This process of acculturation – the process of acquiring the host's society's values and behaviors (Franco 1983) – is seen clearly in studies of filial piety. Studies of filial piety itself can be seen as a variable used to measure acculturation, assessing how much immigrants have adapted to the prevailing culture.

While studies of Chinese, Korean, and Hispanic filial piety have been prevalent, studies dedicated to the change in filiality of Vietnamese Americans have been minimal. Much of the work that has been done has focused on the second generation. One study conducted by Caitlin Killian and Karen Hegtvedt (2003) examined the role of parents in the maintenance of second generation Vietnamese cultural behaviors. Analyzing Vietnamese undergraduate students in the

Atlanta area, they found that children's social networks and parental frequency of ethnic activity both contributed to the impact of the children's behaviors and likelihood of carrying on tradition. Zhou and Bankston (1994) found in their study of Vietnamese youth in New Orleans a correlation between a strong commitment to filial piety and improved academic standing, suggesting that the desire to gain greater social capital for the family encouraged better scholarly work. Zhou and Bankston also found a general trend that Vietnamese children were moving in one of two directions in the United States: either towards the academic correlation mentioned earlier or towards delinquency, particularly gang-related.

### **Brief History of Filial Piety Scale**

Ho and Lee (1974) developed a filial piety scale in the early 1970s to represent “all of the essential components of filial piety” (305). The items in the scale were derived from a study of filiality among students in regards to their professors. The scale consists of positive and negative items which pertain to some aspect of filial piety. Collectively, they encompass the “essential aspects of filial piety, such as obedience, respect, ancestral worship, providing for one's aged parents, and ensuring the continuity of the family line” (Ho and Lee 1974:305). It generally involved a 22-item survey “using a 6-point Likert-type (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*)” (Lieber et al. 2004: 329) scale to indicate the level of agreement with each item. Some items included statements such as “The ultimate crime is being disrespectful to one's parents and failing to care for them” or “Children should not travel to faraway places when their parents are still living” (Lieber et al. 2004: 329).

The filial scale has become a prominent tool in research related to filial piety worldwide and has seen several adaptations to fit various conditions. Sylvia Chen's (2010) study, for

example, examined the current attitudes and beliefs involved with filial piety in two mainland China locations, Hong Kong and Beijing. While Chen applied the same general types of questions, Chen shifted the focus away from parents in favor of the children, investigating the college student population and their relationships with filial piety in regards to their parents. The filial piety scale has also been used on populations other than Chinese immigrants. Hsueh-Fen Kao's (2005) study of the Mexican-American population translated the texts from Chinese-to-English-to-Spanish and used the scale for populations in California and Texas. The items were altered to fit the context of the study, namely the filial relationship between parent and child and what the parents were expecting of the children. The authors of the study found the tool to be a fairly consistent and accurate portrayal of the Mexican-American community in terms of filiality and led to further studies on necessary implementation of elder care-taking in Mexican-American communities based on the studies final results.

The filial piety scale been adapted in various studies to analyze the cultural pressures that may not be present in other societies. This can be seen in Rabia Khalaia's (2010) study in which the author developed a new set of statements to evaluate Arabic filial piety. While the basic concept of the statements were similar to other studies utilizing the filial piety scale, the author adjusted and added questions that were more closely related to Arabic culture, posing statements that related to important Arabic family cultures. Examples of statements from this study included “the child is responsible for the elderly parent's budgeting and property, should provide the lion's share of care and assistance to the aged parent” (Kahalia 2010: 362) or “children should kiss the parent's head and hand when greeting his parent” (Kahalia 2010: 362). The versatility of the scale has allowed for an extensive amount of research be done in various communities worldwide that share the concept of filial piety, but in different cultural context.

Lieber (2004) and his research team members conducted a study concerning the impacts of modernization and the immigrant experience of contemporary Chinese into the United States in relation to traditional Confucian ideology. In particular the concept of filial piety, a fundamental Confucian concept concerning social and familial relations, was the central element chosen for analysis. Chinese first-generation immigrant parents living in the Los Angeles were selected for the study, most of who had lived in the United States for a minimum of 15 years and were in their mid-40s. The authors presented a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative methods with qualitative methods such as open-ended interviews to gather the data. The primary quantitative method applied in the study was the use of a filial piety scale. The results derived from the study was collected as a part of a larger investigation revolving around the “challenges Chinese immigrant parents face as they adjust to life in the United States” (Lieber et al. 2004: 325).

The qualitative questions in the study centered around perceptions on the “generation gap” between parents and their American-born children. The results showed dissatisfaction among parents concerning their children’s disobedience. Children were considered to be more resistant in this new generation compared to their parents who had grown up in a strongly filial upbringing back in Asia. The open-ended interviews, however, revealed that parents were acknowledging their own personal doubts about traditional filial piety and discussed their attempts to compromise.

Quantitative results from the filial piety scale revealed mixed results. Chinese immigrants were found to be maintaining many classic views and principles concerning filial piety in relation to the care and sustenance of the parents. The results also showed some modification of traditional aspects. The scale showed that parents were open to children being more

individualistic in terms of their personal selections, whether it is education or moral principles. The authors suggest that the uneven results in the study show that the individuals in the study had a lesser link to the traditional core of filial beliefs than in the past. The authors also suggest that the concept of filial piety may include more aspects than the study developed actually examined, revealing a possible flaw in the filial piety scale. Overall, the authors come to the conclusion that filial piety still remained a meaningful aspect of the population studied, but to a lesser effect than in their ancestral generations.

### **Urban vs. Rural: Case Studies**

Lieber et al. (2004) article leaves several questions to be answered in future research, the significance of its subject matter's location being one. Participants were located in a densely-populated Chinese area of Los Angeles which may have had an important influence in the ideology of individuals there due to the larger population of Asian Americans. The article somewhat generalizes the Chinese American community as a whole with its final discussion on the matter and does not consider the impact of population density. While few comparative studies have been done regarding filial piety in major and minor urban areas of the United States, studies in China have shown distinct differences in the perception of filial piety among rural and urban locations. Fuligni and Zhang (2004) found that urban male adolescents reported a weaker obligation to caring for their parents in comparison to both urban females and male and females in rural areas. There were several possibilities suggested for this, the pressures of males in the business sector of urban life being one. An alternative interpretation is that regardless of the larger economic system, the demands of rural life tend to equalize the family obligations of male and female adolescents whereas urban life demands relatively more assistance from females than

from males because the duties in urban areas are largely domestic (Fuligni and Zhang 2004: 189). A follow-up study by Fuligni and Zhang (2006) looked at new relationships, particularly authority, autonomy, and familial relationships in urban and rural areas of mainland China. Urban students indicated a greater willingness to disagree openly with their parents and did not have relationships as close as rural students signaled. The study suggested that China's economic reform may have played a role in the differences between the urban and rural student's ideology.

While the differences in larger and smaller Asian-American communities may not be as drastic as China's urban and rural society, there are still many differences within these communities to consider. Nina Glasgow's (2000) study of care-giving among US citizens showed that there were different relationships occurring in rural and urban areas in regards to care-taking. In rural areas, it was more likely for elders to have a spouse and depend on a larger number of children to take care of them. In urban areas, however, elders were either choosing to co-reside with their one or two children or live within spaces nearby. Considering the same situation with Asian American populations and the inclusion of traditional notions of filial piety, these care-taking situations may cause a variety of different responses in the perception of filiality.

## **Methods**

I conducted the study one phase, but with a “concurrent mixed-method approach” (Creswell, 2009) simultaneously using two instruments: a filial piety scale which collected quantitative data for analysis and semi-structured interviews that built on the responses gathered from the scale along with more in-depth discussion related to the subject of filial piety and the relationship between 1.5 generation Vietnamese with the first and second generations. Data were collected in Greenville, South Carolina and Raleigh North Carolina, with thirty-four respondents

total being interviewed. Research was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in May of 2011.

### **Site Information**

Raleigh, North Carolina and Greenville, South Carolina were two locations chosen for both their size and population density for comparative study. Raleigh is the second largest city in North Carolina, and among the top fifty largest cities population-wise in the United States with over 403,892 residents – 2,954 of which are Vietnamese according to the most recent census data. In comparison, Greenville is the sixth largest city in South Carolina with 58,409 residents of which 65 are Vietnamese. Though the population of Vietnamese is small within the city, the entire area county of Greenville, which contains a residential population of 451,225, has over 1,749 Vietnamese residing in its borders, many of whom live in suburbs and developments around the Greenville area. The majority of respondents in the study from the Greenville area live just outside the city. In comparison, Wake County, which contains Raleigh, has over 900,993 residents, of which 4,967 are Vietnamese. This data is based on the 2010 census. Raleigh does not provide the sociocultural environment similar to the ethnic enclaves of the San Diego area, rather containing pockets of members scattered throughout the metropolitan area (McCrae 2002: 198). Some similarities to the west coast communities can be seen in the markets and eateries though, which centralize activity within the community. Greenville in many ways parallels Raleigh in this respect, however on a smaller level in relation to the city size.

I selected 1.5 generation Vietnamese immigrant adults living in Greenville, South Carolina for the first portion of the study during June of 2011, and then transitioned to Raleigh for the second half of the study July of 2011. A smaller population, both in general and among

Vietnamese, the data from participants in Greenville, SC allowed for comparison with the sample from Raleigh, NC in terms of local and economic factors. I first sought out participants in the study through purposive sampling via personal connections from the two cities proposed for research, then snowball sampling to find the remaining participants. Thirty-four participants were interviewed in the study, with sixteen participants interviewed in Greenville and eighteen in Raleigh. The average age of respondents was thirty-eight years old. Of the sixteen participants in Greenville, nine of the respondents I interviewed were women while seven were male. The eighteen respondents in Raleigh were evenly divided between male and female.

The average time respondents have lived in the United States is nineteen years, with the highest being twenty nine years and the lowest being the minimum requirement of ten. Participants were required to have been born in Vietnam in or before 1978 and spent at least five-to-ten years of their childhood in Vietnam before immigrating to the United States. Participants were also required to have had spent a minimum of ten years in the United States and have experienced some form of education whether it be K-12, university, or technical. All the informants in the study were married, with only four of those not having children.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted concurrently with the filial piety scale, meaning both the scale and the interview were to be done at the same time. While the participants answered questions in regards to the scale, the responses elicited from the scale was used to generate further discussion and lead to broader questions unanswerable by the likert scale. One example of a broader question that was asked is “How do you think raising a child in the United States differs from raising a child in Vietnam?” Questions related to the adult’s perceptions of

children in multiple contexts will be suggested, including various aspects of life such as education, social network, and more, an example being “What features of American education do you find positive.” There were also questions about acculturation concerning both their children and their own lives. Participants were also asked to give their impressions on each of the filial piety scale statements for further discussion. As respondents gave their likert response for the current statement in question, discussion on their response about the statement was initiated to discuss the reasoning behind their answer. I conducted the interviews in Vietnamese and English, based on the preference of the respondents, and provided both Vietnamese and English versions of the filial piety scale statements for respondents to read. Locations for where the interview would take place was chosen by the participants at their convenience. The majority of interviews conducted were done in the homes of the respondents. Interviews were conducted in private, with no other members allowed in the room except for the respondent. The majority of interviews were conducted individually with the interviewer, with the exception of a pair of interviews that were done with couples due to time inconvenience.

The study employed Ho's (1994) adaptation of Ho and Lee's (1974) filial piety scale to analyze what are believed to be “all the essential components of filial piety” (Ho and Lee 1974:305). The scale has gone through much iteration since its creation to examine additional relations related to filial piety, such as parental attitudes and child-rearing practices. The version utilized in this study uses the majority of a twenty-two item version presented by Ho (1994) to parallel both Ho (1994) and Lieber et al. (2003) studies for comparative purposes. Table 1 below presents all the statements used in the study.

---

**Table 1. Filial Piety Scale Statements**

**Item**

Children do not have to seek parental advice when there is a problem. They may make their own decisions.

No matter what, children should obey their parents.

Disrespect of one's parents is a harsh crime.

Rearing sons to provide for oneself should no longer be the main reason for having children.

It is okay for children to protest when parents scold them without reason.

Being respectful to one's parents and failing to care for them is a major offense.

Children are expected to look out for the well-being of their parents.

Children are expected to take care of their parents when the need arises.

Children should think more about the needs of the family than their own.

Parents should not interfere with their children's freedom to choose a career.

Children may spend money more liberally rather than save for the future.

Children should respect the people respected by their parents.

Children should carry the values passed on to them by their parents.

Children should not live in faraway places from their family.

Children should be eternally grateful and reciprocate love and kindness to their parents no matter what.

Continuing the family line is not the purpose of marriage.

Children may marry whom they please without their parent's approval.

Any sacrifice in a child's time is worthwhile for the sake of filial piety.

If a man's wife and mother argue, the man should tell his wife to listen to his mother.

Children should not do anything that may cause the parents to worry.

Children should do what is expected of their parents.

Children should aim for great financial success in regards to their choices career-wise.

---

The method uses a 6-point Likert-type scale (*1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree*), which enables respondents to indicate their level of agreement on the various values and behaviors described in the questionnaire. The scale contained statements such as “Children should respect their parent's actions, regardless of how they conduct themselves” and “It is alright for children to protest when parents scold them for no reason.” This version of the scale has demonstrated satisfactory reliability in samples of Chinese mothers, fathers, grandparents, and college students (Ho 1994). Of Ho (1994) and Lieber et al's (2004) 22-items, I modified three items in order to understand perceptions of filiality between the 1.5 and first generation Vietnamese. These items include question 17, 18, and 21, as seen in Table 1. They have been

adapted to be direct statements concerning members of the 1.5 generation in relation to their parents, allowing for more discussion and quantitative information regarding this particular relationship. The quantitative data in the study was examined by gathering the percentage that respondents agreed with each statement to analyze which statements were most and least significant. An overall average of all the likert scale responses was gathered to weigh the significance of filial piety among respondents in the study.

### **Chapter 3 - Vietnamese, 1.5 and the Past**

My brother was born in 1975, twelve years before I, and in another country entirely, back in Vietnam just as the war was winding down. Being twelve years apart by American standards is already a sizable deviation speaking from a generational standpoint, but the difference from a cultural standpoint in terms of our childhoods is almost astronomical. Though my childhood was not lavish by any means, it was in comparison one of luxury. I had no war, no conflict, no poverty that left a mark on my childhood in the same vein that it had marked my brother's. That not only made a distinct difference in the way we looked and approach life, but also the relationship that we had with our parents, who were without a doubt first generation and strongly embedded in traditional Vietnamese values. Because our parents spoke little English and knew little about American culture in general, let alone from an child's stance, I grew up mostly immersed in a Vietnamese household, left to find out the environment around me on my own through friends in the neighborhood and, like many other Vietnamese Americans, through the television where films and shows provided perspective on the model American life.

It was only recently, however, that I noticed how different my relationship was to our parents in relation to my brother, who grew more distant as he moved on to university and a career away from the family, eventually also starting a family of his own. I was always close with my parents, and in some ways had a surprisingly American relationship with them the older I got as we started to share interests and hobbies with one another. As I have moved into adulthood, however, I find myself in a position similar to my brother in that I want to move more on my own and start my own career. How does he feel about that though, and in particular how does he feel his relationship with our parents as evolved in the past twenty years? How has his new family impacted the way he thinks about his relationship to our parents, and in what ways is

he interested in maintaining a relationship with them that may touch on more traditional grounds related to Vietnamese family?

Since moving to the United States, most Vietnamese families have made a shift toward a nuclear family structure, which in turn has changed some of the rules that are typically upheld in a Vietnamese home. Unlike in Vietnam where the eldest male member of the household maintains and coordinates the family's actions on a daily basis, the members, both men and women, of the 1.5 generation have become the new center of the household. This is a result of rapid acculturation and control over financial resources as the main breadwinner of the household. It is a change that has created new dynamics in the average Vietnamese household living in the US, challenging traditional modes of interaction in terms of filial piety. The focus of this chapter will further explore the 1.5 generation's relationships with the first generation, examining how the 1.5 generation is coping with the dramatic shifts in power and structure here in the United States in relation to their parents.

## **Background**

Members of the 1.5 generation are unique in that they engage in two distinctly contrasting relationships within their own households as a result of their exposure of Western culture. They have relationships with their children who they raise in a social and cultural environment different from their own childhood experiences. They are also involved with their parents, the first generation of Vietnamese immigrants who have only limited acculturation to American culture and society. Traditional Vietnamese family relationships are based on the Confucian principles of filial piety, where respect correlates with age. Most families are larger than the typical nuclear family in the US (i.e. parents with two children), with both immediate

and extended members living together in the same household. Males are generally the head of the household, meaning their extended family is the one that lives in the home with the immediate family of the male. Vietnamese households are unique in that the mother or eldest woman also holds equal amounts of respect in the home as the male head of the household (i.e. husband or eldest son), a difference from other male dominated societies that adhere to Confucian teachings like China. However, the society of Vietnam is still predominantly male-oriented. The father or eldest male makes the central decisions in the household.

## **Methods**

In this chapter, I will focus on data from the survey and interview questions related to the first and 1.5 generation, examining the 1.5 generation's reflections on their relationships with their parents here in the United States. The semi-structured interview questions were based around the survey questions asked by the filial scale along with general questions relating to the subject of first and 1.5 generation relationships. The main statements from the filial scale that will be analyzed here are “parents should not interfere with children's freedom to choose a career,” “if a man's wife and mother argue, the man should tell his wife to listen to his mother,” and “children should not live in faraway places.” Also discussed in this chapter are the respondent's responses to the related semi-structured interview questions, particularly concerning how they felt their relationship with their parents has changed in the United States and how they feel family structure in general differ from here and in Vietnam. The interview questions used in the study were derived from the survey statements from the filial piety scale to further enhance the informant's opinion on the subject of first and 1.5 generation relations and the significance that migration has had on Vietnamese family dynamics from their point of view. Data were

analyzed for significant patterns that reflected the majority opinions of the 1.5 generation on the subject of 1.5 and first generation relationships.

## **Data Analysis**

### **1.5 and First Generation Relations**

One of the things that I have learned growing up is that it is very difficult to change who you are, particularly the older you become. While the period between middle school and college may have been a whirlwind of different personas in development, internally as an adult I feel I have not changed greatly in the past several years of my life. So to suddenly ask the first generation, who spent the majority of their lives growing up in Vietnam and fully entrenched in its values to suddenly give all that up and change their mind is something that is simply impossible to ask the average person. The 1.5 generation, however, came to the US as either a child or young adult, where they were still impressionable and vulnerable to change. It is this unique dynamic between the highly Vietnamese-oriented first generation and 1.5 generation whose duality allows them to cross borders that I seek to explore in this section.

### ***Changing Associations***

*“Yes it has changed, you know because of the lifestyle. You have to make adjustments. You have to work full time and if you have a job out there, so... and from the parents, there is more independent here. The privacy, the family privacy is somehow, just us... you know that idea from Western culture. We just have a small unit of family, so it's just like having another family member to live in the same household. Somehow it just considered, I wouldn't say violation, but you know. That's just the kind of mentality, that's why parents have their own place to live. Of course, I prefer it that way. The relationship with parents of course here is not as close as back in the country. And you don't have a lot of time to take care of them compared to back in the country where you all live under the same roof and care for each. That's the difference. - Participant #33, Female Informant*

I began this study by asking informants how they felt their relationships with their parents had

changed since moving to the United States. The majority replied that the relationship had indeed changed, but cited a variety of reasons why and how the relationship has been transformed. Some of the primary reasons concerned the modification in lifestyle since arrival from Vietnam, both in regards to job and culture. Work was one of the themes most commonly discussed when it came to exploring how relationships have changed between the 1.5 and first generation immigrants. The participant above relayed a popular response among respondents about how relationships in general were not as close here as they would be in Vietnam, and that the time devoted to watching and taking care of them is not the same. Respondents placed great importance on the jobs they had, greater than the need to be close to family. This marks a departure from traditional notions of filial piety as practiced in Vietnam where the family generally stayed together in the same household and found work based on their location to stay near the family.

A few interviewees, predominantly male, associated work with some form of freedom or independence in their reasoning why they are able to disconnect with their parents after finding employment in the United States. The following quotes highlight this:

*“Yeah, it's really different. For example, in Vietnam if someone asked if you to do something you just do it. You don't ask why. Here you have freedom. You can ask why you have to do this. So for me it is different.” - Participant #16, Female Informant*

*“[in Vietnamese] It's a bit more distant here in the United States. In Vietnam families are essentially living together in one house. Growing up here though, you have independence and you move out. In Vietnam though, adults take care of kids and then kids grow up and have to take care of adults.” - Participant #8, Male Informant*

Respondents rarely discussed why or how things were easier for them in the United States in terms of family pressures. They described the freedom of making their own decisions as a natural part of US culture that had weaved into their daily lives. They presented the fact that Vietnam was a social space that offered little independence from the demands of parents no matter the age

of the children as one important reason. Another often cited explanation why members of the 1.5 generation and the first generation are less connected was that the United States offered more individual expression, allowing more distancing between the individual and family that was not as possible back in Vietnam. The parent generation has a more traditional mindset that expects the children to listen to them. However, children who adapt to the US ideal of taking care of themselves and making their own personal decisions in the household contribute to this conflicting dynamic between the two generations.

The times that children and work required were common reasons for spending fewer hours on parental relationships for several informants. However, for over half the respondents an alternate reason rose, one involving the maturation of the 1.5 generation.

*“...well it has changed because for me the reason not because of just being in the United States but I've grown up and grown older right, so for that reason it has changed. But in general we are still as close as we were in Vietnam. But I feel like now at this stage, instead of them looking out for me, I need to look out for them. Not just because of us living here, but because of the age.” - Participant #33, Male Informant*

Informants discussed that it was not the experience of cultural differences that affected their relationships with their parents, but rather the actual process of aging and how maturity changed their relationship. These interviewees made an important point that others also made though, in that first generation parents became more dependent on the 1.5 generation for survival. Because members of the 1.5 generation arrived at a fairly young age, learned English, and got a formal university level education, they not only had more potential for success than their parents, but were able to learn and gain an understanding of the US system that many first generation members were not fully able to do. Instead of the eldest member making all the decisions, common in a household that adhered to the cultural value of filial piety, it was this 1.5 generation that suddenly found themselves in a position of power financially and in terms of the family's

business thanks to their knowledge base. Their English-speaking ability and necessary knowledge of handling US affairs not normal to Vietnamese helped change the power structure and the relationship for members of the home.

### ***The Value of Relationships***

*“[in Vietnamese] ...because usually mom and dad in Vietnam live together with us, because of the poverty. Here, however, we can push away.” - Participant #6, Male Informant*

Wealth was another factor that was also brought up during the interviews that influenced and shaped the way the 1.5 and first generation interacted with each other. Continuing with the discussion on maturation and age, informants discussed how wealth had changed not only their family structure, but also their general lives and sense of well-being. Several informants recollected times of extreme poverty as children, and how that made their families closer to one another compared to present circumstances where families are more established and financially secure. With that sense of financial stability established, the willingness of some 1.5 generation members to somewhat isolate themselves from the first generation and distance themselves from filial obligations in favor of more individual attention became more plausible.

In this section I presented the complex nature of the relationship between 1.5 generation and first, showcasing a variety of replies that touch both ends of the spectrum. As I expected, many respondents saw their relationship with the first generation alter in the face of maturing in an American setting which led to new opinions about both their relationship with the first generation and the way they want to live their own lives in relation to the first generation. However, there was another side of the coin that I had not anticipated. Many felt that age and maturation was the factor that changed, rather than the factors related to cultural change, such as

differences related to work. I also found several push-pull factors in play, such as work and wealth, which were driving forces for some informants in their relationship with the first generation. It is apparent that these push-pull factors are tied to the knowledge and experience of American life that these respondents have had form much of basis for the 1.5 generation's relationship with the first generation in the United States. This has caused the 1.5 generation to reconsider the rules that usually dictate the traditional filial relationship in the household and instead rewrite the book in order to both adapt to the US culture and help maintain some semblance of the filial relationship with their first generation parents to provide stability in the home. In the next section I will discuss a situation that demonstrates a typical source of conflict, the relationship between the husband and wife with the mother-in-law. This relation contains many new dynamics that have come into play in the United States, creating new rules in the relationship of not only the mother and daughter-in-law and mother and son, but also between the husband and wife.

### **The Mother-in-law Debate**

My mother is a force of nature. This is not be a cultural aspect traditional to Vietnamese by any means, but a reality of my daily life. To disobey her was not a consideration taken lightly. In that respect, I held sympathy for men involved in the following debate that touched on filiality, individuality, and morality all at once. Incorporating filial piety into the picture where the mothers have many influences on things that go on within the household regardless of the age of the child, one can understand the complexity of the following debate from not just a male perspective, but female as well.

The change from the cultural rules of a society where the eldest members had the

majority of power and authority in a household to a society where the 1.5 generation has more control the family's decisions creates conflicts between the two groups that brings new and unexpected challenges. A question about whether or not husbands should tell their wives to listen to the husband's mother when issues arose became the subject of much heated debate among informants, generating a wide variety of responses that demonstrate some of the influences that living in the United States has had. Most of the female informants interviewed responded negatively, stating that things were different here and that things were talked out, rather than in favor of the elder female.

*“No... [laughs] So if I argue with the mother, the husband tells me to listen to the mother? Uh, NO. [laughs]” - Participant #7, Female Informant*

*“This one, the husband has to listen to his wife first, then listen to mother later. If you go the other way then you are just in trouble! [laughs] This one you have to “fake,” “pretend,” to listen! Because there is no way...” Participant #22, Female Informant*

The females here represent the majority opinion of females interviewed, taking a strong stance on their personal opinions being respected. However, over half of the female respondents acknowledged a period of time where this would have rung true. One participant added to this majority stance, stating that it was not just the husband and wife that had to make adjustments, but also the mother who had to also in fact take action to respect all parties involved and not take a dominant position.

*“....it's not all about my mom or my wife, you want your mom to appreciate your wife and vice versa. You don't want to be in the situations where you have to be the one that... the one that has to hear all those problems. I think it is a three way party, the mom has to know when to step back and not put pressure on the son and the wife has to know when to step back and not put pressure on the husband. I think it's a three way thing, it's necessary to the husband, mom and wife as well. So for me, I will say three or four.” - Participant #27, Female Informant*

Men, on the other hand, responded in a variety of ways. Some agreed that there was some historical significance in this cultural question, and that the answer may still be this in terms of

dealing with first generation immigrants.

*“[in Vietnamese] This one is a headache isn't it? I think... our parents lived in a different time, a different place of course that gives them a different ideology from our generation and yours. The way the parents lived in Vietnam has been far too ingrained in their minds I think. They lived and breathed Vietnam day in and day out for almost the entirety of their lives, there's almost no way they could change their ideas at this point.” Participant #6, male*

*“...I mean usually mother and daughter in law aren't getting along if they are living together for a long time. And to me, just because a mother is disagreeing with a daughter in law doesn't mean the daughter in law is wrong, or she is wrong, it depends. Everything has a reason, everything has to be studied. So, in any argument that happens the two person needs to be treated equally regardless of their role in the family.” - Participant #25, Male*

Men discussed three distinct ways of dealing with this situation. The first suggestion is ask the wives to agree with the mothers and then talk privately about how to handle the situation. The second offers a negotiator to base answers not on age or rank, but on correctness. The third and final method is to simply not be involved in a spout between their mother and wives. The first response was common among older male respondents who believed it to be somewhat futile to argue with a mother or in-law whose ideology was likely not to change. These respondents also believed that this would not be the case for future generations, since the 1.5 and on would be more understanding due to their exposure to American lifestyle and culture. The second and third responses are somewhat characteristically American, employing ideas of egalitarianism over cultural ideas of masculinity and allowing the situation to play out undisturbed by traditional Vietnamese cultural expectations.

Though perhaps a comical topic of discussion on the surface, this debate was one that really encapsulated one of the more dynamic changes that migrating to the United States has had on gender relations. Men showed great variation in their reaction and responses that suggest a deviation from the traditionally male-oriented Vietnamese culture. Women held more feminist

values in regards to this statement, both suggesting the same move from male-oriented culture as the men, but also a push towards more significant inclusion of female authority in the average Vietnamese household in the US.

The politics of how the husband and wife deal with the situation is not an entirely new thing as far as Vietnamese are concerned, but the diversity in answers suggest that US culture has had some influence in the way both men and woman negotiate this situation. There is still much dialogue to be had in how to balance a situation like this between both males and females of the 1.5 generation, but we can see subtle changes occurring among the group.

### **Differences Between East and West**

On a more basic level, another point of debate surrounded children and young adults in the issue of decision-making.

*“[in Vietnamese] ...because... for example there are people who... I saw in Vietnam there are people who stay with their family and are very obedient. It is much more enjoyable to be on your own! People there looked down on you for living out on your own though, society looks down on you. Here it is different. If you live with parents... it isn't fun. We don't have the same... ideas. You don't have to worry about family here, you think about yourself. - Participant #15, Male Informant”*

This is another incident where the power shift has shown great difference in the ideology of the 1.5 generation parents. In reference to the statement suggesting if parents felt children should listen to their elders, most replied that those over 16-18 years of age could at least start making their own decisions and take control of their own well-being, a departure from the norm. I followed this question by asking respondents how they felt family in general was different here and back in Vietnam, according to their memories and personal knowledge. Responses varied greatly, as each individual focused on different traits that they saw were most important to them, but we can see how the past informs their opinions of their parental relationship today.

*“How family different? Of course for the reason I mentioned earlier. Back then we were kids, the parents were the provider. Especially for family back in Vietnam, you come from a strict family where the children had to listen to the parents who had complete authority. Even when I was 19 years old I would never say anything back. My mom would say jump and I would say “how high?” Here though, we had to change the status of life to adapt right? And we all had to work, and we had things to take care of that we didn't use to have in Vietnam. So it's a change in that way. The bond, I would like to say... I'm not saying that it is any less time then it was before, but it definitely is different.” - Participant #33, Male Informant*

Memory was an integral part of how informants looked back to compare Vietnamese and American life. It is important to note that these reflections should not represent what contemporary Vietnamese society is like today, because the majority of these informants arrived during the 80s and 90s, which even in a US context held different values and meanings as far as family went. Respondents often noted that this interpretation of what they feel has changed in moving from Vietnamese to American culture is based off of a memory of what was a different place and time for them in regards to Vietnam. The memories though, regardless of time and space have had a significant influence in shaping the way respondents considered their relationship with the parents, giving them a point to compare-and-contrast with.

## **Discussion**

In this chapter, I showed how respondents took a few strong stances against traditional notions of filial piety in regards to their relationship with the first generation. They see life in the US as entirely contrary from their memory of life in Vietnam as they remember it, where authority and responsibility was weighed differently. The 1.5 generation members are now central figures of the household both financially and in decision-making, and thus have gained a general sense of independence in the household despite having an elder member of the family living in the home with them.

Perhaps the most important comment about the current nature of relationships between 1.5 and first generation relationships are today was made by a respondent who stated that his generation “had to change the status of life to adapt.” This is a key point for many reasons. The 1.5 generation came here at a young age, between the ages of 15 and 20. They were the first generation that had the potential to be visually successful Vietnamese in financial terms as prescribed by US culture through the opportunities they had educationally. With that in mind, it is possible that the turn towards a more US mentality of individuality was not entirely based on a personal decision, but rather a result of need to succeed by their own perceived standards based on their experiences in the US. How they in turn established their relationship with the first generation today can be seen as a by-product of their adaptation to the demands of participating in the US economy. I discussed how the 1.5 generation appeared to be turning down some traditional notions of filial piety. However, if we examine the history of the 1.5 generation, specifically the position they were placed in coming to the US and the decision to adapt to the cultural mentality of the US, I suggest that this move does not push the generation away from traditional notions of filial piety, but rather serves as an alternative mode of filiality, acting as a sacrifice of their previous cultural norms in order to succeed and be in the position they are now as central figures in their household. Instead of fulfilling the parent's specific demands for the well-being of the family in a traditional way comparable to practices in Vietnam, I argue that the 1.5 generation has taken control of the decision-making away from the first generation and assumed authority in the household for the well-being of the family here in the United States. Though the nature of their relationship within the household has changed in terms of power, the 1.5 generation still remains strongly connected to the first generation, however through this unconventional take on filiality where instead of listening to the parents and doing their bidding

to satisfy the family, they do what they themselves see as the best for the family without parental discretion, often now telling the parents what is best rather than the way it used to be with the first generation in control. Their career choices play a large role in this as they have taken more demanding jobs that provide more wealth and reward, but at the expense of both family time and what they want for themselves.

*“We always focus on a career that makes money. Like lawyer or doctor or, if you can speak English. If you can't speak English you go to nail... I think you should pick a career you should have a passion for. I know some Vietnamese here have no choice, you should be a doctor or pharmacist or whatever, but if you don't have passion for it I don't think that is good. I mean, I enjoy my work, but my parents did have some say in it. I like to do hair, but my parents were like “Hair? Come on.” They didn't agree with that. - Participant #16, Female Informant*

This informant discussed how members of her generation had no choice but to go into a vocation such as a physician or pharmacy, likely due to the pressures and expectations of family. This informant also discusses how she would have preferred to be a hair stylist, but instead fell to the pressures of her parents and went into the pharmaceutical field instead. This sacrifice is seen in many of the respondents interviews, some of which discussed hobbies they enjoyed such as construction that could easily be considered vocations for the informants, but are made hobbies instead in favor of high-paying jobs in engineering and medicine. Though important elements of filial piety such as respect may be taken to a lesser extreme for 1.5 generation, there is still a firm commitment that can be seen from the informant's interviews that suggest a strong filial relationship is still maintained between the two generations. We see the basic themes of sacrifice and obedience that still resonates in the actions of the informants in terms of their career choices and, despite shifting opinions on elder caretaking, a consistent trend of parental care in the homes of the 1.5 generation.

In the following chapter, we will turn from the investigation of the relationships between

parents and grandparents within the Vietnamese community, to the study of the relationships between parents and their young children. I will exam the stark contrast between the relationship between 1.5 and first generation and the relationship between 1.5 and second generation, where less conventional concepts of Vietnamese relations come into play.

## **Chapter 4 – Vietnamese, 1.5 and the Future**

I was born in 1987, in Des Moines, Iowa. That is a peculiar time and place to have been born, as a Vietnamese American child of recently arrived refugee parents. Unlike recent members of the second generation of Vietnamese being born in the United States, whose younger parents have had time to acculturate and settle into their American lives, my parents had only just transitioned into a life in the United States; newly arrived refugees to the United States, still getting used to their new environment. For the most part, I grew up in a culturally Vietnamese household, eating traditional meals such as pho for breakfast, learning and speaking Vietnamese at home and English only from books and television, and eventually neighborhood kids. Even though my childhood was accented by many memories of traditional Vietnamese culture, I grew up to be much more like any other typical American child, taking a preference towards American interests and spending more time partaking in daily rituals of Nickelodeon cartoons, R.L Stine books, and immersing myself in 90s American pop culture.

I remember my childhood being more American, and remember feeling more influenced by the culture around me than the culture my parents were emphasizing. However, as I have grown up I have realized that many of the values that my parents instilled in me have become a major part of who I have become. This occurred to me during an interview in Greenville, when an informant suddenly turned the tables and interviewed me. While I certainly believe that the interviews I had conducted up to then had had some influence on my responses, I was surprised by how much more similar I was to the informants I had been interviewing than I imagined I would be. What did this finding mean exactly, as a second generation Vietnamese American? Was I more similar to the 1.5 generation, or was the 1.5 generation more similar to myself?

In this chapter, I will further explore these questions and explain how the 1.5 generation's

relationship to the second generation shows a stark contrast to their relationship with the first generation. I will also show how complex the 1.5 generation identity is, particularly in regards to how they struggle with the challenge of being a transnational immigrant placed with the demand of having to play a major role in the composition of the next generation's identity as Vietnamese Americans.

## **Background**

Common belief would suggest that the second generation of Vietnamese Americans will be a group completely unlike their parent generation, more Americanized and free of obligations related to traditional Vietnamese concepts such as filial piety. However, studies by Peggy Levitt's (2009) and Min Zhou (1999) have suggested that there is more variance among the second generation. Rather than casting a stereotype for the entire generation, Levitt and Zhou maintain that a variety of factors determine the makeup of a typically second generation Vietnamese American. Most children of immigrants ultimately embrace the norms and institutions of the place where they are raised (Levitt 2009:1239). Others, however, do not choose a side in the debate, but rather strike a balance much like we see the 1.5 generation doing between their personal lives and the relationship with the first generation. Rather than being caught between the pressure both to Americanize and to preserve homeland traditions, the children of immigrants create a complex set of practices of their own (Levitt 2009:1239). Much of these complex practices are based on the teachings of their parents, which places more pressure on parenting for the 1.5 generation as they are forced to consider how they want to raise their children in the United States.

## **Method**

In this chapter, I will focus on the survey and interview questions related to the 1.5 and second generation, examining what kind of parenting habits the 1.5 generation has developed for raising their children within US society. For this portion of the study, the majority of the statements from the filial piety scale were used to examine various facets of the 1.5 generation's parenting, including: obedience and respect, expectations, financial concerns and career choices, and love and marriage. Concurrent with the survey statements, I also asked a series of semi-structured interview questions based on these subjects. The questions were asked to help elaborate on the discussion of 1.5 parenting built upon by the survey and looked at their expectations of Vietnamese children in the United States from a variety of angles to help further understand both their perception of Vietnamese here in the United States and explore the values they want to emphasize as parents. Some example of statements asked include “How do you feel Vietnamese children are different here and in Vietnam?” and “How important is learning Vietnamese language and culture going to be for your children? Why or why not?” The data was analyzed for patterns and common themes that demonstrated the informant's opinions on filial piety in the contemporary Vietnamese American household.

### **Quantitative Data**

The quantitative data in the study was used to find out which filial factors informants felt were significant in contemporary Vietnamese American households. This goal was achieved through the use of factor analysis which identified the importance that informants placed on each term. Table 2 shows the results of the filial piety scale factor analysis. Numbers represent the percentage of respondents who found the statement to be true. The items were ranked from most to least significant.

**Table 2. Filial Piety Scale Percent Analysis**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor</b>
Children are expected to take care of their parents when the need arises.	.93
Children are expected to look out for the well-being of their parents.	.90
Children should carry the values passed on to them by their parents.	.90
Children should be eternally grateful and reciprocate love and kindness to their parents no matter what.	.86
Children should not do anything that may cause the parents to worry.	.80
Children should respect the people respected by their parents.	.79
Rearing sons to provide for oneself should no longer be the main reason for having children.	.77
Being respectful to one's parents and failing to care for them is a major offense.	.76
Parents should not interfere with their children's freedom to choose a career.	.75
Disrespect of one's parents is a harsh crime.	.74
Any sacrifice in a child's time is worthwhile for the sake of filial piety.	.74
Children may marry whom they please without their parent's approval.	.73
Children should think more about the needs of the family than their own.	.72
It is okay for children to protest when parents scold them without reason.	.69
Continuing the family line is not the purpose of marriage.	.65
Children should do what is expected of their parents.	.63
Children should aim for great financial success in regards to their choices career-wise.	.59
If a man's wife and mother argue, the man should tell his wife to listen to his mother.	.52
No matter what, children should obey their parents.	.50
Children should not live in faraway places from their family.	.48
Children do not have to seek parental advice when there is a problem. They may make their own decisions.	.47
Children may spend money more liberally rather than save for the future.	.40

Table 2 revealed that parents placed importance on subjects related to parental expectations on the parent-child relationship. In regards to opinions outside of that relationship, however, informants revealed fewer expectations on the individual choices that children may make.

**Table 3. Filial Piety Scale Percent Analysis, by Gender**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
--------------	-------------	---------------

Children are expected to take care of their parents when the need arises.	.96	.90
Children are expected to look out for the well-being of their parents.	.85	.95
Children should carry the values passed on to them by their parents.	.89	.91
Children should be eternally grateful and reciprocate love and kindness to their parents no matter what.	.80	.91
Children should not do anything that may cause the parents to worry.	.86	.75
Children should respect the people respected by their parents.	.78	.80
Rearing sons to provide for oneself should no longer be the main reason for having children.	.77	.77
Being respectful to one's parents and failing to care for them is a major offense.	.71	.82
Parents should not interfere with their children's freedom to choose a career.	.73	.77
Disrespect of one's parents is a harsh crime.	.71	.77
Any sacrifice in a child's time is worthwhile for the sake of filial piety.	.74	.74
Children may marry whom they please without their parent's approval.	.71	.75
Children should think more about the needs of the family than their own.	.73	.70
It is okay for children to protest when parents scold them without reason.	.68	.72
Continuing the family line is not the purpose of marriage.	.65	.68
Children should do what is expected of their parents.	.66	.60
Children should aim for great financial success in regards to their choices career-wise.	.64	.54
If a man's wife and mother argue, the man should tell his wife to listen to his mother.	.54	.50
Any sacrifice in a child's time is worthwhile for the sake of filial piety.	.77	.72
No matter what, children should obey their parents.	.49	.52
Children should not live in faraway places from their family.	.64	.32
Children do not have to seek parental advice when there is a problem. They may make their own decisions.	.43	.55
Children may spend money more liberally rather than save for the future.	.42	.38

Table 3 examines the differences in responses by gender. The majority of the data reflected similar responses from male and female respondents. However, the statement regarding whether children should or should not live in faraway places from their family shows a departure between male and females in the study, with double the percentage of females agreeing with the statement.

**Table 4. Filial Piety Scale Percent Analysis, by City**

Items	Greenville (n=16)	Raleigh (n=18)
Children are expected to take care of their parents when the need arises.	.96	.90
Children are expected to look out for the well-being of their parents.	.93	.88
Children should carry the values passed on to them by their parents.	.86	.93
Children should be eternally grateful and reciprocate love and kindness to their parents no matter what.	.84	.87
Children should not do anything that may cause the parents to worry.	.88	.74
Children should respect the people respected by their parents.	.83	.75
Rearing sons to provide for oneself should no longer be the main reason for having children.	.75	.80
Being respectful to one's parents and failing to care for them is a major offense.	.68	.83
Parents should not interfere with their children's freedom to choose a career.	.82	.68
Disrespect of one's parents is a harsh crime.	.68	.78
Any sacrifice in a child's time is worthwhile for the sake of filial piety.	.77	.72
Children may marry whom they please without their parent's approval.	.83	.64
Children should think more about the needs of the family than their own.	.73	.70
It is okay for children to protest when parents scold them without reason.	.63	.74
Continuing the family line is not the purpose of marriage.	.60	.69
Children should do what is expected of their parents.	.68	.59
Children should aim for great financial success in regards to their choices career-wise.	.49	.68
If a man's wife and mother argue, the man should tell his wife to listen to his mother.	.54	.50
Any sacrifice in a child's time is worthwhile for the sake of filial piety.	.77	.72
No matter what, children should obey their parents.	.65	.38
Children should not live in faraway places from their family.	.46	.50
Children do not have to seek parental advice when there is a problem. They may make their own decisions.	.66	.38
Children may spend money more liberally rather than save for the future.	.50	.31

Table 4 breaks down the data from Table 2 further by dividing the responses by city.

Overall, Greenville and Raleigh showed similar results in the data, with only a few major exceptions. Informants in the cities showed the most division on the statements regarding obedience and career choices. Greenville showed more of a filial presence in terms of obedience

in their responses to the first two survey statements, but displayed more independence in terms of career choices and personal financial decision-making compared to Raleigh.

**Table 5. Filial Piety Scale, Factor Analysis by City**

	Total	Greenville, SC (16)	Raleigh, NC (18)
Filial Scale Average	4.18	4.31	4.08

According to Table 5, both cities averaged a relatively equal response to the survey statements, responding that they slightly agreed with the majority of the scale. The results suggest that filial piety is somewhat significant to respondents in general.

## **Analysis**

### **Youth in Revolt: Obedience and Respect among Second Generation**

I was not born in Vietnam. My parents were first generation, but I grew up in an American context that is completely unlike any of the 1.5 generations. Though the relationship I have had with my first generation parents helps me identify and understand some of the internal challenges that the 1.5 generation have, I realize that I do not fully have the same perspective that 1.5 generation have the relationship because of my lack of any time spent in Vietnam. What influences does growing up in Vietnam have on the members of the 1.5 generation? What components still register significance for them? Curious about what the 1.5 generation specifically felt about the subject, I asked informants a series of statements concerning obedience and respect in regards to the second generation towards the 1.5 generation parents.

### *Decision-Making Among the Second Generation*

*“It depends on the problem right? If the problem is very detrimental, they should make their own decision. If the problem involves... is not very big, then they need to see. Like a problem could be a friend. Or they felt sad or depressed, then they need to get their parents advice. But if it is their friend, they need to find a way to take care of their problem.” - Participant #25, Male Informant*

Of the survey statements I discussed with informants, one that stood out asked whether or not they felt that children had to seek advice from their parents when there is a problem. This statement was one of the few in the survey that had an almost equally divided response the informants. No particular reasoning could be identified for the division. Informants who said that children could make their own decisions wanted them to develop their own ideas and learn from their mistakes. These respondents talked about building the children's decision-making abilities so they would be able to make their own judgments going into adulthood instead of depending on the parent.

*“...I would try to have my children make a decision themselves, otherwise when they are 18 they'll be “I don't know what should I do mom and dad?” - Participant #9, Male Informant*

Informants also acknowledged that their children were growing up in an environment different from their own childhood. They assume that their children will have to make some decisions that the parents cannot help them with, since they did not have the same issues growing up. Respondents who suggest this felt more in the middle, discussing more of an equilibrium between the extremes. They see the benefits of having children hear their opinions from the experiences they have had in the United States, but also know that the children may have their own perspectives that the 1.5 generation may be unaware of because they actually grew up entirely stateside. Despite the knowledge base that the informants have from spending the latter half of their lives in the US, this group of informants believed that striking a balance was necessary for the progression of their children.

### *Obedience Here and There*

*“Because I grew up in Vietnam, I think parents are important to give us input. Sometimes they give us input but you don't have to do what they say. The culture is very different in Vietnam, but I think we should still listen to our parents. We don't have to listen, but we should get their opinion. They may be wrong because they grew up in a different culture, so it may not be appropriate here, but it doesn't hurt to listen to their parents.” - Participant #22, Female Informant*

Fifty-nine percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that children should always listen to their elders, but also noted this reoccurring theme that the opinions of the children should be respected due to the culture they are now in. Again, the subject of the parent's understanding of United States culture compared to their children came into fruition as respondents discussed that there were things about life here in the United States that they may not understand compared to their child, and that they had to give children more leeway to help cope with those cultural differences they may be unaware of. Even those who agreed with the statement showed hesitation. Though they believe that it is important to maintain several values that they grew up with in Vietnam and from their first generation parents, they also recognize and acknowledge the cultural differences that are in play just as well as the others and discuss finding a common ground when possible.

Respondents were also asked to reveal their opinions about whether it was okay for children to protest when parents scolded children without reason. More than half of respondents agreed with the statement, saying that it was okay for children could argue with parental decisions if they see it fit to do so.

*“[in Vietnamese] Things have to happen for a reason, they can't argue for nothing. In Vietnam, parents often order children even though they are not right. I don't believe that is not correct either.” - Participant #6, Male Informant*

Informants noted that back in Vietnam, parents often ordered children to do tasks that might not

have been well-reasoned, and expected children to do them without question. Informants did not want the same for their children, allowing them to rebuttal in the face of demand that they feel is unreasonable, thus building their own autonomy, again building towards this theme of preparing for adulthood that was seen in the discussion on decision-making. This stands as one of the essential items of discussion for the 1.5 generation in regards to parenting, showcasing an ease in restrictions and the willingness to allow children to not only make more of their own decisions rather than having to constantly meet the expectations of the 1.5 generation parents.

Overall I found a great variety of responses concerning obedience and respect from the parents, all of which highlight the challenges and indecisiveness that the 1.5 generation has about raising their children. Many may have agreed with certain statements such as the majority who agreed according to the survey data that children should respect those respected by their parents, but the ambivalence displayed in their interview responses show a different story, one where a variety of factors not normal to Vietnamese family structure has caused hesitancy in how they consider obedience and respect with their own children. The fact that parents are taking the time to consider various characteristics such as age, culture, and more spotlights the potential differences between themselves and the first generation.

### **All For One and One for All: Career Choices for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Child**

Most second generation children today are of the 1.5 generation, a group of individuals who have felt the same parental pressures that I have from the first generation, but are of an entirely different place and time financially and culturally here in the United States. The majority of the 1.5 generation members interviewed in this study were much more financial stable than their parents, who arrived to the United States and mostly fell into low income blue collar jobs

like my parents. With their fiscal futures relatively stable, I wanted to find out whether their stability impacted how informants felt about their children's decisions regarding career choices.

I provided informants with a series of statements to see if future careers were essential issues for the 1.5 generation from a parental perspective, a subject that was important to their first generation parents. Unlike myself, the 1.5 generation was born in Vietnam and have a strong mental comparison between the poverty they endured in Vietnam and the struggles and successes they have here. How this information plays into their ideology in regards to career and financial decisions for their children are key elements considered in this series of statements.

### *Career Choices*

*“You should make that [survey scale maximum] a ten, because I see a lot of story, which is good, nice story, but from look another angle it's a bad one. Parents push kids to be a doctor or lawyer, and they never ask what you want to be. And they grown up knowing oh I have to be a doctor, I have to know piano. I strongly disagree about that.” - Participant #9, Male Informant*

Many informants recounted stories from their own pasts, detailing how they or others they knew were pressured into various jobs such as nursing or pharmacy. This participant discusses how he has seen parents push children into positions they do not desire, such as doctor and lawyer, pinning children and subjugating them to that message into adulthood where they were embedded with the need to be in those professions. For that reason, the majority of respondents preferred to not interfere in children's decision when it came to careers, stating that they placed more significance in happiness rather than in ensuring one's finances. However, many respondents still wished their children would come to them for advice regarding careers, expressing that children did not have to adhere to their opinions, but wanted their children to hear about their experiences and at least consider their input.

Financial success was another important factor for respondents regarding careers. Those who found this subject significant related it to their own life experiences, particularly when considering life after marriage and the introduction of children into their lives.

*“It's become more important, especially once I became married, because I want... it's funny. You commit yourself to a person, and you start... it's almost like you want to always impress them, but it's more like... you want to provide them with everything they want, and then these guys come along, and you want to give them everything they want.”*  
- Participant #14, Male Informant

This respondent discusses how marriage and having children suddenly made finances become a greater significance in their everyday lives, because those additions to his life made him want to be able to provide everything his family needed. This opinion revolving around financial success for the family was a sentiment shared by many of those who saw financial success as an important factor in their children's lives. Most parents placed a strong emphasis on the long term in their responses to questions concerning finance and careers, even those who had differing opinions on the subject.

### ***Filial Considerations: Long Term Happiness vs. Success***

*“I think that is part of the reason, but that shouldn't be all, because you should enjoy what you are doing because you'll be doing it for a long time.”* - Participant #32, Male Informant

Those who disagreed with the statement concerning whether or not children should aim for financial success often brought up the subject of one's happiness, stating that here in America most jobs provided enough financial security and that it did not matter what the children went into as long as they felt they could enjoy the careers they were going into long term. Many informants in the study felt that the children had the freedom to choose their careers because it was something that they would be involved in for a long period of time, possibly their entire

lives even. For that reason, respondents believed that children should aim for a career they can enjoy long term, rather than something that was financially sound, but unbearable as a job choice in the long run. Others talked about experiences they had, or friends they knew who were urged and eventually dealt into professions their family members voiced, many of whom became fixed in careers they did not enjoy, but devoted so much time into educationally that they could- not leave.

Overall, I found informants in general to be very flexible about their children's career choices. They expressed a desire to let their children pursue the academic choices they desire, placing an emphasis not on financial necessity and high-value jobs like they believe their first generation did, but rather on the long term investment of their children's decisions. While financial stability was still an important factor to them in many ways, the informants showed a willingness to let their children decide on a career path that was stable and something the child wanted to do, not just for financial reasons, but for the sake of their health and happiness. This is different from first generation in that it also shows that the 1.5 generation is not looking at children with a focus on family like the first generation, but rather on a more individual focus with the emphasis on personal felicity, a change from filial norms.

### **Caretaking vs. Individualism: Parental Concerns or Lack Thereof Regarding Filial Piety**

One of the biggest concerns for not only myself, but those of the 1.5 generation and beyond is the question of caretaking. Traditionally, elders were treated with the utmost respect in Vietnam. Children there were expected to completely take care of their parents and provide for them in any way possible. Here, however, that ideology has become a topic of debate among not only Vietnamese, but Asian Americans in general who generally share this same tradition of care.

Questions concerning individuality vs. group come into play again, as I attempt to find out whether parents maintained any traditional notions of elder hierarchy and the placement of importance in it with their children.

To answer this question, I discussed with respondents a series of survey statements directly regarding children and their filial responses to the parent. These questions concerned a variety of dimensions related to the expectations of the 1.5 generation for their children responsibility-wise.

### ***Concerns on Caretaking***

*“[in Vietnamese] The younger Vietnamese in the US is hard to judge, because I don't have a great understanding of younger Americans here in the United States, but I feel for the older generation here. They take great care of the kids growing up, but the kids don't reciprocate that. Some of the older generation then have to go to retirement homes, which most of them do not want at all. Not 100% hate it, but the majority don't want to go to a retirement home I'm sure. They don't have anyone to take care of them though, which I feel bad for.” - Participant #3, Male Informant*

This informant looked at the statement simultaneously from a first and 1.5 generation standpoint, suggesting a lack of care from the younger generations and sympathy towards those having to go to retirement homes as a result of the deficiency of caretaking in this younger group. The informant also makes a remark about his age and understanding, noting that he was uncertain about how future generations would handle the same situations that he and his peers are currently going through. This was a concern shared by many of the respondents in regards to whether they felt children should think of the needs of the family more than their own. Perhaps the most filial aspect that respondents felt in the discussion about second generation, though they expressed the desire for their children to be more individualistic about certain things such as love and careers, family was one aspect that they all felt was an important aspect to keep on emphasizing as

parents.

Not all informants felt the same way though, incorporating a variety of individual and collective family dynamics to consider. These respondents reasoned the statement from a variety of situations related to life in America, considering scenarios where a filial perspective would be more harmful than helpful.

*“[in Vietnamese] If we're talking about family then yes, but if they are single then no I think it is good to think about their own independence. If you are married, there are things you want, but you have to always consider the spouse.” - Participant #7, Female Informant*

This informant provided three commonly discussed places in life where this statement was and was not applicable. The first was with those living with family, where she believed that it was important because the child coexisted with relatives in the household and should do their part. The second was for anyone living a single life apart from the family, where she felt the individual should have some responsibility in the family, but still place importance on their individual life. This was an important consideration for many respondents in regards to this question, as many briefly discussed how it was important that children take the time to consider their own futures, particularly around college time when they are focusing on an education. Finally the respondent considered marriage, where there is the possibility of times when individuals may want to think about themselves on occasion. Career decisions, for example, should be in close consultation with the spouse, representing more emphasis on the needs of the family. The fact that multiple considerations on the subject of caretaking itself are now in play for respondents shows a significant change in traditional filial norms. Informants have started to incorporate very American aspects of life into the discussion, causing more hesitation on a subject that would not normally be discussed in a normal filial household. We see respondents talk more about independence in the discussion of family, where informants start using terms as

“priorities” and begin placing an emphasis on decision-making that is unlike traditional Vietnamese values.

### ***Family vs. the Individual***

*“ . . . you don't prevent yourself from doing anything that you think is right because of that. But you still do what you want to do, and not make them worry. There are ways around that. Not to say that there are certain good things they expect you to do. And you should do it! But you don't, lose everything you do because of a certain expectation.” - Participant #32, Male Informant*

Several questions were asked about children's filiality towards parents; more specifically, how devoted the informants felt their children should be in the United States. Seventy-four percent of respondents considered filiality to be an important aspect among children. However, while there was agreement over this statement, many respondents expressed their doubts regarding their responses. A popular sentiment regarding necessity came about as a more reasonable approach towards the subject.

*“To me I think it depends. If it is health issues, I think you have to rank the priorities. Yeah makes sense, but if it is something... if you have a commitment or priorities, you have to rank your list.” - Participant #27, Female Informant*

This informant discussed how this was a question of priorities. If health issues or pressing matters arose, then she believed it was the place of the child to take authority of the situation if beneficial. If one's priorities, such as class work or work in general, were more essential at the time though, the respondent believed that the person should take handle those affairs first as long as nothing pressing was at risk with the family. Respondents offered similar responses, providing examples as going to parties, groceries, and other requests parents may make that was less essential to things that may be going on in a child's life and when the child should concentrate on their affairs rather than those of their parents. This discussion continues to exemplify the 1.5

generation's changing perceptions of filial norms on a critical aspect of filial piety. The emphasis on the individual is more articulate here, as parents put more of the child's needs at the forefront of what they felt should be considered. In the discussion of whether informants felt children should not do anything to cause parents worry for example, respondents reflected on things they had done that were against their parents' wishes, things that they felt was for the betterment of not the family's life, but in fact their own.

*“They do need to learn their own way, they can't always listen to their parents or else they'll never learn. They do need to take in what their parents teach though and think safe when they take actions. So for me when I talk to my children, I'll let them do things as long as they understand the measures need to safely do things.” - Participant #22, Female Informant*

The importance on individual decision-making was a theme that slowly became apparent that it was common among the participants, even those who may have disagreed with the survey statement itself. Family was still an important part of all the informant's perception of what was essential to pass on to children, but there was also this subtle message that parents also wanted children to learn how to prioritize importance, balancing their own needs with those of the family when necessary, something that can be seen as a reflection of the current state of the 1.5 generation in general when considering their comments and relationship to both the first and generation.

As a whole, informants were very supportive of the idea to push more independence on the child and less on filial roles. Perhaps most surprising was informant's willingness to allow children to take risks on their own, something that parents felt children could benefit from. Cultural considerations were again at play, as parents continued to enforce the fact that there were experiences that they did not go through as young adults due to their immigrant history, and that they would have to allow children to embark on alone. The 1.5 generation parents wish to

continue playing as much of a part in their children's lives as they can, but also express a desire to also let the children do what they feel is necessary when applicable as well if it means the betterment of their children's livelihood.

## **Marital Affairs**

I asked informants about their opinions on relationships and marriage here in the United States to get a sense of how their opinions on the subject may or may not have changed. This is a subject where it was blatant that there were many American-related influences that came into play and had made a significant impression on the 1.5 generation due to the difficulties in translating Vietnamese cultural norms into the United States, particularly in regards to marriage traditions. In many ways, this may have been the subject that was most progressively American when it came to the informants in the study as they reflected on their own past experiences.

### *Love and Marriage*

On the subject of marriage, the majority of respondents felt that love was the essential factor of a relationship for their children here in the United States and that parents had no place in their children's choice of spouse. Respondents would mention that they may provide advice to their children about who to date or at least voice their opinions, but the actual decision of who their child wants to marry is in the hands of the individual. In contrast, though the minority took an opposing view, their ideology concerning marriage shared similarities with the majority who agreed with the statement that children could marry whom they pleased without approval. The following is an example showing the similarities and contradictions that can be seen throughout all the interviews:

*“...the way you raise your children has a lot to do with the way they approach you for advice. So it comes down to however you raise them. If you don't care about them at all when they were kids and let them do whatever they want and pay little attention to them and let them make their own decision... if you raise them and teach them respect, teach them values and how the parents are to them and things like that. This is the biggest decision in their lives and who else better to go for advice than their parents right?” - Participant #33, Male Informant*

*“Yeah... well he speak from the point of view of the father. So this is the mother talking. So, I will say yeah of course I would really, I mean, that's not really you know, unacceptable. But if it comes down to their decision, and he or she thinks that is the true happiness in their life and everything, I'll honor their decision. But I'll lose her if I don't accept the fact! I mean, just take it! I mean, okay for me as a mother, of course I'll give them advice and give them some insight, but if they come down to their decision, this is it okay, I'll just honor their decision. If it's not working out, okay, and then they have a place to come back. To their mom. To their parents. If you just shove them out, you'll never have a chance to see them again.” - Participant #34, Female Informant*

These two informants represent common discussions on the subject of marriage and parent involvement. Both informant's shared similarities in that they felt guidance, attention, and values were important factors that related to the parents and child in terms of choosing a spouse. The difference was that the first informant felt that having the approval of the parent made sense when it came to making such a critical decision that would affect their lives. This perspective emphasizes the importance of the relationship between parent and child as a whole here, suggesting that good parents would have close enough relationships with their child to the point where the child would be willing to come ask for approval out of respect and love of the parents due to the closeness of their relationship. However, the second informant was more hesitant, fearing that the children would backlash and disappear if the parents disagreed with the children's choices in regards to love and marriage. This informant's concern speak to a larger issue related to the prospective independence that the 1.5 members expect the second generation to have. Independence for once is a major concern here from the parent perspective, as several informants began to highlight the fear that children's freedoms here in the US could potentially push

themselves away from one another, something that the 1.5 generation very much does not want.

Others who were concerned about children not asking for approval considered things approached the statement from a more traditional standpoint, raising concerns about the happiness of the family in general as a result of the sudden inclusion of a new member.

*“What if people tell you, your children don't listen to you do you like that? If they say, oh your child asked you and everyone was in agreeable would be better? I don't want my child to bring someone home I don't like. Wouldn't it better if they brought someone who was good for them and the whole family for everyone's happiness.” - Participant #23, Female Informant*

This informant expressed her concern about the opinions of others, fearing what the community would think of her parenting if her child had gone against her wishes. There were also those who voiced a concern about language considerations, whether or not the spouse was or was not able to communicate with the rest of the family. Though this concern reflects a minority opinion, since most respondents agreed that freedom of choice was something that their children should have here in the United States in regards to marriage, it does show one the complicated questions and discussions that they have as parents adapting to the more individualistic culture in the United States.

### ***Race Relations***

I asked informants whether or not they felt race to be an issue in terms of marriage for second generation Vietnamese Americans. The majority of respondents stated that race was not a concern here in the United States. Though many informants expressed a preference for their children to find Vietnamese spouses, most recognized that children were growing up in environments completely unlike their childhood in Vietnam. They showed an understanding that things were different here. What that difference is was not well-defined by the informants, but

the overall message was that as long as the couple had good chemistry, race was not an issue.

However, for those that had concerns regarding mixed race relationships, a variety of answers arose to why such a fear was voiced. One of the main concerns was familial compatibility. Several informants suggested that there would be difficulties in making the relationship work between the non-Vietnamese spouse and family because of the communication barrier. There was also the cultural divisions to be considered, as this informant suggests:

*“The food for one thing, the things (pause) yeah you can marry an American who would love to go back to Vietnam and things like that, but when you talk about a certain fruit, a certain dish, a certain culture thing, you don't have that. You have the American version of it, that you can easily relate to, but you don't have the Vietnamese portion to it.” - Participant #14, Male Informant*

This informant was curious about how the relationship between a mixed ethnicity couple would be able to coexist in regards to discussing and sharing past experiences along with finding a middle ground in regards to everyday life for the couple culturally speaking, whether it was food, religion, or other facets of daily life. Though concerned, many informants noted that despite the fact that the 1.5 generation shared more in common with their second generation children than the first generation, they did not grow up in the United States and do not quite comprehend how the children perceive race as an issue in regards to love and marriage. For that reason, most informants were open with allowing the children to dictate their own love life.

Respondents show much cultural adaptation in their responses on marriage, discussing both the challenges that once made up their pasts and the changes they would be open to seeing as far weddings were concerned. Informants felt that children here deserved all the freedom they desired to choose a spouse and be in control of their own love life. While there were certain questions and concerns about certain issues such as interracial relationships, overall respondent's sentiments were more pronounced here in their willingness to let their children have the freedom

to take hold of their own personal decisions in regards to love and marriage.

### **Here and There: Opinions of Youth**

If there was a subject I had the most concern about going into this study, it was the informants opinions of young Vietnamese American adults. It is a difficult question to begin with, asking what informants thought about Vietnamese youth because in many ways they are removed from the younger generation, and their children are also mostly between the ages of two-to-seven. I was also unsure of how respondents would answer the question coming from myself, who was in the age range of the group in question. A concern that informants would not be able to provide a sufficient response along with the hesitancy of discussing with myself their honest opinions made these questions more difficult to frame. Though a challenging discussion for the participants, these questions were important in developing the understanding of why informants chose the way they raise and parent the second generation. Treading carefully, I asked participants to give their formal opinions on second generation Vietnamese Americans, particularly those in their teen and early adult years, inquiring about their general impressions of Vietnamese youth.

#### ***Impressions of Youth***

*“[in Vietnamese] Yeah, a little bit different. Here you [second generation] all are stronger, everything you do, think, is with more conviction. In Vietnam, at your age you have to listen to your parents and whatever they say you got to do it. Here, you don't face that, you do whatever you want and aren't as concerned about it.” - Participant #10, Male Informant*

Most informants have great respect and admiration for the second generation. Participants were impressed by the capabilities of the generation, and also their stubbornness, which was both a

strength and weakness for some. This respondent suggests stubbornness to be a strength for children. Their ability to resist pressures and expectations of parents and do what they consider to be best was what this informant and others found to be admirable. Many informants also admired the technological and studious abilities that many young Vietnamese had due to being born here in the United States, something that the majority of respondents had to struggle with because of the time period they grew up in and their age in general coming to the United States. The ease of independence here was another positive feature that respondents saw and in some cases were envious of. Respondents suggested that children here in the US have “more independence... which allows a lot more opportunity”(Participant #7, Female Informant) because they come out of school and work to make their own money, unlike in Vietnam where kids base their lives on their families and are more dependent. Many informants suggested this independence to be a strength, allowing children more freedom of expression and room for opportunities like this informant thought.

Respondents also discussed their own experience of second generation members. Several informants found the stubbornness and independent nature of the second generation to be disrespectful and concerning as a whole. All of whom felt this way compared their own upbringing, suggesting the reason they felt there was such a dramatic difference between themselves and the second generation in terms of respect and values.

*“For me, I think, sometimes I'm lucky to be the 1.5 Vietnamese generation. I got to grow up part of my life in Vietnam, see the hard life and see other things that now I'm in the US have all the opportunity and look back and appreciate things. I take advantage of what I have. For kids born here, they don't go through the hard life we've been through, so they do not appreciate hard things enough. What happens they learn hard lessons from hanging out with bad friends, do drugs, whatever it is or go to jail and learn their lessons that way. It's tough, and sometimes I feel sorry for them. Even if you explain it to them, they don't see it, don't experience it, don't feel it, so they have to learn some hard lessons to feel it. So that's the disadvantage for them.” - Participant #27, Female Informant*

This informant recounted the difficulties that she and her parents had to endure in Vietnam and cited it as the biggest difference between second generation and her. She suggests that the lack of the powerful experiences that the 1.5 generation had as children was what decidedly made an impact on how they now act in comparison to the informants and members of the 1.5 generation. Others also cited other concerns related to second generation members, language and laziness being two larger concerns. With the greater emphasis on English in their daily lives, respondents showed concern that their native language may not exist in the near future because of both the deficiency of Vietnamese speaking skills among Vietnamese youth and the lack of willingness that many children have to learn it.

A significant number of responses, while attacking the negative aspects of children here made a key note that much of who children became here in the United States had much to do with the parents and the decisions they make in raising their children. Informants discussed both the failures of parents and negotiated what they felt needed to be done to change the current perception of Vietnamese children as they know it.

*“I see a lot of younger Vietnamese, either they grow up here or born here, they are very, very Americanized. There is no difference between them and American. A lot of them, are very ideology, that's good they are independent, but sometimes I feel like they don't have enough real life experience to make the right choice. So, that is one of my goal to talk to them while they are young kids. Honestly with young kids, especially if they grow up in a family that is halfway decent, they don't know what work is. They don't work. They just play sport or play game all day. They don't know how to earn money or how to spend money. Also when they make decision, they make it on what they want, not, if there is a line to reality. Mainly I blame the parents. There is a big responsibility when you have children, you can't have children and not get involved with them.” - Participant #25, Male Informant*

Many informants expressed their concern over the lack of a work ethic among younger kids here, and critique the decision-making skills of the second generation. However, unlike others informants, this respondent emphasized that the blame was not to be put on the children, but

rather the parents. The involvement of the parents was for several respondents essential in how Vietnamese Americans were to development here in the United States, and also the reason why they felt there was such a large divide among Vietnamese American youth, with one spectrum being highly educated and respectful and the other end a group becoming rebellious and indolent, placing more emphasis on their personal desires rather than needs. Parents in the study felt they had to take on more responsibility and help guide the generation towards a more successful future, becoming more hands on. There was clearly indecisiveness on how to do so though, as parents noted the differences that their childhood and those of their children and that it was an issue that clearly played into the challenges they have of raising their child in the US.

Overall, the responses to the differences between youth in Vietnam and here are highlighted by the more individualistic nature of being in the United States, and the opportunities that second generation have by simply being here rather than in Vietnam where those opportunities do not exist so readily. The ease of life here in the United States though, has led much of the 1.5 generation to believe that it has also supported the second generation's ability to be less active and eager to push themselves as the 1.5 generation due to their more challenged history. Though the 1.5 generation wants to provide this quality of life for the second generation, they also want to find ways to motivate them, which in turn has led to much of the parenting challenges that exists for the group.

## **Discussion**

Looking over the responses to the questions regarding parenting the second generation from the informant's perspectives, we can see that while they agree on many of the issues presented in the chapter, as a group there is still much indecisiveness about how they as a whole feel about parenting and in general about Vietnamese American youth. They agreed on the basic

principles of what is expected from the parent and the child, particularly on topics relating to career and success, but how they reasoned the issues varied to a large extent, revealing a level of insecurity among the informants about how they approach certain issues that are on the horizon for themselves are parents.

Revisiting informant's opinions on expectations, I find that they all shared a common opinion that children should consider the needs of the family, but not necessarily in the traditional Vietnamese sense where family was always at the forefront. Instead, respondents suggested that children should meet the needs of the family in a much more American sense, when the need arose, medical or in some financially unstable situation being two high priority examples. This was most apparent when discussing the statement about whether informants felt children should not do anything that may cause the parent to worry. Their openness about past experiences where they had to take their own gambles growing up in the United States without consent from their own parents revealed a significant departure on their own right in relation to their parents, and suggests a greater willingness to let their children be more independent than were themselves growing up. This is a good example of how personal experiences have really affected how the 1.5 generation's parenting decisions. The whole discussion on parenting in general from their perspective is constantly punctuated by their own past events, which have been surprisingly universal among the group. Memories of how their parents urged a certain profession or personal life choice against their own volition served as principle reasons why, in regards to parenting, they felt the need to be less strict about the actions of children. As a result, there seems to be less emphasis on parental power and more of a focus on building closer relationships emotionally with the child. Even those who, according to the survey responses, aligned with Confucian thinking, there was a sense that it was not about the parent being correct

or the one in charge as filial thinking would suggest, but rather more importance placed on being more attentive with the children and developing a relationship based on conversation and close relations.

Overall, informants, much like their label of 1.5 generation, find themselves in a transitory position in terms of developing appropriate parenting responses for children growing up in a predominantly US context daily. They have many developed ideas that show direction of where they would like both parents and children to be in the future, but are currently still strategizing ways of making their ideas a reality, particularly in regards to finding a way to maintain some semblance of Vietnamese culture among upcoming generations of Vietnamese Americans.

## Chapter 5 – Discussion

It was late in the evening on a Sunday night when I sat down for my last interview. After some complications, I had finally been able to schedule some time with a couple of respondents who I had been trying to get in touch with for a couple of weeks. However, I arrived at their home early as the family was washing up from dinner, and casually started to unpack my interview tools for the talk while waiting. Unlike other interviews I had had before, I found a free moment to look at my surroundings and get a sense of the family before talking. I quickly met their two children, both girls, under the age of four, who were both eager to play a few games that I enjoyed doing with my own nieces and nephews. In the back I could see the husband and wife working on some dishes, and much like every other family, one of their parents, also helping with the evening's chores. I had considered this briefly from home to home up to this final interview, but that moment made me realize how common it had become to see this scene of all three generations coexisting within the same household. Most informants responded that they would not mind seeing children move on and become unattached from the parents, and spoke of the merits of doing such a thing. Most also even talked about how they had distanced themselves from their parents and would have preferred more time for themselves and their own children. Yet the majority of those interviewed had a parent living with them, sometimes in different capacities such as a parent that lived only temporarily and moved from child to child, the majority having at least a parent living in their homes daily.

What does having three generations, including themselves, in their own home mean exactly? What kind of challenges does having these three particular generations present that is nontraditional to the average American family? I showed that the 1.5 generation is very much a transitory group that has the burden of passing on values and traditions from their own

upbringing along with the lessons they have learned since being in the United States. They face difficulties of having to choose between the lessons they have learned from their parents in Vietnam and those of their own since maturing as adults in the United States. While informants were already challenged in the parenting realm, I argue the 1.5 generation have the added pressure of their parents behind them, forcing them to often make decisions that have to satisfy not just their own ambitions, but those of their parents. This is a pattern that might see dramatic change as the second generation grows up and nurtures the third generation. According to their specific survey responses, 1.5 generation parents already have many different expectations from traditional filial belief in regards to parenting and freedom of expression. It is likely that future generations will follow the direction drawn by the 1.5 generation and continue towards an increasingly more US mentality on life and family.

### **Filial Piety in Contemporary Urban Society**

It is apparent from the data that the 1.5 generation continues to place some significance in filial piety. Though there are elements of filial piety that they do not place as great of a significance in today, parents still placed a great importance in the principle relationship between parent-child. This is most highlighted in the quantitative data where respondents revealed that they felt most strongly supportive of the filial statements regarding respect and obedience of children to parents. In regards to individual choices such as career and love, however, there appeared to be more willingness for the 1.5 generation in this study to let their children make more personal decisions. This is contradicted by their own memories of the same choices they made, particularly on the subject of careers. According to the 1.5 generation's reflections on their relationship with the first generation, financial and career success appeared to be the most

important aspect of their daily lives, trumping elder authority and the guidelines of filial piety. Though not filial in the classic Confucian sense, this group instead finds that being filial here in the United States means stability in the household. Becoming the central financial figure and authority in the household through their experience and education here in the United States allows the 1.5 generation to create this stability and be most supportive of the family unit, at the expense of taking away the elder authority in the home. I described this concept earlier as the alternative mode of filial piety, signifying that the 1.5 generation still see themselves as being filial, but in a nontraditional sense where they do what is best for the family by their own instincts, and not by what the eldest believes.

Recent studies have begun to show this change in thinking regarding filial piety. Kyu-taik Sung (1998) began to see these findings among urban Koreans in the late 90s, finding that children were already then moving out of the homes to seek better job employment in distant places. Sung suggests "...the relationship between parents and adult children in Korea is transforming into a new type in which mutual respect and reciprocal care and support are considered more important than submission to the authority of the elderly" (88). Chen et. Al (2007) and Lieber et al. (2004) reach similar conclusions on the subject with Chinese communities. As a whole, it appears that urbanization has had a significant impact on the perception of filial piety, one that is based on individual success for the family as a whole. Sudden changes in class, transitioning from low to middle or higher here in the United States for these communities has lessened the significance of filial piety for members of the 1.5 generation, making the core relationship more significant, but the individual choices more open for themselves and their children.

## **Lost in Translation**

Hoping respondents could use their past and present experience and knowledge of Vietnamese both in Vietnam and here in America to inform their responses, I asked informants specifically how they felt future Vietnamese Americans will be different or similar to today's members of their communities. Most responded with both enthusiasm and disappointment, citing cultural issues that they see as a cause for concern. Above all was the topic of language. Almost all respondents believed that it was beneficial for their child to learn Vietnamese, for multiple reasons. Perhaps most important was the fact that speaking Vietnamese was how they felt Vietnamese culture may best be maintained. They equated the loss of language as the loss of identity, and spoke of this concern in regards to their children, second generationers who were already picking up more English speaking tendencies than the 1.5 generation did at their age. They would talk about the potential benefits from learning Vietnamese, such as the possibility of working for the community in the long run as an advocate, or purely the good in being bilingual. Some also discussed more personal reasons, such as how they would like their children to be able to communicate with the first generation.

Surprisingly, I often was met with great astonishment by some informants who found my Vietnamese speaking skills to be fluent for someone who was of my age and born in the United States. Though they wished to see more second generation Vietnamese speak the language, they had rarely come across those who were remotely fluent. Respondents found that teaching their own children Vietnamese was not a simple matter, as children old enough to be communicating tended to utilize English more than Vietnamese. It was apparent that this was a subject of frustration for the informants who occasionally even asked myself for advice on how to get their own children to speak more Vietnamese. After much consideration, I realized that in many ways

I was very much like the children that the parents were so concerned with language-wise. I had also spoke little Vietnamese as a child, and only developed the habit as I grew and spent more time with my parents, learning key words to communicate important ideas related to everything from home, school, work, and more. With that in mind, I offered my story to respondents, but with great uncertainty about whether or not my experiences would be applicable to their situations. The development of the second generation will likely not be the same as mine, considering the differences between first generation, who mostly speak Vietnamese, and 1.5, whose more fluent English dismisses the necessity of learning Vietnamese at home. For the second generation, there is still interaction with members of the first generation through their grandparents, but how that group and future generations will see the importance of learning Vietnamese is potentially a question that will be worth examining in future gerontological studies of Vietnamese Americans.

### **A Tale of Two Cities**

One of the original research questions I sought to explore was the effect of location (social and spatial environment) on opinions about any or all subject matters regarding filial piety. I chose Greenville, South Carolina and Raleigh, North Carolina for their differences in population density and general city size to see if either had an influence on the discussion. In many ways, the informants interviewed in both cities were similar because they all lived in mostly suburban, predominantly white areas and financially middle-to-upper class. For the majority of the survey, respondents were aligned in thinking when it came to their opinions about filiality.

There was one major subject area that stood out between the two communities though,

that of careers and financial success. Regarding the statement asking whether financial success was essential to choosing a career, those in Raleigh, North Carolina proved to be more focused on the financial end, the majority arguing that it was more important than career happiness, which was preferred by those in Greenville, South Carolina. A comparison of jobs between the two cities revealed a more technology focused group in Raleigh that was interviewed, with a large portion of respondents working within the Research Triangle Park around medical or engineering work, compared to those in Greenville who showed more variation in work top to bottom, from barbershop owners and nail technicians to more engineering and pharmaceutical work similar to those in Raleigh. Those who were employed in occupations that require higher education degrees such as pharmacy in Greenville did share more commonalities with those working the Research Triangle than others. While this finding may have come from a product of chance in regards to those who were chosen to be interviewed from snowball sampling, it suggests that while cities may have some influence in how parents think about certain issues, it seemed that it was more of an individual thought than anything else, based on their own ambitions and concerns for themselves and their children.

Though the cities themselves seemed to have little impact on participant's sentiments on filial piety according to the survey, I asked respondents more specifically about the benefits and disadvantages they saw about the city they were living in to further explore if there was any significance to location. The answers reflected more variations of opinions. Those in Greenville, South Carolina mentioned the ease of life in the city, and how its pace of life was comfortable for themselves and their family. However, many also reflected on the difficulties in meeting other Vietnamese, and the infrequency of well-planned events that allowed the possibility of uniting the Vietnamese community there together. There was a general concern that the lack of events

uniting the community and the lack of social interaction amongst one another in the already small community made it difficult to both keep traditions going and incorporate more facets of Vietnamese culture in their daily lives.

Raleigh informants shared many of the same sentiments that those in Greenville did about the lack of group interaction within the Vietnamese community in their area. Despite its size and more places of central meeting including a large Asian grocery store, a local Buddhist temple, a Vietnamese run Catholic Church and holiday events as potential meeting places for more daily Vietnamese interaction, those in Raleigh generally found that any social interaction outside of those areas were limited, or essentially nonexistent. Though more Vietnamese live in Raleigh, with the city's larger size and population, it in many ways parallels Greenville, SC and shares similar difficulties in finding more social spaces for interaction between Vietnamese. Respondents talked about how they generally interacted within small social groups, and rarely communicated with those outside of that social group. Some reasons informants discussed include the lack of events to meet new people outside of New Year celebrations. While it may have been common to run into other Vietnamese in public settings throughout the Raleigh area, the opportunities to be in casual social events for meeting new people was rare, informants noted.

There was another area where there seemed to be division between Greenville, SC and Raleigh, NC, the subject of parental obedience. On the survey statements regarding parental advice and whether or not children should obey their parents, the majority of Greenville informants were in agreement that those were two subjects they united about, in comparison to those in Raleigh who felt the exact opposite. While no one explanation seems to define this reasoning, a couple of possibilities stand out. For members who disagreed the statement that “no

matter what, children should obey their parents,” many mentioned that the wording was too severe to agree with. Informants recollected times in their own lives where they had to disobey their parents for their own betterment, precisely because the parents did not understand the gravity of a situation. Though many of those questioned the wording, ultimately most still agreed with the statement, leaning more towards an agreeable response. There is also a weaker correlation between respondent's career choices and their responses to this question, tying back to earlier conversation about the careers and differences between the two cities. Most of the Raleigh respondents who disagreed fell into a category of technical careers including engineering and some form of medically related work; basically fields involving more education and professional training than other occupations such as nail technician or barbershop. For those in Greenville that also shared similar sentiments on the subject with those in Raleigh, they also fell into similar career categories. It is possible that the training in these particular occupations either made them more sensitive to the phrasing of the statement, or that their occupations are somehow tied to this opinion that children do not have to fully obey their parents in a way that is not apparent from the data alone.

Overall, I saw it useful to utilize two cities in the study. It allowed more venues of exploration in the data, specifically factors related to environment and surrounding. Though there were few differences in general, they were items that would not have been seen otherwise if the study had only been done in one city. However, there are many considerations about location to consider if future studies are to be done on the subject. Though I was able to learn much about the Vietnamese in these two communities, it is entirely plausible that Vietnamese in well-known urban populations such as Houston, Texas, Los Angeles, California, or even nearby in Atlanta Georgia may have completely different perspectives on the subject because of their environment.

This study represents two very distinct, suburban populations of Vietnamese that share similar class and social dynamics to one another, but are heterogeneous of other locations harboring populations of Vietnamese in the US. Conducting studies in major Vietnamese cities and comparing it to the suburban population studied here would provide greater insight into filial piety's significance among Vietnamese Americans. The study would also benefit from a transnational perspective, interviewing those currently in Vietnam to allow compare and contrast between members of the same age. This would permit greater comparison, allowing us to find out whether or not migration and acculturation are principle reasons for the change in filiality, or whether there is another reason for the differences not yet explored.

### **Analyzing the Utility of the Filial Piety Scale**

The filial piety scale utilized in the study employed a concurrent methods approach to further enhance the usage of the tool. Used as both a survey and interview tool, it allowed the opportunity to both generate the quantitative data that it traditionally is used for while also adding a qualitative component, opening wider venues of discussion on the subject matters that the filial piety scale touches on. Considering the tool from a qualitative perspective, it may have been one of the stronger suits of the filial scale as informants were able to use the statements as a base for discussion, often revealing many personal conflicts and memories they had related to the subject, which enriched the quantitative data and exposed hidden details that were perhaps not well-represented by the quantitative data itself.

The quantitative data, however, presented a variety of challenges to consider, many of which was exposed by the qualitative discussion concurrently done in the study. I altered some statements to help modernize the scale and make it more effective in the study, but many

statements still showed signs of age. A statement concerning blood lines, for example, was one that the majority of respondents found to be out of date in the study. Cultural considerations must be made when adjusting the tool for use on different ethnicity to fit their historical contexts. For example, though the statement on blood lines may not apply to great effect among Vietnamese Americans, it still may see some significance among Chinese and Chinese American's in relation to various factors such as the one-child policy still in play within Chinese culture. Most of the statements were applicable to everyday life among members of the 1.5 generation today, but continuous modification and analysis of the survey needs to be done for use on future generations to maintain the viability of the filial piety scale.

One of the biggest challenges for informants during the whole interview was negotiating the age range for the various statements in the filial piety scale. When it came to the actual act of parenting in general, age was a subject that often was questioned in order to aid them in responding. There were certain aspects of this that was unsurprising when examining things from an American perspective. One such example was the subject of decision-making where it was apparent – regardless of culture – that those of a certain age such as preteen should consent with their parents much more often than that of a teenager or older. Another can be seen here, in a comment discussion finances:

*“[in Vietnamese] What age? For someone who is 20, obviously they are old enough. But for kids younger, then of course not! They don't know what they are doing and need to be taught.” - Participant #1, Female Informant*

Respondents often asked about the age range of certain statements, many of which dealt with themes that could have been applicable to a large variety of age sets. Certain questions such as respect and obedience could be applied to all ages, but subjects such as living away from home, finance, and caretaking were areas that called for a definitive age range. There were also many

statements that respondents asked if they could respond for children under and over a certain age, usually 16-18 when children in the US tend to take more of a hold on their own personal decisions. Either making the survey more elaborate or building specific age ranges into the survey would help improve the overall usefulness of the filial piety scale.

In general, the filial piety scale reveals fairly consistent quantitative data on the filiality of Vietnamese here in the United States. However, the qualitative data found in this study revealed that though there may have been a uniform opinion quantitatively on a subject matter, there is a wide spectrum of feelings and sentiments found in the interview data that may contradict the numbers. I have found that the filial piety scale is thus best utilized as both a qualitative and quantitative tool to collect data. By discussing each statement with the participants, researchers can compare the qualitative data with the quantitative results to make a more complete picture of the population's perception of filial piety.

### **Looking Ahead**

*"It's kind of sad... [pause] The thing is, again it comes to that money vs. no-money sort of thing. I'm worried about losing it a lot, because as these... your generation I guess, are college bound and coming out, you will get money, and do a lot more of the American stuff, and you will forget the traditional stuff. We'll... become one of those lost traditions. I think in the long run we'll just slowly evolve into straight American, and then you know we'll have scatters of people who want to go back or those who try to remember their background, their race you know? But it's become a visitor, a tourist sort of thing. Like a German going back to see a concentration camp to get an idea of what it is, but not really understand it. These kids are going to come up, evolve into a normal American, and not a Vietnamese anymore." - Participant #14, Male Informant*

As a second generation Vietnamese American, the study was of immediate interest to me as I was already thinking about the future, and what it held in store for me from the many perspectives that the 1.5 generation currently are in as a Vietnamese parent, child, and individual in the United States. What values would I be teaching my kids? What kind of definition of Vietnamese

American will I even be? Through this study, however, I have thought less of my own future and more about the 1.5 generation's. While this study captures them as a transitory generation between their first and second generation, it also describes how the 1.5 generation sees themselves in this place and time, suggests what they see themselves as in the future. Informant's opinions about caretaking, for example, expressed the opinion that they feel children have less of a need to take care of them, suggesting a divergence in how the 1.5 generation considers to be cared for when they become a senior age. Poverty and status were two major reasons filial piety was such an important part of family in Vietnam. However, with both being a non-issue here, I see an ease in the 1.5 generation about the subject, not only as parents, but as children. Thus, I see filial traditions only continuing to diminish among Vietnamese Americans.

Though we have seen the 1.5 generation take several positions on various filial aspects related to the second generation, it would be interesting to revisit the informants in ten or fifteen years when their children begin reaching the point where much of the discussion becomes applicable. In a relative short period of time, the data from the study reveals that the influence of US culture has already reshaped many filial aspects common in Vietnamese household. What effect will another decade of living in the United States and transitioning into the next phase of their lives have on their opinions of parenting that were reflected in this study? I asked parents how they felt the second generation and on would be in the future, but perhaps the bigger question that should have been poised was how the 1.5 generation will be as they reach their 50s and 60s. There will be a point where all of the informants will have had spent more of their lives in the United States than in Vietnam. How more time in the United States change and influence, if at all, their opinions on filial piety and family is a question that will need to continue being explored as the 1.5 generation transitions into the next phase of their lives.

## Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

sex	Date	City Raleigh
Location of interview	Age	years in United States
number of Children	place of birth	Language preference:
time /duration		

### **I. Background**

What were the reasons you choose Greenville, SC/Raleigh, NC?

Have you lived anywhere else in the US ?

Did you go to school in the United States? What kind of school? Problems, stories, etc.?

Who of your immediate family - such as brothers, sister, parents, children living in this area – that live within an hours drive?

When you first arrived in the US: who helped you to get all the information - how to adapt - what to do?

Where did you learn English, if at all? Did you have problems with the English language at first?

How did you find you job? Whom do you ask if you need to change jobs?

### **II. Obedience/Individualism**

Do you think your relationship to your parents has changed since being in the United States? Do you have different beliefs, values? What's different?

Do you think the younger Vietnamese kids respectful to adults? Do they have good relationships with older Vietnamese?

Can you tell me about your relationship to your parents? What was it like in Vietnam, and how has it changed since being in the United States?

How has life in the US been different compared to Vietnam in terms of family? Parents?

Children?

### **III. Growth and Career Choices**

What do you think of younger Vietnamese Americans? What are they like?

Compare yourself as a child to those in the United States. What do you see different?

It's become a common trend for many young Vietnamese to lean towards professions such as nail tech, doctor, computer engineering as career choices, all very high paying, profitable jobs. Is the financial success of a job makes going to be an important factor for Vietnamese children? Should parents have a say in where and what younger Vietnamese children do?

### **IV. Marriage**

There seems to be a growing trend among some of the younger generation of Vietnamese Americans to steer away from traditional Vietnamese marriages. Some do an American church wedding, some have even smaller events. Do you think Vietnamese Americans will continue to do traditional marriages in the future?

For the most part, it seems like most Vietnamese have found Vietnamese partners. There have been cases of mixed couples, though, which has brought varied reaction from the community. How do you feel about mixed couples?

### **V. Tradition/Values**

How often do you keep up with Vietnamese practices? Do you feel an obligation to?

How important is learning Vietnamese language and culture going to be for your children? If yes, why?

How do you think future Vietnamese Americans will carry on Vietnamese traditions in the United States, if at all?

## Bibliography

- Appadurai, Arjun. (1990). Disjuncture and Difference in the global cultural economy. Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization, University of Minnesota Press: 27-47.
- Bankston, C. L. and V. T. Dao (2010). Vietnamese in the USA. Language Diversity in the USA. K. Potowski. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.
- Bassnett, Susan, and Harish Trivedi, eds. *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Boehnlein, J. K., Tran, H. D., Riley, C., Vu, K. C., Tan, S., & Leung, P. K. (1995). A comparative study of family functioning among Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 183(12), 768–773.
- Chen, Carolyn. (2006). "From filial piety to religious piety: Evangelical Christianity reconstructing Taiwanese immigrant families in the United States." International migration review 40(3): 573-602.
- Chen, Sylvia, et al. (2007). "Decomposing Filial Piety into filial attitudes and filial enactments." Asian Journal of Social Psychology 10: 213-223.
- Cheung, M., & Nguyen, S. M. H. (2001). Parent-child relationships in Vietnamese-American families. In N. B. Webb (Ed.), *Culturally diverse parent-child and family relationships: A guide for social workers and other practitioners* (pp. 261-282). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Diwan, Sadhna., t al. (2010). "Expectations of Filial Obligation and Their Impact on Preferences for Future Living Arrangements of Middle-Aged and Older Asian Indian Immigrants " Journal of cross-cultural gerontology 26(1): 55-69.
- Dinh, K., B. R. Sarason, et al. (1994). "Parent-child relationships in Vietnamese immigrant

- families." Journal of Family Psychology 8(4): 471-488.
- Egawa, J., & Tashima, N. (1982). Indigenous healers in Southeast Asian refugee communities. San Francisco: Pacific Asian Mental Health Research Project.
- Franco, J. (1983). "An acculturation scale for Mexican-American children." Journal of General Psychology 108: 175-181.
- Fuligni, Andrew. J. and Vivian. Tseng (2008). A Measure of Adolescents' Attitudes toward Family Obligation. Online Working Paper Series.
- Fuligni, Andrew. J. and Wenzhin. Zhang (2004). "Attitudes Toward Family Obligation Among Adolescents in Contemporary Urban and Rural China." Child Development 75(1): 180-192.
- Fuligni, Andrew. J. and Wenzhin. Zhang (2006). "Authority, Autonomy, and Family Relationships Among Adolescents in Urban and Rural China." Journal Research on Adolescence 16(4): 527-537.
- Glasgow, Nina. (2000). "Rural/Urban Patterns of Aging and Caregiving in the United States." Journal of Family Issues 21(5): 611-631.
- Ho, David Y. (1976). "On the Concept of Face." American Journal of Sociology 81: 867-884.
- Ho, David Y. (1994). "Filial Piety, Authoritarian Moralism, and Cognitive Conservatism in Chinese Societies. ." Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs 120(3): 347-385.
- Ho, David Y. (1996). Filial piety and its psychological consequences. The handbook of Chinese psychology. . M. H. Bond. New York, NY, Oxford University Press: 155-165.
- Ho, J. (2009). "Acculturation gaps in Vietnamese immigrant families: Impact on family relationships " International Journal of Intercultural Relations 34(4): 427.

- Ho, Yau-Fai. (1974). "Authoritarianism and Attitude Toward Filial Piety in Chinese Teachers." Journal of Social Psychology 92(2): 305-306.
- Huer, Mary B., et al. (2001). "Understanding the Vietnamese American Community: Implications for Training Educational Personnel Providing Services to Children with Disabilities." Communication Disorders Quarterly 23(1): 27-39.
- Hwang, Kwang-Kuo. (1987). "Face and Favor: The Chinese Power Game." American Journal of Sociology 92: 944-974.
- Hwang, Kwang-Kuo. (1999). "Filial Piety and Loyalty: Two Types of Social Identification in Confucianism." Asian Journal of Social Psychology 2(1): 163-183.
- Hwang, W. (2006). Acculturative family distancing: Theory, research, and clinical practice. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 43, 397-409.
- Kao, Hsueh-Fen S. (2005). "Effects of acculturation and social exchange on the expectations of filial piety among Hispanic/Latino parents of adult children." Nurse & Health Sciences 7(4): 226- 234.
- Kao, Hsueh-Fen S., McHugh, Mary L., and Shirley, Travis S. (2007). "Psychometric tests of Expectations of Filial Piety Scale in a Mexican-American population." Journal of Clinical Nursing 16(8): 1460-1467.
- Khalaila, Rabia. (2010). "Development and Evaluation of the Arabic Filial Piety Scale." Research on Social Work Practice 20(4): 356-367
- Kim, B., et al. (2003). "A Qualitative Study of Adaptation Experiences of 1.5-Generation Asian Americans." Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology 9(2): 156-170.
- Kim, B. S. K., Ahn, A. J., & Lam, N. A. (2009). Theories and research on acculturation and enculturation experiences among Asian American families. In N. T. Trinh, Y. C. Rho, F.

- G. Lu, & K.M. Sanders (Eds.), *Handbook of mental health and acculturation in Asian American families* (pp. 25-43). New York, NY: Humana Press.
- LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H. L. K., & Gerton, J. (1993). Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 114(3), 395–412
- Lee, S. J. (2001). "More than “model minorities” or “delinquents”: A look at Hmong American high school students." *Harvard Education Review* 71: 505-528.
- Levitt, P. (2009). "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(7): 1225-1242
- Lieber, Eli., et al. (2001). "Holding on and Letting Go: Identity and Acculturation among Chinese Immigrants." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 7(3): 247-261.
- Lieber, Eli., Kazuo, Nihira, and Tan, Iris (2004). "Filial piety, modernization, and the challenges of raising children for Chinese immigrants: quantitative and qualitative evidence." *Ethos* 32(3): 324-347.
- McCrae, Robert R. (2002). *The Five-Factor Model of Personality Across Cultures*. New York, New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Nguyen, Liem T. and Henkin, Alan B. (1982). "Vietnamese Refugees in the United States: Adaptation and Transitional Status." *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 9(4): 101-116.
- Nguyen, N. A., & Williams, H. L. (1989). Transition from East to West: Vietnamese adolescents and their parents. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 28(4), 505–515.
- Nguyen, Peter V. (2008). "Perceptions of Vietnamese Fathers' Acculturation Levels, Parenting Styles, and Mental Health Outcomes in Vietnamese American Adolescent Immigrants " *Social Work* 53(4): 337-346.

- Norris, Fran H., et al. (2009). "PTSD in Vietnamese Americans following Hurricane Katrina: Prevalence, patterns, and predictors." Journal of Traumatic Stress 22(2): 91-101.
- Park, K. (1999). "'I really do feel I'm 1.5!': The construction of self and community by young Korean Americans." Amerasia Journal 25: 139-163.
- Phinney, J. S., Horenczyk, G., Liebkind, K., & Vedder, P. (2001). Ethnic identity, immigration, and well-being: An interactional perspective. Journal of Social Issues, 57(3), 493–510
- Pyke, K. (2000). "The normal American family" as an interpretive structure of family life among grown children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62. 240-255.
- Scharlach, Andrew E. (1991). "Factors Associated with Filial Grief Following the Death of an Elderly Parent." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 61(2).
- Stocks, C. (2004). "Bridging the Gaps: Inescapable History in Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge*." Studies in the Literary Imagination 37(1): 83.
- Sung, Kyu-taik (1997). "Filial Piety in Modern Times: Timely Adaptation and Practice Patterns." Australasian Journal on Ageing 10(4), 88-92
- Tajima, Emiko and Harachi, Tracy (2010). "Parenting Beliefs and Physical Discipline Practices Among Southeast Asian Immigrants: Parenting in the Context of Cultural Adaptation to the United States " Journal of cross-cultural Psychology 41(2): 212-235.
- Trueba, H., Cheng, L., and Ima, K. (1993). Myth or reality: Adaptive strategies of Asian Americans in California. Philadelphia, PA, Falmer Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2007). Selected population profile in the United States. Retrieved August 27, 2009. <http://www.census.gov/population/www>
- Wong, J. Y., K. K. Tran, et al. (2011). "Vietnamese American Immigrant Parents: A Pilot

- Parenting Intervention." The Family Journal 19(3): 314-321.
- Wong, Y. J., & Poon, M. -L. (2010). Counseling Asian American men who demonstrate suicidal behavior. In W. M. Liu, D. Iwamoto, & M. Chae (Eds.), *Culturally responsive counseling with Asian American men* (pp. 279-298). New York, NY: Routledge
- Xiong, Z. B., Detzner, D. F., & Rettig, K. D. (2001). Southeast Asian immigrant parenting practices and perceptions of parent adolescent conflicts. *Journal of Teaching in Marriage and Family*, 1, 27-48.
- Zhou, M. (2001). Straddling different worlds: The acculturation of Vietnamese refugee children. In R. G. Rumbaut, & A. Portes (Eds.), *Ethnicities: Children of immigrants in America* (pp. 187-227). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zhou, Min and Carl L. Bankston, III. 1994. "Social Capital and the Adaptation of the Second Generation: The Case of Vietnamese Youth in New Orleans." *International Migration Review* 28:821-845.